



General Chair's Report to the House of Delegates

July 2020

The past year has been unlike any other year in my 25 years of involvement in Potomac Valley Swimming (PVS). We've had many challenges during the last four months, and I'd like to thank all the board members for their participation and support during this unique year. I also thank the club leaders for their ideas and support during the recent shutdown and restart. And finally, I thank all PVS members as they practice the health and safety protocols during this return to the pool.

Last July, we successfully held three long course championships meets for the first time in PVS. The 12&U athletes had their own championship meet at Claude Moore and it was a success. The energy and enthusiasm of our young swimmers was great to see. The problem of lack of food vendors at Claude Moore has already been addressed and food trucks are now made available for meets at that facility. The 13-14 year old swimmers had their own successful championship meet at the University of Maryland. And, the LC Senior Championship meet, also at the University of Maryland, was its usual fast meet.

The fall season saw the first PVS Open meet (November Open) hosted at The St. James. It was a success. There were 38 meets in Potomac Valley between late September and the end of 2019.

Twenty officials' clinics were held in the fall, including three online clinics to train new officials and allow current officials to renew their certifications.

In November, the PVS House of Delegates approved the new PVS Bylaws. The template provided by USA Swimming allowed the bylaws to be streamlined from 53 pages to 17 pages. Many items from the old bylaws were moved into the Policies & Procedures document, as task which was completed in early 2020.

Five championship format meets were held in December allowing many of our athletes a mid-season prelims/finals opportunity. PVS had swimmers participate at the US Open and Winter Junior Championships in Atlanta.

2020 started off with the traditional PVS Distance Meet the first weekend in January. This is a distance opportunity unlike any in the country and nearly 450 PVS athletes were able to compete in the 1000 or 1650, many for the first time.

PVS Mission Statement

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PVS Vision Statement

PVS: Leadership and excellence in and out of the pool



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Six PVS clubs were named 2020 Club Excellence clubs (Gold, Silver, or Bronze) as part of the top 200 clubs in USA Swimming performance. The 2018-2019 Virtual Club Championship lists included many PVS clubs (10 in SC and 8 in LC) in the top 10 percent of all USA Swimming clubs.

Our athlete membership numbers have remained relatively stable (within a few percent) over the last four years and we were on pace to maintain those numbers this year. We already had 24 athletes qualify for the 2020 Olympic Trials. We had five PVS officials invited to officiate at Olympic Trials

March 2020 started off well in PVS. We had just completed a successful Short Course Senior Championship meet. Then, on March 10, we received the news that the University of Maryland was cancelling our reservation for the upcoming Junior Olympics meet due to concern about the emerging COVID-19 coronavirus. Three days later, USA Swimming shut down all meets in the United States. A few weeks after that, we were all under a Stay at Home order.

We have dealt with issues affecting meets in PVS in the past, including major snowstorms, hurricanes, pump failures, and even sewage backups. In all my years as a volunteer in PVS, never have we experienced a total shutdown of operations for multiple months.

PVS clubs shifted their approaches to training and continuing to engage their athletes; PVS and USA Swimming stepped up to support our clubs financially. PVS and USA Swimming developed financial relief programs to help our clubs maintain operations. PVS has provided over \$190,00 in relief funds to our clubs. Ten PVS clubs obtained USA Swimming Phase 1 grants totaling \$50,000. A second phase of USA Swimming Grants is now in process and multiple PVS clubs have applied. Many clubs also applied for US Government programs that provided loans and grants.

Currently, most PVS clubs have found places for their athletes to swim, mostly in outdoor facilities. The COVID-19 situation is still critical in the DC area, and many of our local jurisdictions are slowly, cautiously allowing return to swimming. We still have a long way to go and there are still some PVS clubs that do not have swimmers back at practice yet.

When the 2020 Olympic Games were postponed, USA Swimming postponed the Olympic Trials scheduled for June 2020. Olympic Trials are now rescheduled for June 2021.

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On a positive note during this pandemic, USA Swimming has increased their communication with the Local Swim Committees (LSCs) like Potomac Valley. At least once a week I have a phone call and/or video meeting with USA Swimming staff. USA Swimming has also increased their direct communication with their members using a new customer management relations (CRM) system. They also launched their new website in late June.

Another positive note this year in Potomac Valley has been more clubs completing the USA Swimming Safe Sport Recognition Program. At the end of 2019, six PVS clubs had completed the program. PVS now has 19 clubs that are Safe Sport Recognized showing their commitment to the safety of our athletes. My goal is to have half of our non-college clubs complete the program by the end of the year, and I believe we are on pace for that to happen. I thank and recognize all these clubs: Arlington Aquatic Club, All-Star Aquatics, Blue Wave Swim Team, Dragon Swim Team, Fairfax Foxes, Herndon Aquatic Club, Hydro-Sonic Tiburones, Mason Makos Swim Team, Maryland Suburban Swim Club, Nation's Capital Swim Club, Moons Aquatics Club, Occoquan Swimming, Patuxent Aquatics Club, Potomac Marlins, Riptide Swim Team, Shark Tank Racing Squad, SNOW Swimming, The FISH, and Victory Lane Aquatic Club.

PVS committees have remained active during the pandemic. An athlete member of the Safe Sport Committee developed a program to educate and empower female athletes to prevent athlete abuse. The program is titled [Girls Speak Up](#). The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee has been working on a program for athlete engagement and will launch that soon. The Officials Committee is developing modified recertification requirements to allow for the fact that we've had fewer meets and clinics this year.

USA Swimming developed a "Crawl, Walk, Run" approach to returning to competition. Clubs in some parts of the country have, under strict safety protocols, been able to hold small meets in facilities they own or control. I know many are anxious to compete, but in PVS we are still in the "Crawl" phase where we are only allowed one or a small number of swimmers per lane. Public pools the District of Columbia are still not allowed to open. In fairness to those PVS clubs still unable to practice, or have only some of their swimmers practice, the PVS board has decided to not allow sanctioned meets in August. I anticipate that we will ease those restrictions to allow small meets (e.g., intrasquad meets) in September. In the meantime, PVS clubs can hold unofficial competitions within the local health and safety guidelines.

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A PVS task force composed of meet directors, coaches, athletes, and officials was initiated in June to help map out the road back to competition. The first report from that task force will be available soon.

Communication with the PVS members has also increased in the desire to keep our membership informed of the changing situation at both this local and national levels.

- Since late March, I have had weekly round table discussions with PVS club leaders. These meetings have allowed me to share the latest information with the clubs and for the clubs to share information, ideas, and best practices with each other.
- Since late April, I have provided weekly communication updates to our membership. And, beginning at the start of the shutdown in March, PVS had provided links and information from USA Swimming and other organizations prominently on our website: <http://www.pvswim.org>.
- I held a [virtual town hall](#) for PVS members, one for PVS coaches, and two virtual social gatherings for PVS officials to keep us engaged during the shutdown.

I have used this break from competition to further my education of swimming. USA Swimming has provided periodic meetings of all LSC General Chairs and Administrative Vice Chairs. I have attended all of these meetings to collaborate with my colleagues across the country. The Zone Directors have met multiple times over the last three months to coordinate regionally. And, as the Eastern Zone Non-Coach Director, I was a guest at the April 24 meeting of the USA Swimming Board of Directors.

USA Swimming held their business seminar series, SwimBiz, virtually this year. I was able to attend all the sessions. The SwimBiz series teaches clubs and LSCs how to better run their business. The recordings of the sessions will be available on the new website <waiting for the link from USA-S>.

I have attended information webinars from the following organizations to better understand the pandemic and how we can best return to swimming: USA Swimming, American Swim Coaches Association (ASCA), Aspen Institute Project Play, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Center for Disease Control (CDC), BoardSoure, BoardEffect, and Diversity in Aquatics

I have continued to collaborate with officials across the country. I participated in an Administrative Official clinic in Illinois Swimming and I taught an Administrative Official clinic for the five Texas LSCs. In addition, I

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was a co-presenter of a presentation to the LSC General Chairs and Administrative Vice Chairs on procedures and best practices for running online officials' clinics.

In PVS, officials training continued during the shutdown. PVS held two Stroke & Turn Judge clinics and in the process trained 87 potential new officials. Sixty-two PVS officials also attended to fulfill recertification requirements.

As we slowly get back to a "new" normal, I feel that Potomac Valley Swimming can be better than ever in the future. I anxiously await the day I can be back on the pool deck officiating a PVS meet and reconnecting with all of you again in person.

Tim Husson

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