

Swimmer Profile –Shayne Lastinger

By Elaine Krugman



Overwhelmingly, the swimmers I have interviewed have replied, “Georgia Tech” when asked, “What is your favorite swim meet?” During the last few years, Shayne Lastinger can (and should!) be thanked for that.

The meet director for the last two Atlanta Rainbow Trout St. Nicholas SCM Invitational meets and three Spring Splash meets has been Shayne, President of the Atlanta Rainbow Trout Masters swim team (ART), based at Georgia Tech. He picked up from where former Meet Director, Sean Fitzgerald, left off when he relocated to Canada, and has done a fabulous job.

Just 27 years old, Shayne is on his second board position with the Midtown Atlanta team and is a great promoter. “Atlanta Rainbow Trout as a whole is a very inclusive team. You hear the name, and you think it’s probably LGBT, and we are, but we are the only Masters team in an Olympic facility (at Georgia Tech where the 1996 Olympics were held), we are the only Masters team located in Midtown Atlanta, and we are \$30 per month for four coached workouts a week (by Masters certified coaches). What we want people to know is that we aren’t just an LBGT team, but a team for everyone to enjoy the

Olympic pool facility at a low cost. We are in a prime location, we have cheap dues, and we love people; so, come swim with us!” Workouts are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm, and Sundays from 11:00 am – 12:30 pm.

In 2017 – 2018, when Shayne had been with ART for just a couple of years, he joined the board of directors and served as Swim Team Director. This was around the same time Sean was preparing to move with his partner to Vancouver; so, Shayne volunteered to step up and replace Sean as the meet director twice each year to host the Trout’s swim meets.

During the 2017 Spring Splash, Sean trained Shayne on the meet manager software and made sure he understood the entire process of running a meet. Shayne ran the meet while Sean competed, but Sean was available to answer questions in between his races, if needed.

After Sean left, Shayne became President of the team and ran two St. Nicholas (St. Nick’s) meets and one Spring Splash completely on his own—a lot to juggle in between serving as the team’s president and running the family’s two golf cart businesses in Georgia!

Prior to Shayne stepping into the role of Meet Director, I had not met him, so I was curious about his swimming background. As it turns out, he has been a leader throughout his swimming career, serving as Captain of Buford High School’s swim team during his junior and senior years.

Following high school, Shayne quit swimming for five years, and gained weight as a result. Wanting to have more friends with common interests and needing to get back in shape, the young gay swimmer found the LGBT team to be a perfect fit. “I was about 30 pounds heavier than I wanted to be, so it was a great way to lose weight and be social. I haven’t really done much competitions since I started back. It’s something I want to look at more in the future.”

Shayne’s goal is to race distance freestyle like he did in high school, as well as the 200 IM and 100 Fly. “My overall goal would be to get to more of a feeling of being confident about being tested like I did when I was at the height of my [high school] swimming career.”

Being put to the test and taking personal responsibility for the results is what motivates this young Masters swimmer. As Shayne explained, “What I personally like about swimming the most is that for me it is a completely individual sport, and it’s completely on me... If I suck at a swim meet, it’s because *I* suck at a swim meet. If I broke a record, it’s because *I* broke a record. It’s all on me... I love to see my own personal growth.”

Meanwhile, Shayne has thrived on being put to the test wearing the cap of Meet Director instead of Masters Swimmer, running two Atlanta Rainbow Trout meets each year, including last year’s St. Nick’s meet that saw the most entries ever for that meet (170).

According to the enthusiastic meet director, running those Georgia Tech meets is a challenge. “I think part of the challenge of doing a meet is they are spaced so far apart. I have a meet in April, and I have a meet in November or December; so, a lot of times it’s kind of like having to refresh myself [on the process of dealing with various aspects of the meet, including the meet manager software and Meet Mobile App]. “The biggest challenge is seeding relays in the middle of the meet. We do relays at the beginning of the meet, but I can easily seed relays before the meet actually starts. But then, the relays at the end are always the problem children, because I make an announcement that I need the relay entries by noon, and then at 12:01 after I have finished seeding the relays, [a team will turn in their relay card].

Besides efficiently running the meet software and seeding relays, there are other things about Shayne’s job that we all need to be aware of as competitors and coaches. “There is only one computer that can verify times, enter DQ’s (disqualifications), post to Meet Mobile, print results, and print [stickers for] ribbons,” Shayne said, adding that the same computer is used to enter those relays—including the late entries. So, if you were like me at the St. Nick’s meet wondering where the stickers were for a particular event, just be patient, and don’t ask. “If I can just sit in front of the computer and just keep running the meet, it would be [a more positive experience] for everybody,” Shayne said.

In addition, Shayne had these suggestions: “Print the heat sheet at home or download Meet Mobile (to your cell phone), so you know what events you are swimming, which heat, and which lane. For relays, make sure your coach knows when relay entries are due (usually 10:00 am).”

If it sounds like the new ART meet director was complaining about his volunteer job, he really wasn’t. During our interview, Shayne was quite reluctant to say anything negative. I encouraged him to speak up, though, so we could be made aware of our responsibilities as swimmers and coaches for the meet to run smoothly and end on time.

Truly, it’s a labor of love for Shayne. “I think what I really enjoy about it is that there is so much pressure around you, and you can feel it; but it makes me work harder. I love working under pressure; that’s just me as a person. You have 170 swimmers, and a 170 sets of eyes staring at you, and you have to perform. It’s a pressure that I enjoy. It’s a thing that I care about, and a cause that I care about. It’s very fulfilling for me... I personally have a feeling that I always want to make everyone happy no matter what and I have a hard time accepting when people aren’t happy. What I don’t enjoy about running the meet is that as much time and effort as I put into running the meet, there are still people that complain...”

One complaint he won't mind hearing about in the future, though, will be from Ed Saltzman, Chief Official and Georgia Masters board member. "I'm sad that in the last couple of years we haven't been able to do the Reindeer Relay. We'll have to just bring that back and tell Ed to deal with it," Shayne said with a mischievous laugh.

Editor's note: Thank you, Shayne, for making the meets at Georgia Tech my favorite meets as well! You are doing a fabulous job!