



Merger Overview January 2021

What will a merger with DART include?

The merger with DART will include several DART sites (Davis, Solano and Sacramento.) The Solano site will include Solano and American Canyon and will work directly with the Davis site. DART-Solano will maintain oversight of our various programs and facilities in Solano County as well as American Canyon.

Ricky Silva will continue to oversee the programs and staff at DART-Solano, while working closely with the overall DART staff. Kevin Chester will continue to maintain direct oversight of American Canyon.

DART-Solano will maintain a Board of Directors as well as separate accounts, payroll and other areas to maintain consistency with our local partners and facilities this season.

Why merge with another program?

SASO Swimming has experienced a large amount of success over the past several years. This has included the addition of the American Canyon program as well as swim lessons, water polo and masters swimming. The team has grown throughout these past several years, both in size and in performance.

Our Long Term planning committee and Board continue to look at various ways to expand and improve our program to continue to be a competitive team within our region as well as on a larger scale. This has included an increased swimmer base, professional coaches and staff and revenue programs to decrease the amount of fundraising needed to operate.

The most important question of looking at a merger is “**What is Best for our Team for the long term success of our athletes?**” After looking at several options, a merger with DART made the most sense. The merger allows for our staff and team to operate at a local level while bringing additional opportunities for swimmers who wish to compete at the higher levels of swimming.

We also found that a major need for our team is access to an increased number of pools in case of closures, schedule changes, etc. This merger will allow for just this, both locally and in surrounding areas. COVID has allowed us to take a detailed look at numerous possibilities to continue to maintain operations throughout a pool closure or limitations due to growth.

How would this affect my swimmer?

Locally-swimmers will maintain their local pools, coaches, groups and autonomy. The team will continue to operate in a manner that caters to our local communities and facilities. The staff will be hired locally, however, they will be able to work with other professional coaches for training as knowledge sharing. Additional opportunities will include but are not limited to:

Increase number of pools and other facilities in our area
Opportunities to increase programs offered by DART-Solano at pools in Solano County
Ability to share costs for pool rentals and use
Possibility of increased long course swimming
Administrative support from Davis staff

Swimmers will continue to attend local practices as well as local meets. Other opportunities will be offered outside of our area, however, the majority of day to day training and meets will happen at the local level.

Regionally-DART has been proven to be one of the top programs within Sierra Nevada and Pacific Swimming over the past several years. The addition of Solano will help to strengthen this position, which will add increased opportunities for our swimmers. These will include but are not limited to:

Relays for all ages (increased participation in relays)
Increased meet opportunities (locally and regionally)
Shared travel costs for sites and coaches
Ability to host DART team events, including camps and clinics
Ability to co-host swim meets (widen the volunteer base to host meets)
Increased number of officials
Opportunity to compete for LSC Championships

Nationally-DART was recently recognized as a USA Swimming Gold Medal Club in 2021 (15th in the USA.) As a nationally ranked program, some of the benefits will include:

Additional travel and meet opportunities for senior level swimmers
Nationally ranked relays for all ages
Increase training opportunities for seniors (including trips to the Olympic Training Center)
Increased coaching staff to work with swimmers throughout the program.
Funding from USA Swimming as for Club Achievement
Opportunity to compete for Junior National and National Championships.
Increased college recruiting opportunities and education for swimmers
Ability for college and post-graduate swimmers to continue to train with our program

How will this merger affect the staff?

DART-Solano would maintain an independent staff under the direction of Head Site Coach Ricky Silva. This would include swim coaches, lesson staff, administrative staff and water polo coaches. Kevin Chester will continue to maintain direct oversight of our American Canyon program.

We will continue to revisit the coaching assignments and duties as we navigate through the closures and adjustments to our program brought about by COVID. As we return to normal operations, we will assign lead coaches as well as lead staff to our various programs.

The current DART staff includes coaches with a varying level of experience and accolades. The overall staff will include several full time coaches at the various sites throughout the entire program. DART staff will provide administrative support to the team in a variety of ways, including many functions of a treasurer.

The DART staff from all three sites will include coaches that have been recognized both regionally as well as nationally by USA Swimming. This includes several coaches who have been recognized as Coaches of the Year in Sierra Nevada and Pacific Swimming. The current staff includes several leaders in Sierra Nevada Swimming as well as USA Swimming. These leadership positions vary from Sierra Nevada Board Members (including the General Chair) to USA Swimming committees and performance staff.

When will the merger take place?

The official start date of DART-Solano will be on January 20, 2021. This will include an updated Board of Directors as well as internal team structure. The merger will continue in small phases throughout the remainder of the 2020-21 season as there will still be a limited amount of larger meets due to COVID-19.

A transition period will take place prior to January 20. This will include some behind the scenes work for board staff as well as volunteer leadership.

Coaches will continue to keep swimmers and families updated regarding various areas of merging as we move forward. Swimmers would receive a shirt and cap following the official merger date.

An updated website is scheduled to be online in February of 2021. The current website will be updated prior to the introduction of the new website.

The DART-Solano Board will meet monthly in conjunction with DART-Davis Board meetings. The staff will continue to meet weekly.

How will this affect current SASO programs?

Swimmers who are registered as SASO swimmers will be registered as DART swimmers starting January 20. Coaches, officials and any other USA Swimming non-athlete members will also be registered at DART.

DART-Solano will offer a Sea Otters Summer Rec team in Solano. This program will swim in Fairfield as well as other areas in Solano. This program will NOT be offered in American Canyon (swimmers will be referred to AHI Swimming.)

We will continue to offer a program in American Canyon that works in partnership with AHI swimming. Our goal is to offer additional opportunities for swimmers in American Canyon while working with AHI to continue to build the swimming base in the area. Between the two programs, we will be able to offer swimming to all levels and ages in the American Canyon community.

We will offer a Swim Lesson program (name TBD.) This program will be offered in the fall, spring and summer and include learn-to-swim as well as stroke improvement.

SASO Water Polo will continue with the same name, as we have worked hard to increase the name recognition and level of the program in our area. DART does not currently operate a USA Water polo program, so there is no immediate need to change this program. This program may continue to expand in the Solano area as well as other counties in the future.

SASO Masters will be registered at Solano Masters starting in 2021.

Will this affect monthly dues or the annual registration fee?

The budget for the Solano-DART site will be independent of the overall DART program. DART-Solano will be overseen by the Davis program, however, the site will have an independent budget that will be reviewed yearly. We do not plan on any dues adjustments for the 2020-21 season.

Programs that are offered by DART-Solano will include member programs (such as our USA swim team) as well as participant programs. Fees will continue to be recommended by the staff and approved by the Board of Directors.

What about all of my swimmer's SASO gear and attire?

All active swimmers will receive a DART Cap and DART-Solano shirt in late January. Additional DART-Solano items will be available thru our team store starting in late January.

Swimmers can still wear their SASO and TYR apparel throughout the season, including SASO caps. SASO does not require team suits, so there will not be additional costs for suits or other items.

Swimmers **MUST** wear a DART cap starting in February to any meets that included more than one team.

We will begin a larger transition in the fall of 2021.

Who should I talk to if I have specific questions?

For questions regarding the team or programs, you can contact Ricky Silva, Head Coach.

For questions specific to your group, you should contact your lead coach. See upcoming emails about lead coaching assignments.

For questions regarding billing, you should contact Pamela at billing@sasoswimming.org