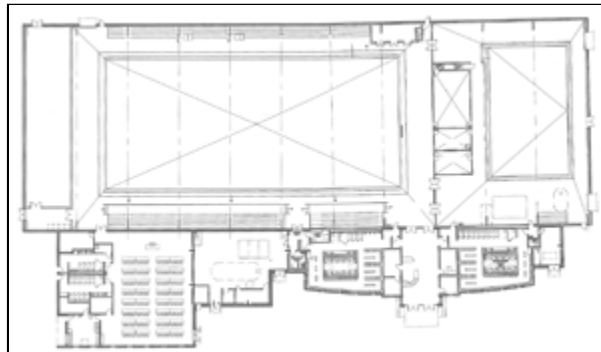


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## SPORTS

### New sports complex includes Olympic trial pools.

By Cameron Steele  
 Jul 30, 2008 - 2:17:33 PM



The new Chesterfield County sports complex will bring much more than two Richmond sports teams to the area. In addition, the complex will be home to the pools used in this summer's Olympic trials in Omaha.

The Poseidon Swimming Foundation, the owner and fundraising arm of the swim team that will use the new aquatics center, bought the pools in late April. The purchase came after the Foundation joined forces with the Richmond Kickers Youth Soccer Club on the sports complex at the start of the year.

Manufactured by Myrtha Pools U.S.A/A&T Europe S.p.a as temporary structures for special events like this year's trials, the pools are some of the fastest in the world. The purchase included a 50-meter competition pool, a 25-yard warm-up pool, and a smaller physical therapy pool.

The head coach of Poseidon Swimming, Ted Sallade, thinks the presence of these Olympian-worthy pools in Chesterfield holds important economic and social implications for the area.

"There will be a huge impact on the community," Sallade says. "It's about providing an opportunity for everyone."

In addition to swim team practices and meets, the aquatics center will be used for a variety of programs benefiting all different age and socioeconomic groups. Learn-to-swim programs for underprivileged kids, aerobics classes for retired residents, physical therapy programs, and membership options open to the public are just a few examples of the ways in which Sallade hopes the pools can be used.

The pools are composed of 1-meter stainless steel panels and PVC. The 8 and 1½ foot depth, the perfectly straight walls, and the top-of-the-line circulation system that cleans the water twice as fast are what make these pools state of the art.

Sallade, who has coached for Poseidon since 1993, expects the facility to bring swimmers from across the country to Chesterfield for state, regional, and national events. He believes that it will be an aquatics center with a "wow" factor.

President of the Foundation Mary Doswell agrees. She says that because of the pools, Poseidon Swimming has received Sportsbackers endorsements, and a commitment to host three major swim-meets each year.

"It's a lot of space to do a lot of aquatics," Doswell says. "The larger events will bring 800+ swimmers to the area." This influx of swimmers and their families will help to fill area hotels, restaurants, movie theatres, etc. Doswell estimates that Chesterfield County will gain at least \$2 million a year from these meets, and that is without the added economic impact from Kickers' events.

As for the team itself, Doswell anticipates doubling the size of Poseidon in two to three years. For Sallade, who has

coached for over 30 years and whose team philosophy is "a lot of fun while we swim fast," a larger team and better facility means he will have more opportunities to coach different groups of swimmers.

"I think the sky is the limit," Sallade says. "We were stagnating here [at ACAC, a Richmond fitness center where the team currently practices]. The new complex should bring a huge influx of kids."

This opportunity of a lifetime arose because of the relationship the Poseidon Swimming Foundation began with Myrtha Pools in 2003 when the Foundation first started working on the project of a new pool/facility for the team. Myrtha was interested in collaborating with Poseidon because they were eager to have a presence in the mid-Atlantic area, according to Doswell.

After teaming up with the Kickers to build the 34-acre complex at Chippenham Pkwy. and Iron Bridge Rd., Doswell contacted Myrtha Pools to update them on their decision. Myrtha countered back with what Doswell called "a very reasonable proposal" for Poseidon to buy the Olympic trials pools.

But because Omaha and other organizations were also bidding for the pools, Myrtha needed a fast commitment. After some scrambling, Doswell and the rest of the Foundation were able to make it work, and she sent Myrtha an e-mail to seal the deal.

Construction is set to start at the end of August, and the complex could be completed as early as late next spring.

While the price of purchase is not being disclosed, Sallade says that the fees to join the team will not go up because of it. The programs offered at the new facility and Foundation fundraising will help to pay for the pools. Long-term lease agreements and capital contributions from Poseidon partners will also alleviate costs.

And it's clear that Sallade and Doswell believe the opportunities afforded by these pools make them worth every penny.

"It's going to put a lot of pools to shame," says Doswell. "And it's really here to serve the surrounding area."

Sallade agrees.

"It's about community."

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