

Gator Gazette

www.foresthollow.com

March 31, 2014



Notes from the Team Rep

Welcome to the kickoff of the 2014 season! I look forward to a great season.

This newsletter is intended to give you some key information to begin the year – how to volunteer, coaches, our division information, leadership changes and opportunities and much, much more. This year I will continue to post everything online (in addition to emailing links to some critical information regarding meets and events) – If you follow my links and read the online information you will be up to date and ready to fully participate in the Gator 2014 season!

My email address remains the same so please add teamrepfhsc@gmail.com to your address book as this is the email that I will be using for all Gator communications. Before the pool opens you can reach me via this email if you have any questions. Once the season starts please see me at the pool or call me on my cell phone at 301.938.0250.

Registration is open as of April 1. Our website maintains the same address of www.foresthollow.com. You'll find registration information later in this newsletter also.

Read on for more exciting news...it is good to be back to at least thinking of summer fun! Go Gators!

Merari Chollette

Team Rep

Meet Our 2014 Coaching Staff!!

Forest Hollow has a great tradition of growing many young and responsible swimmers that have a strong desire to return their love of the team and swimming to others. For 2014 the quality of our Gator Coaching staff remains high and we are excited about the leadership, maturity, eagerness, and enthusiasm that our coaching staff will bring to our swimmers.

WELCOME Head Coach John Bechtoldt !!!!

Coach John comes to Forest Hollow with a rich Gator family history to continue to provide professional coaching skills and Gator Great traditions. Coach John is a USA Swimming Coach with over 6 years of professional coaching experience with Arlington Aquatic Swim Team. John has been a Gator swimmer, assistant coach and Todd Potts Recipient. He is a graduate of Annandale High School and James Madison University. John is excited to return to Gatorland! Once a Gator, always a Gator!! Welcome Coach John!!

We will host a "Meet the Coach" event for sometime in May prior to our Team Kick Off Meeting. Be on the lookout for an announcement soon.

Here's the great roster of 2014 assistant coaches:

Assistant Coaches:

Andrew Boyd
Dylan Gore
Erin Johnson
Catherine Kennedy
Elizabeth Manthos

Sarah Padrutt
Amy Reynolds

Welcome to this strong group of coaches that will help your kids grow in their love of swimming throughout the summer. A group like this should continue to provide us many fun and memorable skits on Friday nights, as well as great swimming skills!

GATOR PRACTICE GROUPS

The Gators **lane swimmers** practice groups are:

- 13 and over
- 11/12"s
- 9/10's
- 8 & Unders

Our **Mini Gator program** continues to enroll our largest group of kids. And, we will continue to devote significant coaching resources to this group to ensure they gain comfort in the water, learn to swim and learn to LOVE the Gators. In 2014 we will continue the three developmental categories described in the Mini Gator Guide will continue to guide our philosophy with this group.

Under Head Coach Johns' oversight, this program will continue to provide attention and resources to this fun group of beginning swimmers.

Mini Gators practice groups are:

- Bubble Blowers/Beginners:
- Beginning Minis – Deep water comfort:
- Transitional Minis – Development of Lap Skills/Stroke Technique:

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Gator Team Kickoff

Meeting is Wednesday,

May 28, 2014, 6pm –

- Meet coaches
- Pick up team gear
- Purchase team suit & other Gator spirit merchandise and more!!!

Division 8 for 2014

This summer we are seeded 1st in Division 8 and in Gator tradition we will be ready to meet our competition in true Gator style – team spirit, determination, surprising finishes, great swims, top notch display of sportsmanship and Gator pride! The teams and schedule are as follows (you can also find these on the website [HERE](#))

- 6/21 - Villa Aquatics@FH
- 6/28 - Shouse Village @FH
- 7/5/14 - @ SHBR
- 7/9/14 - Division Relay Carnival @ Villa Aquatics
- 7/12/14 - High Point Pool @ FH
- 7/16/14 - All Star Relay Carnival @ Hunt Valley
- 7/19/14 - @ Fox Mill Woods
- 7/26/14 - Divisional Championship @ Shouse Village
- 8/02/14 - Individual All Stars @ Annandale

Don't forget that we also host the **Todd Potts IM Carnival – this year on**

Wednesday, July 2, 2014 and we'll also continue to have a **Mini Gator Meet** for our Mini-Gators towards the end of the season.

REMEMBER – WE NEED ALL SWIMMERS TO DECLARE IF THEY ARE GOING TO BE AWAY FOR OUR DIVISION MEETS, please do so during your swim team registration. We will also request an update once the season starts via our website.

To Answer Your Questions...

- Checkout the website on a regular basis.
- Read the various guides and handbooks
- email teamrepfhsc@gmail.com
- preferably speak to **your team reps at the pool or call us**

NVSL 2014 Rule Changes

Each year the NVSL has a Rules Meeting. In most years, a lot of these involve technical changes that have been insignificant to most meets. This year, on Sunday March 30 there were two rule changes that affect our parents or swimmers directly.

These rule changes relate to the Standards of Conduct which can be viewed on the NVSL site at the [Document Center](#)

These amendments which passed included:

- **Amending bullet #3 of the Standards of Conduct to include “social media”.** This bullet states “avoid using inappropriate language, profanity, humiliating or intimidating remarks or behavior (including through social media), verbal or physical assault toward an

athlete, coach, team representative, official, NVSL leadership or spectator”

- **Amendment to rule 1b – Dealing with Standards of Conduct to list some of the violations for which sanctions may be applied.** Included in the amendment as examples are:

- trespassing on or damaging the property of any NVSL pool;
- setting off any incendiary devices at any time at any NVSL pool property on the day of any NVSL meet
- any depictions of personal injury or death directed at team representatives, coaches, swimmers or team mascots.

These illustrative examples of unacceptable conduct are not intended to be exhaustive.

GATOR Parents and Swimmers – Let’s make sure that we display good sportsmanship at ALL TIMES while at our pool in our interactions with each other ALL coaches, volunteers, officials, parents and swimmers of our own team and other teams.

NVSL Standards of Conduct

The NVSL Standards of Conduct are found on our website under NVSL Standards and as mentioned on the NVSL site. Please take a look at these – and abide by them as true Gators during 2014! Good sportsmanship is good for the team and the league! Lead by example! Once again you’ll be asked to confirm you will abide by these during registration!

Gator Leadership Primer

The Gator Swim Team operates as an organization within the Forest Hollow Swim Club. The Swim Team Representative (also known as the A-Meet Rep or Team Rep) is an officer of the Forest Hollow Swim Club and serves a three year term, similar to other Forest Hollow Swim Club board positions. The Team Rep is elected by the Gator team parents through a process developed and articulated by the Swim

Team Board. The Board is led by the Team Rep with positions for the key leaders for the team. Specifically, the Board positions are **generally** the key volunteer leaders, including: Team Rep(s); most recent former Team Rep; B-Meet Rep; Treasurer; leads for Merchandise, Concessions, Volunteers and Data. Each year, the Gator Guide (also known as the Handbook) articulates the process for volunteer positions and the board election process.

The Gator board leadership positions are volunteer positions that historically run three-year terms. Some people choose to serve less than a three year term, some choose to enter a second – full or partial – term. When a volunteer has expressed and interest to transition out or is at the end of their commitment, interest for open positions are communicated to the swim team parents, via newsletters, weekly updates, volunteer signups, and word-of-mouth, including pep rallies.

Some positions require “advance” notification/planning as they require some training or shadowing to take on the task. This is primarily the Team Rep position, as many of the duties also involve NVSL processes, but merchandise, data, and concessions positions all benefit from at least shadowing the prior volunteer. These types of positions are easier to learn with some guidance than on one’s own.

In most years, we have to do a little “pushing” and “pulling” to get people to step into the rolls – especially the Team Rep positions given the time commitment involved. But, some years, we have had greater interest in a position. In years where we only get one person to answer the call, we fill the position with that person with no election held. In years where the interest is larger, we schedule a vote for the position, normally at the year-end awards banquet or other pre-announced time.

Hopefully, this article has helped you understand the process and the leadership positions. There are several other articles

Register online by May 1 to get your FREE t-shirt and swim cap.
Otherwise a \$5 per shirt and \$3 per cap will be charged while

in this newsletter that are related – read further to meet the 2014 Swim Team Board and open positions and process for 2014 and beyond.

The 2014 Gator Advisory Board

Here are your 2014 volunteers that will lead the Gators in 2014:

- Merari Chollette, Team Rep
- Bob Elkins as B Meet Rep.
- Jay Nash as Treasurer.
- Cara Dalrymple with merchandise.
- Allie Rutherford Data Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator – OPEN
- Tim Nields as Gator Grill & Concessions management.

Thanks

A HUGE word of “thanks” to the many greats who have given their time and talent for one or more years in a position that will not be with us in these roles this season:

- Gator Grill – Bill and Mary Kennedy
- Winter Swim Coordinator – Suzie Paletti

THANK YOU!!!!



2014 Gator Advisory Board Openings

Here’s a recap of the open and filled positions:

**Openings NOT anticipated for 2014
volunteering or election:**

- Treasurer: Jay Nash; Term 2012, 2013, 2014
- B Meet Rep: Bob Elkins; Term 2012, 2013, 2014
- Merchandise Coordinator: Cara Dalrymple Term 2013, 2014, 2015
- Concessions: Tim Niels; Term 2014, 2014, 2015
- Data Coordinator: Allie Rutherford: Term: 2013, 2014, 2015
- Head Official: Doug Padrutt; 2013, 2014, 2015

**Those positions that need a 1 season
replacement or a 3 year new term
commitment beginning now (2014)**

- Volunteer Coordinator
- Winter Swim Coordinator

For 2015 the following positions are open

- B Meet Rep – Bob Elkins
- Treasurer – Jay Nash

These two positions are up with the scheduled cycle served 2012, 2013 and 2014. **Bob and Jay have both expressed a willingness to continue to serve in these positions** but if you are interested, be sure to let me know early in the season.

More communications on these positions will be available during the 2014 season.

**How do you sign up for an open
position?**

- Talk to your Team Rep Merari
- All interested swim team parents may express interest.
- If there are more than one interested for any of the positions at the end of the season, I'll communicate election processes through weekly news and announcements.

**Reminder – Time Trials and
Picture Day**

June 14 @ Forest Hollow

**We'd love to have all Gators and
Mini Gators in attendance for our
team picture. Please mark your
calendar now!**

**The Gators Need YOU! We need
Volunteers!!**

Volunteers are truly what make the Gators one of a kind! We need YOU and your time to make the Gators a success!

This year, we are looking for a new Volunteer Coordinator that can work well with the Team Rep to manage the volunteer needs of the team. A 3 year commitment is ideal but a 1 year commitment to at least get us through this summer is needed. We are also in need of a new Winter Swim Coordinator to help keep that program going.

Every family should contribute at least 5 hours of tasks each year to take part in the excitement of Forest Hollow. There are lots of opportunities to help...let us help you find the right fit as all hours are not just on meet days!

On the Gator website, you will find a link to our [volunteer registration site](#). It is an easy to use tool called "Jooners". We will continue to use this site for 2014. We will also send out periodic e-mail "invites" to volunteer. This system is easy to use, similar to what many of you use in schools, and should enhance our process for filling vacancies. Please respond early...fill in as many positions as you are able...and support the Gators and your kids!

VOLUNTEER!!!!!!

There are several Gator traditions and special events – that cannot occur unless a parent is willing to organize these events. **Splash Down and Bowling outings** are two great examples. Let's not lose these traditions – step up now and volunteer!

NVSL Training – For Some Positions It is a Must

Most of the “meet officials” positions require training every two years. But, the NVSL makes it easy. If you are interested or did not renew your training in 2014 for various positions including stroke & turn judge, a referee, a starter or a head timer or learning more about clerk of course and table workers positions – the NVSL has a spot for you!

- May 29 – New Referee Clinic – Lee-Graham Pool 7pm
- May 31 – NVSL U – Fairfax Gov't Center (note new location!!)
8am-1pm
 - Referee/Starter & New Starter Clinics – 8:00 am
 - Hy-Tek Clinic – 8:00 am
 - Table Workers Clinic– 9:00 am
 - Fairfax County Food Safety Workshop – 10:00 am
 - Chief Timer Clinic – 10:30 am
 - Clerk of Course and Announcer Clinic – 11:30 am
- June 7 – Annandale Swim Club – Stroke & Turn, Announcer, Chief Timer, Clerk of Course, Tables – 8:00 am
- June 10 – New Referee – Lee Graham – 7:00 pm
- June 15 – Referee/Starter; New Starter – 9:30 am – Mantua
- June 15 – Stroke & Turn – Hunt Valley – 9:30 am
- June 18 – Stroke & Turn – Hunt Valley and Sully Station – 7:00 pm

Concession News



We are delighted that Tim Nields is going to lead the Gator Grill in 2014!! The Gator spirit will be high...and the menu items will continue to delight and surprise with this dedicated and spirited team. We are looking for some new volunteers and our experienced Gator Grill volunteers to help make it a great gator grill summer!!

The Gator Grill is our biggest income producer, short of the registrations. It is a HUGE task that requires lots of help and support from all the Gator families. Signup to grill some burgers, wrap the sandwiches, sell some drinks, or serve the multitudes! Besides the pool itself, it is the most “happening” spot at Forest Hollow. Find a meet or two where you can help make this a success.

You can also donate dollars to offset costs of the grill when you register. Pick an amount and know your dollars are going to good use. (And, we find this much easier than asking you to bring donations of candy or drinks...let Tim Nields do the shopping with your support!!)

2014 Gator Merchandise

Cara Dalrymple continues as our 2014 Merchandising Rep! She has been busy working with our Sport Fair rep to get us all

ready for this season. We will have newly designed swim caps, t-shirts and hoodies.

The summer suit will remain the same as 2013 since it is a two year Speedo Suit that wears very well. Gators will be hitting the pool once again in Speedo Vortex (Female all sizes \$57.75 and Male all sizes \$37.28 pricing includes tax). The suits will be on sale at the parent meeting WEDNESDAY, May 28) at the beginning of the season. Suits can also be purchased at Sports Fair in Arlington, VA.



This suit is made of special fabric – that is long lasting – but doesn't stretch like normal suits. We highly recommend that each swimmer try on the suit at the team meeting or at Sports Fair to get the right fit.

Note: A team suit is NOT required, but it is highly encouraged. It helps promote team unity and spirit and it looks great in our team picture. Gators of all ages like to be part of the team – having the Gator suit helps them be part of the team.



As part of your team fees each swimmer will receive a t-shirt (guaranteed and receive special pricing on only one order. Thus, it is imperative if you Gator wants a t-shirt in a particular size, to REGISTER by MAY 1! It is online and it is easy. Extra adult t-shirts are also only available through ordering at the time of registration.

FREE of cost IF you register by May 1). If you register after May 1, and while our "extra supplies last" you will be charged a mandatory \$5 fee for the t-shirt, no exceptions! Please understand the t-shirt process is labor intensive and one. We will have the same swim cap as last season. Every swimmer, registering by May 1 will receive a cap for FREE. Those that register

after May 1 will be charged \$3. Our supply of older caps from prior years will be on sale as practice caps. This year's cap design but in silicone can be purchased for \$10 and ordered pre-season when you register your swimmer.

Other merchandising options will be available in 2014. Ms. Dalrymple will be working to offer some great options for fun, for Gator Buddy gifts, and for styling Gator pride around the community! Look for news and updates on the website and through notifications as these options become available!

Register for the Club & Gators

Registration in 2014 is EASY – both for RETURNING team members and our NEW team members!

Just go to www.foresthollow.com or directly to the following links to register for

- [Swim Club Registration](#)
- [Swim Team Registration](#)
- [Mini Gator Lessons Registration](#)

You'll find links to the Swim Club, Swim Team, and Mini Gator Pre-season Lessons. Click on the registration link and the system will guide you through.

If you are a returning member (you registered in 2013 for the team), then use your same "user name" (likely your e-mail address) and register as an "existing member". If you've forgotten your password, there is a link at the bottom of the page to lead you to a reset process. If you have problems, you can always e-mail the Team Reps and we can walk you through or find your "user name". The biggest benefit you'll find as a returning member – your key information only needs

to be updated, it is already populated into the system!

If you are a new swim team member, you simply need to register as a “new” member, enter a “user name” (suggest your e-mail) and a password you can remember. The system will walk you through some easy screens for getting your kids enrolled.

Registrations for the Swim Club and the Swim Team are separate – that means you’ll have to register for the Swim Club separate from the Swim Team. Mini Gator lessons are also under a separate registration. But, once you’ve signed in, your same name and password will work.

For the Swim Team, all registrations are online – we don’t take your checks! You’ll have two options to pay – debit/credit or e-check. We encourage you to use e-check if you can as the fees are lower, giving more back to the team.

For the Swim Club, you can register online or pay the traditional way by filling out a hand form and paying by check. We strongly encourage you to register online! Why? You can either pay by debit/credit card or e-check, just like for swim team, but you can also click an option to mail in your payment by mail.

The glory is – you can easily fill out the information electronically and it is part of Forest Hollow’s data base. E-mail notifications about pool closings and other news will come from this data base. So try something new and register online for both the Swim Team (required) and the Swim Club!

GATOR FACTS.....

WHO ARE THE GATORS?

The Gators are boys and girls (and their parents) who are members of the Forest Hollow Swim Team. Our team focuses on

improving swimming skills, learning good sportsmanship and self-discipline. We have daily practices, compete in swim meets, have family potluck dinners and pep rallies on Friday nights, make new friends and have lots of fun!!

WHO CAN JOIN?

The swim team is open to swimmers, ages 4 – 18. Gators must be able to swim at least 50 meters (2 pool lengths) continuously, without assistance. Gators will work on stroke technique, starts, turns and endurance during practice and participate in swim meets.

Mini Gators must be comfortable in the water (can fully submerge head for 5 seconds), propel themselves for a short distance in the pool, be able to follow directions, work well in a group and leave parents willingly.

The goal of the Mini Gator program is to provide young swimmers with the basic swimming skills necessary for the continued involvement in competitive swimming. Please check out our Mini Gator Guide on the website for more information about whether your child is ready to be a Mini Gator or ready to be a Gator!

WHEN DO GATORS SWIM?

The 2014 Swim season for Gators begins with our Team Kickoff meeting on Wednesday, May 28, 2014. Practice begins on Thursday, May 29 and ends Friday, July 26. The season is extended to Aug. 3 for those who make it to individual All Stars.

2014 Practice Sessions

May 29 through June 24 – Lane Swimmers only – evening practice

June 25 – July 25 Monday through Friday morning and Tuesday/Thursday evening available for Gators unable to attend the morning practice.

Mini Gators morning practice – June 25 through July 25, 2014. Tuesday and Thursday evenings are available for Mini Gators unable to attend the morning practice.

Regular attendance at practice and meets is encouraged. Please note: Nighttime practice is shared with pool patrons so space is limited. Plus, there are more evening thunderstorms that may disrupt practice.

2014 Swim Meets

Saturday mornings A Meets (NVSL league meets). Monday evening B Meets (developmental meets).

All swimmers are encouraged to swim at the developmental meets. Participating in league or Saturday morning meets is limited and selections are made based on specific criteria (see Gator Guide).

The [Meet Schedule](#) can be found online on our website.

Specific practice times are online under [PRACTICE TIMES](#).

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

- \$102 for 1 swimmer
- \$93 for the 2nd swimmer
- \$86 for each additional swimmer.

Registration fees help to pay for the coaching staff, equipment, ribbons, awards and team activities. Each swimmer registered by May 1 will receive a free team t-shirt and latex swim cap. **Swimmers registered after May 1 are not guaranteed a T-shirt or latex cap; the mandatory cost for these items after May 1 is \$5 for the t-shirt and \$3 for the latex cap – while supplies last. No exceptions!**

Mini Gator Pre-season Lessons

Over the past several summers, the Gators have offered our Mini Gator swimmers a pre-season opportunity to get in the water before Mini swimming begins on June 25. These lessons are offered for a two week period – Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday for 30 minutes each over a two week period. Each registered swimmer gets FOUR pre-season sessions.

For 2014, we are once again offering these lessons. But, registration is online ONLY. We must have a minimum of 4 swimmers registered and we can take no more than 6 swimmers for each session.

Information explaining additional details, costs, etc is on the website. The costs remain steady, although a transaction fee is added for the online registration process. Should we need to cancel the session, you will be refunded the cost (not the transaction fee) as disclosed on the registration page.

Remember – this is pre-season and the weather can at times be challenging. Makeup days if necessary will be communicated. Should we not be able to hold these, we would refund on a pro-rata basis.

- [Mini Gator Lessons Registration](#)

Read All About the Gators...

Updated Gator Handbooks and Guides for 2014 will be up on the website soon. We have a host of reading material for you: Gator Guide, the New Parent Handbook, the A, B, C's of Developmental Meets and a Mini Gator Guide. **Take the time pre-season to read up on our practices, traditions, rules, and processes!!** For reference, last year's guides are available on the website at <http://www.foresthollow.com/gator-swim-team/>

Summer Fun Arranged by the NVSL

There are various opportunities the NVSL has arranged for outings to

- Kings Dominion,
- DC United,
- Potomac Nationals,
- Washington Nationals

These flyers will be posted on our website. Take advantage of these discounts and have some fun with fellow swimmers.

Attention All High School Seniors

Each year the NVSL award several scholarships to swimmers in the league. Criteria for the selection process includes:

- 1) Swim/Dive team commitment and leadership
- 2) School and community involvement
- 3) NVSL Scholarship essay

The application form and details are posted on the Gator website - www.foresthollow.com. The information will also be posted on the NVSL website in the documents center.

The deadline is Friday June 27, 2014. We encourage our seniors to look into this opportunity and start planning for the submission now!

Gator Only Information on Website

The swim team provides information about the team we'd prefer not to share with the public but which is accessible to our swimmers and parents. This includes team photos and swimmers' times. In order to secure this information we display it on a webpage that requires the site visitor to login. Therefore, in order to gain access to the page you will need an account.

To register for the site, look in the left sidebar, near the bottom of any page. Click, 'register' and create an account with a Username, Email and Password. All accounts will be checked against the swim team roster before they are approved.

Once approved, simply login to see private gator content. Links to swimmer times and photos will appear in the gator menu on the left of every page. If you aren't logged in, those links won't appear. Please remember, this account is for access to private Swim Team information only. You do not need an account to access most of the site, and this account is not related to your account for paying dues.

If you have any questions, please contact Ernie at ForestHollowWeb@gmail.com.

H2O

2 Parts Heart

1 Part Obsession