**INTRODUTION**Thank you all very much for coming to the pool tonight. I want to welcome everyone back to the swim team for our 2019 summer swim season and want to warmly welcome anyone new to the team.

My name is Malka Ostchega, and I am the head coach of the team. This is my 6th year coaching the team. We have a great season planned, with many improvements over last year.

Our team belongs to the Montgomery County Swim League (MCSL), which is a recreational summer swim league that has 90 teams divided into 15 divisions. Our team is seeded 6th out of these 90 teams, and we will compete in the league’s top division (Division A) with 5 other teams. While our division is quite competitive, our **goal for the summer is to have fun**. We also want to run successful swim meets and each swimmer to do their best and swim all strokes in a legal manner. The best part of summer swimming is that your whole family can be an active part of one team, and we have boys and girls ages 6-18 all competing together.

 **PRACTICES & MEETS**Practices -- Starting tomorrow until school lets out, we normally hold practices every weekday in the late afternoon and early evening. When school ends, we generally will hold (i) morning practices every day and (ii) evening practices on Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays (but not Wednesdays & Fridays) for those who cannot make the morning practices. The practice schedule is on our website ([www.bebarracudas.org](http://www.bebarracudas.org)). During the summer, evening practices tend to be crowded, so **we encourage kids to come to morning practices**. Thursday evening practices will be a combination of swimming and fun activities.

Meets -- We have swim meets on Wednesday evenings (B meets) for everyone to swim. Then, we also have swim meets on Saturday mornings (A meets) for swimmers that qualify. Although we have two types of meets, we are one team - there is no A and B team. Please do not get discouraged if your swimmer does not qualify for a Saturday meet. Our team is projected to be among the fastest in the league, so it can be difficult to qualify for those meets. There will be plenty of chances for everyone to compete.

 **VOLUNTEERS & OFFICIALS**Swimming is a very unique sport in that we need parents to help a lot. It takes over 40 parents to run a successful swim meet, as we need officials, computer operators, timers, runners and people to run our concession stand. **This year, we desperately need officials (referees, starters, stroke & turn judges)** and computer operators. **PLEASE consider getting certified as a referee, starter or stroke & turn judge – dates for training sessions are on our site.** We can NOT run a meet without officials! If you’re good at computers, please become a computer operator. Also, this is likely the last year that our current parent reps will be with the team, so we want to use this season to train new parent reps for next season. Please talk to me or any of the parent reps to serve in this role. We ask every family to work in some capacity at least 3 swim meets this year, and you can volunteer online.

Volunteering not only helps the team, it also benefits you by making the time go by a lot faster and makes the meets a lot more interesting and fun if you are on deck with us. I guarantee you will also make some new friends - there are so many nice parents on our team. Also, your children are more likely to take an interest in the sport if they see you actively involved in it. Please do not be shy about volunteering - we provide on the job training and refreshments. If you have young children, we can find a job that you can do with them. We really need your help.

If you are the parent of a teenager and for all the teenagers here tonight, this is the time to help your team. We can give you SSL hours for any job you do during a meet, timing or running or whatever you would like to do. You also are excellent role models for the younger swimmers. Any of the parent reps can help you fill out all the forms needed.

To ensure that we have sufficient volunteers for each meet, the team will observe the following two policies:

1. Parents of each swimmer must volunteer in at least three (3) swim meets. If parents fail to meet this minimum requirement, we reserve the right to bar their swimmer(s) from swimming in a meet until this requirement is met.

2. We will not start a meet until we have sufficient volunteers to properly run the meet. If we do not have sufficient volunteers 15 minutes after a delay, we will cancel the meet.

We also need your sincere help with sportsmanship. The league has asked us to do everything we can to promote good sportsmanship. There is an important code of conduct for swimmers, parents and coaches, and when you sign up for this team, you are agreeing to this code of conduct. It is posted on our website ([www.bebarracudas.org](http://www.bebarracudas.org)).

**SIGNING UP FOR THE TEAM & FOR MEETS**Go to our website ([www.bebarracudas.org](http://www.bebarracudas.org)), click on the green “Register Now” tab, and follow the 2 steps.

* Step 1 is to register on our website and pay the $50 / swimmer fee. This fee pays for everything that the County does not – e.g., equipment, software, awards, ribbons and food for the picnic – and includes a new swim t-whirt and cap. Here, you also agree to adhere to the code of conduct and to being photographed. We never use any child’s name, and our team photographer takes amazing pictures of the team, which you can see on our website.
* Step 2 is to sign up with the County’s RecWeb. You do not need to be a member of the Bethesda pool to join the swim team. The cost is the same as last year which is $185 per swimmer for county residents and $200 for non-county residents. The County then puts you on our roster.

**You cannot swim at time trials or any meets unless you have completed BOTH steps above.** Once you are registered on our website and on the County’s RecWeb, you then are ready to sign up for swim meets.

* For Wednesday “B” meets, you must sign up your swimmer online by **Monday at 9pm** (i.e., 2 days before the Wednesday meet). Otherwise we cannot allow your swimmer to swim the meet. This may sound harsh, but we have a very large team and this is the only way we can run a smooth meet. We are completely automated, and we cannot put your swimmer into the lineup if they just show up at the meet.
* For Saturday “A” meets, you must sign up your swimmer online by **Wednesday at 9pm** (i.e., 3 days before the Saturday meet). Otherwise we cannot allow your swimmer to swim the meet.

To make things easier for everyone, please go to the website now, click on the “Meets & Events” tab at the top of the page, and then click on the green “Meet Entry” button for every meet of the summer season to tell us if your swimmer can (or can’t) swim that meet. That way, you’ll be all signed-up for the season and won’t have to worry about deadlines. And, if later in the season your kids get sick or whatever, you can just change your sign-up.

Our first swim meet is Saturday, June 8 at 7:30am at our Bethesda pool. This will be our “Time Trials” meet, which is to (i) enable swimmers to get their first "baseline" time in the events they want to swim this summer season, and (ii) give swimmers, parents and coaches their first taste for competition (and running a meet) this summer. The deadline for registering for this meet is Wednesday, June 5 @ 9 pm (but beat the rush and sign up NOW)!

**COACHES**We have a great coaching staff and a wonderful tradition of hiring coaches that have all coached and/or swum in the Montgomery County Swim League. These coaches know what it’s like to be a 7-year old at their first meet. They do an excellent job with the swimmers. Please let the coaches coach at practice. If you have a parent question, please ask a rep or another parent (or one of the coaches AFTER PRACTICE). Also, if you have other small children with you, don’t let them go into the water if it is not their practice.

* [Coach introductions…]Assistant Coaches: Christian Miller, Oana Mirestean, John Nguyen, …

**MERCHANDISE**Finally, we will create an online store on our website where you can buy swim suits, goggles, deck wear and other accessories. Just go to [www.bebarracudas.org](http://www.bebarracudas.org) and click on the “Store” tab. Each swimmer also will receive a free Bethesda Barracuda swim cap as part of their registration fee. SwimOutlet.com handles all orders, payment and shipping, and gives our team a discount on all sales made through our website and a small commission on each sale, so please buy your gear through the online store in order to support the team. THANK YOU!