

PATRIOT PULSE

All training groups are currently focused on building strength and refining proper technique in the pool. This is an important phase for growth, so please be sure to listen closely to your coaches as they provide feedback and make corrections.

As a reminder, if storms are detected in the area, we will evacuate the pool and remain out of the water for 30 minutes following the last detection. During this time, groups will most likely transition to dryland activities off the pool deck.

Congratulations to our athletes who participated in the Illinois Swimming Girls Clinic with In Depth Academy! It was a valuable and exciting experience, highlighted by the opportunity to learn from Olympian Olivia Smoliga.

This weekend, we have teammates competing in the Illinois Swimming Senior Quad Long Course Challenge at Stevenson High School—good luck and have fun!

We are also incredibly proud of our divers who competed in the Badgerland Invite in Madison, WI. They are now preparing for Region 7 at Northwestern in two weeks—best of luck as you continue your season!

Here are a few important reminders and updates:

- **CAPTYN:** Sign up is OPEN for most of the upcoming meets! You can check out the new site using the link below: <https://www.patriotaquaticclub.captynsites.com/>
- **Swim Team Equipment:** PAC vouchers are active in the Kiefer site! You can go into the site today to order team suits (required) and other apparel (optional). <https://theswimteamstore.net/teamlogin/index/loginpost?username=patriot&password=aquaticclub11>
- **Louisville Swim Camp-UPDATE:** We are proud to announce our partnership with University of Louisville for a swim camp June 21-June 25th. You can find more information about the camp and sign up on their website [HERE](#). The only thing the fee does not cover is transportation. This is NOW OPEN to our 11 and over swimmers that have Regional qualifying times. If you have any questions please contact Coach Kevin.
- **Google Calendar:** All practices are listed in our team Google Calendar. We highly recommend adding it to both your and your swimmer's phone to stay up to date with practice times and any potential schedule changes.
- **Locker room Access and Security Reminder:** Locker rooms can only be accessed from the pool deck. Please enter the pool area through the southeast corner near room 5044. We've had ongoing issues with people opening locker room doors, which has unfortunately led to thefts. Do not leave personal belongings unattended in the locker room — please lock them up or bring them onto the pool deck.

Why Great Swimmers Must Learn To Get Comfortable Being Uncomfortable

Courtesy of Kevin Pierce. [Follow Kevin on SubStack here.](#)

Leadership on a swim team isn't about having the fastest time or the most accolades. It's about influence. It's about being the one who shows up early, stays late, encourages the teammate who just missed their cut, and holds the standard high even when no one else is watching. The best leaders in the pool don't just perform—they transform the atmosphere around them.

But here's the truth: none of that happens without discomfort.

Discomfort is the catalyst for growth. It's the key ingredient that most young athletes either avoid—or misunderstand. And yet, the swimmers who go the furthest in the pool and in life are the ones who learn to lean into it rather than shy away. They don't wait until they feel ready; they act, knowing that leadership requires risk, vulnerability, and a willingness to face the unknown.

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4/14/26 FALL/WINTER

Support all levels and abilities to their given needs, according to our vision as a coaching staff.

Provide encouragement, knowledge, and opportunity to strive for goals, e.g. goal setting opportunities, coaches meeting with athletes to discuss goals and progress.

Build success through commitment and hard work.

Use the sports of swimming, water polo, and diving to develop growth and personal accountability

We are committed to Safe Sport and providing a safe, healthy, and positive environment for all our athletes.



Ask any great swimmer, and they'll tell you that progress rarely feels comfortable. In fact, the very nature of swimming is built on discomfort. You train in silence with nothing but your breath and your thoughts. You stare at a black line for hours. You learn to love the burn in your legs and the pressure in your chest because those sensations signal that you're pushing boundaries.

But physical discomfort is only one side of the coin. The deeper challenge—and the one that separates leaders from followers—is emotional discomfort: speaking up when the team energy is low, addressing a teammate who's cutting corners, leading a warmup when you're unsure of what to say, or trying something new and risking failure in front of your peers.

Those moments are where leadership is forged.

One of the most powerful ideas I introduce to swimmers is the "stretch zone." It's not the comfort zone, where everything is predictable, and you feel in control. And it's not the panic zone, where you feel overwhelmed, anxious, or shut down. The stretch zone lives in between. It's where you're challenged—but supported. Pushed—but not paralyzed. In the stretch zone, discomfort isn't dangerous; it's developmental.

I've seen the stretch zone at work through swimmers like Andre. In the water, he had talent. He was consistent in practice, smart about his races, and always brought effort. But outside the water, he held back. He was quiet in team huddles, hesitant to speak in group settings, and unsure of what it meant to lead.

When I challenged him to lead warmups one week, he nodded, but I could tell it was uncomfortable. That was the point. He didn't need to be perfect—he needed to practice. He stumbled a bit on the first day, unsure of what to say. But his teammates followed. By the second week, he was checking in with others about their goals. A few weeks later, he led a pre-meet team talk. It wasn't flashy, but it was real—and it mattered.

By the end of the season, Andre wasn't just swimming well—he was leading. And not because he transformed into a different person. He simply stepped into the stretch zone over and over again until it became familiar territory. His leadership didn't come from being the loudest voice on the deck. It came from showing up consistently, embracing challenges, and modeling the kind of humility, courage, and work ethic that inspire others.

As coaches, we can't force leadership—but we can cultivate it. That starts by creating an environment where discomfort is normalized, not avoided. Where it's okay to fail, to mess up, to try something new and not get it right the first time. We have to move beyond just preparing swimmers for races—we need to prepare them for real life.

That means celebrating the effort to lead, even when it's awkward. It means pulling swimmers aside after tough moments and helping them reflect. It means helping them see that the nerves they feel before speaking in front of the team are the exact same nerves they'll one day feel before giving a presentation in college or walking into a job interview. If they learn to push through it in this context, they'll carry that strength everywhere.

Discomfort builds self-awareness. It builds resilience. It teaches swimmers how to adapt, how to grow, how to lead with empathy and strength. Those are the qualities that last long after the stopwatch stops.

Leadership moments are everywhere on a swim team, but they don't always look big. Sometimes they're found in the swimmer who steps out of their lane to congratulate a competitor. In the athlete who notices someone struggling and quietly offers encouragement. In the teammate who holds their lane accountable when effort starts slipping. These are the micro-moments that add up to a culture of excellence.

And it all starts with a willingness to get uncomfortable.

The swimmer who volunteers to do something new, who risks being vulnerable, who tries to make an impact even if they're unsure how—that's the one who's leading. Not someday. Not when they're named captain. Right now.

Because leadership isn't a title. It's a mindset. And the best swimmers don't wait to feel ready. They step up, step out, and step into the stretch zone again and again—knowing that discomfort isn't the enemy. It's the beginning of greatness.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

PAC:

SWIM:

- **April 26:** PAC vs RISE vs WILD Tri Meet at HOME. Sign up by April 23rd!
- **May 8-10:** NASA Spring Blast-Off at Northwestern University. Sign up by April 29th.
- **May 16-17:** PAC Spring Fling at HOME. Sign up by May 7th.
- **June 26-28:** North Shore Open at HOME. Sign up by May 31st.
- **July 9-12:** Summer Sectionals at the FMC Natatorium in Westmont, IL. For qualifiers only.

WATER POLO:

- **NOW:** Registrations are still open.

DIVING:

- **April 18-19:** Region 7 at Northwestern University.
- **May:** IL. Central District Meet (AAU Summer Qualifier) at Glenbrook North High School.
- **May 23-26:** AAU RWB Championships at the Orlando Diving Academy in Orlando, FL.
- **June 5-7:** Zone D at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, IA.
- **June 13-14:** Patriot Diving Summer Invite at HOME.
- **June 25-28:** USA Diving Central Championships at the University of West Virginia, Morgantown, WV.
- **July 14-24:** AAU Nationals in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
- **July 29-Aug 4:** Junior Nationals at the University of West Virginia in Morgantown, WV.

Patriot's Nutrition Corner with Coach Chandra:

I've talked before about how important protein is for athletes, but it's also important to understand the difference between complete and incomplete proteins. Complete proteins contain all 9 essential amino acids—nutrients your body needs for muscle repair and recovery but can't make on its own. Foods like meat, eggs, dairy, tofu, tempeh, and edamame are all complete protein sources.

Incomplete proteins are missing one or more of these amino acids. Many plant-based foods—like beans, nuts, seeds, and grains—fall into this category. That doesn't make them less valuable; it just means variety matters. If you don't eat meat, aim to include a mix of protein sources throughout the day to get all 9 essential amino acids.

Getting enough quality protein from a variety of sources helps support recovery, reduce soreness, and keep you performing your best.

GROUP UPDATES

SWIMMING

ELITE - Coach Kevin
kzakrzewski@d125.org

So far so good as we navigate the spring season! Kids that were able to show up on Sunday to both practices did a great job. Not an easy double! This week we spike the intensity to another level!

PATRIOT PLUS - Coach Carolyn
cgrevers@d125.org

Great start on getting goals written and turned in. Now we discuss what we have gotten down, but also make commitments to work on these things as we build up again for a great season. As a team, we are committed to build strength and power in underwater and breakouts while continuing on all other aspects of the sport. Please try to listen when we do instruction and pay attention to the focus for each day. Also, be mindful when we are doing work in the PWC of your posture and technique as we continue to build power and strength.

PATRIOT - Coach Kee
keehng@gmail.com

We had a good meeting with parents and together we will work closely to support our swimmers to foster their potential. After working on techniques and learning new drills the first 2 weeks, we are transitioning to the next phase of training with higher kicking intensity, moderate aerobics, and pulling. Technique continues to be the group's main focus!

JR PATRIOT - Coach Thomas
tschwinger@d125.org

As we are in week 3 of our new season, please make sure to have all the necessary equipment needed for practices. There are still swimmers without a water bottle; it's very important to always have one and to stay hydrated throughout practice. Right now, as we are slowing things down and working on drills, it is a perfect time to fix those mistakes that us coaches have been pointing out. Since it's never too late to make those critical changes!

LIL/MINI PATRIOT - Coach Megan
mosullivan@d125.org

As we are getting into the swing of things please remember to check the calendar. There are a few changes this week and next. Swimmers should have a water bottle with them at each practice. During Dryland practices swimmers need to wear GYM SHOES. LILs have started breaking into interval groups. Swimmers groups may change over the course of the season and it's to put them in a group that best fits their needs and abilities. Remember to encourage your swimmers to put forth their best effort every practice and to be respectful team mates.

WATER POLO

HS Water Polo - Coach Rose
rwimer@d125.org

Good Luck with your high school season. Summer Registration will be coming out soon.

10U and Age Group WATER POLO:

Make sure you are a part of the parent square app to get weekly schedule updates! Join [HERE](#)

Spring Season Registration – 10U & Age Group

Registration for the Spring season is now open for 10U and Age Group athletes. Please use the link below to complete your registration.

Important: This is a brand-new registration system. You will need to create a new account, even if you were registered on our previous website—old accounts will not carry over.

Registration Link: [Water Polo](#)

DIVING

COMPETITIVE DIVING
Coach Jonathan - jroby@d125.org

Congrats to all that competing this weekend at the Badgerland invite! Good luck to all competing at regionals at Northwestern this weekend!

DEVELOPMENTAL DIVING

Normal practices this week, we'll see you in the boards!

LEARN TO DIVE

No practice on Saturday 4/18, come in on Sunday 4/19 to make up the class!

PAC Social Media
INSTAGRAM:

[@patriotaquaticclub](#)
[@nipc_wp](#)
[@pac_diving](#)

FACEBOOK:

Patriot Aquatic Club -
Lincolnshire, IL

YOUTUBE CHANNELS:

Patriot Aquatic Club
Northern Illinois Polo
Club

**MOTIVATION OF
THE WEEK:**

**"Every morning
you have two
choices: continue
to sleep with your
dreams or wake up
and chase them."**

Carmelo Anthony