

To: PVS HOD Delegates
To: PVS Flash Mail Recipients

Subject: Appropriate LSC for Certain PVS Clubs to Register in - Potomac Valley Swimming or Virginia Swimming

This memo is being sent to advise you about some significant discussions that have been occurring with Virginia Swimming (VSI) and United States Swimming Board members that involve (at this time) three PVS teams. They are Snow, Ashburn Swim Team and OCCS. The discussions have been to discuss which is the appropriate LSC that these teams should register in for future registration years.

Background:

First, a little history. When USA Swimming came into existence in the late 1970's, the LSCs were divided up based on what had been AAU Districts. Specifically, Potomac Valley became the territory of the District of Columbia and the immediately surrounding counties of Maryland and Virginia. Per the USA Swimming Rule Book, that is the Virginia counties of Arlington & Fairfax, and the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church.. But, Loudoun County and Prince William County are part of the Virginia LSC.

I was first approached on this issue in late July, 2004 by Virginia Swimming. The initial issue that Virginia Swimming brought to our attention involved Snowbird Aquatics (SNOW). SNOW (including its predecessor clubs Solotar and Sunset) started in Potomac Valley with practice sites solely in PVS territory. SNOW later opened another site in PVS as well as a site in Loudoun County. They eventually wound up with only one practice site that is in Loudoun County.

An existing non-USA Swimming team approached SNOW this past summer looking to become a part of SNOW. This team was located in Strasburg (in Shenandoah County). VSI felt this was an encroachment of their territory and wanted PVS to discourage SNOW from affiliating with this club. Based on what our understanding of USA Swimming policy on this matter, we were not aware of any rules and policies that SNOW would be violating. This, SNOW continued to pursue this possible affiliation.

This caused VSI to share its concerns with USA Swimming. When they did so, they also pointed out that there were two other PVS teams that had training sites in VSI territory - AST and OCCS.

AST has been a member of PVS since 1990 and has always had only one practice site, in Ashburn Village, Loudoun County, Virginia. When AST became a USA Swimming club, it joined PVS because their mailing address was within PVS. VSI is now expressing the view that AST should never have been allowed to join PVS and should switch to Virginia by the next registration year.

OCCS started out in PVS in 1988 with all their practice sites in PVS. Over the years their practice sites have shifted so that now they are entirely in Prince William County

(part of VSI). VSI is still willing to let them register as a club with PVS (as there was apparently some sort of historical agreement between VSI & PVS that we have not been able to locate thus far), but only if they agreed not to further expand in VSI's territory.

In addition, the question has arisen whether a club registered in one LSC and having practice sites there may also have training sites in another LSC. We are currently aware of three PVS clubs that are either currently doing so or are actively considering it. It is understood that this is permissible under USA Swimming guidance, but VSI has shown interest in also addressing this matter.

Past Activities:

As a result of the concerns raised by VSI about SNOW affiliating with a team in Shenandoah County, I agreed to meet during the annual USAS Convention with the VSI General Chairman and two representatives of the United States Swimming Board to discuss the matter. It was at that meeting that I also found out that it was not just SNOW that VSI wanted to discuss, but also whether OCCS and AST should be allowed to continue to register as clubs with PVS.

Since I did not anticipate the status of OCCS and AST would be on the agenda, I did not consult with them prior to going to convention. Nevertheless, I did agree to bring back to PVS and the potentially impacted clubs a proposal that included the following:

Occoquan Club (OCCS) can remain in PVS on the condition that any future expansion of the club will be in PVS and not VSI and that this is applicable not only to satellite teams but also practice water.

Snowbird (SNOW) and Ashburn (AST) clubs will be contacted with the proposal that they change their membership to VSI by the 2005 registration year. The rationale is that both clubs are improperly registered in PVS.

The OCCS Board has considered the proposal and has advised me that they while they wish to remain in PVS, they do not want their right to expand in VSI territory limited. AST has informed me that they wish to remain in PVS. SNOW has indicated a preference to remain in PVS – particularly if there will remain a potential for other PVS clubs to open training sites in Loudoun County.

The PVS Board has met and agreed to support its member clubs that are most directly impacted by this matter.

VSI and United States Swimming have also been advised that what was proposed at the September meeting is not acceptable to at least two of the clubs most directly impacted.

Future Plans

Given that the proposal made at convention was not acceptable, representatives of USA Swimming have now offered to host a session with a facilitator to see if a resolution can be developed. This session will include representatives of the VSI and PVS Boards, as well as a representative from each of the directly involved teams. We are still working out the specifics. I expect the meeting to occur sometime early next year.

While the results would not be binding until approved by the Boards of PVS and VSI, it is the expressed hope of the USA Swimming representatives that the parties come to the meeting with the goal of reaching a consensus on a solution to the current situation. The range of solutions that could be developed is at this point quite flexible.

The issues we may address could include;

- Whether any clubs currently registered with PVS would need to change their registration to VSI. If the clubs were permitted to remain in PVS, would any conditions be placed on their future activities.
- Should the boundary between PVS and VSI be redrawn.
- Are there any current or future restrictions on the right of PVS clubs currently training in PVS to also have training sites in other LSCs.
- If clubs were to leave PVS, should they continue to have the right to participate in our meets? If so, all meets, non-championship meets, etc. What kind of commitment (if any) should PVS make regarding how permanent the arrangement would be. Would they attend on an equal basis with PVS entered clubs/athletes?
- Should we be more active in inviting current VSI member clubs training in Prince William and Loudoun County to participate in our meets.

As you can see, the issues are potentially far reaching and could have a long term impact on PVS and at least some of its clubs. Given this, I wanted to make sure that you were aware of these developments. I also want to invite you to share with me any thoughts you may have on what would constitute a solution that would be (should be) acceptable to PVS. It is important that I know of your interests and concerns prior to this meeting I want to be able to effectively represent your interests as we attempt to develop a mutually acceptable solution to this challenging problem.

Jim Garner
General Chairman, PVS