



A Letter From Coach Dave

Dear Team,

It's 2023 and Championship season is just around the corner! In the coming weeks there will be a meet for everyone on the team that they can focus on to perform their very best. These meets include the Mini Champs (February 18-19, Hampton) for our 8-under swimmers, Silver Champs (February 24-26, Fox Chapel) for all team members in the "faster than B, slower than A" times range, Developmental Champs (March 4-5, West Allegheny) for our 14-under swimmers who have not yet achieved a B time, and Junior Olympics (March 10-12, Pitt) for all team members who have achieved A times. In addition to that, our high school swimmers will be competing at WPIALs (March 2-3, Pitt) and States (March 15-18, Bucknell). As you can see—our plate is full and there is something for everyone! Let's make sure that as a team we double down on our commitment for the remainder of the season, and let's show Western Pennsylvania what PEAQ is all about. Best of luck to all team members in our championship meets!

Regards,

Coach Schraven

Coach Topher to Present at National Conferences

For those of you who don't know, **Coach Topher** sits on USA Swimming's Athletes' Executive Committee. Because of this national-level leadership role that he holds, he will be attending a conference in Denver this April and then traveling in June to Portland and Minneapolis. We look forward to him sharing what he learns!





PEAQ Meet Recap – December and January

PEAQ certainly has been busy this winter! Our swimmers have represented PEAQ at both the local and national levels. We kicked off our December meet schedule with **The Christmas Qualifier** meet held at Bethel Park High School the weekend of 12/2-12/4. Following that meet, PEAQ's December and January schedule was quite full with swimmers competing at the following meets: **Junior Nationals East** in Greensboro, NC (12/8-12/11); **PEAQ Intrasquad** at Canon McMillan (12/10); **PEAQ@Pitt Christmas Meet** at the University of Pittsburgh (12/15 - 12/18); **Age Group Open** at Mount Lebanon HS (1/14-1/15); **Tri-Cup** in York, PA (1/14-1/15); **ISCA Club Championship** in Hanover, VA (1/20-1/22).

* The picture above is of **Carter Robertson, Elise Nardozzi, Mac Clark, Matthew Purcell**, and at Junior Nationals in Greensboro, NC the second weekend in December. A special shout out goes out to these four swimmers and **Coach Marian** for qualifying for and representing PEAQ at this very elite and national-level meet. They raced against some of the fastest 18 and under swimmers in the country. Way to Go!

PEAQ Hosts a Successful Youth Night!

On January 7th PEAQ invited its age group swimmers to come and view a high school swim meet at the Upper Saint Clair HS pool. The swim meet was a tri-meet held between Upper Saint Clair, Canon McMillan, and Seneca Valley high school swim teams. The age groupers wore their PEAQ gear and sat together in a special PEAQ section in the stands where parents and coaches chaperoned and made snacks and drinks available to the swimmers. The highlight for many of the swimmers, besides getting to see some fast swimming, was participating in the chuck a duck contest during the break where several kids with good aim won gift cards! After the meet, many of the high schoolers stuck around to have pizza with the age groupers and to help the coaches run a special starts and turns practice for the age groupers. This super fun and successful event was organized by **Coach Alex**, and we are already looking forward to making this a tradition!

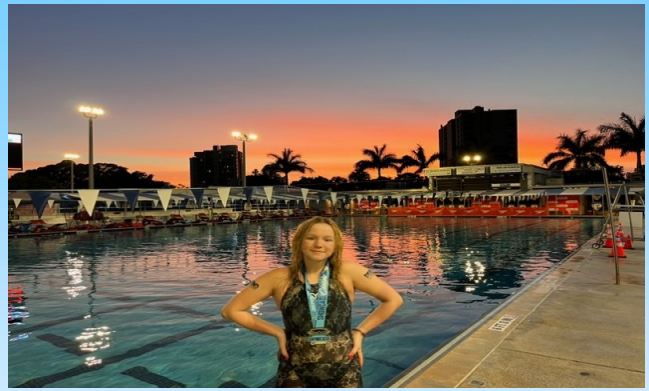


The South Hills Splash Makes Strides

Something incredible happens on Sunday evenings at the Upper Saint Clair High School pool. Sunday nights are when 33 special athletes who make up The South Hills Splash team practice under the leadership of **Coach Alex** and many PEAQ senior-level volunteers. The Splash team is part of a Special Olympics Pennsylvania program that swims out of the Upper Saint Clair High School pool. For the past few months, the team has been practicing and having fun with friends in preparation for their championship meets, which will be held at The University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University in April. This has been an amazing learning experience for all those involved. Go South Hills Splash!



Good luck to those swimmers competing in the IMX/R/L meet this weekend at USC! Swim Fast!



Fish Out of Water: Lauren Opitz

Everyone on the senior team knows that Lauren Opitz is a fierce competitor and an accomplished swimmer in the pool, but there is more to Lauren than just swimming. Lauren is the oldest of four siblings and a sophomore at Peters Township High School where she is an honors and AP student who loves physics and statistics. When not swimming or studying, you may find Lauren volunteering. Meals on Wheels is a nonprofit that Lauren works with by helping with deliveries and special activities for the program. Meals on Wheels is a program that is designed to help individuals who need prepared meals, including those who may need short term assistance due to an illness or injury. Last summer, Lauren showed both leadership and kindness when she organized a card making activity with the younger Wahoo swimmers for Meals on Wheels recipients. Lauren's card making activity proved to be a wonderful service and team bonding activity for the kids. Lauren also volunteers with Special Olympics as a South Hills Splash coach. This is a program that helps some very special athletes be a part of a swim team that is run out of Upper Saint Clair's High School pool.

We are so proud of Lauren at PEAQ. Our younger swimmers are very lucky to have Lauren as a role model. Keep being amazing, Lauren!



Safe Sport Reminders

At PEAQ we are committed to providing a safe environment for our athletes. We want to provide you with some safe sport reminders and also share some safe sport policies that are being put in place by USA Swimming.

- 1) New parents, swimmers, and coaches, visit our Safe Sport page on the PEAQ club website to familiarize yourself with safe sport and what that means.
- 2) Parents, if you haven't already obtained your PA clearances for volunteers, please do so. If you are registered at one of our South Hills sites, please visit the PEAQ website and do the following:
 1. Click on "Club Team."
 2. Select "Parent Resources."
 3. Select the subsection "Safe Sport," and follow the instructions on how to submit your paper work. South Hills parents should email **Carissa Howard** (carissathoward@gmail.com) with questions. If you are registered at the Pitt site, please hand your clearances in to **Mimi Perez** (mimiperez71@gmail.com).

- 3) **Athletes, upon your 18th birthday, you must take the USA Swimming APT (Athlete Protection Training) course and read and acknowledge the USA Swimming MAAP (Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy).** Links to both courses can be found in the PEAQ home page. **Please note –The 30 day grace period for completion no longer exists.**



Healthy Habits: Granola Bars

5 Ingredient Peanut Butter Granola Bars

**This recipe was taken from realfooddietitians.com*

Ingredients:

- 3 cups of old-fashioned oats
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup peanut butter
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup maple syrup or honey
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of mini chocolate chips
- 2 whole eggs
- *Optional - a pinch of salt

Directions – Preheat oven to 350 and combine all ingredients. Line a 9x9 baking pan with parchment paper and transfer the mixture to the pan. Firmly press the mixture into the pan and create an even layer. Sprinkle with some additional chips and firmly press the chips in. Bake for 15-17 minutes or until the edges brown. Let cool completely and then cut into squares or bars.

Incentive Swim Cap Program

Our PEAQ coaches are trying something new this year! They have been issuing special motivational swim cap awards that are meant to encourage performance and sportsmanship/character. Each month a chosen swimmer or swimmers has a chance to win a silver PEAQ cap for performance or a blue PEAQ cap for sportsmanship/character. Coaches began awarding these special caps to selected recipients in the fall and will continue doing this throughout the season. When you see swimmers wearing a blue or silver cap, congratulate them!



Caught You Doing Good

See what good things our coaches have "caught" our swimmers doing!



Shaddie Bemm (nominated by Coach Alex) - Shaddie has quietly been working hard and his improvements are compounding! His practices have been looking great, and his determination to get through hard sets is something to see. Most impressive are his leadership skills with his teammates when he encourages them to do their best and improve their skills. Keep it up!

Kaitlyn Connors (nominated by Coach Alex) - Kaitlyn has been a huge fan of her USCHS teammates this season. Kaitlyn is rarely sitting at dual meets and constantly asks people their events and wishes them the best of luck. She continues to lead not only by example, but also in her encouraging words at practice too. Keep it up!

Alex Hrvatin (nominated by Coach Topher) - Alex competed in his first swim meet this winter, and while he was very nervous, he pushed through all of his events. He even won a duck for finishing first in his heat! He did an amazing job!

Conor Kloos (nominated by Coach Royce) - Conor has been very welcoming to our newer Developmental swimmers. He has helped demonstrate what to do and lead their lanes!

Olivia Liu (nominated by Coach Amy and Coach Sarah) - Olivia is in our Developmental group. She is always a good listener and so kind. Great job, Olivia!

Colin McKain (nominated by Coach Royce) - Colin has been a positive role model for our younger swimmers. Every day during our transition from high school/senior group to the age groupers, Colin encourages the younger swimmers to swim and cheers them on. The younger ones really enjoy hearing it from a senior group swimmer.

DJ Poe (nominated by Coach Alex) - DJ has a way of bringing light to a room full of darkness. During these past few weeks, the Junior group has worked through the IMX events. DJ worked hard at the sets. When he was red-faced and barely catching his breath, he would crack a joke to his lanemates. It's without question, he helps his teammates get through the more challenging sets with his enthusiasm and his little bit of silly.

Vivi Scalise (nominated by Coach Amy and Coach Sarah) – Vivi is brave and always works hard at practice! Keep it up, Vivi!

Quinn Willyerd (nominated by Coach Royce) – Quinn helped me clean up our area after the Mount Lebanon meet on both days. Nice job!

Matvey Zoukovski and Nazar Zoukovski (nominated by Coach Royce) - The Zoukovski brothers helped me clean up our area after the Christmas meet every night. I really appreciated their help after a long night of swimming.

