

SWIMMER PROFILE: RANDY MARCHMAN

By
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Recognizing that swimming was the most beneficial exercise he could do for his health, Randy Marchman always returned to the pool after several job interruptions. Following a ten-year break after quitting the college swim team at Georgia Southern University, transferring to the University of Georgia, and graduating; Randy landed a job in Atlanta. His company transferred him to Orlando, and then Washington, DC, however; so, during those busy times, Randy took another hiatus from swimming. Once he got settled in DC, he picked it back up again.

Randy decided to enter some open water events, and after competing in a one-mile lake race and a 3-kilometer ocean race, he was hooked. Next up? Swim the Suck, a ten-mile open water swim in the Tennessee River Gorge—a big leap from

swimming a 3k! On race day, Randy accomplished his goal of finishing the ten-mile course with the assistance of his wife as his kayak escort.

The open water swimming enthusiast had hoped to race Swim the Suck again in 2013; however, a shoulder injury interrupted his swimming once again. As Randy explained, “It was all that repetitive motion over and over and over again; so, when I try to do long-distance freestyle, sometimes it aggravates that injury. It is an injury that still haunts me to this day, as it hurts if I do more than 4,000 yards in a workout.”

Randy’s swimming history began long before those job interruptions and shoulder injury conspired to keep him out of the pool. “Doctors informed my mother that I was born with a heart murmur. When she queried the doctors as to what would be good to do in regard to the murmur, one of the things they suggested was

swimming. She started taking me to the local YMCA where we took ‘Water Babies’ classes. I don’t remember any of this, but I was swimming before I was walking!” he laughed.

As the Water Baby grew older, he joined the Marietta Aqua Jets swim team, and then swam with a group coached by legendary Georgia Swimming Hall of Fame coach, Pete Higgins, during his middle and high school years. In 1979 and 1981, he made the Georgia All-Stars team and competed against top swimmers, including Steve Lundquist who went on to win gold at the 1996 Olympics. His carpool partner one summer was another 1996 Olympian, Angel (Myers) Martino. “I definitely got to train and compete with some great swimmers!” Randy remarked.

During the summers off from Sprayberry High School, the Marietta, Georgia, native swam in summer leagues and won the state championship in the 100 IM, at age 17.

Currently, Randy and his wife live in Blue Ridge, Georgia, and he works as Chief Financial Officer for a company in Blairsville. Pools are few and far between up in that area, so he swims near his office at Union General Hospital’s Wellness Center. The pool is primarily used for physical therapy, so it is kept at 86.5 degrees— toasty for race-pace training! “It’s hard to do high heart rate training in this water, and we have no masters workouts or teams; but, at least I’m swimming and loving it,” he said when asked how he survives training in such warm water for 3-4,000 yards per session, three times a week. “That is why I have been focused more on longer distance stuff. It’s the lower heart rate and more endurance-related than trying to do anything at race speed for any continued amount of time. But, you still feel great after you do it, and you just work around it,” he added.

Somehow, Randy does manage to train for meets and mostly competes in the 200’s of butterfly, breaststroke, and backstroke as well as the 400 IM. “I did an 800 meter [freestyle race in 2019], and I liked that; but, I have to be careful with injuring my shoulder.”

Although Randy likes racing the middle-distance events, he had this to say when asked which race he likes the most: “I guess my favorite is probably the 100 butterfly, because even though it’s not a sprint, it’s not a 200. I can maintain myself pretty well for a 100.”

In addition to swimming local meets, Randy has competed at two national-level meets. “I went to Nationals in Greensboro. I didn’t have any qualifying times, so I did just the [three events] that you can do. I found out real quick I was out of my league!”

The National Senior Games swim meet that Randy competed at was more to his liking, however. “[Going to the National Senior Games] was really a highlight for me. It was last year, 2022, in Fort Lauderdale. I was able to get an individual gold, a silver, two bronze, and two relay golds; so, I was happy. I trained for that; it was my major focus for a year.”

Still, USMS is where Randy is most involved with swimming and where he has volunteered his time. He recently served as the Southeast Zone Chair and on the USMS LMSC Development Committee.

When asked what Randy enjoys most about Masters and swimming, he replied, “I like the opportunity Masters affords in providing competitions. It’s kind of a goal to keep me motivated, to keep me swimming and training hard... I just think [swimming is] a wonderful exercise. It helps me not only physically, but mentally. After a stressful day, you go to the pool and it’s therapeutic; you feel so much better afterwards.”

Randy has a training recommendation for you, though, so you can keep feeling better after you swim: “Be careful; don’t overdo it. You have got to listen to your body. If your body is telling you that you need some rest, then, you know? Some people get really excited and over train, but you will eventually have an injury.”

It's important, too, to remember that at some point, you will slow down—something that Randy acknowledged when asked if he has faced any challenges with his swimming. “Accepting the fact that I am going to get slower every year. You’re always training to get faster, but I guess it’s how slow can you go in reverse,” he said with a laugh, relating to Georgia Master’s old banner slogan that boldly states, “The older we get, the faster we were.”