How One Spark Ignited a Relay World Record Spree

Four Dallas teammates saw an opportunity to do something special—and inspired Lone Star Masters to raise its relay ambitions to a new level.

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Lynn Morrison, Krissy MacCurdy, Janie Cole, and Jeannie Woolslayer had been swimming together in Dallas for years. Three of the four set their first relay world record together in 2014. By late 2021, they realized they would collectively age up into the 280+ age group in 2023, opening the door to a new goal: breaking six relay world records at the annual three-day Little Rock LCM and SCM meets in January. None of them had ever set an individual world record, but together they saw a real chance to take down existing relay marks.

The Revival of Lone Star Masters

Before that dream could take shape, there was one small but critical step. The 2022 Spring Nationals were coming to San Antonio, and Lynn—who had been part of the powerful Lone Star Masters program in the 1980s—saw an opportunity to revive the club. With help from her co-coach, Jacky Merianos, she set out to build a team capable of contending for the national club title. She knew strong relays would be essential, so she gathered Texans who loved racing together. Lone Star Masters indeed won the club title, but one of the meet's defining side stories was the team's complete command of the 65+ relays: seven titles in seven events, including six national records and a 1-2-4 finish in the opening Mixed 400 Free Relay. Combined with two national records set before the meet, Lone Star's total reached eight. Seven of those marks—four mixed and three men's—still stood through the 2025–26 season.

Although the 2022 LCM and SCM seasons that followed produced no new records, Lone Star earned seven No. 1 USMS relay rankings in the 240+ age group. More importantly, the team's identity shifted. What began as a push for a club title became a broader relay mission: chasing world and national records, earning top ten finishes, and simply enjoying the chance to race with friends and family.

Little Rock: The First Breakthrough

That momentum carried the women to Little Rock in January 2023, where they entered two LCM and four SCM relays. They went six for six, easily surpassing the existing world records. Lynn, the heart and soul of Lone Star Masters, remembered the meet as unforgettable: "That Little Rock meet was special. We loved every minute of those three days—something none of us will forget." The following week, the relay team appeared on a local morning show as proof that "age is just a number."



Cole, Woolslayer, Morrison, MacCurdy

Bruce Williams, a cornerstone of the Lone Star men's and mixed relays at 2022 Spring Nationals, was also in Little Rock. He set three individual world records there and watched the women's relay success unfold. Their achievement sparked the same thought for him: when teammates age into a new group together, relay possibilities begin to emerge. Soon, plans were underway for a return to Little Rock in January 2024—this time to pursue men's and mixed world records. As a final tune-up, the Lone Star men posted No. 1 USMS rankings in the SCM 200 and 400 free relays in the 240+ age group during fall 2023.

Little Rock 2024: The Men and Mixed Relays Join the Spree

In 2024, Bruce Williams returned to Little Rock with a deeper Dallas/Fort Worth squad: Tom Wolf, Tom Barton, Richard Neville, and Robert Kelsoe. Jack Gooding, an SMU graduate and Lone Star teammate based in Little Rock, rounded out the group and brought a hometown cheering section of family and friends. Lynn Morrison and Jeannie Woolslayer also returned to power the mixed relays.



Williams, Woolslayer, Morrison, Neville

By the end of the 3-day competition, Lone Star Masters had added five men's and five mixed world records. A sixth men's record was disallowed because of a timing-system issue in the first event on day one. Lynn and Jeannie added five records to the six they already held, while Bruce totaled nine relay world records across the men's and mixed events. The 280+ world-record count had climbed to 16, and the group left Little Rock convinced there were still more marks to chase.

Dallas 2024: Four More Records at SMU

The next opportunity came quickly. The South Central LCM Zone Championships were scheduled for July at the new SMU natatorium in Dallas, and the team targeted four relays:

- Men's 400 medley relay
- Women's 400 free relay
- Women's 800 free relay
- Mixed 400 free relay

The men were especially motivated to claim the medley relay record that had been disallowed in Little Rock, but lineup challenges forced a reshuffle. Neville could not attend because of a family wedding, and Gooding, the original butterfly swimmer in Little Rock, was injured. Barton took over backstroke so Wolf could swim breaststroke, Kelsoe took over butterfly, and Williams returned as the only swimmer repeating his Little Rock leg on freestyle. The revised lineup broke the world record by 12 seconds and went two seconds faster than the Little Rock foursome. It was the first clear example of one of the team's defining strengths: depth and the ability to excel in multiple strokes.



Barton, Williams, Wolf, Kelsoe



Woolslayer, Morrison, Hirsty, Cole

On the women's side, Jacki Hirsty joined Lynn, Jeannie, and Cole to take down both freestyle relay world records, including a 40-second drop in the 800 free relay. Lynn and Jeannie then faced a quick turnaround: the Mixed 400 free relay was the very next event. To maximize recovery, they swam the first two legs of the 800 free relay, took a brief break, and joined Williams and Wolf to cut six seconds from the Mixed 400 free relay world record. Four new world records in Dallas lifted the team's total to 20 in 18 months.

2025: Setbacks, Depth, and New Contributors

The 2025 season tested Lone Star's resilience. In January, the team lost its fiery leader, Morrison, to a near-fatal injury from which she is still recovering. In March, Williams stepped away because of health challenges and missed the SCY and LCM seasons. Other injuries to key swimmers kept the team from adding new relay records.

Even so, there were bright spots. Spring Nationals returned to San Antonio, and the men were determined to defend their 65+ relay titles from 2022. Wolf and Neville teamed with newcomers Bruce Paakh and Jay Leigh to win the 200 medley relay by more than 11 seconds. In the 200 free relay, none of the original 2022 swimmers returned, but Paakh, Wolf, Leigh, and Barton still won by more than seven seconds. Overall, the Lone Star men went three for three in No. 1 relay rankings during the SCY season.

During the 2025 LCM and SCM seasons, Lone Star's 280+ world-record holders contributed to six more USMS No. 1 relay rankings—but none in the 280+ age group. In July, Wolf and Leigh partnered with Brendan Clark-Griffin and Mike Doyle to post a No. 1 ranking in the 240+ LCM 400 Medley Relay. At Summer Nationals, two new 65+ sprinters, Mike Bergman and Vince Ackerson,

joined Neville and Doyle to win the 240+ 200 free relay and claim a No. 1 ranking. Bergman and Wolf teamed with Stephanie Stone and Maureen Rae to set a national record in the 240+ Mixed 200 Free Relay. To close out the LCM season, Wolf swam up into the 320+ age group for Lone Star's fourth No. 1 ranking, handling butterfly with veteran stars Bob Welty, MISHOF breaststroker Joann Leilich, and Ida Hlavacek in the LCM Mixed 400 Medley Relay. For Wolf and Leilich, it was a reunion: they had last swum together on a relay 42 years earlier, at Wolf's first Summer Nationals in 1983, when both represented DC Masters.

Planning the 2026 Comeback

Bruce Williams returned to action at an SCM meet in November, joining Wolf, Leigh, and Pablo Lohmann for a No. 1 ranking in the 240+ 200 Free Relay. Wolf also led off the 200+ 400 Medley Relay with Alex Garriga, Marshall Campbell, and Doyle, earning another No. 1 ranking.

Although Wolf did not earn records or No. 1 rankings in the 280+ relays that year, he contributed to 5 No. 1 relay rankings in the 200+, 240+, and 320+ age groups. That range of success inspired him to begin planning a 280+ comeback in 2026, with the Rowdy Gaines Classic in late January as the first event.

Rowdy Gaines and Greensboro: Momentum Returns



Bergman, Paakh, Guthrie, Rowdy Gaines, Wolf, Williams

With Williams back, Wolf rallied the 280+ men's group. Five swimmers made the trip to Orlando for the Rowdy Gaines Classic: Wolf, Williams, Paakh, Bergman, and David Guthrie, a newly aged-up Lone Star relay member from the 2022 San Antonio team. Their goal was simple: lower all four of Lone Star's 280+ SCM relay world records. They did exactly that, overcoming freezing temperatures at an unheated pool facility in Orlando. The swims marked the first world records for Paakh and Bergman.

At Spring Nationals in Greensboro, the 65+ men lowered the USMS 200 medley relay national record they had set in 2022, this time with three new swimmers—Guthrie, Paakh, and Ackerson—joining Wolf to win by more than nine seconds. Later that day, Paakh, Ackerson, Williams, and Guthrie won the 200 free relay, with all four breaking 25 seconds. The biggest surprise came in the 65+ Mixed 200 Medley Relay, where Lone Star veterans Monica Bailey and Linda DeSanders joined Guthrie and Paakh for an upset win to revive the team's mixed-relay success.

Summer 2026: Another World Record in Dallas



Wolf, Guthrie, Kelsoe, Bobby Patten, Ackerson

The momentum carried into the 2026 long-course season, when the 280+ men's squad raised the bar again. At the Pegasus Masters Summer Meet at SMU in Dallas, they targeted the LCM 200 Medley Relay world record, a three-year-old mark that was the toughest record they had attempted since the spree began. Wolf, Guthrie, Kelsoe, and Ackerson answered the challenge, lowering the record from 2:07.03 to 2:05.48. It was Ackerson's first world record.

They had help from fellow 280+ relay world-record holders Barton, Neville, and Bergman, who joined Campbell in a 240+ chase relay that finished in 2:07.82. The new world record brought the Lone Star 280+ squad's tally to 21 unique world records from January 2023 through July 2026. Williams captured the feeling for the team: "Race is over, look at the timing display and the feeling is amazing… feels sooooo great accomplishing our goal with three other amazing teammates. The medal doesn't mean as much as the thrill of the moment AND LSM getting another one for the record books."

The Formula: Depth, Versatility, and Resilience

The tally stands at eight world records for the women, seven for the men, and six mixed. Five women have contributed to the records, while 10 men earned the distinction. On the men's side, Lone Star used nine different freestylers, five butterfly swimmers, three backstrokers, and three breaststrokers—an extraordinary display of versatility and depth.

The team's success is a result of basic principles. Its members share a commitment to improvement through strength training, technique refinement, recovery work, and sharing their experience and knowledge. They support one another when setbacks strike, and they take advantage of the Dallas area's deep swimming resources, including Olympic coaches, Olympians, and professional swimmers who offer clinics and lessons for Masters athletes.

What's next? As Wolf puts it, "There are still nine records we haven't broken. We also want to keep improving the ones we still have and regain ones that have been broken".