



Kelly Quinn/Gazette Staff

TAKING IN AIR: William B. Melchior Jr. of Little Rock competes in the 1,500-meter Masters swimmers meet at the Little Rock Racquet Club. Melchior finished in 28 minutes, 33.04 seconds.

Masters swimmers congregate to test times in 1,500 meters

By Susan Jarvis
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Masters swimmers gathered Saturday at the Little Rock Racquet Club's 50-meter pool to test themselves at a distance of 1,500 meters.

Masters Swimming is for anyone over 19 who seeks a competitive venue with people their own age nationwide.

Two swimmers kept the clock running at the end of the swim and swam 500-meters more. Norman Whitaker, 64, and Herb Walters, 66, both of Russellville, used the event to turn in a time for 2,000-meters in a postal event.

Various Masters Swim Clubs across the nation sponsor the postal events. Swimmers can do the distance in their home pool at their convenience and on the honor system. Times are sent to a central location and swimmers have the fun of seeing how they compare to other swimmers their age from across the U.S.

"It's lots of fun," said Whitaker, who posted a time of 37 minutes, 35 seconds for 1,500 meters and 45:12 for 2,000 meters. "I used to swim in races at Lake Wappallo, Mo., as a boy, but I've been in

Masters swimming three years. I never got beaten as a boy, but I don't win much as a Masters swimmer."

Walters had minor abdominal surgery just 10 days before the meet, yet he swam the 1,500 in 44:45 when he usually does it in 46 minutes. His 2,000-meter time was 56:55. He started swimming 2½ years ago at his doctor's recommendation after a perforated artery.

"I'm faster because I don't change the side I breathe on so often," he said. "I used to change it every time I turned."

Marvin Schwartz, 42, of Little Rock swam the 1,500 distance faster than the other swimmers in 19:29.66. He kept on a pace of 6:30 for the 500-meter distance.

"I was pretty steady," he said. "I felt pretty solid."

Richard Kersh, 32, of Russellville swam the second fastest time of 20:48:10. He also maintained a steady pace, with a 6:40 for 500 meters, and a 13:40 for 1,000 meters.

Michael Hunt, 26, of Little Rock used the swim as a test for the MightyMite Triathlon.

Bill Melchoir, 49, of Little Rock swam the 1,500 meters in 28:33.04.

"I'm happy for right now with where I am," he said. "I've been in Masters Swimming seven or eight years, but I started competing as a kid at 13. In 1978, I set an AIC record for the 200-yard freestyle of 1:47.9. I broke Chuck's [Letzig, meet director] 1975 record of 1:50 something."

Any swimmer over 19 can join the Masters Swim meets or their workouts. Workouts are 8 to 10 a.m. each Saturday at the Stephens YWCA, 12th and Cleveland. The next meet is the Arkansas Masters Long Course State Championships at the Creekmore Pool in Fort Smith. Call John Neubayer for more information at 452-8070.

Results

- Men 25-29: Michael Hunt, 26, 22 minutes, 52.49
- Men 30-34: Richard Kersh, 32, 20:48:10.
- Men 40-44: Marvin Schwartz, 42, 19:29.66.
- Men 45-49: Doug Rawn, 45, 25:36:06.
- Men 50-54: Richard Strickland, 54, 31:00.07.
- Men 55-59: Tony Chandler, 55, 31:29.46.
- Men 60-64: Norman Whitaker, 64, 37:35 (2,000 meters in 45:12.)
- Men 65-69: Herb Walter, 66, 44:45.32 (2,000 meters in 56:55.)