

Potomac Valley Swimming Operations Division Report

February 2014

I have registered for the 2014 Zone Workshop, April 11-13, 2014 in Baltimore. The workshop is for LSC Times Officers, Registrars, Safe Sport Chairs and office staff.

The January/February issue of Splash Magazine has the list of Top 10 Times from the 2012-2013 season. In the article accompanying the list (see attached) it says that Potomac Valley had the most No. 1 rankings with 57.

Safety Committee

Nothing to report this month.

Equipment

I authorized repair of two CTS-6 timing systems and two Infinity starting systems for a cost of \$3700. Five more Infinity systems are at Colorado for evaluation and repair. It is estimated they will cost about \$250 each to repair. Once they are all returned we will be able to send two starting systems out with each set of equipment.

With the number of PVS teams owning their own timing equipment, the requests for equipment rentals for PVS meets is down. This has allowed us to do rentals for a number of H.S. meets in both VA and MD and one Masters meet.

Technical Committee

Jim Thompson will be making one last update of the spreadsheet of JO qualifiers based on data through Feb. 2. The report may be available before the Feb. 10 board meeting.

Online Meet Entry (ONE) for SC Senior Championships and SC Junior Championships opened on Monday, January 27, 2014. All entries must be submitted through OME. OME entries close Tuesday, February 25.

Officials Committee

On January 15, the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee issued a new interpretation of the "touch rule" for breaststroke and butterfly based on a new interpretation from FINA. Overlap of the thumbs at the touch is now legal.

http://www.pvswim.org/official/rules/2014-01-15_Breaststroke_Touch_Interpretation.pdf

I had one late request for Officials Travel Reimbursement for Winter Nationals and one request for the Austin Grand Prix that I recommend to the Board for approval.

As of February 7, 2014 Potomac Valley had 500 certified officials. Given that we have many weekends with four meets some weekends with five meets, this is not an excessive number. The trend, however, is encouraging.

The IMX Meet (Jan 31-Feb 2) had 103 officials volunteer their time. Of this number, 75 were from Potomac Valley. Officials from MA, MD, MR, NI, and VA also worked the meet.

PVS official, Al Meilus has been accepted to the USA Swimming Open Water Weekshop, April 11-13, 2014 in Ft. Meyers, FL. USA Swimming will provide the housing and meals. PVS will pay the transportation costs.

Both PVS Short Course Championships (N3/N2) and PVS 14&U Junior Olympics (N2) have been approved as USA-S Officials Qualifying Meets (OQMs). Jim Sheehan, the current USA-S Program Operations Vice President, will be the lead evaluator for SC Champs.

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SWIMMING FOR THE TOP

◆ BY MIKE WATKINS

Here's a look at the 2012-13 Top 10 List, by the numbers. Check out the complete short course yards list, beginning on page 36. The long course list will run in the March-April issue of *Splash*.

108

For 2013, a total of 108 individual records and 64 relay records for a total of 172 NAG records overall.

9 MILLION

USA SWIMMING COLLECTED OVER 9 MILLION TIMES IN SWIMS (9,041,978)

34

LSCs had at least one No.1 ranking

Potomac Valley had the most individual No. 1-ranked times (57)

PV

TOP THREE LSCs

for individual events - PV- 57, FL- 55, PC- 45

16

FEMALE

LONG COURSE INDIVIDUAL RECORDS BROKEN

30

MALE

SHORT COURSE

26/36

FEMALE MALE

INDIVIDUAL RECORDS WERE BROKEN

When she was just 9 (which was a very short seven years ago), World and Olympic Champion Katie Ledecky made it her goal to swim fast enough to make USA Swimming's Top 16 list.

Because of her fantastic talent, it didn't take her long to accomplish this, and today, she stands proudly atop her age list – as well as in the world – in multiple events.

Ledecky, who won Olympic gold in London at the age of 15, attributes a good bit of the motivation that propelled her toward becoming one of the best swimmers in the world to first becoming a Top 10 swimmer among USA Swimming ranks.

"I remember feeling some disappointment when USA Swimming changed the lists so that they would only include swimmers who were aged 11 and older, and the lists became "Top 10" lists rather than "Top 16" lists," Ledecky said. "I got over that disappointment quickly, though, and then I became motivated to swim faster so that I could still make the

shorter Top 10 list as soon as I was eligible.”

And Ledecky hasn't been alone in chasing these goals. Swimmers past and present used the ranking lists throughout their evolving swim careers to set goals and use as motivation to accomplish faster times and ultimately chase their Olympic dreams.

Initiated in the early 1980s as a means to measure progress and provide motivation, the Top 16 list – which was pared down to the Top 10 a few years ago – is part of USA Swimming's National Age Group Recognition Program, an awards program for the top-level of age group swimmers.

All times submitted to USA Swimming from sanctioned, approved or observed competitions are eligible for consideration. The swimmer must have been a registered member of USA Swimming at the time of the swim.

Swimmers who are in the Top 10 in an event at the end of the season are awarded a certificate for their accomplishments. Certificates are distributed for both short course yard and long course meter events. They also receive USA Swimming Deck Pass patches for making the list.

But over the long haul, the real prize – along with bragging rights for being on the list – is the tremendous opportunity athletes and coaches have to gauge results, set goals and compare times for future growth and improvement in the water.

“The lists definitely motivated me when I was younger,” said U.S. National Team member and University of California-Berkeley All-American Catherine Breed. “I think any ‘young up and comer’ is encouraged and motivated when they see their name (on the list) in *Splash*.”

“I never looked at them with my coach, but they did give me a baseline of where I wanted to set some time goals. I never really had any goals to move up in the list, though moving up was more of the result, not the goal. I know I looked forward to the list being published, and to be able to compare myself to the superstars and try to get as close to their times as I could.”

AIMING FOR THE TOP

Once awarded in age-pairings – 10-11, 12-13, 14-15, etc. – Top 10 lists are now kept for each age, starting with 11 up to age 18. The National Times and Recognition Committee presented the Top 10 single age recognition program at the September 2007 Age Group Development Business Meeting.

During the meeting, which involved LSC Age Group Chairs and committee members, the Age Development Committee popularly recommended that the 10 & U age group be dropped as part of the recognized age groups in this program.

The time frame for each year's recognition is Sept. 1 through Aug. 31 of the following year. Lists are compiled and checked in the fall and the final list is prepared and announced prior to the end of the year in *Splash*. They are also kept online so swimmers and coaches can see where times rank almost immediately.

By and large, the decision to recognize 10, and not 16 swimmers per event, and the decision to use single-year age groups as opposed to dual-year groups, have caused some minor discussion and controversy.

The decision ultimately was made with the swimmers' and sport's best interest in mind.

“From (Missy) Franklin and Katie (Ledecky) all the way down the list, the lists include the top 7,500 to 8,000 age group swimmers in the USA Swimming membership,” said USA Swimming Performance Database Director Larry Herr. “Through discussions and analysis, we realized that there can be a significant developmental difference between ages, like 11 and 10, so it wasn't really fair to group them together and compare them to one another.”

LEAVE 'EM WANTING MORE

Despite the changes, swimmers and coaches alike find various rewards and motivations behind the Top 10 list rankings.

For former National Team and World Championships team member Kelsey Ditto, watching and analyzing the list made her want to swim even faster.

“That list definitely motivated me to work harder,” Ditto said. “When you're growing up, you know when you're the fastest person in your pool, and then the fastest at your local meets, but thanks to the list, I also knew where I stood against the whole country.”

“I've always been very goal-driven and aware of metrics, and I think that was one of the earliest examples of having something to aim for and work toward that seemed so far out of reach, but all of a sudden it felt tangible.”

For coaches, the opportunity to use the list for goal-setting can be a Catch-22.

Bruce Gemmell, head coach of the Nation's Capital Swim Club in Washington, D.C., sees value in the list – depending upon how it's used with each athlete.

“It can be a double-edged sword if you use it incorrectly with the wrong athletes,” Gemmell said. “I use it selectively because it motivates some swimmers but can hinder others who don't respond positively to it.”

“Being an old coach, I've become pretty good at knowing how to use the list with my athletes because I know them. It's all about putting it into context for them.”

For Ledecky, she sees great value in the lists, especially for younger swimmers still finding and making their way through the sport, even if they are gunning to knock her off the top.

“Though I may not look at the lists now as frequently as I did when I was 11 or 12, I certainly feel there is significance to them and value in reviewing them,” Ledecky said. “It's fun to think that there may be young swimmers who are trying now to chase down some of my times, and the lists still remain a source of motivation because I can see that there are some great young swimmers coming up through the ranks.”

