

Potomac Valley Swimming
P. O. Box 3729
McLean, VA 22103-3729

November 8th, 2004

Mr Ron Van Pool,
President
USA Swimming Board of Directors
29001 8th Street South
Federal Way, WA 98003-3702

Subject: Border with Virginia Swimming

Dear Ron,

I'm writing this to inform you of the facts as Potomac Valley currently sees the situation. This is mainly in response to numerous notes from the Virginia General Chair over perceived incursions into their territory by Potomac Valley teams. This first came to my attention last July when the Virginia General Chair sent me a note complaining about one of our teams allowing an existing non-USAS team to join with them. Turns out, and I did not realize this until we got to convention, that this particular event was only a small part of what Virginia was really after. Therefore, I was not prepared to address how OCCS or AST might respond to any proposed solution.

There were actually three teams that Virginia was complaining about:

1. Occoquan Swimming (OCCS). This team was originally formed in about 1988 with two practice sites, one at George Washington University (in Washington, DC) and Mount Vernon Recreation Center in Fairfax County, Virginia, both of them within the PVS boundary. In about 1995 in order to expand their water time they opened a practice site at the Chinn Center in Prince William County, this is in Virginia's boundary. This started with one-hour programs in the afternoon.

Apparently one of the Virginia teams in that area attempted to get OCCS to change LSCs at that time, but OCCS decided they wanted to stay with Potomac Valley. I believe that there was some agreement struck by the respective General Chairman (at the time) between Virginia Swimming and Potomac Valley on this, but we have not been able to locate any formal document.

Shortly thereafter, the OCCS coach at Mt. Vernon, quit and went to another team because they couldn't expand at that facility and, as a result, their use of Mt. Vernon ceased. By that time, OCCS's use of the Chinn facility had increased substantially.

OCCS has maintained their mailing address within the PVS LSC since 1992.

2. Snowbird Aquatics (SNOW). This team grew out of two prior teams. The first was Solotar (SOLO), this team trained entirely within the PVS area. The last head coach at Solotar before it's demise was Paul Bergen. When Solotar went under, Paul then formed a new team called Sunset. (SNST). This team was also within the PVS boundaries, and lasted a couple of years. It was not a growing club at the end, so when Paul Bergen decided to go elsewhere, one of his Assistant Coaches Mike Pluskatis formed a new team called SNOW. The reason for the name change was to keep a financial distance between his new team, and the bankrupt old team. When SNOW was founded, they had one practice site that was in Potomac Valley, and one that was in Loudoun County (Virginia Swimming LSC). Their mailing address was in Potomac Valley. A year or so later they lost most of their Senior swimmers (due to High School graduation), and thereafter it became economically impossible for them to keep their Potomac Valley site open. They found other teams that could take the rest of their Senior Swimmers and shrunk to one practice site in Loudoun County.

This was the team the Virginia initially complained to me about, and the reason was that another team in Virginia's territory (not an USAS team), wanted to join with SNOW. Virginia also mentioned

OCCS and Ashburn Village teams in the initial set of correspondence as being in their territory, but I did not get the impression that they were their major concern.

3. Ashburn Village Swim Team (AST, formerly ASVT). They were formed in 1992 with their sole practice site in Loudoun County, adjacent to Dulles Airport, in Loudoun County (in Virginia's boundary) and their mailing address was in Potomac Valley. I was not involved with the Potomac Valley Board at this time, and don't know what, if any, discussions preceded their joining Potomac Valley. To the best of my knowledge, until George started to raise objections this summer, the fact this team had been registered with PVS for 12 years was not an issue with VSI.

At this year's Convention, I got together with the Virginia General Chair, Chairman of the Rules Committee Don Hart, and Wells O'Brien to see what could be worked out. Virginia was adamant that SNOW and AST be moved to the Virginia LSC, and that OCCS could stay with Potomac Valley, but only if they agreed to not expand further in Virginia territory. In addition, Potomac Valley would not allow any other Virginia LSC based club or practice site to combine with Potomac Valley clubs, this would have been difficult to enforce, and maybe not enforceable at all. I was to go back and present this to the involved clubs and the Potomac Valley Board.

After returning and contacting the clubs, SNOW at this time has decided that they would be willing to move to the Virginia LSC, AST did not want to move to the Virginia LSC, and OCCS decided that restricting their growth did not serve their best interests, and also did not want to move to the Virginia LSC. After these discussions, the Potomac Valley board voted in favor of supporting its member clubs, and thereby not ratifying the draft agreement between Virginia and Potomac Valley.

Based on the guidance coming from United States Swimming it is our understanding that the guidelines that have been used for several years to determine in which LSC a club should register is determined by the mailing address of the club when it initially registers with United States Swimming. Both Virginia (we believe) and Potomac Valley Swimming have proceeded on this basis for at least a decade. It is our understanding that prior General Chairmen of both LSCs have met annually at the USAS convention to discuss any outstanding issues.

Regardless of one's current views on the appropriateness of such a policy, we believe that any proposal to reconsider the wisdom of this policy should take into account the impact that existing past practice would have on existing and well established competitive and organizational relationships.

I was not made aware by my predecessor of any pending concerns that I should be prepared to address. The geographic boundaries of Potomac Valley were set back in AAU days, and they are simply Washington DC and the counties in Virginia and Maryland that touched Washington DC (the actual description is the District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties in Maryland and Arlington and Fairfax County and the independent cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax in the Commonwealth of Virginia). This ignored other areas that are still quite close to Washington, but did not actually touch. The government units within the PVS boundaries are what constituted the Washington DC Metropolitan area at a much earlier date – perhaps in the 1960's and/or early 1970's. The Washington Metro area is described in various places. The following is a sample of these (I have deleted the portions of these descriptions that refer to Maryland as that is not part of the current discussion):

- From the US Census Bureau American Housing Survey for the Washington Metropolitan Area 1998:
 - District of Columbia
 - Alexandria City, VA
 - Arlington County, VA
 - Fairfax city, VA
 - Fairfax County, VA
 - Falls Church city, VA
 - Fauquier County, VA
 - Fredericksburg city, VA
 - Loudoun County, VA
 - Manassas city, VA

- Manassas Park city, VA
 - Prince William County, VA
 - Spotsylvania County, VA
 - Stafford County, VA
- From the Urban Institute Poor People and Poor Neighborhoods in The Washington Metropolitan Area:
 - District of Columbia (DC)
 - Virginia Suburbs – Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, Loudoun, Prince William, Stafford, Alexandria, Fairfax City, Manassas, Manassas Park
 - The metropolitan area, as defined by the U.S. Census, includes the following:
 - Maryland - Deleted.
 - Virginia - Alexandria, Annandale, Berryville, Boyce, Chantilly, Culpeper, Dahlgren, Dumfries, Fairfax, Falls Church, Falmouth, Front Royal, Goldvein, Haymarket, Herndon, King George, Leesburg, Lorton, Lucketts, Manassas, Marshall, McLean, Middleburg, Midland, Millwood, Mount Vernon, Occoquan, Paris, Purcellville, Quantico, Remington, Reston, Somerville, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Sterling, Thornburg, Triangle, Upperville, Vienna, Warrenton, White Post, Woodbridge.

Metropolitan Areas as defined by United States Government (Office of Management and Budget) follows. They define the concept of a Metropolitan area as “a core area containing a large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core.”

Specifically, Loudoun County and Prince William Counties are part of the Washington Metro Area, and so long as these counties are part of the Virginia LSC, it is very likely that there will continue to be problems. I think what is needed here is for these counties to be moved to the Potomac Valley LSC, or a novel approach where teams in these two counties can pick which LSC they wish to be a part of. Please note that the counties we are recommending to be moved do not include all the Virginia counties that are considered to be part of the Washington Metropolitan area.

Additional information on where the practice sites under discussion are located follows.

As can be seen, the teams in question all practice sites are all very close to the currently existing Potomac Valley Swimming boundary varying from 1.3 to 12.5 miles.

Pool	Team Using	Address	Driving Distance to PVS Boundary
Ashburn Village Sports Pavilion	AST	20585 Ashburn Village Blvd Ashburn, VA	8.1 miles
Ida Lee Recreation Center	SNOW	Ida Lee Drive and King Street, Leesburg, VA	12.5 miles
Chinn Recreation Center	OCCS	13025 Chinn Park Road, Woodbridge, VA 22192-5073	5.9 miles
Dale City Recreation Ctr	OCCS	14300 Minnieville Road Drive Dale City, VA 22193-3304	6.4 miles
Freedom Center	OCCS	10900 University Blvd.; Manassas, VA 20110-2201	8.4 miles
Woodbridge Sports	WMJ (part of PM)	Devils Reach Road	1.3 miles

		Woodbridge, VA	
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PVS is asking that USA Swimming recognize that the practice sites of the teams under discussion are well within its core Urban Area as defined by the US Government.

The Census Bureau defines an Urbanized area as follows:

”(UA) An area consisting of a central place(s) and adjacent territory with a general population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile of land area that together have a minimum residential population of at least 50,000 people. The Census Bureau uses published criteria to determine the qualification and boundaries of 'UAs”.

An Urbanized Area is a much tighter definition and is not nearly as far reaching as the Metropolitan area definition. There are maps on the Census Bureau web site that we can provide that clearly show the population density in the areas where the pools under discussion are located.

PVS has also always recognized that these training pools are not within its current geographical boundaries and thus the teams training at these pools have never been able to hold a PVS sanctioned meet at any of these facilities and any sanctioned, observed or approved meet conducted at any of these five facilities have done so under the authority of VSI. PVS clubs who have held sanctioned meets in these facilities have paid sanction fees to VSI.

I have tried in this letter to give you a preview of some of the points PVS would likely make were VSI to take this matter to a Board of Review and PVS were then given an opportunity to respond. I am sharing this with you so you can give some thought to whether another round of informal negotiations between PVS and VSI would be useful. I also think it important that if there is another round, any potentially impacted club also be invited to participate as it is not really appropriate to ask either General Chairman to also represent the business interests of any of its member clubs – which in some cases may vary depending on their particular circumstances and future aspirations.

With best regards,

Jim Garner
General Chairman
Potomac Valley Swimming.

cc: Jeff Gudman
Don Hart
George Homewood
Ira Klein
Mike Saltzstein
Well's O'Brien
Bruce Stratton
Mary Jo Swalley