



A Letter From Coach Dave

Dear Team,

Welcome to the 2024-25 PEAQ “Short Course” swimming season! We’ve had a tremendous amount of interest in our program and we’re so happy with the number of new families who have joined the top USA Swimming club in Western PA.

While every program will claim to be “the best,” one of the nice things about swimming is that we are able to measure performance *objectively*—it’s not a matter of opinion! USA Swimming—the National Governing Body (NGB) for competitive swimming—has developed a system to measure the performance of its member clubs that it calls the VCC, which stands for “Virtual Club Championship.” The basic gist of the program is that it measures the performance of your team members who are between the ages of 11 and 18 for both boys and girls. The system assigns “power points” to times swum for the various events (the faster the time the more points you earn) and selects

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PEAQ at The Pirates

On September 7th, PEAQ attended the USA Swimming Swim Night at PNC Park. Our swim families came out to show their support for the Pittsburgh Pirates and one of our PEAQ alumni, **Josh Matheny**, who was the guest Olympian for the special swim day. Swimmers in attendance were given a chance to talk with Josh and gifted a Pirates swim cap and an autographed Josh Matheny picture. Despite the Pirates’ two losses to the Washington Nationals, our swimmers and families had a great time.



A Letter from Coach Dave Continued

the top 2 swimmers in each event. The maximum number of events a swimmer can have scored is 4, so the system is designed to measure the depth of a team's performances, not just the fastest times. You can learn all the detailed parameters of the VCC by following [this link](#).

PEAQ has been the #1 scoring team in the VCC within Allegheny Mountain Swimming (our Local Swimming Committee, or LSC) each year since 2017. For the most recent Short Course season, we were ranked #1 in Allegheny Mountain, #29 in the Eastern Zone, and #91 across the USA. Given that there are approximately 2700 member clubs, that places us within the top 3.3% of swim clubs nationwide. To give you a sense of perspective with regard to how we perform relative to our local competition, the Top 5 teams in AMS are PEAQ, Allegheny North (160k points, 207 nationally), Fox Chapel (116k, 399), Steel City (114k, 410) and Mt. Lebanon (92k, 577).

We will provide VCC updates several times throughout the season, including detailed reports that list which swimmers were selected for which events. A good goal for all of our team members would be to achieve a time that allows them to contribute to our team score. The more competitive we can make it for our swimmers, the better the kids will swim, and the higher our team will be ranked!



PEAQ Attends Swimposium

On the weekend of September 13-15, Allegheny Mountain Swimming and Middle Atlantic Swimming hosted a Swimposium with the support of USA Swimming. The Swimposium was held at the Penn Stater Conference Center in State College, PA. Coaches, officials, parents and swimmers from both LSCs were invited to attend, and specific tracks were designed for those groups. Additionally, Olympians **Josh Matheny**, **Chris Giuliano**, and **Alex Walsh** were on hand to share their experiences and expertise. PEAQ had swimmers, parents, officials etc. all attend this great event!

Pictured below is PEAQ's **Jackson Edwards** who attended the conference and was recently elected by his peers in AMS to be a senior AMS athlete representative.



New Faces on Deck

We are very fortunate at PEAQ to have highly qualified coaches on our staff. We would like to welcome the following new coaches: **Meghan Miller** (CM), **Kelly Beck** (USC), **Vernon Yenick** (USC), **Anna Grimenstein** (USC), **Michael Rine** (Pitt), **Jerry Chen** (Pitt), **Max Shipley** (Pitt/USC in summer), and **Drew Jalbert** (Pitt). When you see a new coach on deck, introduce yourself and welcome them to our PEAQ family!

Abby Poe: Fish Out of Water

The last name Poe may be familiar to you because we highlighted Zoe Poe last year. This year is Zoe's younger sister's turn. **Abby Poe**, along with the rest of the Poe kids, are great swimmers. In the sport of swimming, Abby is a two-time individual WPIAL finalist and a WPIAL and State finalist in the 4X100 free relay. However, like her siblings, Abby is also a fantastic runner and triathlete.

Abby is a South Fayette Junior and an impressive 4 Sport Varsity Athlete competing in Cross Country, Swimming, Track & Field and Triathlon. In Cross Country, Abby is a 2-time WPIAL finalist and a PIAA State finalist. In track and field, Abby has been a WPIAL finalist in multiple events and was a PIAA State finalist in the 4X800 relay. The fact that she is an accomplished swimmer and runner, makes Abby a natural triathlete, and we at PEAQ are grateful to Abby and her family for bringing more awareness to this sport. Her triathlon accomplishments are impressive and include:

- MMTT Elite Triathlon Team Member
- Junior Elite Triathlete - currently ranked in the top 10 in the country in her age group
- 2024 USA Triathlon National Championship - Abby was first out of the water among elite athletes 16-19 Yrs olds
- 2024 USA Triathlon National Championship 6th place in her age group (16 yr old)
- Selected for 2024 USA Triathlon Junior Select Triathlon Training Camp (only the top 8 female athletes in their respective age group are eligible for this camp)

It's hard to believe that Abby would have time for anything else, but she also finds time to volunteer with the South Hill's Splash, PEAQ's Special Olympics swim team, and she participates in the following school clubs: Student Government, Interact Club, Best Buddies, and Preschool Club.

We are so proud of Abby and wish her luck in ALL her sports and activities this year. Keep up the good work!



Coach Topher Attends National Swimming Conference

Coach Topher embarked on his annual trip to Denver, Colorado for USA Swimming's Annual Business meeting. He was invited to attend as a member of USA Swimming's Athletes' Executive Committee, which represents and advocates for athletes within USA Swimming on a National Level. While there, Topher ran workshops for local athlete representatives, and he presented on policy to the greater convention as a whole. This year, he was successful in leading a legislative push to have the 50s of stroke recognized as events for 13–14-year-old swimmers, something that is now in effect! Topher was also re-elected to another 2-year term on the committee, as well as elected Chair of the committee for his previous commitment to leadership. Great job, Coach Topher!



PEAQ Dives into a New Season at The First Splash



PEAQ's first short course meet of the 2024-2025 season, The First Splash, took place at Peters Township High School pool on October 5th and 6th. PEAQ had a huge showing at this meet. For some swimmers this was their first meet, and for some of our more seasoned swimmers, this was one of many First Splashes that they have competed in over the years. Our PEAQ coaches were so proud of our swimmers. Our team put up lots of best times, and several swimmers stepped out of their comfort zones to try new events at this meet. Overall the meet was a giant success. As coach Dave wrote in his email to the club when he shared meet results, let's "build on the positive momentum we established at the meet this past weekend!" Keep up the good work, PEAQ!



PEAQ to Host 2nd Annual Halloween Meet

PEAQ will be hosting its second annual Halloween meet at USC HS pool October 25th-27th. This meet is a prelims/finals meet with qualifying times. Those PEAQ swimmers who do not have qualifying times will be able to race in a time trial between prelims and finals.

We need lots of volunteers to run this meet, so please sign up to help! It will be a fun and fast meet!





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 **Lynn Brunner** (lbunner217@comcast.net) 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).

Healthy Habits: Hummus

Recipe submitted by Ahmad Alhajhusain (Sara and Hassan's dad)

Homemade Hummus

Ingredients:

- 1 can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed thoroughly
- 2 Tbs of plain Greek yogurt
- Juice of half a lemon
- 2 minced garlic cloves
- 2 Tbs of tahini
- 4 Tbs of extra virgin olive oil
- Pinch of cumin (add to taste)
- Pinch of salt (add to taste)
- 2 ice cubes for creamy texture

Directions:

Mix all of the above ingredients in a blender until smooth and creamy. Serve with fresh veggies and/or pita.



Caught You Doing Good

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



Audrey Lee (nominated by Coach Topher) - Even as one of our newest Juniors (and youngest), Audrey is always dialed in, knowing exactly what we are supposed to be doing, keeping the correct intervals, and helping to guide the entire group so they always stay on track! She makes those around her better, and that is the mark of a true teammate!

Emily Lee and Stephanie Liu (nominated by Coach Megan) - Stephanie and Emily have been lane leading practices for the first time this fall! Keep it up!

Nathan Keeney (nominated by Coach Megan) - Nathan always cheers for every single teammate during relays!

Evie Irwin (nominated by Coach Megan) - Evie always supports her teammates and reminds the group of sendoff times. She also keeps count of reps for the group.

The Senior Group Special Olympics Volunteers (nominated by Coach Dave) - We kicked off the new 2024-2025 South Hills Splash season on September 29th, and our first practice was filled with senior swimmers who have committed to volunteer their time this year and help coach The Splash. This was great to see!

Kendrick Hsu and Neil Mangan (nominated by Coach Marian and Coach Zach) - These two boys always make sure the equipment bags are hung neatly and off the floor. Thank you!

Griffin Tomsheck and Sara Alhajhusain (nominated by Coach Morgan) - These two swimmers stayed through all of 500 heats in the 13 and over age groups at The Frist Splash to count for their teammates. THANK YOU!

John Brendan Serbicki and Matthew Gavin (nominated by Coach Morgan) - These boys are new to Age Group 4 and have done a great job of adjusting to and leading the group.

EVERYONE at First Splash (nominated by Coach Morgan) - You did an amazing job!

Margo Schott and Cooper Provost (nominated by Coach Royce) - Margo and Cooper have been great teammates by helping the newer Age Group 2 kids with settling into practice.

Natalie Artz (nominated by Coach Royce) - Natalie helped to keep our area clean at The First Splash Meet. Thank you!

Paige and Sophie Simpson (nominated by Coach Benon) - Sophie stayed after the morning session of the First Splash to help, and Paige stayed after her events finished at the meet to count for anyone who needed a counter during the distance session.

