

PATRIOT PULSE

Great job to everyone who competed at the Tri Meet this past weekend! As an early-season benchmark, it was a valuable opportunity to put your training into action and practice the skills we've been building in the pool.

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

Louisville Swim Camp-LAST CHANCE:

The registration deadline is now this Thursday, April 30th. 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/> All posted swim meet information can be found under the Swim Team tab on our website, or directly here: <https://www.patriotaquaticclub.captynsites.com/hosted-meets>
- **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>
- **Personalized Caps:** These have not come in yet. As soon as they arrive, swimmers will get them at practice.
- **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.

Added article link: [8 Essential Stretches for Swimmers \(but excellent for most athletes!\)](#)

What Sets the Best Swimmers Apart: Mental Habits That Lead to Growth

by [PEYTON CURRY](#)

Swimmers spend up to 30 hours per week training, stretching, lifting weights, and rehabilitating injuries. In the pool, they build endurance, focus on technique, and push to be as fast and efficient as possible. In the weight room, they condition their bodies, develop fast-twitch muscles, and build strength. Just like the physical side of the sport, the mental aspect of swimming needs consistent training and focus.

Finding Areas for Growth

The best athletes understand that their physical preparation can only take them so far. Without a strong mental foundation, consistent high performance isn't guaranteed. These athletes recognize their weaknesses and are willing to identify gaps in the physical and mental aspects of their training. This mindset creates room for growth and improvement.

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4/28/26 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.



Daily Habits Set Swimmers Apart

Swimmers build a positive mindset through the daily habits they bring to every practice. The things they tell themselves when they face a challenging set, have an off day, or even have a great day add up over time and shape the mindset that athletes carry into competition.

Mental habits can subtly influence how hard athletes believe they are working. For example, some athletes might leave a practice feeling exhausted, assuming they gave 100%. But in some cases, the fatigue comes more from mental stress, like overthinking, self-criticism, or frustration. They may have spent more energy worrying than actually working, feeling drained from mental exhaustion as opposed to physical exertion.

These patterns don't just burn mental energy; they shift focus. Poor mental habits can distract swimmers from the task at hand when they should be sharpening their skills and attention to detail.

Over time, self-talk in practice becomes the voice that shows up behind the blocks. If swimmers end every practice thinking they failed, it's unlikely their self-talk will suddenly become positive come race day.

Putting it into Practice

Many swimmers find that despite doing everything "right" when it comes to training hard, eating well, and sleeping enough, their mind is the very thing that gets in the way of executing their race plan and achieving their goals.

Luckily, mental training doesn't require lots of extra hours outside the pool. It's something that can be developed gradually through simple, intentional habits built into everyday training. Intention is a great place to start. If athletes are mindful of the language they use during practice, recognize when they slip into a negative mental space, and learn to pivot, they're already making progress. Tools like visualization, breathing techniques, and brief moments of reset between sets can have a positive impact without the feeling of taking on additional tasks.

Creating habits isn't just checking off another box. It's evaluating self-talk, daily mental patterns, and identifying how these impact performance.

Finding the Extra 1%

Natural talent is often praised, but it's rarely enough on its own. The highest performers understand that they have to train beyond what comes naturally to them, physically and mentally.

At the same time, a swimmer can work the hardest in the pool, lift the heaviest weights, and eat the cleanest diet. But at the end of the day, if their mental habits are unproductive, their performance will hit a ceiling.

Sport psychologists and performance coaches play an important role in helping athletes develop the mental habits that support success. Incorporating strong mental habits is often the factor that gives elite athletes the edge over their competition. The good news is that on the mental side of training, even small shifts can lead to significant improvement.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

PAC:

- TBA

SWIM:

- **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.
- **May 29-31:** BAC Jack Pettinger Invitational in Madison, WI. Sign up by May 17th.
- **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.
- **July 10-12:** North Suburban Splash at HOME. Sign up by June 30th.

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:

Sleep and nutrition go hand in hand when it comes to performance in the pool. What you eat throughout the day can directly impact how well you sleep at night—and better sleep means better recovery, energy, and focus at practice. Try to avoid heavy, greasy, or high-sugar foods close to bedtime, as they can disrupt sleep quality. You might notice it takes longer to fall asleep, you wake up more during the night, or you feel restless and not fully recovered in the morning. Some athletes also feel overheated, sluggish, or have an upset stomach after eating hard-to-digest foods late at night. Instead, aim for a light evening snack that includes a mix of carbohydrates and protein, like a banana with peanut butter or yogurt with granola, which can help support muscle recovery and promote more restful sleep.

GROUP UPDATES

SWIMMING

ELITE - Coach Kevin
kzakrzewski@d125.org

With AP exams around the corner, it's especially important that you plan ahead and prepare early for your exams and how you can make sure you don't miss practice because of the exams. Madison and Project LA are around the corner. Want to make sure we are as prepared for those as possible.

PATRIOT PLUS - Coach Carolyn
cgrevers@d125.org

Turns were the focus for the Tri meet over the weekend. They are getting better and faster, but there is more work to be done. We will continue to work the endurance part of the season, but sprint and pace work will be introduced more and more. Our next focus will be the Blast-Off in a couple weeks and the start of Long Course meets. Challenge yourself with a plan for races!

PATRIOT - Coach Kee
keehng@gmail.com

We are very proud to see our swimmers participating in all strokes at the first meet of the season. It was a great way to shake off the rust and to experience racing speed again. Most importantly, being able to identify areas to work on is essential for progress! This is the last week of general practices with aerobic, kicking, and pulling. The group is more than ready to start

JR PATRIOT - Coach Thomas
tschwingen@d125.org

What a fun meet to start off the season. Each swimmer should be able to take away a couple of tips from the coaches on what they should be focusing on during practices. We did notice though, a lot of what we said at the meet is the same thing we've talked about in practices. So, make sure to use that advice, make those important changes, and start your way to improving.

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

Great first meet! While there weren't a lot of best times it was a great experience for the LILs to practice racing even when tired and I was happy to see the camaraderie. This week we will begin our focus on perfecting drills and technique.

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:

"Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time."

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

DIVING

COMPETITIVE DIVING
Coach Jonathan - jroby@d125.org

No practice Friday or Saturday this week due to water polo, all over practices are on!

DEVELOPMENTAL DIVING

No Friday practice this week, we'll see you Wednesday and Sunday!

LEARN TO DIVE

Practice Wednesday at our normal time and from 11-noon Sunday this week, see you on the boards!

PAC Social Media

INSTAGRAM:

[@patriotaquaticclub](#)

[@nipc_wp](#)

[@pac_diving](#)

FACEBOOK:

Patriot Aquatic Club -
Lincolnshire, IL

YOUTUBE CHANNELS:

Patriot Aquatic Club
Northern Illinois Polo
Club