

Swimmer Profile – Stacy Fox

By Elaine Krugman



Since joining Georgia Masters' Facebook page, I had seen Stacy Fox's name pop up, but had never met her at a swim meet. Somehow, I even missed meeting her at the Georgia Golden Olympics, even though we were competing in the same age group. It wasn't until the Alabama Senior Olympics this past May when we finally met face-to-face, hung out together, and even competed against each other in the 50-yard breaststroke.

As it turns out, Stacy joined U.S. Masters Swimming five years ago, after getting hooked back into swimming by a friend who encouraged her to join the Roswell Rapids Adult Swim League. The team needed swimmers to fill events and field more relays, so they could rack up more points, and win another championship. Her friend told Stacy, "You don't have to be any good; you just need to show up and finish to score points."

Stacy wasn't exactly a newbie; she had swum as a kid while growing up in Illinois and competed in high school. "I swam in high school on the men's team, because we didn't have a women's swim team. It was a lot of fun.

Then, I didn't do any swimming for over thirty years other than floating with a glass of wine and a rubber duck!" she laughed.

That first day back between the lane lines proved to be a tough one. As the rusty swimmer explained, "I went to my first practice at a Roswell area pool, and I swam in lane 1 (the beginner lane), swam 25 yards, and almost died gasping for air! I got home and probably drank a half a bottle of wine after my first swim practice, because I was dying. But, I went back; and, I kept going and went to the meets. After my first summer, I lost about thirty-five pounds and was feeling really strong and fit; so, I looked to see where I could swim. I found the Stringrays (Masters), and have been swimming with the Stingrays in the Winter and competing in Masters, and then competing with Roswell Rapids in the Summer."

About those thirty-five pounds Stacy lost, she said, "It was a great byproduct [of swimming]. Losing weight, getting all of my cholesterol, and all of my labs, and my physical profiles back into normal ranges; but, that wasn't the reason I joined the swim team. I just joined because my friend said they needed bodies to compete, and so I did; and, I've never stopped swimming since!" She added, "Swimming on my team keeps me emotionally happy and keeps me physically fit; and, at my age, swimming 3,000 yards per day allows me to have an extra glass of wine at night or an extra slice of pizza."

Stacy has come a long way since feeling like she was going to die after her first lap back in the pool. She swims those regular 3,000-yard workouts in a busy weekly schedule.

“During the winter, I swim five days a week; Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays with the Stingrays, and by myself on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:00am. In the summer, I swim with the Stingrays on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays at 6:00am, I usually swim by myself on Thursdays, and we have swim meets on Fridays. Then, I swim with Roswell on Saturdays, outdoor long course.”

Freestyle is Stacy’s preferred stroke, and distance events are her favorite to race. “When I am swimming the long-distance events, I am always thinking in my mind, ‘I am going to be Katie Ladecky today! I am going to swim, and be powerful, and be fast!’” she laughed, and then added, “My goal is that I really want to compete in the 1650. That will enable me to set a [time goal] for the future.”

Due to sustaining a shoulder injury from practicing butterfly incorrectly and not being able to swim backstroke because of having positional vertigo, Stacy focuses on just swimming freestyle and breaststroke. “For the first time ever, I swam the 100 yard breaststroke and loved it; and, I would love to try and train for the 200 breaststroke,” she said.

Stacy uses a variety of resources to help improve her swimming. In addition to reading swimming articles on Facebook, Stacy said, “I read my U.S. Masters Magazine. When I travel (for work) to Houston, I have Coach Michael (Soderlund) send me workouts. My Roswell Rapids Coaches, Melissa (Massey) and Jonathan (Luckhurst), are fantastic and post our summer workouts on Google Drive. And if I need extra workouts, I’ll go to the U.S. Masters website. They have [an area on the site] where different coaches can [post] their workouts. It’s fun, because there are a ton of really interesting workouts on there that you can look at and choose to do. You get different ideas and different ways of doing things.”

Stacy tests her training in a variety of different competition settings. “The summer league is casual and a lot of fun. There are no awards other than bragging rights. We get a championship towel every year, and that’s the coveted towel. It’s another happy place, swimming outdoors in beautiful weather, and competing. It’s a lot of fun!... So, we have the more competitive Masters, and then, not that Atlanta Adult Swim League is not competitive, because it is about points, but it’s also about bringing home the coveted towel at the end of the year. But, it’s definitely much more casual.”

In addition to summer league and USMS meets, Stacy competes at various Senior Games meets, which she was introduced to by Stan Delair, profiled in the March issue of *Georgia Masters Newsletter*. “Stan told me about the Georgia Senior Games in Warner Robins, because it’s a lot of fun, great competition, it’s very casual, great medals, great t-shirts; and, I should sign up and go. I said, ‘Well, ok.’ So, I went down and swam, and came home with a flurry of medals.” I said, ‘Well, what else can I do?’ and then went to Alabama and qualified for the 2017 Senior Games in Birmingham, and then just qualified for the National Senior Games again in 2019. I really wanted to go to Pan Ams (UANA Pan Ams Masters Championships), but I just couldn’t afford the expense and the time off of work,” Stacy explained. “I don’t do as many Masters competitions as I want, because I also train my dogs and show my dogs in obedience, rally, and agility competitions. It always seems like a lot of the Masters competitions are already on a weekend where I have already entered a dog show. I definitely want to do more; but, what I train for every other year is to qualify for the [National Senior Games].”

Returning to swimming has been a memorable experience for Stacy; however, one memory in particular stands out. “The first time I swam at Warner Robins in the Georgia Senior Games, I came home with a bronze, silver, or gold medal in every event. I just remember coming home and my family was like, ‘How did you do?’ I held up my medals and I’m like, ‘I did ok!’ That really kept me motivated. I thought, ‘Wow, I can be really good as a senior.’ I’m just going to keep swimming. It’s just so much fun, and I love it! I love competing, even if I don’t win medals; but, the medals are kind of fun. I started to rack up more medals swimming at different events, so my husband (Steve) and daughter (Rebecca) for my birthday bought me a big, beautiful cast iron medal hanger that hangs in the kitchen. We hang all my medals on there, and they’re all excited, because now we have to get a second one... My (16-year-old) daughter is always really proud when people come in and see all my medals. She’s like, ‘Yeah, my mom’s a bad-a**!’”

From the impression I got when I met Stacy at the Alabama Senior Olympics and talked with her about swimming, her enthusiasm will keep her in the sport for the rest of her life. “I love the feeling I get from getting up every morning at 4:45am and hopping in the pool, feeling strong, feeling fit, and having fun. The camaraderie on the teams I swim for—there are so many great people; I just love them all. It’s something that motivates me, and makes my heart happy... My goals are really just to keep swimming as long as I can. Sue Ottoson is one of my SHEroes, and I hope that when I am in my 70’s, I am still swimming and winning medals,” she said.

If that’s the case, Steve and Rebecca better start thinking of buying a third medal hanger, too!