

PATRIOT PULSE

Swimmers are heading to their first Long Course Meter (LCM) meet of the season at Northwestern University. Good luck to those competing at the NASA Blast-Off! More information will be available soon.

Both the NIPC 12U and 14U teams head to New Trier this weekend for games. Go team!

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:** They are in! Coaches will send these home with swimmers this week.
- **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.

The Key to Unlocking Your Speed: A Positive Mindset

by BAILEY DURAN

We've all had that race where we're standing begrudgingly behind the blocks, thinking about how we'd rather be doing *anything* other than swim this race. To make matters worse, the swimmers to your left and right appear to be geared up and ready to battle. You begin to tell yourself that there is no way you are going to keep up with them.

People experience negative thoughts every day, whether consciously or subconsciously. But when swimmers entertain those negative thoughts, they have unknowingly sentenced themselves to performing far less than their best. So how do you harness and retrain your thoughts to make significant improvements in your performance? Read on to find out!

Why Your Mindset Matters: A positive mindset is arguably one of the most important tools for a swimmer to develop. [Training, talent, and genetics can only take a swimmer so far.](#) According to Coach **Kyle Elmendorf**, "Talent can win you games, but character and attitude win championships. Coaches would rather invest their time in athletes who are motivated, coach-able, hard-working, disciplined and great teammates over a selfish group of talented athletes."

Your mindset ultimately determines your result, whether in practice or in a race. The swimmers who stay positive in practice are setting themselves up for success. Positive swimmers are ready for anything that is thrown at them, whether their goggles fall off during the start or they swim a personal best.

National champion gymnast, three-time All-American and Hall of Fame athlete [Kirk Mango](#) emphasizes this when he says, "The mental game side is all about what the athlete believes. This belief is what makes the biggest difference in how an athlete acts. Attitude and belief about what one can accomplish are essential to any possibility of achieving anything."

Swimmers typically fall somewhere between the [positive mindset](#) and [negative mindset](#). A mentally tough swimmer has a positive mindset and a mentally weak swimmer will have a negative mindset. You might be thinking, "What's the big deal? Does it really matter if I'm negative versus positive if I get the job done?"

The answer is yes, and it makes a bigger difference than you think.

Effects of a Negative Mindset: A negative mindset plagues nearly all swimmers from time to time, as the constant wear and tear to your body is bound to take a toll. No one can stay positive all the time; we all have bad days! How the swimmer responds to those thoughts, however, is what counts.

A swimmer who is hit with negative thoughts before a race and allows them to take root and stay will under-perform. Negative thoughts create anxiety or fear inside of us. According to psychologist **Dr. Laura M. Miele**, Ph.D., negative thoughts cause mental blocks, lack of focus and/or preparation, less than desirable performances, tightening of muscles, and in some cases, injuries.

Dr. Jim Taylor addresses this further by adding:

Negative emotions can hurt performance both physically and mentally. They first cause you to lose your prime intensity. With frustration and anger, your intensity goes up and leads to muscle tension, breathing difficulties and a loss of coordination. It also saps your energy and causes you to tire quickly. When you experience despair and helplessness, your intensity drops sharply and you no longer have the physical capabilities to perform well.

Negative emotions can also hurt you mentally. Your emotions are telling you that, deep down, you're not confident in your ability to perform well and achieve your competitive goals. Your confidence will decline... Also, since your negative emotions are so strong, you will likely have

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5/5/26 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.



difficulty focusing on what will help you to perform well; the negative emotions draw your attention onto all of the negative aspects of your performance. Finally, negative emotions can hurt your motivation to perform because you just don't feel good and it's no longer fun.

A negative mindset tells us that failure is unacceptable. When we are overwhelmed by these thoughts, we experience a barrage of emotions including fear, frustration, anger and helplessness. Focusing your energy on the task at hand becomes impossible and steals our joy in the sport.

Mental toughness trainer **Craig Sigl** also tells us that negativity turns your mind against your goals, even if you don't intend for that to happen. He says that negative thoughts will come out victorious if we harbor them.

Where do negative emotions come from? Dr. Taylor says that they come from "baggage" from past races, experiences, etc. At first, negative emotions can boost performance because they cause a rise of intensity. However, if not properly dealt with, they will begin to cause more damage than help.

It is okay to be disappointed in a race – it shows you care – but don't let yourself stay there!

How to Change Your Mindset: Here's the good news: if you are reading this and realize your swimming is dominated by a negative attitude, you can make tangible steps toward a positive mindset! When you feel that first trickle of negativity, do not allow it to spiral out of control.

Ask yourself the following questions when you begin to beat yourself up about a bad race: "Am I being fair to myself right now? Am I blowing this out of proportion? Am I helping or hurting myself by thinking this way?"

Psychologist Dr. **Kristi Pkiewicz**, Ph.D., instructs us to **reframe** these thoughts and visualize a better outcome when faced with doubt and fear. Instead of feeding into and voicing negative thoughts by complaining, you learn how to control your reactions by finding a more constructive way of interpreting your situation.

Reframing causes you to shift your focus from factors that you cannot control to those you can. You cannot control what your opponent says or does, but you *can* focus on what *you* do. For example, Dr. Pkiewicz says when you are faced with thoughts like *I'm too tired to speed up this last 50*, you should reframe it by saying *Relax – trust my training*.

Visualization is a powerful tool with cognitive reframing. According to Dr. Miele, visualization and positive self-talk are a form of relaxation. When you picture yourself being successful and reaching your goals, your body responds to that. So next time you feel the self-doubt rising up, picture yourself accomplishing what you have set out to do. It will make a huge difference!

Make a goal. By concentrating on your end goal instead of thinking of how tired you are or how fast these people are ask yourself, "What time do I want?" or "What do I want my 50 split to be?" By concentrating on what you want your race to look like, you are taking concrete steps toward controlling your outcome.

Believe in yourself! You *can* achieve this. If you believe you are going to fail, you will – plain and simple.

Persistence is key. If you know that you need to make a change, don't give up after a week. Keep working hard to change your thought pattern and train yourself to not worry about what is outside of your control.

Take a deep breath when you feel yourself responding to negativity coming from yourself or your teammates. Because anxiety and stress can inhibit deep breathing, focusing on breathing from your abdominal area will open up your airways. Dr. Taylor says that breathing deeply will help your body relax, feel better and feel more in control. These changes will naturally increase your confidence and enable you to perform well.

Smile! When you feel stress and don't know if you can take anymore, smile. Even if you don't feel like you can, do it. Smiling releases endorphins which cause your body to relax and feel happy.

Apply all focus to your race. You've been preparing for this moment and know what to do! Focus on yourself and no one else! You've already done all the training. Performance is oftentimes attributed to 10 percent physical training and 90 percent mental strength. Your self-talk matters!

Allow room for improvement. Instead of beating yourself up after a sub-par performance, think of at least one way you know you can improve (like faster flip turns) and train that aspect in practice. Each race is an opportunity to learn something. Develop a plan of attack and move forward!

The Power of a Positive Mindset

When you are positive throughout practices and meets, you are giving yourself a huge advantage. Dr. Taylor says that positivity allows you to enjoy the process. It helps us approach every challenge and love it. You will also begin to enjoy those high-pressure meets that used to scare you to death. Your confidence will naturally grow, insecurities will begin to melt away, and you will believe in yourself and those goals you swim for every day.

Positive thinking boosts performance and helps you feel more in control. While negative thinking leaves you feeling helpless and overwhelmed, positive thinking leaves you feeling confident, excited, happy and fulfilled. It also encourages your body to perform at its peak intensity while being relaxed and excited about the task at hand.

Not to say that positive swimmers don't have bad swims from time to time – they do. But you won't see them throwing their cap and goggles and pouting in the corner. They talk it over with a coach, analyze aspects to improve, and move on. Your response to those bad races determines how fast you will bounce back and achieve that time you've been working toward.

A positive mindset will help you to be calm and confident when it matters the most. How you respond to tough things will determine your success as a swimmer.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

PAC:

- TBA

SWIM:

- **May 8-10:** NASA Spring Blast-Off at Northwestern University. Entries are closed.
- **May 16-17:** PAC Spring Fling at HOME. Entries are closed.
- **May 27:** Northshore Quad meet at Centennial pool in Wilmette, IL. MINI/LIL can sign up until May 19th.
- **May 29-31:** BAC Jack Pettinger Invitational in Madison, WI. Entries close May 8th.
- **June 12-14:** RISE Endless Summer meet at Libertyville HS. Entries close June 3rd.
- **June 26-28:** North Shore Open at HOME. Entries close May 31st.
- **June 27-28:** RISE Summer Splash at Libertyville HS. Entries close June 18th.
- **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:

- **May 9:** 12U and 14U games at New Trier.
- **May 17:** 12U and 14U games at Glenbrook South.

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:

Build-your-own recovery snack formula: carbohydrates + protein + fluids. Carbs help replace the energy you just used, while protein supports muscle repair and recovery. A good goal is to pair a carb source (fruit, granola bar, crackers, cereal) with a protein source (milk, yogurt, chocolate milk, peanut butter, cheese, or a protein shake). For example, try chocolate milk and a banana, yogurt with granola, or crackers with peanut butter. Don't forget fluids to rehydrate—water or a sports drink if it was a tough set. Keeping it simple and eating within 30–60 minutes after practice can help you recover faster, feel better at your next workout, and stay consistent throughout the season.

GROUP UPDATES

SWIMMING

ELITE - Coach Kevin
kzakrzewski@d125.org

Best of luck with APs this week and next week! Make sure you prepare as often as possible and plan ahead. Missing practices should not be an option.

PATRIOT PLUS - Coach Carolyn
cgrevers@d125.org

We are heading into our first LCM meet this weekend. I have talked to the squad about preparing each race with a plan and strategy. Every swimmer has a different goal in mind for each meet and race, so we want to hear what their plan is going into the swim and then what we have learned from the race. Be smart and race fast!

PATRIOT - Coach Kee
keehng@gmail.com

Our swimmers did a great job on their self evaluations and goal setting which enables us to work closely and to make progress together. We are now in a new phase focusing on race pace training. Pulling is next to build strength for propulsion. Aerobic and kicking are still important to maintain and improve endurance. Technique and race strategy wraps everything for racing in this group.

JR PATRIOT - Coach Thomas
tschwingen@d125.org

Jr's will be doing their first test set this week at practice. We try to do one every 3 to 4 weeks during the season to assign lanes and gauge a swimmer's progress. Hoping, if they are training correctly and putting in the effort, then we'll see progress in those test sets. But we are also looking that they are maintaining technique, correct turns, and streamlines throughout.

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

Calendar has been updated to reflect our transition to the Summer schedule. Make sure to check the meet sign ups - we've added the 1 day NT Meet for MINIs & LILs. As a reminder with the nice weather we may be going outside so please be sure your swimmer is prepared as needed - shoes, sunscreen, water bottles, ect. For both groups we are continuing to focus on the important details and building upon already learned drills.

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:

"Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results."

Willie Nelson

DIVING

COMPETITIVE DIVING
Coach Jonathan - jroby@d125.org

Register for the GA Central Association Champs meet on Dive Live! No practices Sunday have a HAPPY MOTHERS DAY!

DEVELOPMENTAL DIVING

Wednesday practices shifted this week to 7-9pm. NO PRACTICE SUNDAY!

LEARN TO DIVE

No practice this Wednesday due to a water polo game! Saturdays practices are also pushed to 4:30-5:30pm

PAC Social Media INSTAGRAM:

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

FACEBOOK:

Patriot Aquatic Club -
Lincolnshire, IL

YOUTUBE CHANNELS:

Patriot Aquatic Club
Northern Illinois Polo
Club