

To All NLAC Families:

As many of you may have already heard, Middle Atlantic and USA Swimming recently lost one of the most unique, hardworking, and accomplished individuals to ever grace the pool deck. This past Saturday, long-time Middle Atlantic swimmer Fran Crippen, passed away during a 10k Open Water World Cup Race in the United Arab Emirates. At this point the circumstances surrounding his death are still being investigated. He was 26 years old.

As I stated, Fran was a long-time Middle Atlantic swimmer, swimming for Germantown Academy for many years where he eventually set a National Independent School record in the 500 free. He was one of the top distance swimmers in the country when he was younger and eventually became one of the top distance swimmers in the world. He later went on to star at the University of Virginia and became a multiple time NCAA All-American. After an unbelievable successful pool swimming career which also included several Olympic Trials, Fran decided to pursue a career in open water swimming. Because of his legendary work ethic, he immediately became one of the best in the world. His dream was to become an Olympian.

I remember in the fall of 2008, I tried to recruit Fran to coach with me when I was in Virginia. Although I didn't know him very well, I knew more than enough to know he would be a fantastic role model for my swimmers at the time. After narrowly missing the Open Water Olympic Team in the Summer of 08, he was in the midst of deciding what he wanted to do with his life moving forward. Ultimately, he decided to return to Germantown Academy to continue to pursue his dream of becoming an Olympian, a dream I am certain he would have realized had he had the chance. His passion and relentless pursuit of his dream is an inspiration to anyone who knew him or even heard of him.

In addition to all I have mentioned, I want to add that as good as his reputation was as a swimmer, his reputation as a person was even better. Like I mentioned, I did not have the pleasure of knowing him well although I did have the opportunity to watch him swim many times as a young age grouper in Middle Atlantic. But, I have been telling people that if I have heard his name come up in conversation 1,000 times, I have probably heard 5,000 positive things being said about him. He had that big of an impact on the people around him. He was the type of person that you couldn't help but be drawn to.

Today, NLAC will join many other Middle Atlantic teams and more, in honoring the life of this outstanding young man. I will begin by talking with the kids about Fran and the type of person he was, and then the NLAC Senior group will begin practice by swimming a 1650, a distance he mastered during his career. We will do this in honor of Fran Crippen. While this may only be a small gesture, I believe it is a way to show our gratitude for a remarkable individual who made an enormous impact on the swimming world, and a way to ensure his legacy will remain on the pool deck for a long time to come.

Thank you,

Ryan Sprang
Head Coach
Nittany Lion Aquatic Club