

CHAPTER 11 NEWSLETTERS

1. Purpose

- 1.1. SAMS NEWS should play a key role in conveying, up to date information, news and resolutions quickly, efficiently and frequently as possible to members. SAMS NEWS can also be used for soliciting, directly, members' views and ideas.
- 1.2. The newsletter is similar, in a way, to a newspaper in that it should be easily and readily obtainable by readers and as such its distribution need not follow the normal channels of communication i.e. via SAMS secretary to regions, then to clubs and then only finally to members.
- 1.3. The value of a good newsletter in promoting masters should not be under estimated and at least four per annum should be provided.
- 1.4. Some brilliant newsletters of late have been produced by SAMS, notably from Marius Olivier over the period 2011 to 2013 and Owen van Renen from 2013 to 2019 and beyond). Terry Downes, has also provided numerous interesting articles for the newsletter.

2. Distribution

- 2.1. Prior to 2005, SAMS printed newsletters and posted to individual members.
- 2.2. Since 2005 however, modern technology has obviated the need for mail postage of newsletters. Newsletters are uploaded to SAMS' website as well as emailed to regions/clubs. Clubs, in turn, either email newsletters to individual members or inform them that the newsletter is available on SAMS' website.
- 2.3. With due regard to the above, newsletters should preferably not exceed about 2 megabytes. Typically, bulk mailer platforms limit email distribution to 2meg.

3. Copyright and acknowledgements

- 3.1. SAMS NEWS will invariably contain content derived from other publications. Care should be taken not to transgress copyright laws and where appropriate, to acknowledge the source and authors of articles used.

4. Style

- 4.1. Probably key to a successful newsletter is knowing the audience and writing from the viewpoint of the reader
- 4.2. Know what the readers want to know. Avoid jargon and keep it simple, short, lively and punchy.
- 4.3. Attempt to write in a way that it reflects natural speech and focus on people doing things rather than on theorizing and philosophizing.
- 4.4. It is not uncommon for good writers, to write, re-write and write again. However, one does not have to go to extreme lengths to present a passable newsletter or be a literary genius.
- 4.5. Use catchy headlines, pictures or sketches that will focus readers' attention and draw them into reading the article. Don't cram in too much – leave open spaces.
- 4.6. Bare in mind the "30.3.30" rule which, seemingly, applies to newsletter readers. Namely; a large percentage of readers spend just 30 seconds skimming through it, a somewhat smaller percentage spend only 3 minutes on it while only a few percent will devote 30 minutes or more to it.

5. Content and material

- 5.1. Newsletters should contain information ranging from regional news, reports on nationals, inspirational articles, fun articles, news from the president's meeting and reports from world masters as well as information on trophies, registrations, membership, family trees, swimmers' profiles and so forth. There should never be a shortage of material.
- 5.2. Numerous inspirational, motivational or fun articles are available on sport and related health matters that can be readily adapted or tweaked for the masters swimming environment. .
- 5.3. Newsletters going back to 2005 are available on SAMS' website. A review of such will show that no special talent is required and that the primary objective is to portray the ethos, camaraderie and fun that exist within masters – as illustrated in the two articles below:

5.4. Article One

Just four rules for me

As a newbie to this master swimming lark, I developed my own set of four rules that I feel certain will help any person become the master swimmer they always knew they could be.

Firstly, the key to any successful venture is having the correct equipment. I had seen a friend attempting a dam swim with one of those big, single lens goggles similar to those used by deep sea divers and coming horribly unstuck. So, the first thing was a pair of snazzy, state- of-the-art goggles that supposedly never let water in regardless of the type of dive you do and never, ever fog up.

Next on the shopping front was a decent cossie. I decided there and then that the itzy-bitsy-teeny-wienie bikini that my friend wore in the dam swim would not do, so I opted for one of those flimsy, racing cossie that cling unashamedly to every bulge and leave nothing to the imagination. After all, one does need to try and conform, regardless of one's torso dimensions.

Secondly, be realistic about who you are. I am not a morning person in the way that Robert Mugabe is not an intellectual. While I usually wake up at 7am, it is only around 10 that I become aware of my surroundings.

Hence, I will not be joining anyone for an early morning swim, no matter how much they cajole, beg, threaten and on occasion brandish sharp power tools.

I'm also what some people would term lazy. I, on the other hand, prefer to consider it "personal resource stockpiling".

Ignoring the realities of who you are will just create expectations that cannot be met, resulting in despair, torment and an overpriced pair of goggles lying in the closet.

Thirdly, don't worry what other people are thinking. While this is an excellent rule and should be applied to almost everything in life other than a hostage situation, I find it most suitable for the new master swimmer.

At my first gala I was oh-so self-conscious about everything and especially in my new cossie, so naturally, I had my biggest bathroom towel wrapped around me so tightly that it would have made those ancient Egyptians who embalmed those mummies proud.

Standing ahead of me was a men's heat and really, what an odd assortment of characters. One portly fella was twisting and turning, touching his toes and stretching for the heavens. Another was fiddling and faffing with his cossie, no doubt looking for the cord which seemingly had gotten itself lost in the depths of nowhere. Another was staring fixedly ahead, as if in a trance. One thing was clear – all were totally oblivious of their surroundings and, certainly, nobody was taking the slightest notice of them.

Lastly, keep it fun. Given that I have the attention span of a gnat and struggle with committing fully to things (apart from naps, to which I give all I've got) I knew that I had to keep things fun to keep my master swimming venture from going the way of Elton John's hair.

Life is not always fun when there are too many rules, but in my case, four are all I need to ensure that I graduate from a newbie to a lifelong master swimmer.

(Adapted from an article by Gill Chapman; "Rulz to Run by" - Runners World, July 2006)

5.5 Article Two

That's nothing, China. (During the Malmesbury champs – 2006)

The three chinas were swapping war stories and yakking about the 800m. An argument arose as to who should fetch the beers.

"I can't go," said Charlie. "I took too much strain. I couldn't even see straight at the end."

O'Swaar (of mixed van der Merwe/Irish descent) retorted, "I took so much strain and was so tired that I couldn't even take a decent look at those lovely legs when that naked dolly in the box ran around the pool deck."

"Hah" said Charlie. "You are really confused 'cause that naked dolly in the box didn't run around the pool when the 800m was on."

"That just shows you," said O'Swaar. "I definitely took the most strain. You won't believe how I suffered in the last 50. And what's more, I had so much breakfast at that Swartland B&B, that every time I hit the shallow end of the pool I got a roastie on my tummy. He bared his bloated belly for all to see. Sue put on her horn-rimmed specs and examined his slightly reddish spare wheel closely. "Naw," she said. "That's not a roastie. It could be sun burn or frost bite but looks more to me like a stain from that red Muscadel we got in our goodie bags."

Not to be outdone, Charlie retorted. "Hey, Bro, I took so much strain that my left leg cramped totally and then my right leg finally gave in so I had to use just my arms."

"That's nothing," chirped in Kosie. "Both my legs seized and then my arms gave in. So I could hardly move at all. I had to lie and wait for spasmodic cramps to jerk me forward like an inch worm while my neck was twisted all the time so that I could breath."

There was a silence as O'Swaar worked out that going in to bat first was not an advantage. To win here you needed somebody else to set the target.

Kosie went on, "When I finally finished and the officials dragged me out the pool and into the tent, the physio said it was the worst case she had ever seen. Two guys had to hold me down while she tried to un-crimp my knotted muscles."

Charlie, butting in, said. "That's nothing. They didn't dare move me from the edge of the pool. I just lay there in a state of total exhaustion. The physio even refused to handle my case and called the doctor and he had to get a second opinion."

O'Swaar smiled triumphantly. "I was way beyond physio treatment and doctors. They called in a priest to say last rites. I regained consciousness just in time to stop them phoning the mortuary."

Kosie and Charlie looked at each other. Kosie said, "O'Swaar, you win. We can't top that one, can we Charlie?"

Charlie shook his head and O'Swaar grinned. "So," said Kosie, "I guess we'll have to concede you took most strain. Well done, China. Winner buys the round."

"No problem," said a triumphant O'Swaar as he ambled off. Kosie and Charlie watched him go. "He falls for it every time," said Charlie. "It's really too easy – I almost feel bad doing it to him. But I'll get over it. As long as the beers he brings are cold!"

(Adapted from an article by Bruce Pinnock; Runners World, October 2002)



Ryk Neethling: A newbie of a different kind!



Terrible Twins! Charlie Merrit (left) and Koos Meyer: The choice of names in the article above is purely coincidental!



Owen van Renen: for many years editor of SAMS NEWS

SOME PHOTOS 2011



Oudtshoorn Nationals 2011: Eric Nell (left) and Anton Harrop-Allin doing their thing.



Oudtshoorn Nationals 2011: World record breaking relay team - Marcelle, Strauss Sanderina Kruger, Cecilia Stanford and Edit Otterman. Sanderina, Cecilia and Edith also broke world records in individual events.



Oudtshoorn Nationals 2011: Why Freestate won the club Spirit Trophy!



Oudtshoorn Nationals 2011: Hippies on their way to a party and doing their thing.