

Results of Athlete Survey at GMU during Tom Dolan Invitational Meet, December 6-9, 2007

PVS Athletes rated GMU their Favorite PVS Competition pool during a recent survey of athletes at the Tom Dolan Invitational meet held at George Mason University. The GMU facility received 28% of the over 200 votes cast. Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex received 14% of the votes. Freedom Center and UMD tied for third favorite at 11% of balloting and OakMarr rounded out the top five with 7% of the votes.

PVS Athletes were surveyed during the Tom Dolan meet for elite swimmers who made time cuts. Ages 9 and older were asked on a ballot "What is your favorite PVS pool?" with all PVS pools listed then "Why?" with the following categories listed (fast, nice facilities, lots of deck space, parking, water temperature, water depth, well lit, close to home concessions, spectator seating, drop off/pick up, chairs allowed, food allowed and other:)

The overwhelming favorite was GMU. Sixty-nine percent of those voting for GMU liked it because it is "fast," 51% thought it had nice facilities, 39% voted for it because it was close to home and 34% thought it had lots of deck space. The category among the voters liking GMU best that received the least number of votes was the category of "drop off/pick up." Several comments written in about GMU included, "warm shower", "Swimmer hospitality", and "It is Fun." When asked what her favorite PVS competition pool was, Kate Ziegler voted for GMU.

Prince George's Sports and Learning Center received 14% of the votes with 90% of those supporting it because it's "fast." Only 6% of its voters did so because it was "close to home." PGSLC was listed with its initials and might have received more votes otherwise because swimmers think of it as the "Fed Ex" pool or "Prince George's" pool and not by its letters.

Freedom Center and UMD received the same number of votes at 11% with the most frequently marked reason being both were "Fast." Fifty-eight percent of Freedom Center's supporters chose it because it was "close to home" and its deck space with 54% liking it because it allowed food." UMD received frequent marks for having "nice facilities" and its "water depth" was marked often.

Rounding out the Top 5, Oak Marr Rec Center received the most votes of the Fairfax County facilities at 7% of votes cast. On those ballots, 86% liked the pool for its speed; 26% chose it for being close to home. It also received frequent marks for "parking."

One surprising result was the number of Fairfax County facilities which received no votes at all – Mt. Vernon, Providence, Audrey Moore and South Run. Lee District only received 2 votes. While Cub Run did receive 6 votes, one voter mentioned the "water park" was what made that pool their favorite. It may be worth noting that not only were these elite swimmers where speed would be a major factor and less than half of PVS swimmers make this kind of meet, but there were no 8&Unders in the survey and several venue's Clubs did not participate in Tom Dolan (SDS, Potomac Marlins, AquaHoyas, SNOW, FAST, MSSC, PEAK, DCPRS, BTSC, and Flying Gull). It did not appear that elite swimmers tended to vote for their practice pool, but I mention it so that future surveys might be conducted during Opens when all levels of swimmers are represented and venues throughout the PVS are tallying athlete views at the same time. As far as where PVS spends money renting space for Championship meets, the clear consensus was that it should be at a "fast" pool like GMU, PG, Freedom Center or UMD.

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