

## PNA 2025 COACH OF THE YEAR

(Speech by Sally Dillon as presented at the annual meeting)

It is my honor to be able to present the *2025 PNA Coach of the Year* award.

As previously noted, PNA has 14 clubs and 20 workout groups. It surprised me this year that only two nominations were submitted for this prestigious award. There were plenty of reminders in our newsletter, a couple email blasts, and reminders to previous nominators. Yet – we still had only two nominations.

Fortunately – the nominees are terrific and both deserving of the award. In fact, they have been honored previously!

Bainbridge Masters coach April Cheadle and Cascade Masters coach Pete Colella were nominated this year. Each has received the award previously: April in 2013 and 2016 and Pete in 2018 when he was NEO's coach.

April has coached Bainbridge Masters for more years than I can count, and her workout group has grown to 161 members! Only the PSM regional club has more members. Her nomination noted:

*From the very beginning, Coach April has shown an unwavering commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive environment for all swimmers. Her enthusiasm for the sport is contagious, and she inspires each of us to strive for excellence both in and out of the pool. Through her innovative training techniques and personalized coaching style, she has helped athletes of all skill levels improve their performance, build confidence, and develop a love for swimming.*

*ALSO: Coach April's dedication goes beyond just training sessions. She takes the time to understand each swimmer's individual needs, strengths, and areas for improvement. Whether it's through one-on-one feedback or team-building exercises, she encourages communication and camaraderie among teammates. This has created a unique bond within our team, where everyone feels valued and motivated to achieve their personal best.*

A long-time youth coach at Cascade Swim Club, Pete turned his focus to Masters swimmers and coached the North End Otters. He founded the Cascade Masters in 2021 and the club trains at the outdoor Yost Pool in Redmond. Under his leadership, the pool has become home to Cascade Swim Club and is open to the public throughout the year. His nomination noted:

*In ways big and small, sometimes bluntly, sometimes with a subtle and delicate sensitivity that demonstrates a great emotional intelligence, he finds unique ways to connect with and motivate his athletes. His kindness and humor make our pool deck a great place to be. Although Pete welcomes people of all skill and commitment levels, he is perhaps the most talented and creative technical swimmer coach I have ever had. I am amazed at the variety and quality of his workouts and how much and how quickly I and my teammates have improved under his program.*

*ALSO: Pete has a long and sustained coaching tenure in the Pacific Northwest. He's a true student of the sport and is continuously learning and sharing new training ideas, techniques and drills with his swimmers.*

The selection committee consisted of previous *Coach of the Year* recipients.

Two great coaches, so the decision wasn't easy.

This year's PNA Coach of the Year is . . . Pete Colella.