

# The Masters Muster

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## Worlds Biggest Swimming Extravaganza!

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### Jan Watson Reports on the Competition at the 1st World Masters' Championships

Tokyo was grey, oppressive, humid and hot. The mood in the Yoyogi complex was bright, cheerful, optimistic and vast. Mark Morgan had said he couldn't wait to swim there again as it is the best pool in the World.

So many great things and little details to remember; the organisation, the precision of the Japanese officials as they marched to their places each day. The speed at which the events were run through. Every detail had been covered. The men's events started from one end and while they were still finishing their race the women's event was started from the other end.

The presentation area was constantly thronged with spectators and camera buffs recording the efforts of the 8 or so enthusiastic Japanese who gave each and every medal winner a victory chorus followed by 3 cheers and a few 'banzais' thrown in for good measure. Their voices were a bit ragged at the end of 4 days but their spirits never flagged.

Performances were spectacular spurred on by the magnificent surroundings; swimmers produced great efforts and most people recorded at least one 'PB'. Highlights of the meet would be the performances of Jim Montgomery from Lone Star Masters in the U.S., who swam World Record times consistently, culminating in a brilliant 100 Free of 52.32. Satoko Takeuchi of the Asahi Culture Club, Japan, an ex-Olympian of the 1964 Games, (held in the same venue), created great media interest and TV coverage as she powered her way to a brilliant 1:15.15 in the women's 100 Back (40-44 age group).

Australia's "Swimmer of the meet" would have to be Bob Barry of Leisure Coast, who had a magnificent 4 days; his tally was 3 World Records: 200 Back in 2:44.74; 200 Free in 2:24.75 and 100 Back in 1:15.25. He also won the 100 Free and was second in the 400 Free. Women's honours were shared by Frances Vorrath (73) of Osborne Park W.A.; who claimed a World Record in the 50 Back, 2 other Golds, 1 Silver and a Bronze.

Ettalong's Frank Griffiths (78) cleaned up with 4 Golds, Gloria Robinson (47) North Lodge won all 3 breaststrokes, Karen Gibson (32) Rocky also won her 3 breaststrokes with a World Record of

1:18.88 in the 100 Breast. Other swimmers to perform well were: Judith Drake-Brockman (65) Claremont with 2 Golds and 3 Silvers; Beryl Anderson (69) of North Lodge with 3 Golds and 2 Silvers taking 90 seconds off the 800 record, her club-mate Barbara Wilson (53) consistent as always, 3 Golds and a Silver plus the 800 record; Rae Wilsmore (40) of Leisure Coast won a brilliant 50 Fly and 50 Free with Silvers in her 50 and 100 Back; in the same age group Warringah's Jan Wat-

son won Gold in the 100 and 200 Free plus a Silver and a Bronze; in the same age group Adelaide's Caroline Fleming picked up 3 Silvers; Sue Andrew (30) Reynella, 1 Gold and 1 Bronze; Marjorie McQuade (52) Power Points 1 Gold and 2 Silvers; Eileen Price (65) Canberra, 1 Gold and a Silver and Nancy Rittson (70) Sunshine Club, 1 Gold and a Bronze.

The dynamic 88 year old Harry Fowler from Summerland romped home in the 400 Free swimming Backstroke and claimed 3 other Silvers; Warringah's Mark Morgan (29) won his 100 Free in great style in 53.45 but was just pipped in the 50 and 100 Fly to take 2 Silvers and a Bronze. One of AUSSI's originals, Jack Brownjohn of Cronulla took out a great Gold in the 55+ 50 Free and a Silver in the 800 Free. In ad-

*Warringah Master's Jan Watson — two well deserved golds.*





dition 26 other Australians claimed Silver and Bronze medals proving Australia a force to be reckoned with in World Master's Swimming.

The standard of the competition was considerably higher than in Christchurch 2 years ago, and all Australians can be justifiably proud of their efforts. 🌐



Who says sprinters don't have staying power? After eight years Mark Morgan repeats his Commonwealth Games Gold Medal winning performance taking the 25-30 years 100m freestyle in a time a fraction slower.

◀ Sheep in wolves clothing — beneath the civilian demure lies three finely tuned athletes. Kevin Vickery, Frank Griffiths and Harry Fowler get together prior to flying to Japan.

## Masters Ain't Hollywood, But We're Getting There

*Comment by Bob Foster*

Thank you Jan and congratulations to all AUSSI swimmers on their great performances, I now feel much worse for missing out; the atmosphere and Australian camaraderie must have been fantastic. I also believe that the social and after swim tours were wonderful.

For the edification of those readers not familiar with AUSSI, the Australian Union of Senior Swimmers International; we cater, via a large and growing number of clubs, for swimmers of any standard, aged 20 years and over, competing in 5 year age brackets. AUSSI encourages 'fitness and fun' through swimming and over the past 15 years has developed into a force that has now truly proved itself. AUSSI is partly responsible for and is a mainstay of, Masters Swimming International; the association that two years ago staged the first International Masters Championships in Christchurch, NZ. That meet brought together competitors from 21 countries and paved the way for MSI finally gaining sanction from FINA to stage the first World Masters Championships in Tokyo during July this year.

I was lucky enough to compete in Christchurch and be a part of that first gathering of Senior Swimmers, from all parts of the World. Minimum age group for MSI starts at 25 to 29 years and the

oldest swimmer was 89. Ex-Olympians and strugglers all had the chance to assess their ability against each other for the first time. The success of that meet had everyone determined to be in Tokyo this year. 3,540 swimmers from 19 Countries made it. Ages ranged from 25 to 89 and 9,160 individual swims were completed as well as 556 relay teams contesting men's, women's and mixed freestyle and medley relays.

**This was the biggest swimming competition ever contested in the World.**

AUSSI N.S.W. President, Gary Stutsel, was re-elected President of MSI for the two year period leading up to the October 1988 World Championships, to be held in Brisbane. Also at the MSI Committee meeting, the 1990 Championships were awarded to Rio de Janeiro.

Unfortunately, the closest I came to Tokyo was seeing off my club team and the other NSW swimmers at the airport, so along with many others, we waited anxiously for the results of the 5 day competition. Unfortunately the odd pieces that did filter back were rather sketchy and brief and mainly mentioned Dawn Fraser, for obvious media reasons. On that note, many people ask and provoke me about the lack of exposure the AUSSI at-

tracts; the Media, ie: TV, Radio, Newspapers and magazines, obviously are in the business of attracting and entertaining their viewers, listeners and readers. What does the sporting public want to see? Seiben beating Gross or a 65 year old breaking a World Record of 1.16 for the 100 free. Boris Becker beating Ivan Lendl at Wimbledon or Frank Griffiths beating Fritz Schuman in the 200 Back. Greg Norman winning the British Open or Power Points taking out the mixed medley relay. However, rest assured that we will not stop trying for attention, the Tokyo results will no doubt aid our cause.

Swimming her best times since resuming swimming with AUSSI, Dawn Fraser did achieve us some exposure and it is great to see a swimmer of Dawn's stature back in the pool exemplifying what AUSSI is all about. One gold and five silvers is a great effort. Ironically in her main events, Japanese Yoshiko Osaki turned the tables on her defeat at Dawn's hands in the 1956 and 1960 Olympics. However, as Dawn said, after breaking the 45-49 800 metre World record only to see it shattered 3 heats later by American Linne Weir: "My swimming here has been excellent, my times are improving and that's what Master's is all about ... doing your best."

I will not hand over this report and a rundown on major winners to someone who I know trained her heart out for this major event and enjoyed great success, Jan Watson of Warringah Masters.

So now its back into the grind of local competition with State Short Courses coming up and the Nationals in Perth to strive for in April next year. Sayonara for now. 🌐