

# About SKWIM™ with Founder Kevin McCarthy

*“The glimmer of a new ‘water-disk’ game became a mission of C.A.R.E.”*

*As a big Irish Catholic family in Southern California, all 7 of us kids learned to swim as toddlers in a small inflatable 3-ring pool, with mom as our ‘lifeguard’. Dad, who was also a strong swimmer, worked in the building industry and was always creating something in the garage. Grandpa, a retired plastics chemist, had access to large polycarbonate window panels, like for viewing dolphins. So, one summer, dad fabricated a large clear above-ground pool which looked like a giant aquarium. And yes, it was bulletproof (when it wasn’t leaking). In 1972, we moved to Newport Beach, and mom and dad encouraged us to appreciate the gift of the ocean. In the classroom, I was a fish out of water; more a student of Sports Illustrated and pick-up sports games. And my favorite place to be, was in the surf with my brothers. Even back then, I yearned for a fast yet easy-to-play water sports game, and puzzled by the industry void.*

*In the summers of our high school and college years, my brothers and I seemed to wear swim fins more often than shoes. We surfed, swam and snorkeled, often with open wounds on our feet from those fins, due to daily use. Fins were mandatory for our ocean sports and saved my life more than once in big storm surf, but man, they were brutal on the feet.*

*After college, I wondered if a more comfortable and versatile swim fin design could speed a community water-sports game, enhancing play for participants and spectators alike. Could a dream for a popular water game be realized? And what would the implement be; a ball?*

*In 1984, now married, and at the pool one day with our daughters, we played with a disk-shaped pool filter lid, realizing that it could glide across the water. That discovery fueled the mission for a water-disk game propelled by swim fins. After a move to the Seattle Eastside, the equipment and rules steadily took shape over the next 20 years, with invaluable help from family (now 5 kids), friends, and aquatic professionals. The game was gradually defined, refined, and named SKWIM (swim+skim), and played with a soft foam hydroplaning disk.*

*It soon became evident that SKWIM™ would become the first water game for the whole community; from beginning swimmer to Olympic hopeful; for children, and straight on through to senior citizens. Lifeguards are attracted to SKWIM because the game emulates water rescue; since participants must communicate, strategize, use teamwork, and monitor every player, while simultaneously tracking and playing the fast-gliding disk on the water’s surface. Like rescue swimmers, SKWIM players use equipment, including Skwim fins, goggles and uniforms. The game is an exciting way for lifesavers, surfers, divers, and especially new swimmers to become water-strong, water-smart, and stay water-fit year-round. Lifeguards say SKWIM builds camaraderie, water safety, and a spirit of teamwork for the entire community!*

*In 2009, SKWIM was officially introduced in the USA by lifeguards, swim instructors, and P.E. teachers. Soon after, SKWIM spread to Canada, Hong Kong, Africa, and recently Greece and Norway. In 2014, **International SKWIM Certification** was published as the global standard for measuring and certifying water safety with any level of player. SKWIM Certification is the only program that graduates participants from beginning swimmer to ‘lifesaver’ within the context of game play. In 2016, the SKWIM C.A.R.E. Initiative (Critical Aquatic Response Education) was established to activate swimmers to teach non-swimmers how to swim, all in the context of SKWIM game play. One SKWIM C.A.R.E. facilitator may coach 8 beginning swimmers in 1 hour sessions, with the support of their sponsoring Skwim-buddy, helping defeat global drowning! Now at the beach and in pools, in the shallows and in deep water, there is a global water-disk game helping to enhance and save lives in and around the water. And always with lifeguard supervision. **SKWIM™ – for the time of your life.** [www.skwiminternational.org](http://www.skwiminternational.org)*

