



TWENTY-ONE IS THE MAGIC NUMBER

It was late at night and I was anxiously sitting across from Maria, an average looking, yet well manicured dealer from Richmond, VA. Whether or not she was actually from the town that had an arachnid college mascot or not, was the least of my worries... Yet should you sincerely believe anything you read in Las Vegas, including someone's name tag.

I was noticeably desperate upon my next calculated action of pushing my last orphaned chips into the vanishing zone of green felt between me and my ordinarily faced "Bicycle" tossing adversary. Here I was on the verge of what could be the night's last hurrah, and all I could consider was the limiting and magic number and how Maria had my evenings destiny I her hands: Would I still be able to continue in the fun, or would I be heading back to my bleak dark cavernous hotel room for the remainder of the night.

"Twenty-one! ...Please! Twenty-one!" I repeated in my mind "...Anything larger than twenty-one and you will be done."

When it comes to Las Vegas Blackjack, "being over twenty-one" and loosing all of your chips can definitely put an end to your nighttime fanfare. The casino odds favor this result have assisted many empty pocketed casino patrons to retire early because a card total exceeded this magic number.

However, unlike Black Jack, in the world of MASTERS DIVING, exceeding the magic number of twenty-one, now opens the door to a life long privilege of competing within the US MASTERS DIVING community. Did I say community? That's probably not the right word, since in truth it is that we are more like a family.

So I would like to extend an invitation to any US DIVING Competitive Gold Membership registered twenty-something or older divers in 2008. Mark your calendars and join us, we have two great events scheduled which are promising to be very memorable.

Our Spring National Championships this year will be held at the new Allen Jones Aquatic Center in Knoxville, Tennessee. This is the identical facility chosen to host the Olympic Team Selection Camps this summer. Just think: you will have the opportunity to compete at the FIRST National Championship ever in this phenomenal facility which happens to contain the same equipment that will determine the fate of this year's Olympic hopefuls. You won't want to miss this event, so mark your calendars for May 17-19.

Our second event this year, the Summer National Championship will also be of historic significance. If you're not slated to head to Beijing, we have a less costly alternative, and invite you to join our diving family at the LAST National Championship Diving Event ever to be held at the Historic Woodlands Diving Facility, August 22-24. For those of you that didn't know, this historical, tree surrounded outdoor tower facility is planned for redevelopment and is being bulldozed. We are happy to have negotiated a FINAL National Championships Event for this venue. So if you want one last chance to reminisce and "dive in the trees," join us in August for our Farewell Woodlands National Championship and an Olympics

by Ed Richmond USD Masters Chairman

watching party. I am told that a TV will on deck so that we can compare our dives to the Olympians.

In order to compete in MASTERS AGE GROUP COMPETITIONS, you must be registered with a current USAD Gold Membership and be at least twenty-one on the first day of the events. Between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-nine: 10 dives are required on springboard (5 Vols (9.5 DD) + 5 Opnls.), and 6 dives are required for platform (3 Vols (5.7 DD) + 3 Opnls.) And keep in mind; you will only be competing against your age group peers in the following delineations: 21-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39. And once you reach 40, you get the privilege of dropping one dive from you list, and another for each subsequent decade you participate in MASTERS.

Additionally, I'd like to share that we also have a special event called "GRAND MASTERS" which might interest you. As a new person to MASTERS DIVING, I want you to know that you automatically become eligible to participate in this special event if you have competed in an individual event in the Olympic Games (representing any country), or who have placed in the top three places in an individual event at any previous Senior National Diving Championships. It's a fun event because you can pick a succession of six dives meeting the event criteria from any diving level of springboard or platform for this special competition.

And lastly, I can't forget to mention that on our last day of events we finish the championships with a fun and informal MASTERS pairings for synchronized diving.

Not to sound like a salesman, but for a flat event admission fee of \$95, you can compete in as many events that you qualify; in addition at this price you receive one banquet ticket for the weekend. Additional banquet tickets are available for \$45. We hope you can make it. It's promising to be a fantastic year in US MASTERS DIVING. Registrations are being handled by www.divemeets.com.

PS: Don't forget to bring ID proof that you are 21 ... The "Family" will be carding at the door!

We are hoping that USA Diving's recent membership classification overhaul will help us in changing some age biased perceptions in MASTERS DIVING. In 2008, the "MASTERS ATHLETE" membership classification has been eliminated from USAD and all athletes participating at the National Championships level are listed as Competitive Gold Members. If you are 21, you are invited, allowed, and encouraged to come and play with us.

USA Diving MASTERS Spring Nationals
May 17-19 at the **University of Tennessee, Knoxville**. Master's Diving has the privilege of being the first National Championship in this newly commissioned facility.

USA Diving MASTERS Summer Nationals
August 22-24 at the **Woodlands facility near Houston, TX**. This will be the last National Championship at this historic facility since