

PATRIOT PULSE

We have several upcoming meet registration deadlines approaching, so be sure to review your options and sign up soon!

Summer Water Polo registration is now open as well—links are included below.

All swim meet information can be found under the **Swim Team** tab on our website, or directly here:

<https://www.patriotaquaticclub.captynsites.com/hosted-meets>

This page includes entry lists, psych sheets, session reports, and warm-up/arrival times for both current and upcoming meets throughout the season.

Louisville Swim Camp Reminder:

The registration deadline is this Saturday, April 25. This opportunity is open to swimmers ages 11 and older who have achieved an individual Regional qualifying time.

We're excited to continue our partnership with the University of Louisville for this camp, taking place June 21–25. More details and registration are available on their website.

Please note: Camp fees do not include transportation.

If you have any questions, please contact Coach Kevin.

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>
- **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.

6 THINGS SWIMMERS CAN DO FOR MORE MENTAL TOUGHNESS

BY **OLIVIER POIRIER-LEROY**

Being mentally tough is essentially about conquering yourself.

- By using more productive self-talk in the water...you push through doubt and discomfort during hard sets and practices.
- You use visualization to prepare for the stress of competition...and rise to the occasion when it matters most.
- You focus and concentrate on specific things at practice...and improve faster than ever because you are fully engaged and present.

Mental toughness is more than just about being "tough"...it's about maximizing your talent, skills, and ability.

It's **taking what you already have and using it more consistently.**

While I doubt there is a swimmer out there who wouldn't like an extra couple pounds of mental toughness, there is a persistent misconception that mental toughness is something you have or you don't.

In reality, **mental toughness is something that can be properly programmed and trained.**

Your mental toughness is like any other skill...

Spend time working on it, you are going to get better at it.

Spend no time working on it, avoid it because you don't know where to start or because you think it's something purely innate, and that mental toughness you hope for won't show up when you need it most.

Here are some simple things swimmers can do to build mental toughness.

WRITE POSITIVE SELF-TALK ON YOUR WATER BOTTLE.

If there is one skill to work on for more mental toughness, it's this one.

Be intentional about the self-talk you are going to use, and write it down so that you read and see it precisely during those moments when you need it most.

Your self-talk shouldn't be unrealistic, and should be unique to you and your personality.

The best way to go about better self-talk is to look into your inventory of great performances and tease out the forms of self-talk you used then and applying it to what you are doing now.

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4/21/26

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.



FINISH STRONG IN EVERYTHING YOU DO.

Effort and focus always starts strong. Whether it's a season, a main set, or a week of training, at the outset we are fresh and energized.

As the effort and fatigue go on, our concentration diminishes. Often this leads to our effort tapering off as we near the finish.

Finishing strong is something we could all do a little more of.

The benefits of closing everything you do with maximum effort should be obvious, but let's quickly recap: Finishing strong all the time makes it a habit (builds confidence), immediately separates you from the competition (fatigue makes cowards of us all), and shows you how mentally tough you can be.

Be the swimmer who finishes strong, all the time.

EVALUATE YOUR WORKOUTS REGULARLY.

One of the less-talked about realities of fast swimmers is that they aren't just talented (even though that for sure helps!), it's that they are better able to sort through their performances, good and bad, and take lessons and motivation from them.

Good swim or bad swim, they learn and move forward.

This type of self-awareness and willingness to use every performance as fuel for the next is like putting fins and paddles on your swimming.

You are simply going to improve much faster when you can use experiences for more informed training and preparation.

Put on your white lab coat and objectively look at your training. What are you doing well? Where are you being successful? How can you spread that around further? What are things you can improve on?

Instead of avoiding your weaknesses and *opportunities for growth* to protect your ego, take a step back and evaluate how you train, how you prepare, and how you can be even better.

GRADE YOUR BIGGEST MINDSET OPPORTUNITY DAILY.

One of the issues that I hear about from swimmers who want to get mentally tougher is that they don't really know how to measure their mental toughness.

How each swimmer defines mental toughness, and what it means to them, is unique.

Grade your mental toughness.

Give yourself a tangible target to work with, even if the skill itself seems like an abstract thing.

I've always found that [grading effort after practice](#) is an easy way to put more focus on excellent effort during training.

SET DAILY CHALLENGES AND GOALS IN PRACTICE.

Daydreaming during practice is something we all do to a certain degree. But if that's all you are doing, then you are going through the motions and not really making the most of your time in the water.

One way to focus up is to set yourself small goals and challenges each day at the pool.

- *Today I am going to push off with perfect streamlines for the whole practice.*
- *Today I am going to finish every rep of every set with a race finish.*

Little things that go beyond what your coach expects of you will not only keep you engaged and present at practice, but this kind of engagement is a lot more fun and rewarding than allowing your mind to wander and your swimming to suffer.

VISUALIZE YOURSELF OVERCOMING ADVERSITY.

And not just swimming the "perfect" race. Mental imagery is a proven way to bulletproof your race-day performances.

[Countless Olympians from Michael Phelps to Katie Ledecky use this mental skill](#) to prepare for the stress of competition. Often swimmers are blindsided and choke on race day because they aren't prepared for the pressure, stress, and expectations.

When you use visualization properly, to rehearse the nerves, the butterflies, the block under your feet, the cold rush of water when you dive in, moments of adversity in real life aren't as devastating.

Because you've imagined yourself thriving in the face of adversity ahead of time, the sting and shock of your goggles springing a leak or your legs feeling cement on the final lap doesn't derail your focus and energy.

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 for SUMMER are now open.

DIVING:

- **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:

Another key piece of performance nutrition is managing inflammation. While some inflammation is a normal part of training and recovery, too much—especially from poor food choices—can slow recovery, increase soreness, and impact performance. Chronic inflammation can lead to injury and illness so reducing inflammatory foods is important for consistent performance. Focus on including more anti-inflammatory foods like fruits (especially berries), vegetables (like spinach, kale, and broccoli), fatty fish, nuts, seeds, and healthy fats such as olive and avocado oil. These foods provide antioxidants and omega-3s that help your body recover faster and stay healthy. At the same time, try to limit highly processed foods, fried foods, and excess sugar, as these can increase inflammation and leave you feeling sluggish. Eating this way consistently can help you feel better, recover quicker, and stay healthy.

GROUP UPDATES

SWIMMING

ELITE - Coach Kevin
kzakrzewski@d125.org

We are in week 2 of some high intensity training. Taking the foundation we set in the winter and reapplying it now. Consistency and accountability are key as we go through this phase of training as we only have 5 weeks until Madison. I know APs are around the corner, be as prepared as possible now. Missing practice will not be excused because of an exam.

PATRIOT PLUS - Coach Carolyn
cgrevers@d125.org

This has been a great week for Patriot Plus, keep up the good work. We are continuing the buildup of strength and endurance in all our strokes. This is an important time to work on personal goals for in the water as we build power in everything. Starts, turns and breakouts will continue to be a focus especially as we head into our first meet this weekend.

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
tschwingen@d125.org

We'll be getting our first chance of the season to race this weekend at our Tri meet with Rise and Wild. Although it will be SCY, it's a good opportunity to see where we are after the first couple of weeks of practices and some things that you need to start working on. Please make sure to attend all the practices that you can. We have another week of drills, and then we will start introducing more anaerobic/aerobic sets.

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

This week is another week of different schedules so please be sure to check the Calendar. We will try to utilize as much pool time as possible. Please check in with your LIL about their swim equipment - seems like some feet are growing and fins are getting a bit tight. We have started splitting into our interval groups, these can change based on what we are doing day to day or as swimmers progress week to week.

WATER POLO

HS Water Polo - Coach Rose
rwimer@d125.org

High School Girls
Athletes: includes incoming freshmen
Dates: May 26th-July 23rd
Location: Stevenson High School Pool
Cost: \$500

Practice Days/Times HS GIRLS:
Monday: 6:00am-7:30am Pool
Tuesday: 7:30pm-8:30pm Dryland/Polo IQ 8:30-10pm Pool
Wednesday: OFF
Thursday: 7:30pm-8:30pm Dryland/Polo IQ 8:30-10pm Pool
Friday: 6:00am-7:30am Pool

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

[NIPC WEBSITE LINK](#)

High School Boys
Athletes: includes incoming freshmen
Dates: May 26th-July 23rd
Location: Stevenson High School Pool
Cost: \$500

Practice Days/Times HS BOYS:
Monday: 7:30pm-8:30pm Dryland/Polo IQ 8:30-10pm Pool
Tuesday: 6:00am-7:30am Pool
Wednesday: 7:30pm-8:30pm Dryland/Polo IQ 8:30-10pm Pool
Thursday: OFF
Friday: 6:00am-7:30am Pool

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

Age Group WATER POLO:

Age Group Water Polo
Athletes 8th grade and younger (11-14yrs).
Athletes who will be in 9th grade in the fall 2026 are high school registration, Please email me for details

Dates: May 26th-July 23rd
Location: Stevenson High School Pool
Cost: \$500

Practice Days/Times:
Monday: 5-5:30 pm Dryland/Polo IQ 5:30-7pm Pool
Tuesday: 5:30-7pm Pool
Wednesday: 5-5:30 pm Dryland/Polo IQ 5:30-7pm Pool
Thursday: 5:30-7pm Pool

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

10U WATER POLO:

10u Water Polo
Athletes aged 10yrs old and younger, all levels

Dates: May 26th-July 23rd
Location: Stevenson High School Pool
Cost: \$500

Practice Days/Times:
Mondays 6:00-6:45p
Wednesdays 6:00-6:45p

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

MOTIVATION OF THE WEEK:

"Always remember, your focus determines your reality"

George Lucas

DIVING

COMPETITIVE DIVING
Coach Jonathan - jroby@d125.org

Congrats to all those who competed this weekend at Region 7 Championships and qualified to Zone D championships in Iowa city!

DEVELOPMENTAL DIVING

We'll see you on the boards at our normal times this week!

LEARN TO DIVE

Normal Wednesday practice this week but no Saturday practice due to a water polo tournament.

PAC Social Media

INSTAGRAM:

[@patriotaquaticclub](#)

[@nipc_wp](#)

[@pac_diving](#)

FACEBOOK:

Patriot Aquatic Club -
Lincolnshire, IL

YOUTUBE CHANNELS:

Patriot Aquatic Club
Northern Illinois Polo
Club