

# Age doesn't mean a thing for masters swimmers

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To swimmers, age doesn't make a lot of difference.

With age-group swimming being extended into the masters area, swimmers can shoot for records for years to come.

It doesn't matter how old you are, but what you get out of it. At least that's the opinion of two swimmers at the Region VIII Championships, a two-day masters meet at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Del Schmand, 70, of Little Rock

and Marie Kreipe, 65, of Tecumseh, Kan., swim mostly for the enjoyment, but the benefits for health are there also.

Kreipe recently had what for her was a major problem and it was one that kept her from the water as much as she likes for three months.

First, she went to Europe and the month there without swimming was almost too much.

The day after she got back, she broke her right leg. It was another two months before she could spend as much time in the water as she wanted.

She said the three months almost killed her.

## Wanted to swim

"I wanted to swim so much," she said.

With the cast on her leg, Kreipe couldn't drive, either. A removable cast was put on after 10 weeks and that allowed her to get in the water a little bit, but still it didn't allow her to drive.

"The first day after I got the cast off [for good], my son said I should practice driving around the block a little before driving in town," she said. "I couldn't wait. I went straight to the pool and swam 700 yards. The next week, I was up to 1,200 yards, then 1,500 yards and I was pretty much normal by then."

It's not quite that bad for Schmand, although a couple of days without swimming is about his limit.

"I try and swim about an hour every morning, but I can't on the weekend," he said. "By the time Monday rolls around again, I'm ready for the water.

"If I go any longer, I don't feel as well. When I get out of the water, I feel exhilarated. My whole attitude about things changes [for the better]."

## Started at 58

Kreipe started swimming when she was 58, early compared to Schmand, who became active in the sport only about three years ago.

"I had eight kids and five of them were on swim teams," Kreipe said. "I used to work as a stroke judge and timer, but what I really wanted was to swim with the kids. They started a masters program at

the YWCA in Topeka and I got in from the beginning. We had an informal meeting and soon after that formed a club."

From the formation of that club, Kreipe hasn't stopped, except for her broken leg.

She holds a personal best of 36.22 in the 50-yard freestyle and swam a 36.42 at the World Masters Games at Toronto last year, qualifying her to be a top 10 swimmer internationally.

Kreipe swam in six events at the Region VIII Championships, picking up three seconds and a first in Saturday's competition, then adding another second and another first Sunday.

The two firsts came in long events, the 500 and 1,000-yard freestyles.

Schmand didn't do quite as well, but he was limited to only one event, the 1,650-yard freestyle, because he had to attend a wedding Saturday.

But he made the most of it, picking up a state record in the process, completing the distance in 45:57.41.

## Competed two years

Schmand has been competing only two years although he was quite an active swimmer in his youth.

"I started when I was 12 with the scouts and swam quite a bit," he said. "When I went away for school at 18 I quit and never got back in it."

Several years ago, when Schmand was working with the Army Engineers, the safety officer decided all men working on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System should know how to swim.

"I was with the Operations Division then and I figured since they wanted us to be able to swim I might as well take the course," he said. "I thought if I do it, that might indicate [to the other men under him] it was working taking."

After the course, Schmand stayed with swimming "off and on" but not to the level he does now.

"I did it more for recreation and health more than anything else," he said.

A couple of years ago, he met Mary Lou Jaworski at the YWCA who suggested he try the masters program.

He tried the club's lake swim, a one-mile trip around Lake Norrell each year, and was hooked.

He likes the competition, but says that is secondary to the fellowship and friendship he has gained since becoming involved with the club.

"You get to know everyone and each of them will help you," Schmand said. "There's a lot of razzing, but it's good-natured razzing."

Schmand also subscribes to the theory that active people don't feel as old as others.

"I may be 70 years old, but I don't feel that old, I just feel good and I owe it all to this," he said, pointing toward the UALR pool. "You don't try to push, just do what you can."

And that's just what Schmand does.

Sunday, he was swimming in the second heat of the 1,650-yard freestyle and was still swimming when the third and fastest heat started.

It took him almost 46 minutes, but he did what he could. That's all he wanted to do.

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Three masters swimmers from the Little Rock Racquet Club recorded state records in Saturday's Logmaster Invitational at the University of Arkansas.

Marion Staab set a mark of 12 minutes, 32.92 seconds in the 1,000-yard freestyle in the 25-29 age group while Pat Riley recorded a time of 2:06.01 in the 200 butterfly in the 30-34 age group.

Frank Lorge set two new marks at the 50 and 100 backstroke. His time was 26.78 in the 50 and 57.80 in the 100. Both times would have been the third fastest in the country, based on last year's times in his age group.

In addition, Lorge and Riley will be attending the United States Masters Swimming national meet May 15-18 at Indian River Community College at Fort Pierce, Fla.