

Steve,

It was with much disappointment that I read, after hearing rumors of the fact, of QDD's request to transfer to Potomac Valley Swimming. It is unfortunate that this situation has come to this point. I believe that VSI bears a lot of responsibility, as does USA Swimming.

First, QDD states that VSTP no longer exists as a team in the North. I was surprised to read this, especially since QDD swimmers competed in our meet that we hosted at the WARF, The Icebreaker, back in December. Although we are a small team that has gone through many changes in the five years since I first resigned from coaching USA Swimming, the team still exists and is developing good swimmers. In fact of our six Senior level swimmers, three made Senior cuts and of those three, one earned her way to Sectionals. VSTP also has two All-State swimmers from our Age-Group program. So we are here, still going strong, and striving to survive in an area overlooked by VSI and the clubs from Richmond and the Tidewater areas.

Next, when Curl-Burke absorbed Patriot Swimming and FAST, I contacted USA Swimming and spoke with several representatives from VSI about the dangers inherent in allowing the move. USA Swimming, as we now know, did not want to get involved. One wonders why USA Swimming wanted their hands clean in this situation? Needless to say, VSI lost many swimmers that switched clubs, lost the ability to make full use of facilities for potential VSI teams in Manassas and Warrenton, and have allowed for the development of the "mega-club" concept to flourish. The idea of a "mega-club" is especially troublesome since they seem to go against the tenets of USA Swimming in developing swimmers and building the base. Small clubs, personalized attention and family-type atmospheres that many swimmers benefit from are lost in favor of the masses on these big teams paying the way for potential swimmers with futures in Olympics or Div. I swimming.

QDD presents an argument that travel is problematic. I agree whole-heartedly. With the creep of PVS teams into VSI territory, meet hosting opportunities for VSI clubs are diminished and travel for these same clubs is increased. I am not interested in taking VSTP to PVS meets to support their clubs, while we pay VSI dues and are a VSI Team. We are loyal to our LSC and want to see VSI succeed. However, meet travel and overnight stays have become expensive and makes it a financial burden on our families. Is VSI willing to help promote the creation of more facilities here in the northern part of the state? If so, when? If not, why?

It is funny that this situation has happened. When I first started with VSTP, back when the team was created, I hoped to build a team that, although small, could rival the "big dogs" in VSI (NOVA, Poseidon, Coast Guard, TIDE, etc.) in terms of swimmer development and teaching that the process was just as important, if not more so, than the first place ribbon. I thought that being a part of an LSC meant that that same LSC had our best interests in mind, as we supported VSI and the interests of the LSC. I sincerely hope that I have not been mistaken in this belief, and that, regardless of the outcome of the QDD decision, VSI will be there for VSTP.

Thanks for reading. Although my arguments may not be the best formulated in written form, several coaches and others who have spoken with me in the past will know how I feel.

Sincerely,

Brad Boelter
Head Coach VSTP