

Richard Abrahams

US Masters Swimming



Richard went out for the HS swim team beginning in 10th grade (age 15). No previous competitive experience except for 4th of July and Labor Day races at a beach club on Long Island Sound. New close friendships on the team kept him on the team despite the fact he didn't earn a letter that first year. The following summer his swimming improved during his High School junior and senior year he earned a partial scholarship to Northwestern University.

He learned that the team needed him to swim the 200 Fly. He convinced his coach let him swim a 50 Free at a dual meet and he won the event while improving his

best time by a full second. So he entered Richard in the 50 for Big Tens where he was seeded 35th. Improving another full second, he actually won Big Tens and later ended up 5th at NCAA in 1964, earning him All-American Status. He qualified and competed in the Olympic Trials in 1964.

Competing in Masters Swimming since 1974 and Masters Nationals since 1976, Richard has set over 70 individual national records. He still holds 45 USMS individual records and 7 relay records in three age Groups spanning nearly 20 years, a feat held by less than a handful of people. He has also achieved 292 Top Ten US times, 35 All American USMS Honors, defined as best time of the year for that event. The personal records he set and held in Colorado Masters spans five age groups and still currently holds over fifty records. He is proud of his achievement of being the first person in the world over 60 to swim the 100 free under 50 seconds, an American record he set in 2005.

Abrahams has set 37 FINA Masters World Records and won 10 gold medals in three FINA World Masters Championships since 1986. He was inducted into the prestigious International Swimming Hall of Fame in October, 2011. At his induction he thanked his family and his close group of training partners that are also his closest personal friends.

His swimming has been described as an electrifying energy that illuminates pools like lightning flashes. Some swimmers have the gift; most don't. Weissmuller had it. So did Fraser, Skinner and Gaines. A young Richard Abrahams had it, too. And, at the age of 66, he still does. At swim meets, you always know when he is swimming. People around you will tap you on the shoulder to point at Richard getting on the blocks.

Abrahams explains, describing how he frequently refers back to a collection of detailed training logs he's accumulated to determine what's working and what needs to be tweaked. "It's knowing how you're feeling, and knowing how to train." Abrahams devours scientific articles on such wide-ranging topics as physiology, biomechanics and psychology. He borrows freely from the training methods and insights of athletes as diverse as Lance Armstrong and Michael Johnson. He once had an opportunity to train with top U.S. national swimmers at the U.S. Olympic Training Center (USOTC) training camp in Colorado Springs, and when he returned home, he immediately incorporated what he learned into his regime.

He has been published ten times in USMS publication Swimmer Magazine and is a regular contributor to Colorado Masters Swimming newsletter.

Love for the sport, long-time friends, meeting new people, health and fitness, always learning something new, fun travel opportunities, new challenges with each new age group, has kept Richard working on new techniques and alternative training strategies. Richard lectures, seminars and writes on training, stretching and dry land training.