

## SWIMMER PROFILE: DELISE COLEMAN

By  
Elaine Krugman



How about this for an enthusiastic return to competition? Following an 18-year absence, DeLise Coleman renewed her USMS membership early last year, got busy entering swim meets, and won the 2022 Grand Prix (60-64 age group)! “I was glad that I got the Georgia Grand Prix this [past] year. I was kind of excited about that!” DeLise said about her accomplishment.

Growing up in Indianapolis, DeLise Coleman swam on a parks and recreation AAU team throughout grade school. She didn’t swim in high school or college, but returned to competition as a new USMS member, in 2005. DeLise didn’t renew her membership, though, and was away from competition until she rejoined last year as a member of the Andrew & Walter Young YMCA Masters Swim Team.

What brought DeLise back to Masters Swimming? “Swimming was always my go-to thing. I was a lifeguard until my 30’s. In college, when the Marriott started their club memberships, I was one of their first lifeguards at the Marriott, in Nashville. Then, I was a lifeguard with the Y and the Red Cross... [Swimming is] what I like doing. I knew that I was preparing to retire, and this is something I wanted to get back into... I am officially retired as of January. I’m looking forward to this new chapter now. I’m [splitting time] between Georgia and Hawaii, so I like it.”

Now that she has more time to train, she keeps a busy workout schedule between her swimming and other fitness activities. In addition to swimming three times per week at the Rosel Fann pool, in Atlanta, she power walks at least three miles, two or three times per week, and cycles once a week. She also meets with a personal trainer for strength and conditioning sessions twice a week.

When I asked DeLise if she does coached workouts, she replied, “I follow yours; the ones you have posted (Elaine’s Flex Sets in the Georgia Masters Newsletter). She also follows Coach Ilonga Thandiwe’s workouts, as a member of the Andrew & Walter Young YMCA Swim Team (but not a member of the Y). “Each swim, in

an hour, I have been averaging 2,200 yards, and I have been trying to get up to 3,000,” she said about her per-session yardage.

The freestyler especially likes racing the longer races and always signs up for them as part of her five-race line-up at each meet. “I only like doing long distance, and I mostly like to swim and daydream; so, now I’m trying to learn how to pick up my speed... I just wait until somebody tells me it’s the last lap,” she laughed, adding, “I’m trying to learn how to get into the rhythm of competition.”

As a long-distance freestyler, I asked DeLise if she also competed in long open-water races. “I don’t like open water. Last year I joined the Atlanta Tri-Sisters, and last year was the first year I did a triathlon.” The swimming portion of the super-sprint was in the pool, which DeLise prefers. “I was pleased with my time. I had to learn how to ride the bike, and I have never been a runner; so, [the Atlanta Tri-Sisters] started teaching me how to ride the bike in March. I ended up winning that [triathlon]!”

DeLise explained that she won’t swim in open water because of concerns about possible bacteria that she doesn’t encounter in chlorinated pools. “I have lupus and latent tuberculosis, and asthma” she said. The asthma, in particular, is a concern. She explained that she does a lot of breathing exercises, but still had to figure out a breathing pattern that worked best for her lungs. “I breathe every stroke. I exhale twice, and then inhale once. That works the best for me.” Instead of one continuous exhale, she has to force the air out in two bursts. In addition, one of the reasons she prefers distance swimming is because of the lack of time to get good breaths during the high turnover rate of a sprint.

“Last year, the first competitive swim that I did was the West Gwinnett Developmental Meet. That was my first time back doing it, and I got caught up in the competition instead of just taking my time. That’s how I lost my breathing rhythm. But, then I just relaxed.”

DeLise learned a lot about herself at that meet and suggests other new swimmers follow in her footsteps. “Establish a routine. I don’t let the competition part bother me. I look at it as just going out to have fun.”

The return to the pool and competition has been great for DeLise's health. When asked what DeLise enjoys most about swimming, she said, "I am so energized off of swimming and relaxed... The doctors are amazed after this last year when I picked [swimming] back up that everything is great. They said just to enjoy the ride."

In addition to her swimming and fitness routine, DeLise has been doing monthly IV vitamin infusion therapy to help control her lupus.

Since competition has also had a positive impact on her health, DeLise has more walking, triathlon, and swimming events and competitions planned for this year. So far, she completed the Selma to Montgomery race as a part of a relay team, last March. In addition, she competed in the St. Anthony Triathlon Super Sprint in St. Petersburg, Florida, and shaved three minutes off from last years' time and came in second place. She also completed the Dare to Tri in Fort Gordon as a relay team with family members. "I like doing the triathlons in Georgia, so Superfly and East Cobb will be coming up" she added.

Delise also competed in the Maria Thrash Memorial swim meet at Dynamo, the Walt Weed competition in Savannah, and the Atlanta Rainbow Trout meet at Georgia Tech.

It seems as if DeLise really is enjoying the ride in Masters swimming. As she described her experience since her return, "I like how the people are encouraging and cheer other members along. This last Georgia Tech meet, the St. Nick's one; I liked that one, because I [swam] some good times. There were a lot of people there, and people who recognized that I was improving. The 800 was the one I improved, because I almost got that under 20 minutes; it was like 20:02."

DeLise, we look forward to seeing you enjoy the ride in the years to come!  
Welcome!!

