



# SwimTalk Spring 2006



## 68 and still KICKING butt

by Laurie Reaburn, Masters Swim coach Prairie Life Center, O.P.

After first meeting Landon Kirchner in the pool, it did not take me long to learn a great deal about this 68 year old swimmer, who swims like a 30 year old and still kicks butt in the pool. Landon began swimming at an early age and was for the most part self taught. He decided to master the breaststroke and butterfly because he was not the fastest freestyle swimmer and he believed that "if you can't beat them at what they do best, get better at what they don't do well."

Exceptional at all strokes, his favorite events were usually the ones that he was most successful at which include the breaststrokes and individual medleys. He has made US top ten times and achieved world rankings in these events. The most memorable swimming experience was hard to choose for such an accomplished swimmer, but a few do stand out. Landon won the USMS national championship in the 400 I.M. in 1998 and this was a win that he is very proud of. He also won three first place finishes at the 1990 Canadian Masters Nationals in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Landon's advice to new Master swimmers is simple: "enjoy your time in the pool. Attend to the feel of the water on your body, the beauty around you of superbly shaped conditioned athletes, the satisfaction of completing a challenging set or workout, and the companionship and encouragement offered by your lanemates and teammates." He also recommends asking your coach for assistance in fine tuning your strokes. Landon truly believes that "even after 26 years of masters training, that it's never too late to learn something new and valuable in swimming."

It would require much more space to include all of Landon's accomplishments and all that one could say about this phenomenal swimmer. As Landon's current coach, I have learned two very important and valuable lessons. The first is that there exists true determination and dedication in every swimmer, no matter what his or her age. The second is that you can be 68 and still kicking butt. Landon and his wife, Barb Smith, are a true inspiration to our team at Prairie Life. I look forward to writing an article in the future titled "75 and still kicking butt."

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### Congratulations to Our Relay

#### All-Americans

- Jennifer Gray
- Catherine Moore
- Kylie Neal
- Jessica Varlack
- Elisabeth Venard
- Lynette Washburn
- Laura Young
- Tonya Young



## Competition Calendar

### Breadbasket Zone Meet April 29 & 30

Omaha, NE

Entry forms and information can be found at [www.swimslam.org](http://www.swimslam.org)

### USMS Nationals May 11-14

Coral Springs, FL

Entry forms and information at [www.usms.org](http://www.usms.org)

### Postal 5K and 10K Championships

May 15–Sept. 15

Hosted by River City Sharks  
Neil Salkind [njs@sunflower.com](mailto:njs@sunflower.com)





## Freezing and Not So Fresh Open Water

By Shari Harden

When I jumped off the boat and into the water of the San Francisco Bay at the start of The Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon, I thought I had made a terrible error in judgment. My hands and feet felt like ice was stabbing into them. The water slowly filled in my wetsuit and the frigid water enveloped me entirely. I swam towards shore, with only one thought; get me out of here. But after a few minutes my hands and feet went numb and no longer felt any pain. The water in my wetsuit had warmed considerably due to exertion and the biological necessity you can always count on to warm a wetsuit. I thought of the people on the boat who were lined up to wait for the toilet with concerned expressions, desperate to pee before the triathlon began. Silly amateurs.

If the thought of urine in your wetsuit makes you cringe, open water swimming is not for you. Urine, after all, is sterile whereas the water in which you are submerged most certainly is not. The bacteria, the fungi, the fish poop,

what's not to love? The lack of chlorine is one reason to love open water swimming, another is the overall impact of the workout just seems a little bit better than a swim in the pool. Open water swimming seems similar to running on trails while swimming in the pool is similar to running on a treadmill.

Both the pool and the treadmill will give me a great workout with control over distance and I can let my mind wander, while on the trail or in the lake my brain must be more attuned to my surroundings. Physically the trail makes me work a little harder as I must adjust my stride for rocks, ruts, acorns, and twigs that look like copperheads. Mentally the extra attention given to every step, means less time spent thinking about work, leaf clogged gutters or ozone depletion. A swim in the lake gives similar benefits as I must pay attention to where I am going, other swimmers around me, wakes from boats and lightening from dark clouds. I especially love the wind. A good strong wind

makes swimming in one direction a tougher workout than you could ever get in a pool and then you turn and the speed session begins.

A trail run or lake swim will exercise more of the stability muscles that don't have much work to do when the next stride is just like the last. Also, I never tread water in the pool, but at the lake if I want to stop and/or socialize I have to keep the muscles working to avoid sinking to the bottom. The bacteria and goose poop will also give your immune system a very different workout than the pool.

I encourage everyone who has the opportunity to swim in open water to give it a try. It may not replace most of your workouts, but it will give you some variety and you might find that it is a nice break from staring at the same tile at the bottom of the pool.

### Open Water Tidbits

#### Heritage Park

You definitely want to avoid the bottom of Heritage Park pond (I just can't bring myself to call it a lake) as it has several inches of slimy goose poop that will adhere to your feet for the duration of the triathlon.

#### Shawnee Mission

The triathlon club usually has open water workout times on Tuesday and/or Thursday evenings during the summer. The water clarity here is fairly decent - you can usually see almost to your hand.

#### Longview Lake

A large swimming area makes this a great area for open water workouts. The people who are there to splash around with the kids stay close to shore leaving a long workout lane by the ropes. A women's triathlon group swims here on Monday nights from mid-June through August.

#### To Wetsuit or Not to Wetsuit

At triathlons the water temperature must be at or below 78 for wetsuits to be legal. Some athletes may opt to wear one anyway, but they will not be included in the rankings. Many open water swims will have separate divisions for wetsuit clad swimmers.

**SwimTalk is published four times per year.**  
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## **Where to Swim???**

**Check out the MOVY website for places to swim.**

**<http://community.lawrence.com/movy/>**