



Take Your Mark!

Potomac Valley Swimming
Parents Newsletter

September, 2018

Welcome!

Welcome to the premiere edition of **Take Your Mark!**, the newsletter for Potomac Valley Swimming parents. We aim to make this a regular update on PVS activities, and an opportunity to help you learn more about the sport of competitive swimming as well as how USA Swimming and PVS work.

As always your comments, questions, suggestions are welcome. Please send them to: jjneill@cox.net



Words of Wisdom From a Parent to a Swimmer

The swim bag was double checked—everything looks like it is there—and the swimmer leaned out.

“Be the hardest worker and the one having the most fun,” came the parting words of the parent.

“Sounds good!” The truck door closed, and the swimmer scurried indoors, swim bag bouncing wildly off his back.

The parent’s statement stopped me dead in my tracks, if not physically, then definitely mentally.

After all, this wonderful piece of advice was comprehensively powerful and gave exactly the right message: You can work hard, and have fun at the same time.

And really, isn’t that all we want?

For the full article: <https://swimswam.com/best-advice-ive-ever-heard-swim-parent-give-kid/>



Swimming Governance

How are your child’s swimming experiences organized and governed, and how do they fit within the scope of Olympic/International swimming?

Let’s start at the top. FINA (Fédération internationale de natation) is the international federation recognized by the International Olympic Committee for administering competition in water sports—swimming, diving, water polo, synchronized swimming, etc. It is based in Lausanne, Switzerland, and currently consists of 209 member nations. Each nation establishes governing bodies to administer the individual aquatic sports under the rules and procedures of FINA, as well as those of the country’s Olympic governing body. The national governing body for swimming in the United States is USA Swimming.

USA Swimming, headquartered in Colorado Springs, is charged with the overall organization and operation of swimming within the U.S. It is divided into 59 Local Swimming Committees (LSCs), which are the local administrative organizations responsible for the registration, support, and governance of the USA Swimming member swim clubs in their designated region. In Washington DC and the nearby counties, that LSC is Potomac Valley Swimming (PVS).

Potomac Valley Swimming currently includes approximately 12,000 athletes in about 50 member clubs. It is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of coaches, officials, swimmers, and other interested parties. One of the chief responsibilities of PVS is to sanction swim meets, and then to ensure that these meets are run under USA Swimming rules.

Please note that there are other organizations in the area that run swim meets that are not typically sanctioned and governed by PVS—these include high school, college, summer leagues, masters, etc.



Competitive swimming is a unique sport—not only because of the life-time benefits to the swimmer, including physical fitness, improved self-esteem, low injury rate, to name a few—but because it takes many parent volunteers to run swim meets. In no other sport can so many parents take such an active role. You don't have to just sit on the sidelines and watch; you can get down on the deck and participate by volunteering.

Parent volunteers are essential for all PVS swim meets.

“So, what types of volunteers are needed for most swim meets?”

Timer: Typically this position requires the most volunteers, and it is the simplest position. Each lane at a pool typically requires 2-3 timers per lane to ensure accurate timing. Timers use stopwatches and automatic buttons to record times for the swimmers participating in the meet.

Head Timer: The Head Timer supervises the timers in each lane and assists the timers if there is a timing malfunction.

Marshall: Marshalls are responsible for monitoring the behavior of swimmers on the pool deck to ensure the safety of every swimmer in the pool. You are basically an extra set of eyes for lifeguards and meet management.

Runner: Runners do a variety jobs including posting results, collecting timer sheets, transporting documents between meet workers, etc.

Hospitality: Most swim meets provide snacks, drinks, and food at swim meets for coaches and officials working at the meet for a long period of time. Hospitality workers are similar to concessions workers, but only prepare food for coaches and officials working at a swim meet.

None of these positions require previous experience! The next one is a little different:

Official: Officials are the folks stationed around the deck to ensure that the competition runs smoothly and according to USA Swimming rules. These volunteers have undergone training, have worked as apprentice officials, have taken comprehensive rules tests, and have undergone evaluation by an experienced official before being certified by PVS. In addition, they are required to pass criminal background checks and to take athlete protection courses prior to stepping on deck. It sounds complicated, but it's really not, and it's an especially rewarding volunteer role. Contact your club's officials chair for more information.

“How do I get involved as a volunteer?” Many clubs have a Volunteer Coordinator who will be happy to answer your questions and assist. If you don’t know who this is, contact your child’s coach.

Swim meets require a considerable number of parent volunteers. The smallest meets may have 150 swimmers and require 30-40 volunteers to run; larger meets will need even more parents. Pick a position and provide a helping hand!



Links to some intriguing articles for swim parents:

Why Isn't My Swimmer Dropping Time?

<https://swimswam.com/isnt-swimmer-dropping-time/>

A Tribute to Swim Parents Everywhere

<https://www.swimtopia.com/a-tribute-to-swim-parents-everywhere/>

What is the Right Level of Competition for Age Group Swimmers?

<https://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/news/what-is-the-right-level-of-competition-for-age-group-swimmers/>

5 Reasons Swimming Volunteers are the Best Volunteers

<https://swimswam.com/5-reasons-swimming-volunteers-best-volunteers/>

6 Things Parents Like to Do at Meets

<https://swimswam.com/6-things-parents-like-to-do-at-meets/>



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