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About The FISH:

The FISH Swim Team is a year-round USA Swimming Club, owned and operated by Head Coach Ray Benecki. Coach Ray started the team in 1991 with a small group of dedicated swimmers. The original team had only a couple lanes at Spring Hill RECenter, and that has been our home ever since. The team has grown over time, and now we have over 300 members at 2 sites, Spring Hill and Audrey Moore RECenter in Annandale. Most of our families live in the greater Washington, DC metropolitan area.

Coach Ray worked with Kate Ziegler for 9 years in which she set several world records and qualified to be on the 2008 Olympic Team in Beijing.

Team Highlights

- 1 World Record Holder (4 World Records)
- 1 American Record Holder (9 American Records)
 - 1 Olympic Trials Qualifier (2004)
 - 2 Olympic Trials Qualifiers (2008)
 - 2 Olympic Trials Qualifiers (2012)
 - 1 Olympian, Beijing (2008)
 - 1 Olympian, London (2012)
 - 5 Time World Champion
 - 5K Open Water Champion
 - 10K Open Water Champion
- 50+ Top 16 National Age Group Rankings
 - 1 National Champion (9 National Titles)
- 3 National Age Group Top-16 Relays, Sectional Qualifiers
 - 9 Eastern Zone Champions
 - 2 Time VA State Champions
 - 3rd Place PVS Team
 - 68 Current PVS Records
 - 3 Sectional Records
- Sectional High Point Winner
 - German Trip
 - International Experience

Mission Statement

The team's mission is to encourage the pursuit of excellence, while nurturing a love for the sport of swimming, and developing the values and skills for success in life along the way. The Fish is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and positive environment for all athletes to grow and appreciate their sport and their teammates.

Team Philosophy

We, as The FISH coaches, believe in developing our swimmers both as athletes and as young people. We strive to teach the swimmers the correct fundamentals of all four competitive strokes, as well as starts and turns. We want to make our athletes better by building a strong aerobic training base, while maintaining a focus on technique and fundamentals. We will instill a passion for the sport in each of our athletes, while also building necessary life skills such as dedication, hard work, mental toughness, and attention to detail along the way.

We truly believe in the TEAM approach at The FISH. We take pride in the fact that each of our coaches knows the name of each and every one of our swimmers, and have worked with them all throughout the course of the season. We believe that each of us has something unique to offer to each swimmer, and we make sure that each coach is involved in some way in the development of each individual swimmer.

Staff Introduction:

Head Coach Ray Benecki:

Ray Benecki is the founder and head coach of the FISH. He formed the club in 1991 for his oldest son Steven, when he was 4 years old. Coach Ray works mostly with the Awesome and Incredible FISH at Spring Hill and the Amazing and Fantastic FISH at Wakefield. However, don't be too surprised to see him in the water with the Mini FISH on a Saturday night.

Coach Ray is an ASCA Level V Coach and was appointed Assistant Women's Coach for the USA National Team at the World Championships in March 2007 and he was also an appointed member of the 2008 Olympic Team coaching staff in Beijing. He served as an assistant open water coach for the USA National Team at the Pan Pacific Championships in August 2006. He served as Assistant coach for the Eastern Zone Regional Distance Camp in 2005, ran the National Distance Camp at the USOC in 2007, and was appointed by Mark Schubert as Special Consultant to the National Junior Team in Melbourne Australia.

In 2010 Coach Ray won the Dirks/Gould Award. He was nominated for the *Golden Goggles Award* Coach of the Year in 2005 and 2007. Ray has presented seminars on distance swimming for USA Swimming and the American Swim Coaches Association in 2005 and 2008. He was a collegiate swimmer at Cornell (1970-71) and Delaware (1972-75).

Ray lives with his wife Joanne and his three sons in Fairfax, Virginia.

Managing Director Monika Paris:

Monika A. Paris is the *Managing Team Director* for the FISH; she ensures that the coaches can focus on providing the best possible training and that the FISH continue to be among the premier swim teams in the US. Her responsibilities include but are not limited to public relations, fund raising, recruitment, and daily operations that come along with running a swim team.

Monika holds a BS degree in business, with specialization in hospitality, from the University of Houston. She brings a diverse set of experience and talents to the management of the FISH: she owned and operated a web design company in the early days of the Internet and more recently worked in recruitment and placement for legal professionals. Besides her business and professional skills, Monika is an accomplished artist. She has shown her abstract paintings in the US and Europe and her paintings are part of private collections in America, Germany, Tunis, and France.

USA Swimming:

- 2010 Western Zone Select Camp (Phoenix, AZ) --- Head Manager
- 2009 National Open Water Camp (Ft. Meyers, FL) --- Assistant Manager
- 2008 *Olympic Splash Bash* at George Mason University --- Organizer

Monika lives with her husband and her daughter Lillie (Mini FISH) in McLean, VA. She has two older children; Antonia Paris who attends the University of Berlin and Benjamin Paris who attends George Mason University and plays on the Mason soccer team.

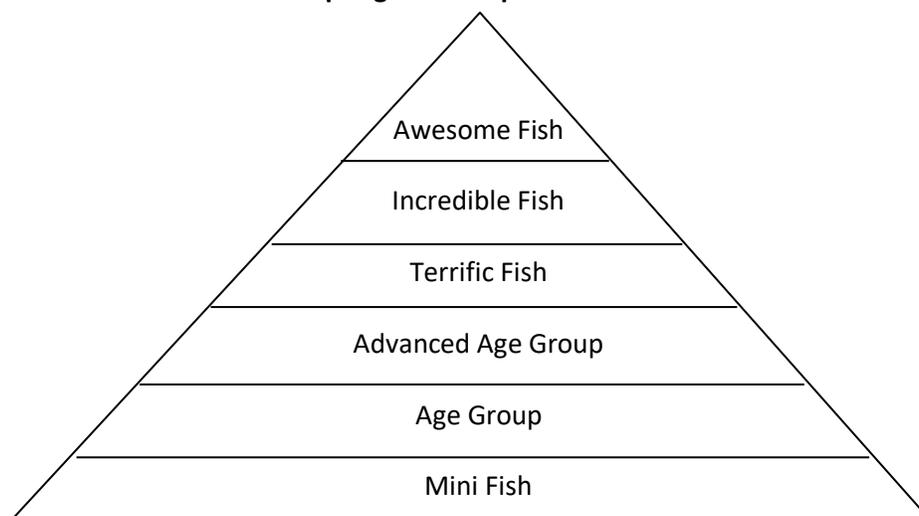
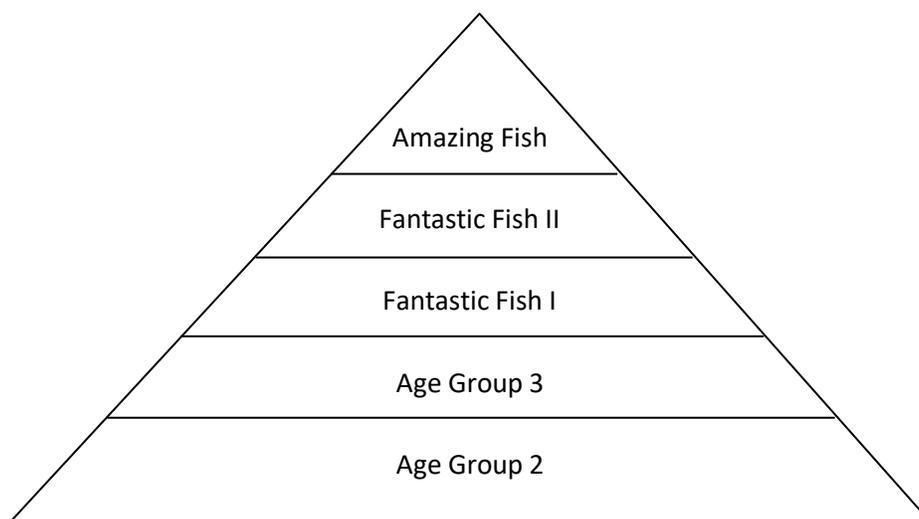
In her free time, she likes to paint and she is training for her upcoming trip to climb Kilimanjaro.

Coaching Staff:

The FISH employs several full time coaches as well as hourly coaches. To see their full bio's please refer to our website at www.pvfish.org.

Team Structure:

The Fish uses a structure designed to develop a swimmer physically, mentally and emotionally in a systematic and progressive fashion. We believe that this long term approach of gradually increasing degrees of commitment is essential to their development. The emphasis in the early stages of participation is on technique as well as introducing knowledge of the sport. As the swimmer moves up into higher level groups, the practices increase in both physical and mental demands. We feel it is important to establish training groups of swimmers who are compatible in respect to abilities, commitment levels and goals. With this in mind the coaching staff assigns each swimmer to a group based on skill and dedication. Each group has specific requirements and goals that apply directly to the capability of the swimmers within that group.

Spring Hill Group Structure:**Wakefield Group Structure****Awesome FISH**

Practice Location: Spring Hill RECenter in McLean, VA

The success for the Awesome FISH training group is measured at national and international competitions.

Part I – Objectives:

- to prepare swimmers for national and international competition
- to provide the necessary training and experience to successfully compete at that level

- to attain maximum performance by developing each athlete to their fullest potential
- to utilize every available scientific and technical resource, including videotaping and stroke analysis, dry-land training, nutrition, and strength and flexibility
- to draw upon the services and expertise of our support network, including physical therapists, personal trainers, and the technical support staff of USA Swimming.

Part II – Life Skills:

- **Time Management** --- Awesome FISH are expected to attend at least 6 practices per week including one weekday morning long course practice. They are expected to manage their outside commitments so as to not adversely impact their practice attendance or performance.
- **Leadership** – Awesome FISH are expected to be positive role models, and to demonstrate leadership, at all meets and social functions.
- **Goal Setting** – Awesome FISH are taught how to set and achieve goals through hard work and determination. It is expected that they will arrive 15 minutes early to practice for goal setting and stretching.
- **Organization** – Awesome FISH are expected to maintain up to date practice logs which teach them to be organized and prepared.
- **Responsibility** – Awesome FISH are taught to be responsible so that they can keep on top of time management, leadership, goal setting and organization.

Part III – Experience:

- ☐ International travel experience
- ☐ Altitude Training
- ☐ Social Activities
 - Annual Cook and Ride
 - Regatta

Incredible FISH

Practice Location: Spring Hill RECenter in McLean, VA

The success of the Incredible FISH is measured at PVS, Zone and National competitions.

Part I – Objectives:

- ☐ to prepare swimmers for the PVS, Zone, and National championships,
- ☐ to provide experience and optimal training in advanced stroke technique and racing strategies which are necessary to successfully compete at this level,
- ☐ to train at a high level working on developing goals to maximize performance of each athlete,
- ☐ to utilize videotaping and dry land strength & flexibility training,
- to develop a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment so that swimming can become an enjoyable lifelong sport.

Part II --- Life Skills:

- ☐ Swimmer learns to accept the **responsibility** for his/her performance
- ☐ Swimmer learns coping strategies to **deal with peer pressure**
- ☐ Swimmer learns coping strategies to **deal with parent pressure**
- ☐ Swimmer understands and **performs personal race strategies**
- ☐ Swimmer demonstrates an **ability to balance school, social, swimming and family**
- ☐ Swimmer can effectively **communicate** her/his commitment to her/his parent, coach and teammates

- ☐ Swimmer knows the team goals and will take an active part in **developing specific and attainable practice group goals**
- ☐ Swimmer **understands the relationship** between his/her personal commitment level and results

Terrific FISH

Practice Location: Spring Hill RECenter in McLean, VA

The success of the Terrific FISH is measured at the Age Group Championship competitions.

Part I – Objectives:

- ☐ to prepare swimmers for the Age Group Championship competitions
- ☐ to provide experience and optimal training in advanced stroke technique and racing strategies which are necessary to successfully compete at this level
- ☐ to train at a high level , working on developing goals to maximize performance of each athlete
- ☐ to utilize videotaping and dry land strength & flexibility training
- to develop a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment so that swimming can become an enjoyable lifelong sport

Part II – Life Skills:

- **Time Management** – Regular practice and meet attendance is essential. The swimmer will learn the ability to manage their outside commitments so as to not adversely impact their practice attendance or performance.
- **Positive attitude** – Each swimmer will learn to have a positive attitude for each practice, ready to focus and work hard each day.
- **Goal Setting** – Each swimmer will learn how to set and achieve goals. It is important to arrive 10 minutes before each scheduled practice, for stretching and goal-setting.
- **Responsibility** --- Show up at practice with all your equipment (fins, snorkel, pull buoy, paddles, water bottle).
- **Maturity** – Each swimmer will develop a high level of maturity, coupled with a strong desire to take your swimming career to the next level.
- **Social Skills** – Each swimmer will learn important social skills at the team socials scheduled throughout the season. It is very important to attend at team activities and socials.

The Terrific group is the first group within the FISH Swim Team with an attendance requirement.

Advanced Age Group

Practice Location: Spring Hill RECenter in McLean, VA

The success of the Advanced Age Group FISH is measured by transitioning swimmers from casual summer leaguers to competitive year round athletes.

Part I – Objectives:

- ☐ to focus on technique, through drills and demonstration, and racing strategies
- ☐ to provide strength training through timed interval sets
- to develop a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment so that swimming can become an enjoyable lifelong sport

Part II – Life Skills:

- **Time Management** – The swimmer will learn the importance of managing their time as regular practice attendance and regular meet attendance is required

- **Positive attitude** – The swimmer will learn to have a positive attitude at each practice, ready to focus and work hard each day.
- **Listening Skills** – The swimmer will learn to develop good listening skills as they must listen to coach, and be eager to correct strokes and improve.
- **Goal Setting** – The swimmer will learn how to set and achieve goals. It is important to arrive 10 minutes before each scheduled practice, for stretching and goal-setting.
- **Responsibility** – The swimmer will learn to be responsible as they must show up at practice with all equipment (fins, pull buoy, paddles, & water bottle).
- **Social Skills** – The swimmer will learn important social skills at the team socials that are scheduled throughout the season. It is very important to attend team activities and socials.

Age Group

Practice Location: Spring Hill RECenter in McLean, VA

The success of the Age Group FISH is measured in the ability to swim and compete in all strokes well.

Objectives:

- to prepare swimmers to be able to swim and compete well in all strokes
- to provide experience and training in stroke technique and beginning racing strategies which are necessary to successfully compete at this level
- to train with a balance between stroke technique and introductory training skills and processes
- to develop a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment so that swimming can become an enjoyable lifelong sport

Athletes move into Age-Group FISH from the MINI FISH group. Swimmers must be able to complete the 'Goals of the MINI FISH Group' to move up into the Age-Group FISH.

Swimmers may be invited by their coach to swim with the Advanced Age Group FISH practice on Saturday evening, if they can keep up and have perfect attendance for the week.

Practice duration is one hour and twenty minutes. One hour of practice time will be spent in the water.

There is no attendance requirement for this group. However, attending as many practices as this group recommends will ensure that swimmers will improve and make friends.

Mini FISH

Practice Location: Spring Hill RECenter in McLean, VA

The success of the Mini FISH is measured in the ability to swim all strokes well; when this is accomplished, successful Mini FISH will be able to swim a strong IM.

Objectives:

- to encourage proper swim technique through positive reinforcement
- to ensure that the competitive experience is a positive one
- to develop a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment so that swimming can become an enjoyable lifelong sport.

Workouts are offered two or three days a week, depending on the swimmer.

Practice duration is one hour.

Wakefield FISH

Practice Location: Wakefield RECenter in Annandale

The success of the Wakefield FISH is measured in the ability to swim and compete in all strokes well.

Objectives:

- to prepare swimmers to be able to swim and compete in all strokes well
- to provide experience and training in stroke technique and beginning racing strategies which are necessary to successfully compete at this level
- to train with a balance between stroke technique and introductory training skills and processes
- to develop a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment so that swimming can become an enjoyable lifelong sport

Practice duration is one hour. We offer five training opportunities. You can choose to swim two times, three times, four times, four times with a 2-hour practice and unlimited number of practices per week.

The different group descriptions are as follows:

Amazing FISH

Swimmers have unlimited choices from the Wakefield practices (see list below). Swimmers can take advantage of Saturday practice options at Spring Hill, depending on their skill level. In addition, swimmers will have the option to participate in Sunday practices. Swimmers need to discuss these options with a FISH coach before signing up for this training group

Part I – Objectives:

- ☐ to prepare swimmers for the Age Group Championship competitions
- ☐ to provide experience and optimal training in advanced stroke technique and racing strategies which are necessary to successfully compete at this level
- ☐ to train at a high level , working on developing goals to maximize performance of each athlete
- ☐ to utilize videotaping and dry land strength & flexibility training
- to develop a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment so that swimming can become an enjoyable lifelong sport

Part II – Life Skills:

- **Time Management** – Regular practice and meet attendance is essential. The swimmer will learn the ability to manage their outside commitments so as to not adversely impact their practice attendance or performance.
- **Positive attitude** – Each swimmer will learn to have a positive attitude for each practice, ready to focus and work hard each day.
- **Goal Setting** – Each swimmer will learn how to set and achieve goals. It is important to arrive 10 minutes before each scheduled practice, for stretching and goal-setting.
- **Responsibility** --- Show up at practice with all your equipment (fins, snorkel, pull buoy, paddles, water bottle).
- **Maturity** – Each swimmer will develop a high level of maturity, coupled with a strong desire to take your swimming career to the next level.

- **Social Skills** – Each swimmer will learn important social skills at the team socials scheduled throughout the season. It is very important to attend at team activities and socials.

Fantastic FISH

Fantastic FISH II: Swimmers practice **four** hours per week, including a **2-hour** practice, which is mandatory.

Fantastic FISH I: Swimmers practice three hours per week including a **2-hour** practice, which is mandatory.

Part I – Objectives:

- to focus on technique, through drills and demonstration, and racing strategies
- to provide strength training through timed interval sets
- to develop a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment so that swimming can become an enjoyable lifelong sport

Part II – Life Skills:

- **Time Management** – The swimmer will learn the importance of managing their time as regular practice attendance and regular meet attendance is required
- **Positive attitude** – The swimmer will learn to have a positive attitude at each practice, ready to focus and work hard each day.
- **Listening Skills** – The swimmer will learn to develop good listening skills as they must listen to coach, and be eager to correct strokes and improve.
- **Goal Setting** – The swimmer will learn how to set and achieve goals. It is important to arrive 10 minutes before each scheduled practice, for stretching and goal-setting.
- **Responsibility** – The swimmer will learn to be responsible as they must show up at practice with all equipment (fins, pull buoy, paddles, & water bottle).
- **Social Skills** – The swimmer will learn important social skills at the team socials that are scheduled throughout the season. It is very important to attend team activities and socials.

Age Group

Age Group 3: Swimmers practice three times per week. Each practice is one hour long.

Age Group 2: Swimmers practice twice a week. Each practice is one hour long.

Objectives:

- to prepare swimmers to be able to swim and compete well in all strokes
- to provide experience and training in stroke technique and beginning racing strategies which are necessary to successfully compete at this level
- to train with a balance between stroke technique and introductory training skills and processes
- to develop a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment so that swimming can become an enjoyable lifelong sport

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

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.

Practice Facility Logistics

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 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

It is very important that you park in the regular parking lot and use the main entrance doors. If you are

parked in the lower parking lot down by the soccer fields, you will be ticketed by the Fairfax County Police. You **MUST** enter and exit through the **facility's main entrance** and use your swipe card. 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. 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.

Madeira 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.

We are Guests at Spring Hill, Wakefield, Madeira and GMU!

We have the privilege of using great practice facilities and we would like to remind everyone to adhere to each facility's rules in terms of access and usage.

Usage:

- **FPCA – Spring Hill and Wakefield** --- Only athletes registered with the FISH are allowed to use FPCA facilities during practice hours. If you as a parent would like to work out during regular operating hours, you need to purchase a day-pass. This is also true for younger family members not registered with the FISH, and even those who are registered, but not at one of their regularly scheduled practice times.
- **Madeira** --- Madeira does not allow any usage of their facility other than our swimmers using the pool during designated practice hours.
- **George Mason** --- Special arrangements may be made if you wish to use the facility during practice hours. Ask the attendant at the reception desk to see if this is possible.

There is **no free usage** at any of these facilities. Failure to adhere to this policy will not only get us in trouble as lessee, but will also have consequences for the swimmer whose parents and or siblings abuse this rule.

Thanks for your cooperation.

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, and their

swim lessons, 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 the facility where practice is scheduled. Ask if the facility is open, if they say “YES” then we have practice.
- 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.

The FISH is not associated with school closings. WE PRACTICE WHEN THE POOL IS OPEN UNLESS YOU RECEIVE AN EMAIL OR A CANCELLATION IS POSTED TO OUR WEBSITE.

Meet Information

The coaches of The FISH research meets, read meet entry information, look at past results, speak with respected coaches who have attended the meets, and speak with the host coaching staff. We put a great amount of thought and consideration into many factors that influence the outcome of our team meet schedule. The fundamental objective is the best possible meet schedule for developing age groupers into successful senior swimmers. The result is a FISH meet schedule better than most clubs and with better competition too!

You can find the Meet Schedule on our website: www.pvfish.org

Meet Policies

Entry Procedures

An email will be sent out a few weeks in advance of the meet. The email will contain a brief meet announcement, as well as the events each swimmer is entered in. If your child **cannot** attend the meet, you must respond before the deadline posted in the email and meet announcement. **If a response is not received by the stated deadline, your child will automatically be entered and your account will be debited.** If your swimmer can attend the meet no response is necessary as your child will automatically be entered.

Your swimmer's events are selected by their coach. Their events will be selected with your child's development and growth as a swimmer in mind.

Arrival Times

On each meet announcement, there is a chart which tells the swimmers the warm up times for each session. **Please have your swimmer arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time.** Warm-up times are not time of arrival; we expect the entire team to start warming up at the beginning of our scheduled warm up. This will ensure that the swimmer is ready and not distracted and that he/she will have a good experience.

At certain meets, such as Distance Challenges, each event will be positive check-in. This means that if your swimmer does not show up on time to check in for his/her race, he/she will not be eligible to swim.

For Distance meets, the swimmers will arrive at the pool in waves. The warm up times will be sent out a few days in advance of the meet. Again, it is especially important to arrive on time.

The FISH Swim Caps

We require that a FISH swim cap be worn at all meets. We offer two packets; either six latex or two silicone for \$20 each.

Prelims/Finals Meets

We would like to make sure you know and understand our policy on Prelims/Finals meets. These types of meets encourage the highest levels of competition and dedication to the team they are representing.

The policy of the FISH concerning meets with Prelims and Finals sessions is that any swimmer who qualifies for Finals must swim Finals. Swimmers may not scratch or opt out of Finals.

Hopefully the following discussion written by Head Coach Ray Benecki will help you understand the basis for this policy.

Prelims and Finals Meets

Every so often we are presented with the tremendous opportunity to swim in a meet that has prelims and finals sessions. These meets are structured so as to present the fastest 8, or 16, or 24 swimmers from the morning or afternoon prelims sessions with another chance to swim at finals in the evening. The number of swimmers advancing to finals in this fashion depends on the meet, their age group, and sometimes the events themselves. Some meets offer finals for all age groups, except for the 10 and unders. Some meets offer one heat of finals for 11 and 12 swimmers, but two heats of finals for 13 and older swimmers. Distance events are usually swum just one time, and sometimes the 11-12 200 fly, 200 back, and 200 breast are Timed Finals also.

These types of meets provide a valuable learning experience for our swimmers and encourage them to swim at a high level of competition. These types of meets are valuable tools to prepare our swimmers for their end-of-season Championships. Either they get a taste of swimming finals, or get a better appreciation of what it takes to qualify for finals next time.

Swimming the same event twice in one day is quite a challenge; making finals in two events doubly so. And you can imagine qualifying for three. Yet we don't want to wait until our biggest meet to face this challenge. The more experience you can get trying to qualify for finals, and swimming finals, the more confidence you will have, the faster you will swim, the stronger you will be.

A swimmer should enter a prelim race with the goal of making finals. To expect anything less would be to sell yourself short. To expect not to make finals would be self-limiting.

As a swimmer develops and reaches this level of competition, we would like you to keep the following information in mind.

What is Involved? Be prepared! Clear your calendar for the entire weekend. When participating in prelims/finals meets, just expect to be there all day. Ideally, we would like our swimmers to go home to rest and refuel between prelims and finals. Swimmers need to be back in time for

warm-ups in order to prepare for their final race(s). Please plan accordingly to assure a successful swimming experience for your athlete.

Atmosphere: The atmosphere at prelims is very different than during finals. The fastest swimmers have a hard time swimming best times during prelims especially knowing that finals will take place only a few hours after their initial, qualifying race. The goal is to swim fast enough to make finals. However, in the history of the FISH, we have had swimmers swim best times during prelims and they were totally surprised when they realized they had just secured a spot in the A Final.

Pressure: After a long day of swimming the athletes return one more time to the pool for the final races, the fastest races. Who will touch the wall first? Though the pressure is tense, athletes handle it better when participating in these types of meets more frequently. Therefore, when a swimmer qualifies, participation is a must. In addition, the team spirit among the athletes can alleviate some of the pressure. Teammates cheer each other on and the FISH spirit takes on a life of its own.

Reaching Goal Times: Prelims/finals meets create an environment for our swimmers to reach their goal times in December. Representing your team in a final race, scoring points for your team, and getting that time you worked so hard for, is all part of the learning experience.

For Prelims/Finals meets expect to be there all day, even if there is no expectation to be there. This way if a chance to swim Finals arises there will not be any complications. **If a swimmer qualifies for FINALS and does not swim, the consequences will be severe and could result in ejection from the team.** If you and your swimmer know in advance of a conflict during the Finals session, do not sign-up for that day of the swim meet. All of our swimmers are capable of break-out swims and should have a goal in mind to qualify for Finals.

The FISH Team Travel Policy

USA Swimming is requiring every USA Swimming Club to establish and maintain a travel policy according to their guidelines. We are working closely with USA Swimming to adhere to these requirements in order to assure a safe and healthy travel environment when taking our athletes on travel trips. Coaches and chaperones that interact with our athletes are in the unique position of great trust. This trust is to be used to provide the safest, healthiest child-centered sports environment possible.

- a. Our travel policy must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.
- b. Team managers and coaches are members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check.
- c. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete).
- d. During overnight team travel, athletes rooming together shall be of the same gender, and preferably similar age. Chaperones and coaches will stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 and Under, same-gender chaperones may room with the athletes; in this case, written consent should be given by the athlete's parent or legal guardian.

- e. There will be no male athletes in female athletes' rooms, and no female athletes in male athletes' rooms at any time.
- f. A copy of the Club Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
- g. Team officials should obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
- h. Team officials should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
- i. Curfews shall be established by the team staff each day of the trip.
- j. The directions & decisions of coaches/team manager are final.
- k. Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
- l. When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a coach or chaperone.

Financial

- Swimmers are responsible for all their incidental expenditures.
- Swimmers are responsible for any damages or thievery they cause at the hotel.

General

- Athletes must meet trip eligibility requirements as determined by the Head Coach.
- Parent(s) are responsible for getting swimmer(s) to stated departure point and pick up at arrival point on time.

The FISH Code of Conduct

All team members, team staff, and parents of minors are apprised in writing of this Code of Conduct and the attached FISH Travel Policy. A signature on this document constitutes unconditional agreement to comply with the stipulations of both documents.

- a. Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
- b. Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
- c. The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.
- d. The possession, use, or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.
- e. No "deck" changes are permitted. Athletes are expected to use available change facilities.
- f. Team members are reminded that when competing in meets, traveling on trips, and attending other meet-related functions, they are representing both themselves and the FISH program. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the club. Swimmers are to refrain from use of inappropriate language and physical conduct at team activities and events.

Failure to comply with the Honor Code as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action. Such discipline may include, but may not be limited to:

- a. Dismissal from the trip and immediate return home at the athlete's expense
- b. Disqualification from one or more events, or all events of competition

- c. Disqualification from future team travel meets
- d. Financial penalties
- e. Dismissal from the team
- f. Proceedings for a LSC or USA Swimming Board of Review

Nutrition:

Part of our purpose and goal within The FISH is to further the athletes knowledge and awareness of the sport. Nutrition is a very valuable element of this. We intend our webpage to be a very valuable source of such information. Please get used to visiting it frequently. Specifically you can gain more knowledge about nutrition by visiting the nutrition corner.

Fundraising:

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 dry land training and education equipment, 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.

Our fundraisers each year include the Halloween Candy sale, Spirit Wear, Swim-a-thon, and Script online gift cards. Participating in these fundraisers go towards the FISH's trophy requirements. If you are interested in being part of the FISH fundraising committee please see the parent committee section.

Trophy Requirements

Trophies are for all the FISH out there that are truly dedicated to the team. There are certain requirements that must be met in order to earn one of these coveted trophies. Trophies will be given out by Coach Ray at the end of the season picnic.

The requirements are:

1. **50% or greater practice attendance throughout the season.** It is very important to attendance practice on a regular basis. Good practice attendance will help your swimmer to continuously improve as well as teaching such life skills as time management and responsibility.

2. **Participate in two (2) fundraisers throughout the season.** The FISH is a non-profit organization and so relies on your support in our fundraising efforts. It is important to participate in the FISH's various fundraisers so that we can continue to keep our dues low, while still paying pool rental costs, supplying the swimmers with educational information and dryland equipment, and keeping our coaches' education up to date.
3. **Participate in two (2) meets throughout the season.** It is important that your swimmer regularly participate in swim meets throughout the season so that both the coach and swimmer can evaluate how the swimmer is progressing. Swim meets also add a competitive element to the sport which encourages fast swimming and a fun environment.
4. **Participate in two (2) FISH social activities throughout the season.** The importance of the FISH socials is to make new friends and learn new things about your fellow swimmers and coaches that otherwise would not be accomplished at practice. Participating in these entertaining, safe events with teammates encourage team bonding and team building which are incredibly important in keeping swimming fun and exciting!

Parent Committees

The FISH would not be as successful as we are without the help of all of our parents. These Parent-led committees are an integral part in keeping this team running smoothly. The Fundraising Committee obviously is a vital part, with The FISH being a non-profit organization. The Candy Sale, Spirit Wear, and Swim-a-Thon have been our most successful fundraising efforts. The Social Committee is in place to help our athletes interact with each other outside of the pool. They put on events that help to foster long term friendships and the family atmosphere we value at The FISH. The Swim Meet Committee has done a fantastic job in helping us to develop the reputation of running the best meets in all of Potomac Valley. The Official's Committee is a great way to get involved if you want to see all the great swimming action up close and personal.

Whatever your interests may be, there is a committee for you! So become a vital member of The FISH and volunteer to help with one of our great committees!

Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee is busy all year. The mission of the Fundraising Committee is to generate funds to support the vision and mission of The FISH. Our goal is to raise money in order to provide equipment, awards, and host high quality social events by generating funds through various activities. These include, but are not limited to, outreach events, sponsorships, campaigns and grants to support our swimmers in attaining personal excellence. The Halloween Candy Sale, Spirit Wear, and Swim-a-Thon have been very successful for us in the past. Any fundraising ideas should be presented to the Fundraising Chair or to the Managing Director for approval prior to implementation.

Social Committee

The Social Committee's main objective is to develop and coordinate events that enhance team morale and develop community spirit among FISH team members. We would like this aspect of our team to grow, so the social committee will be very important this season. This committee will work to plan social events that help foster the family atmosphere that we value here at FISH. This committee also coordinates the end of the year banquet to provide needed recognition to FISH swimmers for their year-long focus on success.

Swim Meet Committee

The Swim Meet Committee, chaired by Managing Director Monika Paris, provides a focus to ensure the availability of the necessary resources for home and away swim meets and the coordination of set up for a meet and restoration of the pool following the event. The swim meet committee will help set up the meet, help run concessions, keep the meet running smoothly, and help clean up the host pool when the meet is over. This is one of the most important committees that we have because without the Swim Meet Committee, we would not be able to host some of the best meets in all of PVS.

Official's Committee

The Officials' committee is crucial to the existence of FISH hosted meets. The FISH, and PVS on the whole, needs more trained officials at all levels, and we are asking you to consider becoming a swim official. Working swim meets as an official is a fun and rewarding experience, one that allows you to support your swimmers in the sport they love as well as get to know other dedicated swim families. We are ready to help those parents who want to become certified officials!

PVS periodically offers clinics for certification. For additional information, please review the officials' pages on the Potomac Valley Swimming website, where you can find the training schedule for the current season.

FISH Volunteers and Donations for FISH hosted Meets

The Fish swim team needs your help! Since 1991, the FISH has grown into one of the few Gold Medal Club swim teams in the country. By hosting four meets per season, we not only provide convenience to our own swimmers, but we are also a major contributor to the PVS community, since they cannot put on nearly enough meets.

A major challenge for the FISH is securing the enormous number of volunteers and officials to host a meet. FISH parents are required to support these meets by donating food items and by working during the meets. This is the only way to successfully manage FISH hosted meets, benefiting not only our swimmers, but also to the entire PVS community.

We are hosting the following four meets:

- **November Open at Cub Run** in early November (This meet is co-hosted by PVS as the association relies on stronger, more established teams like ours to host their Open meets.)
- **Super FISH Bowl at Spring Hill** in early February
- **The FISH LC Derby at George Mason University** in early May
- **The June Invitational at George Mason University** in early June

There are two basic requirements:

1. **Food Donation:** each parent who has a swimmer participating in one of The FISH hosted meets needs to donate food towards concessions or hospitality worth \$20. If you cannot provide a food item, we ask you to contribute \$20.
2. **Working the meet:** each parent who has a swimmer competing in one of The FISH hosted meets needs to work two sessions per meet. Sign-up sheets are available prior to the meet and you can choose from various jobs; timing, working concessions, working in hospitality, or working as an official. If you cannot fulfill your meet volunteer obligation, you will be charged \$75 per meet.

Parent Section

The Ten Commandments for Parents of Athletic Children

Reprinted from The Young Athlete by Bill Burgess included in "The Swim Parents Newsletter"

1. Make sure your child knows that -- win or lose, scared or heroic – you love him/her, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without a fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, his/hers competitive attitude, their sportsmanship, and their actual skill level.
3. Be helpful, but don't coach him/her on the way to the pool or on the way back, or at breakfast, and so on. It's tough not to, but it's a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advice, pep talks and often critical instruction.
4. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve his/her swimming skills and attitudes. Help him/her to develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.
5. Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure. Don't pressure your child because of your pride. Athletic children need their parents so you must not withdraw. Just remember there is a thinking, feeling, sensitive free spirit out there in that uniform who needs a lot of understanding, especially when his world turns bad. If he/she is comfortable with you – win or lose – he/she is on their way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.
6. Don't compete with the coach. If the coach becomes an authority figure, it will run from enchantment to disenchantment, etc., with your athlete.
7. Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with other members of the team, at least within his/her hearing.
8. Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his/her philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his/her leadership.
9. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over-reacting.
10. Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear of discomfort