

Swimmer Profile: Rolffs Pinkerton, NCAM

by **Mary Craddock Hoffman**

Rolffs Pinkerton brought home five gold medals from the 1995 State Senior Games held at Pullen Aquatic Center in Raleigh. For the 55-59 age group division, he set three new state records in the 25 back (15.60), the 100 free (1:02.09) and the 50 back (33.21). His other first places were in the 25 free (12.37) and the 50 free (27.27) There were 13 Orange County competitors who medaled in a variety of sports, with Pinkerton leading in the gold. A total of 2,040 athletes over the age of 55 competed at the games this year.

Rolffs has enjoyed his NCAM swimming success ever since he started swimming Masters after a very long absence. Although he grew up in Venezuela where soccer and tennis were the sports of choice, he learned to swim at the age of 12, teaching himself during boyhood play. When he was 14 years old his family moved to Atlanta, Georgia where he attended Woodward Academy, a prep school that often won the Southeastern Classic swimming championships. Swimming on the Woodward team, Rolffs received his first formal instruction on strokes. He went on to swim for the Univ. Of Georgia in Athens, but gave up the sport in 1962. He took up competitive tennis, but eventually developed rheumatoid arthritis which affected his spinal column. Tennis took its toll on his back so he reluctantly quit and began to swim for NCAM in 1994.

Pinkerton's back condition has greatly improved from the swimming, keeping him loose and relaxed. Swimming has become a revitalizing experience that he enjoys just as much as he did in his early youth. He organizes his training around a busy schedule as a Clinical Psychologist for Duke's Student Mental Health Service. On the days he can't make an NCAM workout, he fits in a swim at the Duke facility.

One finds it impossible not to admire and like Rolffs. With his quiet enthusiasm, subtle humor, and genuine friendliness, it's natural to forget how successful he is. He is a stealthlike competitor, who reveals his aquatic craft when the waves from his wake hit you in the face! State Records:

55+ Mixed 200 Medley 2:16.50 (Pinkerton, Kortheuer, Newell, Stroupe)

55+ Mixed 200 Free 1:58.17 (Clark, Newell, Pinkerton, Jones)

45+ Men's Medley 2:01.69 (Pinkerton, Green, McGrain, Clark)

Top Ten 55+ Mixed 200 Medley (Pinkerton, Kortheuer, Newell, Stroupe)

55+ Mixed 200 Free (Clark, Newell, Pinkerton, Jones)

55+ Men's 200 Free (Clark, Webber, Kortheuer, Pinkerton)



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