

## Coach Jeff Faikish's New Era With North Penn Swimming

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(at left) Jeff Faikish with his NP Class of '07 teammates and Coach Bill Bartle. (At right) Jeff Faikish pauses during practice as the new head coach of the Boys Swimming and Diving team at NPHS.



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TOWAMENCIN- Following Coach Brian Daly's decision to step down after seven seasons as head coach, the renowned boys swim program was left with a void. Sure, swimming is a barefoot sport, but Daly still managed to leave big shoes to fill after guiding his teams to several undefeated seasons, championships at all levels of competition, and record shattering individual performances. But North Penn's history has been rich, and the Knights looked to some of that history as they welcomed in Jeff Faikish as the new head coach.

Although 2012 is his inaugural season of head coaching at the Rick Carroll Natatorium, Faikish is no newcomer to the North Penn swimming program. Growing up as a member the Nor-Gwyn feeder teams, Faikish was ultimately a part of the State Championship team in 1997 when he was also honored as an All-American.

Following high school, Faikish attended the University of Connecticut on a swimming scholarship before transferring to the Indiana University of Pennsylvania where he received his degree. He has previously coached at IUP, Methacton, Central Bucks, and even North Penn for a year as Daly's assistant. During the summers, he also coaches at the Lansdale pool.

When asked if he was nervous about taking charge a program with such a historical precedent of excellence, he quipped, "I would be lying if I said I wasn't."

"It keeps me on my toes," he explained. "There is a lot of pressure taking over a program with such previous success. 1976 was our first state representation, and from that moment until today, there has been consistent representation at the state level. After growing up with the North Penn

swimming lifestyle, I realize the weight the program entails. My oldest brother was the coach here for 3 years, and he was successful, so it's a goal of mine to follow in his footsteps as well as the other coaches like Rick Carroll, Bill Beradelli, Bill Bartle, and Brian Daly. It's pretty intimidating, but it's a challenge I'm willing to accept."

The new season also marks changes to the program itself, the most noticeable being that both the boys and girls teams practice at the same time. Additionally, according to senior Colin Kelly, swimming with Daly involved longer distances and more sets where the challenge was making the interval. Conversely, Faikish's sets have slightly easier intervals with the challenge coming from "sprinting and pushing yourself to the limit."

In terms of life on the land, Faikish laughed that "[he] doesn't have a life outside of swimming." He went on to explain that he has a wife and three children to share his love of "anything aquatic." His oldest daughter is 6 years old and involved in the local youth aquatic clubs, but like any loving dad would, Faikish promises to be supportive of whatever his children choose to do. However, his passion for the sport will remain strong for life.

"Swimming pretty much consumes my life, but it's a personal choice," explained Faikish. "I accept it and I love it. My life revolves around the sport, my family, and my friends. Throughout life, we have these waxing and waning times of when you work out, but I like to challenge myself. At the same time, I try to be fair to these kids, and if I can't do a workout myself, I'm not going to make them do it."

In terms of goals for the season, Faikish aims to guide the swimmers to individual performance successes with which the team success will come. His love for the sport and high expectations seem to be received extremely well by the swimmers.

"The best part about him is his passion and energy," reflected senior Jack Morris. "He is always in your face trying to motivate you. He gets really into it and everything during our sets in practice and doesn't accept any excuses. When you make him happy you know you earned it."

Jeff Faikish and the boys swim team seek to develop each swimmer individually and to regain the district title after being marginally defeated by Upper Dublin for last year's district title. The Knights begin their quest for success at home with a non-league match up against St. Joes Prep on December 7th at 3:30 p.m.