

SENIOR FISH 2015



Name: Caroline Heilbrun

Nick Name: Carrie

FISH Group: Awesome

Home Town: Fairfax Station, VA

High School: Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST)

Future College: Yale

Parents & Siblings: Parents Mark and Amy and two younger siblings Maddie (Awesome) and Emme Cate (Terrific)

When did you join the FISH, and what has been your most memorable experience while being on the team? I joined the FISH just prior to my freshman year in high school, and my most memorable experiences were the two training trips I travelled on- Omaha, Nebraska in 2012 and Grand Junction, Colorado in 2014. In Omaha, we watched a teammate qualify for the Olympics at the 2012 US Swimming Trials, and in Grand Junction, we took breaks from training to hike in some of the most beautiful red rock formations in the Western United States.

What was your most rewarding and exciting meet during your FISH career? I loved travelling to Greensboro, North Carolina with Coach Nicole for the 2014 US Winter National Championships. I got to try out the brand-new USA Swimming approved backstroke wedges and starting block inclines during my races, and I also saw Katie Ledecky and Connor Jaeger break American records in the 1650 freestyle back-to-back at finals.

What is your favorite set? 4 x 300s freestyle: you can take two 5-second breaks anywhere in each 300, but overall time must descend.

What are your favorite events? 100 fly and 50 free

What is the biggest challenge for you in swimming? My greatest challenge as an athlete has been to maintain a strict gluten-free diet in order to consistently feel well and perform my best in practices and competitions.

What motivates you most? I am most motivated by the desire to keep improving. No matter if I achieve a personal best or have a bad swim, I am eager to get back to work in the pool. Always remember, your best is yet to come.

Which aspects of swimming do you apply in everyday life? You have to expect the unexpected, such as, for instance, when Ray unexpectedly changes the main set to 10x400s best average.

You are beginning a new chapter in your life, college. What are you most looking forward to? How has FISH prepared you? I am so excited for college! I'm looking forward to being immersed in a community of diverse and driven students, experiencing collegiate swim camaraderie, and pursuing celiac-related research and policy. FISH has prepared me very well for living on my own- on all of our travel meets and training trips, we are expected to take care of ourselves by preparing all food, cleaning up, and compromising with assigned roommates.

What advice can you give your teammates in your group and especially your younger teammates who are just starting out? Balance is the key to happiness. Always try to optimize your performance in school and in swimming, and also make sure to find time for yourself. Don't let any one thing dominate your entire life. Be Zen.

Tell us a little bit about you; what do you like to do when you are not swimming or busy with schoolwork? In my spare time, I like to ski, read, solve jigsaw puzzles, and train my dog, Max, to become the next Air Bud. I also like to volunteer: I work with disabled students as a volunteer of FCPA's Adapted Aquatics program, and I am also a member of the Recording Audio for the Disabled club and the Assistive Technology club at school.

The FISH Class of 2015 Questionnaire

Name: Megan McCreary

Nick Name: McMegan

FISH Group: Awesome

Home Town: McLean, VA

High School: Connelly School of the Holy Child

Future College: Virginia Tech

Parents & Siblings:

Momma Chris McCreary, hospitality

Tom McCreary, doesn't do swimming

Frat boy Matthew McCreary, sinks like a rock, does baseball instead, JMU

Bullet McCreary, bullet

Princess Peach Kathleen McCreary, she's really competitive

When did you join the FISH, and what has been your most memorable experience while being on the team?

I joined FISH when I was 9 yrs. in the mini FISH. My most memorable experience on the team was the summer of 2012 when the team took a trip out to Omaha, Nebraska for a training trip at the University of Nebraska, Omaha and to watch Olympic trials.

What was your most rewarding and exciting meet during your FISH career?

The Al-Solstice meet in Clearwater, Florida. This was the first travel meet we went to in the winter that was some place warm. This meet was prelims and finals but prelims was short course and finals were long course. What makes this meet stand out from the rest is that the mile was not Friday night but noon Saturday/Sunday. I swam the mile, but I also did prelims and made it back for finals that day as well. I was at the pool for 12 hours with two other swimmers and Coach Ray.

What is your favorite set?

The set of steps I take to get out of the pool once practice is over.

I do not have a favorite set, but when the set has 150s or 75s in it I already like it. I love swimming 150s and 75s because they are different and the distance is not one you compete.

What are your favorite events?

My favorite events to swim are the 100 back and breaststroke, but I am good at the 200, 500, and 1650 so I like to do those too.

What is the biggest challenge for you in swimming?

Staying motivated and not being discouraged when I was not doing well. I tend to get too into my head and psych myself out and getting over that mental barrier has always been my biggest challenge.

What motivates you most?

Being able to look good in a two piece.

In the past I was motivated to prove a point – that I was just as good as or better than another swimmer. To prove that I could swim the same times, go to the same meets, and practice in the same group as them. However recently I have been motivated by the kids I coach for my NVSL team in the winter. I want to show them what hard work can do and where they can get if they continue to swim. When I correct them I want them to know that I know what I am talking about and that swimming is not just a pastime of mine but something that I genuinely love doing.

Which aspects of swimming do you apply in everyday life?

In swimming sometimes in a practice you are either doing a set, or a practice, or even an event that you neither like nor are you doing well in, but you can't just get out and not do the set, you have to suck it up, get over yourself and finish it. In life whether I don't want to do something or don't like the task at hand, like in anything that has butterfly in it, I suck it up and complete the task. The displeasure or pain is temporary by the time it takes for me to get over myself I am already done. I may not have enjoyed the process but I finished it.

You are beginning a new chapter in your life, college. What are you most looking forward to? How has FISH prepared you?

In college I am really looking forward to all the big changes. I have gone to the same school with the same people for seven years and I have only been on FISH so it will be a big shock but I'm looking forward to it. FISH has taught me that nothing comes easily, especially not without hard work, and that you can eventually reach your goals. Yes, college is going to be a polar opposite to where I am now, but FISH has taught me that there is nothing I can't tackle.

What advice can you give your teammates in your group and especially your younger teammates who are just starting out?

Trust your coaches - they know what they are talking about and they want you to improve just as bad as you want to. Also trust and believe in yourself. Have total confidence in your abilities - if you think you can accomplish anything you will get there.....eventually. And finally, in swimming and in life there will always be ups and downs both may last a long time, but again trust and believe in yourself and the times when you are down will not seem so bad.

Tell us a little bit about you; what do you like to do when you are not swimming or busy with schoolwork?

In my free time normally what I start off doing is just sitting around doing pretty much nothing. It's always really nice to not be running around and be busy. When I get bored with that I like to read books and draw/paint. But when the creative juices are not flowing and I have the opportunity to watch a movie I will. I don't typically watch television shows because I don't have the desire or discipline to keep up them, especially one that has more than one season. I also really enjoy cooking food – mainly because I get to eat it when I am done. Road trips are another favorite of mine. When someone has some place to go I will try to go. Recently I have

been able to go on a lot of road trips because my older brother is away at college at James Madison University which is only two hours away; and I guess seeing my older brother is nice too.

The FISH Class of 2015 Questionnaire

Name: Amy Owens

Nick Name: Tammy

FISH Group: Awesome

Home Town: Mclean, VA

High School: Langley

Future College: West Point (USMA)

Parents & Siblings: Papa Owens, Mama Owens, Matthew Owens, Alice Owens, Michelle Owens

When did you join the FISH, and what has been your most memorable experience while being on the team? I joined Fish in sixth grade, and my most memorable experience was the Colorado Training trip.

What was your most rewarding and exciting meet during your FISH career? My last JOs, when everyone was really pumped and swam well as a team.

What is your favorite set? 100 fly on 1:20, 75 fly on 1:00, 50 fly on :40, 25 fly on :20
3*50s free on :35
75 fly on 1:00, 50 fly on :40, 25 fly on :20
2*50s free on :35
50 fly on :40, 25 fly on :20
1*50 free on :35
25 fly on :20

What are your favorite events? 100 and 200 free and 100 back

What is the biggest challenge for you in swimming? Balancing school work and swimming, especially when taking so many AP courses

What motivates you most? Beating people on my list of competitors

Which aspects of swimming do you apply in everyday life? The competitive spirit as well as waking up really early in the morning

You are beginning a new chapter in your life, college. What are you most looking forward to? How has FISH prepared you? Fish has prepared me by being tough physically and mentally. I look forward to applying that at West Point, and perhaps be ahead of my classmates in that aspect.

What advice can you give your teammates in your group and especially your younger teammates who are just starting out? To explore new things in high school, and place priority on the things you love to do.

Tell us a little bit about you; what do you like to do when you are not swimming or busy with schoolwork?

I like reading, knitting, volunteering, hiking, having photoshoots with my friends (which Barbizon prepared me for), and binge-watching Netflix

The FISH Class of 2015 Questionnaire

Name: Ian Russiello

Nick Name: Big Dawg

FISH Group: Awesome

Home Town: Vienna, VA

High School: James Madison

Future College: Cornell University

Parents & Siblings: Mother- Kathy, Father- Mike, two brothers Andrew and Matt

When did you join the FISH, and what has been your most memorable experience while being on the team? I joined the Advanced Age Group under coach Grady in 2008. My most memorable experience was qualifying for Jr. Nats at Senior Champs last year. The whole team came to cheer me on and I felt as though they pushed me through.

What was your most rewarding and exciting meet during your FISH career?

My most rewarding meet was my first Junior Nationals in Irvine, California. The atmosphere was intense but also exciting. We were all newcomers at the meet so not much was expected of us.

What is your favorite set? 14 X 600 free

What are your favorite events? The 200 Fly is my baby but the mile and 400 IM are close behind.

What is the biggest challenge for you in swimming?

My Biggest challenge in swimming is not letting other people get in my head or discourage me. Negative attitudes are contagious and everyone's guilty of having them at one time or another. Holding on to a positive and confident attitude is what makes champions.

What motivates you most?

Watching myself improve is what motivates me most. After months of training and hard work all you need is that big time drop to make you want to go through it all again.

Which aspects of swimming do you apply in everyday life?

After a bad race in swimming you can't get down on yourself. This applies to everything. After a failed test or just a terrible day you can't get the thought in your head that everything you do will be bad. You have to forget the low points and build off the high points.

You are beginning a new chapter in your life, college. What are you most looking forward to? How has FISH prepared you?

I'm looking forward to meeting new people and switching up the training style. I'm sure no college coach can match Ray's rigorous distance practices. Next year I will also start lifting

which should be a positive change. After endless yards and six MSSC Senior Meets, I'm ready for anything.

What advice can you give your teammates in your group and especially your younger teammates who are just starting out?

Don't be intimidated by the next level on FISH. It will always seem easier to not pursue Awesome Fish but the benefits of making it to the top level under Coach Ray are some that you cannot find anywhere else in Potomac valley or even the country. He has brought me to a level far past what I had expected of myself and I owe so much to him. If you are lucky enough to have him as a coach don't be foolish and let that opportunity slip by.

Tell us a little bit about you; what do you like to do when you are not swimming or busy with schoolwork?

My favorite sport aside from swimming is lacrosse. I played for ten years before quitting for swimming. I like to watch college games or play in the back yard with my friends. Aside from that, in the summer I'm just a regular old pool rat at the Cardinal Hill Swim Club.



Name: Gerry Wan

Nick Name:

FISH Group: Incredible

Home Town: Vienna

High School: Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology

Future College: Princeton University

Parents & Siblings: Sister - Alison

When did you join the FISH, and what has been your most memorable experience while being on the team?

I joined the Fish the summer before 7th grade. My most memorable experience was attending a swim clinic with Olympians Brendan Hansen, Dara Torres, and Rebecca Soni.

What was your most rewarding and exciting meet during your FISH career?

My most rewarding meet was JO's of 2010, where I unexpectedly dropped 15 seconds in my 100 breaststroke. The most exciting was JO's of 2012, where the 13-14 boys broke every Fish relay record.

What is your favorite set?

IM rollercoasters

What are your favorite events?

200 IM, 100 Free, 100 Breast, 25 Free

What is the biggest challenge for you in swimming?

Attending morning practice

What motivates you most?

Competition and wanting to stay able to eat unlimited amounts of food

Which aspects of swimming do you apply in everyday life?

Commitment and marginal analysis

You are beginning a new chapter in your life, college. What are you most looking forward to? How has FISH prepared you?

I am looking forward to the new environment and different opportunities college offers. Fish has taught me to set goals and stay focused.

What advice can you give your teammates in your group and especially your younger teammates who are just starting out?

You never know what your true potential is, so try different things and persevere through the ones you already do. Swim practice is going to be hard, but you will learn things you never expected to learn. Also, listen to Coach Ray.

Tell us a little bit about you; what do you like to do when you are not swimming or busy with schoolwork?

More schoolwork