



A Letter From Coach Dave

Dear Team,

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had an opportunity to spend some downtime with family and friends and recharge their batteries to kick off a successful 2025. Every year at this time of the season one of the things I pay attention to is the number of kids who miss practice due to sickness. For whatever reason, this year we seem to be particularly hard hit in terms of the number of swimmers we've had miss time due to common cold, flu, Covid, Norovirus, RSV, pneumonia....you name it!

It's always a shame when kids who work hard all season have their championship meets derailed by untimely sickness. I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage everyone to double down on healthy habits that will keep our team as healthy as possible as we head into the final stretch of the Short Course season. Let's all practice smart and safe habits such as:

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PEAQ Competes at Junior Nationals

PEAQ sent seven athletes to compete in this year's Winter Junior Nationals East held in Greensboro, North Carolina, which took place December 11th through December 14th. **Coach Dave** and **Coach Marian** along with **Mac Clark**, **Jackson Edwards**, **Luke Hartman**, **Delaney O'Toole**, **Cinco Perez**, **Ben Whiteford**, and **Nazar Zoukovski** all headed south for the meet, which showcased some of the fastest 18 and under athletes in the country. A big congratulations goes out to Mac Clark, who placed 5th in the 1650! Making finals at this meet is not an easy task! We are so proud of Mac and all our swimmers who competed at this high-level national meet and represented our club.



A Letter from Coach Dave Continued

- frequently washing your hands
- covering your coughs and sneezes
- not sharing water bottles (yes, this still happens!)
- avoiding surface contact as much as possible when out in public spaces
- *staying home when you are sick so as to not infect others*

In addition to these hygiene-centric behaviors, I believe the foundation of good health—and peak performance—is getting adequate sleep and eating a healthy diet. Let's give ourselves every opportunity for success as the season winds down and make sure our athletes are not only working hard *in* the pool, but also also “training” properly *outside* the pool.

See you at the pool!

Coach Dave

PEAQ Hosts Three Meets

PEAQ has had a very successful start to its short course season! One of the things that makes us successful is our ability to host meets. We are very proud that our club hosted three great meets at each of our three sites during the first half of our season. In October, PEAQ hosted its Halloween Invitational at Upper Saint Clair (10/25-10/27), and in December PEAQ hosted two meets. The first December meet was an intrasquad IMX/R meet held at Canon McMillan (12/7-12/8), and the second December meet was PEAQ@Pitt's 62nd Annual Christmas Meet held at the University of Pittsburgh (12/12-12/15). It takes A LOT of work to host a meet, and we would like to send out a big THANK YOU to all of our volunteers who helped make these meets happen. We couldn't do it without you! Pay attention to your inbox for more opportunities to help out at our PEAQ-hosted meets during the second half of short course.



Fish Out of Water: Colin McKain

Senior swimmer **Colin McKain** has been a swimmer with PEAQ for the past 8 years. He has been an active member of the Canon McMillan High School swimming and diving team for the past four years, and he has qualified for WPIALS each year. This year he is also one of the captains for the CMHS swimming and diving team. We know a lot about Colin the swimmer, but did you know that Colin is also a very active community volunteer?

The McKain family runs the Jameson's Army Foundation, which raises awareness and money for kids with congenital heart defects. The foundation is named after Colin's younger brother, Jameson, and Colin is a very contributory volunteer. Last spring, Colin, along with several CMHS swimmers and **Coach Royce**, attended Jameson Army's Green Heart Gala to support the McKain family's foundation. In addition to volunteering with Jameson's Army, Colin also volunteers at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and for The Children's Home of Pittsburgh and Lemieux Family Center.

Colin has other interests too, outside of swimming and volunteering. He teaches swim lessons at PEAQ @ CM and is a member of Ski Club, NHS, and French club at Canon-McMillan High School. In the summer, he is the Head Lifeguard at Southpointe Country Club.

Colin plans to attend WVU in the fall of 2025 where he will major in medical leadership and management. We are so proud of you Colin! Keep being amazing!



Josh Matheny Talk

PEAQ had a special guest come in on November 29th! Former PEAQ swimmer and Olympian, **Josh Matheny**, was home for Thanksgiving break and came in to speak with our club. All three PEAQ sites were invited to this special event that was held at the Upper Saint Clair pool. Josh's talk was excellent, and he addressed a series of questions both from **Coach Dave** and from the crowd. Josh discussed his Olympic experience; the challenges associated with being a student athlete; his plan to go pro; how he handles nerves; the importance of sleep and nutrition on performance, and many other interesting topics. All our athletes and families gained something positive from the morning. We can't wait to hopefully cheer Josh on in the 2028 Olympics!





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).



New Faces on Deck

Coach Shannon Poleski was a coach for PEAQ for six years and then took a break from coaching for a few years to focus on her family. Now that Coach Shannon's boys, Nick and Nate, are a little older, she is able to return to coaching on a part-time basis. When not attending one of her sons' hockey games with her husband, Brad, you can find Coach Shannon on deck on Tuesdays and Thursdays at USC, where she has been primarily assisting with the Senior Group, the Junior Group, Age Group 3 and Age Group 4.

Coach Shannon is a 2004 graduate of Ohio University where she swam for all four years. In 2002 Coach Shannon was named Conference Swimmer of the year in the MAC, and in 2004 she qualified for the Olympic Trials in the 200 back. Coach Shannon is eager to share the experiences that she has gained from being a mom, a swimmer, and a coach with our swimmers!



Healthy Habits: Oranges

Did you know that the NFL requires that the home team provide three dozen sliced oranges during half time to the visiting team? Did you ever wonder why NFL players eat oranges for a snack? As it turns out, oranges are a great food for athlete recovery. They reduce lactic acid and give a boost to the immune system, while also being hydrating. So, the next time you are packing snacks for a meet, throw an orange in your swim bag. Your body will thank you!

Caught You Doing Good

See what good things our coaches have “caught” our swimmers doing!



Charlotte Kauffman (nominated by coach Julie) - Charlotte volunteers her time at the Canon Mac High School home meets. It is nice seeing PEAQ swimmers helping out with the high school team

Colton Rumbaugh (nominated by Coach Megan) - Colton was away over the winter break, but he was motivated enough to practice on his own while away.

JJ Stitt (nominated by Coach Megan) - JJ helps to put things away and clean up after practice.

Lydia Jack (nominated by Coach Topher) - Lydia stayed for the entire afternoon session of the Halloween meet, after a long morning of racing, just to cheer for some of her favorite little swimmers whom she got the chance to coach at Wahoos this summer! Now in PEAQs Age Group program, these swimmers look up to Lydia as a teammate, and Lydia has been an exemplary role model for them.

Jack Whiteford (nominated by Coach Morgan) - At the Halloween meet, Jack let a 10-year-old who broke his goggles behind the block borrow his.

Matviei Zaikina (nominated by Coach Morgan) - During a hard set, Matviei was telling his teammates good job and that he was proud of them. Additionally, he was being a great teammate, when he was counting down a high rep set to motivate everyone to get through it.

Roberta Flores-Vega (nominated by Coach Royce) - Roberta very kindly brought in Christmas treats for her age group.

PEAQ Coaching Staff - (nominated by Coach Dave) Many of our staff members not only coach for PEAQ, but they also coach a high school team too. This causes the winter months to be extremely busy for our coaches. Thank you to those staff members who coach a high school team and help support our sport at our local schools, and thank you to those staff members who have stepped up to help out and fill in when we are short staffed due to high school meets.

