



FISH LINES

Coedited by Monika Paris, Managing Director,
and Coach Meredith David

Welcome to the 2011-2012 Season

A warm welcome goes to our returning as well as our new FISH families. We have an exciting season ahead of us and we will communicate to you using email, weekly newsletters written by our coaches and our website. Be sure to check your email and our website at www.pvfish.org frequently and don't hesitate to contact us when you have questions. We are eager to see you all back behind the starting blocks.

We hope you had a fantastic summer with time to rest and reflect on all the fantastic swimming that occurred over the summer. The Fish swimmers had a great summer season and perhaps you had a chance to visit our website to check on our results. Have you noticed all the new team records that were set?

As the summer came to an end, we had to say goodbye to our FISH graduating seniors and college swimmers. We wish them best of luck with their studies and swimming over the next school year.

Class of 2011: *Jessie Kusuma, Zachary Diener, Alex Le, Leigh Siegfried*

Once again this has been a phenomenal season for the team! Swimmers made incredible strides and we had a strong showing at championships in both the spring and summer.

In the midst of it all, we were recognized by USA Swimming's Club Excellence Program as a **Gold Medal Level Club** for the third year. There are only 21 Gold Medal Clubs nationwide.

We have a great season plan in place for all levels and we are aiming for substantial improvements for all swimmers. We are very much looking forward to meeting and working with all of you.

First Social Event of the Season Designed for All Terrific, Incredible and Awesome FISH AND their PARENTS!



We will be having our first FISH Social after practice on Saturday October 1st. This social is aimed towards the Terrific, Incredible and Awesome swimmers, and Wakefield swimmers who also swim with these groups. The FISH Coaches and their swimmers will be going on a scenic bike ride on the WO&D starting in Arlington with a BBQ afterwards. We would like to ask a few parents to help us organize the cooking. Who would like to help?

This event creates a splendid opportunity for our swimmers and coaches to get to know each other outside the water and build team spirit.

Since the bike ride is designed to take place following Saturday morning's practice, we hope everyone will attend this fun event. If this maps out to be a successful experience in terms of attendance and bonding, there will be more socials in the future.

Detailed information will be sent to you via email and if you have questions and would like to help with the cooking, please contact Coach Casey at cbrutus@pvfish.org.

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FUNDRAISING—Helping Us, Helping You!

The FISH is now a non-profit organization and all donations are tax-deductible, (please consult your tax adviser.)

As a non-profit organization FISH relies on your generous support in all our fund-raising efforts. Fundraising ensures the team meets its operating needs which dues alone do not cover. As you may or may not know, Fairfax County continuously raises pool rental rates and USA Swimming continuously raises registration fees. Furthermore, we would like to purchase 30 medicine balls, educational videos and send our coaches to conferences. In order to compensate for these increases and expenses, and to keep our team dues the lowest in the area, we rely on different forms of fundraising. Fundraising is vital to our organization, and also generates public awareness for the sport of swimming and our team.

The funds raised can help gain the team access to powerful learning tools, and to bring in experts who add a valuable experience. In addition, funds can provide scholarship money to potentially great swimmers in our community who could not otherwise afford such a great opportunity; it can lessen the burden for your coaches and families by helping to cover travel expenses; it can go towards the numerous continuing education classes/clinics our coaches need to attend to keep the swimmers, at the top of their game.

The following FISH fundraisers all count toward your swimmer meeting the end of the year FISH Award requirements (page 7.)

Seasonal Fundraisers:

Halloween Candy Sale: At this time of the year, what is the most widely sold item in grocery stores? CANDY!! Why not help your neighbors, friends, and family by delivering their favorite candy right to their door. Buy all the candy you need for this kid-friendly holiday. This is an incredible opportunity for you to support our team. You will find the candy order form in your folder on Monday, September 19th, and have until Tuesday, October 19th to sell candy and place your order. We will track the progression of our candy sales in each group via a gigantic pumpkin displayed on the bulletin board. **For additional questions please contact Claudia Bernstein at (703) 851-5568 or cswana@aol.com.**



Swim-a-Thon: We are excited to announce that next spring on Saturday, April 14th at Spring Hill and Monday, April 16th at Wakefield we will again host our annual Swim-A-Thon®. The Swim-A-Thon® is a program that has proven itself over and over again as a successful method of raising funds for teams. In addition, it is recognized by USA Swimming as an effective and appropriate way to foster team spirit.

Fund raising is essential to the success of our team and all the swimmers. The Swim-A-Thon® is a truly a fun and exciting way to raise funds for our team and best of all we receive 95% of the profits we raise. This alone is a fantastic benefit of the Swim-A-Thon program®.

Essentially, all our swimmers will be challenged to come

and swim as many laps as they can for their team. So please plan on attending our Swim-A-Thon® next spring to show your team support!

If you have any questions in the mean time please feel free to contact **Christina Ewing, Swim-A-Thon Chairperson** at 703-851-4345 or caj_2000_mmu@yahoo.com. Go Fish!

Spirit Wear Fundraiser: In order to continue to reinforce team spirit and to get ready for the Fall/Winter season which officially starts on September 19th, for the first time, the FISH team is offering FISH beach-sized towels (32" x 64" 100% Ring Spun Cotton) with an embroidered FISH logo in two team colors, royal blue and sunshine yellow, for only \$25 each. As an incentive for orders to be placed by Oct 1st (no exceptions), we are offering towel personalization. Yes, you can select to have your swimmer's first or last name embroidered on the FISH logo towel, at the FISH team's expense! After the Oct. 1st deadline, towels can be purchased but personalization can no longer be offered.

Please fill out the attached order form (pg. 8) and send it by email to **Thuy Nguyen at: Manh_nguyen@yahoo.com**. Then, please mail a hard copy of the same form, together with your payment (check made payable to the FISH), to Thuy Nguyen, 5003 King Solomon Drive, Annandale, VA 22003.

We very much look forward to getting your support to kick off the 2011-2012 spirit wear campaign and make it a successful fundraiser.

Any towel purchase will count towards one spirit wear fundraiser activity.

On Going Fundraisers:

SCRIP: SCRIP is a fundraising program that works while you shop. By purchasing popular "gift cards" (grocery stores such as Giant, restaurants, hotels, gas stations, Best Buy, Home Depot, etc), every single purchase you make will credit a small percentage back to the FISH.

Simply sign up on the SCRIP website - we have a special FISH account already setup with SCRIP. Then, place your orders each month, print off the order form, place it into the SCRIP Folder along poolside and begin seeing your swim team succeed.

What retailers can I purchase gift certificates from during the Holiday Season!

Hundreds! The question becomes: what retailers can you not purchase cards for? Many popular retailers participate in the SCRIP Program including: Lowe's, Speedway, major chain hotels, JCPenney, The Gap, Shell, Kohl's, Pizza Hut, Red Lobster, Old Navy, Bath & Body Works, and hundreds of others. See the retailer list by logging into the scrip website.

The SCRIP program is a "no cost" way to fundraise for your swim team as well as an opportunity for your swimmer to complete their requirements for the end of the season award. A scrip information handout will be placed in your swimmer's folder

For additional questions please Karie Greenblatt at 703.865.6678 or kdgreenblatt@aol.com.

The FISH is now a non-profit organization and all donations are tax-deductible, (please consult your tax adviser.)

We are Guests at our Practice Facilities

Remember we are guests at any facility we practice at. We ask that you treat the facilities as if they were your home. Be courteous to the employees and make sure you take your empty water bottles with you after practice.

There are some rules that the facilities managers have asked us to pass along.

Spring Hill, Providence and Wakefield Swipe Cards

You will receive a swipe card at the beginning of the season and you must use it each time you enter a FCPA facility. It is only good for our practice times. If you lose it, you will be charged a \$5 replacement fee.

Entrance to Spring Hill and Parking

When you arrive at Spring Hill RECenter you will notice the parking lot down by the soccer fields. That entrance is **ONLY** to be used during non-business hours; for example, the early weekly morning practices, (4:50 -6:20 AM,) Saturday morning practices, and the Saturday evening practices. During business hours you **MUST** enter and exit through the **facility's main entrance** and use your swipe card.



You will be ticketed by the Fairfax County Police if you are parked illegally in the lower parking lot. If a coach sees you entering through the back

entrance door (this applies to all groups) you will be asked to go around the building and enter or exit through the front entrance. During non-business hours there are 7 parking spots available in the lower lot which



you can use, but if you park in fire lanes or up against the fence, you will be ticketed and probably towed. To avoid any confusion and issuing of any tickets, please park in the regular parking lot and walk with your swimmers back to the car. This is a great opportunity to hear how practice went and to provide parental support.

George Mason University Drop Off

GMU Aquatic Center has specific drop off procedures for swimmers. Swimmers should be dropped off and picked up in the designated area, Lot C. **DO NOT** use the circle drive in front of the facility for drop off and pick up purposes. It is a privilege to use GMU and the FISH coaches expect everyone to adhere to the rules that have been explained. In addition, the swimmers need bag tags to gain access to the building. If you haven't already received your bag tags please see your coach. The charge per bag tag is \$5.



Madreia Drop Off

In order to gain access to the campus at Madeira you will need a FISH parking pass. Please check your folders for the pass and display it to the guard upon entering campus.

Inclement Weather Policy

If there is *inclement weather* we will have practice as long as the facilities are **OPEN**. Practice will still be held even if there is no school. The facilities we practice at may even cancel their activities, but the FISH will still have practice. If the facilities are open the probability that we still have practice is 99.99%.

How do I find out if the facility is open?

- Call Spring Hill at 703-827-0989. You will hear an automated message. At the end of the message, you need to press zero to speak with a member of the staff. Only ask if the facility is open, if they say "YES" then we have practice.

The FISH is not associated with school closings. **WE PRACTICE WHEN THE POOL IS OPEN.**

- Another way to find out if we are having practice is to contact **your coach**. You need to e-mail your coach and ask for an emergency contact phone number in the case of bad weather.
- In addition, go to **our website** to find out whether practices are taking place.



Swim Meets — What do I do...??

Meets in General

FISH caps are required at all swim meets - no exceptions!

The FISH participate in a variety of swim meets ranging from the novice level dual meet to statewide and regional championship meets. Many meets are low key and designed to be a learning experience. Winning means improving starts, strokes, turns, paces, and times. Racing, the ability to race, and the strategies in racing are a close second priority. Beating someone else is a bonus not overly emphasized except for the higher levels of competition. We try to attend invitational meets about every four to six weeks. We also hold meets twice at our home pool and two meets at GMU.

Swim meets are preceded by a warm up period of 60 to 90 minutes. The coaches will tell the parents what time the swimmers are expected to be at the meet (in general, 15 minutes before warm-ups start; plan for traffic.) Once at the meet, swimmers must stay in the team area, unless



excused by their coach, in order to avoid missing events. The coach will manage all the warm-up swimming, speak with the swimmers before each swim, and review the swim with the swimmer immediately after. Parents should either volunteer to time (meets cannot be run without volunteer timers) or find a comfortable place to view the meet away from the immediate side of the pool (most swim parents sit together). Parents are not to engage in coaching their children at the meets. However, parents are welcome to speak with coaches at appropriate times before or after the meet.

About the Meet Schedule

Please see the FISH meet schedule on page 6; meet recommendations will be made by the coaches. All FISH members will not swim at every meet; if you are required to swim, you will receive an email from the FISH with detailed meet information.

Meet Entry Process

Meet invitations are sent via email from the following email address:

fishentries@gmail.com

It is very important to make sure that this email address is not in your "junk" folder. The meet entry process is as follows: An email meet announcement will be sent out with a grid attached. The grid shows invited swimmer's names followed by those events that he/she will swim. If your swimmer is on the grid and you want to enter him/her for those days no reply is necessary as he/she will be automatically entered into the meet and your escrow account will be charged. If your swimmer **cannot** make the meet, or a particular day of the meet, then an email must be replied to the fishentries@gmail.com account by the deadline stated in the meet announcement. If we don't hear back from you then your escrow account will be charged. There will be **no exceptions!**

FISH Hosted Swim Meets

Hosting swim meets is an important part of our team's success. We are able to keep our team dues one of the lowest in the area because of the success we have had hosting meets. We would not succeed without your support. Throughout the season we will be asking for volunteers to officiate, run concessions, create and order t-shirts, create and sell programs, run hospitality, and donate food and drinks. Some of you already indicated on your swimmer's registration forms that you are interested in volunteering and you will be contacted soon regarding these positions. Besides volunteering at the meets, you can also help out by identifying meet sponsors, sponsoring program ads, and sharing your expertise and professional services with the team. Please mark your calendars:

- **November Open at Cub Run—November 4th — 6th**
- **Super Fish Bowl II at Spring Hill—February 4th — 5th**
- **The FISH Derby at GMU—May 5th — 6th**
- **June Invitational at GMU—June 16th — 17th**

During this season, if your swimmer participates in one of our hosted meets and you cannot volunteer your time, you will be charged \$75.

Volunteering at Meets

Due to USA Swimming insurance policies parents are not allowed on deck unless assisting in running the meet. Meets require many volunteers to run smoothly. Whether it is officiating, timing, etc...parents are needed to help make a meet an enjoyable experience for our swimmers. We will be hosting four meets this season; November Open, Super FISH Bowl II, The FISH Derby, and the June Invitational. At these meets, we will be asking families to volunteer time and donate food for concessions and hospitality. Team hosted meets require the team's joint effort to run them. Even meets we do not host, will need your support to be a success. Signing up to be a timer will ensure that the meet runs smoothly. Besides, volunteering at a meet gives you one of the best seats in the house - right on deck!

Age Group and Mini FISH Swimmers at Swim Meets

A few things to let you know about how we handle meets for these groups. A swimmer can only participate in a meet when invited by a coach. We want the swimmers to have a positive experience, especially, if it is their first meet with us. When we think the swimmer is ready, he or she will be invited to a meet through an email from fishentries@gmail.com. The email will contain the meet announcement along with a grid showing which events the swimmer will be participating in.

In order to accurately reflect your child's improvements at the end of the season, we are using the summer league times as a starting point. Please send an email with your 2011 NVSL times (attached sheet pg. 9) directly to Coach Ray (rbenecki@pvfish.org) by October 31st.

Become a PVS Deck Official

FISH encourages all interested parents to become certified as a Potomac Valley Swimming (PVS) deck official. PVS is the Washington area branch of USA Swimming (the governing body for competitive swimming in the United States). If you have officiated in summer league swimming (such as NVSL) that experience provides a good foundation for officiating in PVS, as USA Swimming rules also govern the summer leagues.

There is no better seat in the house to watch your child swim, than on deck. Taking an active, supporting role in swimming is a great way to show your child the importance of his or her activity. We also host 4 swim meets each season and parents will be needed to fill various officiating positions during those meets. Also, when we attend a meet, hosted by another club, we are required to provide a certain number of officials based on how many swimmers we enter into the meet. If you are interested or have questions regarding becoming an official, please contact our **Officials' Coordinator, Alan Goldblatt at alanguidblatt@verizon.net**

To get started you should register for a Stroke & Turn official's clinic administered by PVS. A current list of times and locations is provided on the PVS website (www.pvswim.org). To register, go to the PVS website and click the link which corresponds to the session which is most convenient for you. Note that these sessions occur early in the fall.

Meets cannot be run without officials on deck. We really appreciate all of the parents willing to step up and contribute in this way. A special thank you goes out to the many FISH parents who have already expressed interest in becoming an official when they sent in their registrations. You will receive a personal email from Alan Goldblatt very soon.

TENTATIVE MEET SCHEDULE FOR THE 2011-2012 SEASON

Date	Meet Name & Location (Complete meet information can always be found at	Groups Attending Meet
October		
8-9	HAAC Harvest Moon Invitational Meet Herndon Community Center	Invited 12 & U
22-23	MSSC Fall Senior Meet Fairland	MANDATORY for all who qualify
29-30	Gator Mini Meet Washington-Lee H.S.	Invited 8 & U Minis
November		
4-6	PVS November Open Meet hosted by the FISH Cub Run Rec. Center Mt. Vernon, Takomo	All Fish swimmers plus Invited 9 & Unders
12	Boys vs. Girls Meet (hosted by Fish) Spring Hill	Mini, AG, AAG FISH
December		
2-4	MSSC Christmas Champs Fairland	9 & O no Tom Dolan Cuts
3-4	Reindeer Mini Meet Providence	Invited Mini FISH
10	Fish Bowling Party	
15-18	New England Senior Champs Boston University	All those who qualify
26-30	Time Trials Spring Hill 4- 6:30	Mini, AG
January		
7-8	Distance Challenge Lee District	MANDATORY for all who qualify
13-16	Retriever Classic UMBC	MANDATORY for all who qualify
21-22	The Snow Dude Mini Meet Mount Vernon	Invited 9&U
21-22	PVS January Open Meet Fairland	Invited 9&O
February		
4-5	Super FISH Bowl II (Hosted by FISH) Spring Hill Rec. Center	Qualified AG, AAG, Terrific, Incredible
10-12	St. Charles Swim Team & TYR Chicagoland Championships TBA	14 & Over
17-19	PVS 18&U Championships Lee District	Qualified 18 & U
18-19	Gender Blender Mini Meet Montgomery AC	8 & U
March		
8-11	PVS Junior Championships GMU	MANDATORY for all who qualify
8-11	PVS Senior Championships GMU	MANDATORY for all who qualify
9-11	Columbus Grand Prix Columbus, OH	All who qualify
10-11	Mini Championships Olney	All 8 & U
15-18	PVS 14 & U Junior Olympics TBD	MANDATORY for all who qualify
22-24	Eastern Zone Southern Sectional Meet GMU	All who qualify
24-25	Spring Champs Fairland	All who qualify
29-31	Indianapolis Grand Prix Indianapolis, IN	All who qualify
April		
11-14	NASA – Showcase Classic Clearwater, Florida	All Who Qualify
May		
5-6	FISH DERBY (Hosted by Fish) GMU	MANDATORY for all who qualify
12	Boys vs. Girls Improvement Meet Spring Hill	Mini, AG, AAG
June		
16-17	FISH June LC Invitational Fairland	MANDATORY for all who qualify

Communication

Our most important tool for communication is our website at www.pvfish.org. You will find important information about upcoming meets, the practice calendar, contact information, coaches' bios, practice cancellations, practice locations, and much much more. We are also maintaining a "Parent Corner" and a "Nutrition Corner" throughout the season to provide you with the latest topics on parenting swimmers and nutrition. Please visit our site on a regular basis to stay in touch. Some parents have even made the FISH site their home page so every time they get online, they get the latest FISH news.

In addition to the FISH website, there are **two other websites** that are beneficial to be bookmarked: the Potomac Valley Swimming site (www.pvswim.org) which is the site for our LSC and the USA Swimming website (www.usaswimming.org) which is the site for the governing body of our sport. Swimmers can create a web account on that site which is free of charge and allows them to view their top times and other swimming related topics published for swimmers.

The **Swimmers' folders** are another "vehicle" to stay informed. Swimmers are expected to check their folders every time they have practice. Meet entries, announcements, along with other time sensitive information will be placed in each swimmer's folders.

Email is another form of communication. Swimmers will hear from their respective coaches via email. Every Sunday or Monday there will be a **weekly newsletter** arriving in your email box keeping you abreast with the latest team and practice group developments. It is extremely important that both swimmer and parent read the newsletter as it is used as a building block towards the swimmer's physical and mental development.

The coaching staff will be expecting the swimmers to relay information to their parents. Our coaches believe that the swimmer needs to learn responsibility and they will be given the chance to do so. We know that some swimmers are better than others at relaying information to their parents, but we still believe that this is a good teaching opportunity.

If you have questions, please contact your coach via e-mail at any time.

Coach Ray: rbenecki@pvfish.org

Coach Andy: acipriano@pvfish.org

Coach Matt: mpelletier@pvfish.org

Coach Art: avera@pvfish.org

Coach Steven: stevenbenecki@pvfish.org

Coach Casey: cbrutus@pvfish.org

Coach Meredith: mdavid@pvfish.org

If you have general questions regarding the team, please contact our Managing Director, Monika Paris at mparis@pvfish.org or (703)870-8664

FISH Trophy Requirements

In order for our swimmers to receive a trophy at the end of the season, they have to complete the following trophy requirements:

- Attend at least 50% of all practices.
- Participate in two swim meets.
- Engage in two social events.
- Take part in two fundraisers.



FISH Swim Caps

FISH Caps will be available for sale on Thursday September 22 at Wakefield and Saturday, September 24th during all practices.

If you need to purchase FISH swim caps, please contact Managing Director Monika Paris at mparis@pvfish.org or (703) 870-8664. We offer two packets; either six latex or two silicone for \$20 each.





Dear FISH Swimmer!

Welcome to the 2011-2012 FISH short course season. We need to hear from you! Please share with us how well you swam over the past summer.

You can either email your best times directly to Coach Ray at rbenecki@pvfish.org, or you can simply fill out the information below and place the form into Coach Ray's folder at Spring Hill or Wakefield.

This is very important information, as your summer best times will count toward your improvement goals at the end of the 2011-2012 season.

Swimmer's Name:

Event	BEST TIME	Meters (M) or Yards (Y)	DATE
25 FREE			
50 BACK			
25 BACK			
50 BACK			
25 BREAST			
50 BREAST			
25 FLY			
50 FLY			
100 I.M			
OTHERS			