

PATRIOT PULSE

Good luck to all our outstanding female swimmers and divers competing at the IHSA Sectional Meet this weekend! We're cheering you on and can't wait to see your hard work pay off in the pool and on the boards.

Congratulations to all our athletes who wrapped up their Conference meets last weekend—you finished strong and represented our program with pride.

It was great to see our team come together and compete at the Fall Classic this past weekend. Congratulations to everyone who raced, and best of luck to those competing at the MAC A3 Meet in the coming days.

We're also sending our best to the water polo teams competing in Lyons and Naperville North this weekend—finish the season strong! And finally, good luck to our divers heading to the Fall Back Invite in Schroeder. We're proud of you all—let's make it another great weekend of competition!

Here are a few important reminders and updates:

- **MAC A3 Meet:** The qualified 13 and overs are heading to the RecPlex in Pleasant Prairie, WI. over the weekend. More information to those that are entered in the meet will go out shortly.
- **Winter League:** Meet one is this Saturday! More information for those entered will be out soon. Just as a reminder: these meets are for 14 and under swimmers who do not have Regional qualifying times. It is intended to be a quick and fast event that is geared for our newer swimmers looking for opportunities to get times.
- **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.
- **ParentSquare:** We still have families that have not switched from GroupMe to ParentSquare. Please follow this [LINK](#), fill out the form and select all of the relevant groups you need to be a part of. This is for PARENTS and ATHLETES! If you have any questions please reach out to Coach Kevin Zakrzewski.
- **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.
- **Practice like a PATRIOT Program:** Still going.....Check it out on Instagram!

What Does Your Pre-Race Routine Look Like?

by Olivier Poirier-Leroy

One of my favorite things to do at swim meets is to watch how swimmers behave in the moments before they explode off the blocks. The body language, the different levels of intensity, the chest slapping, water spitting, dancing and nervous leg-pumping.

Watching the pre-race routines of swimmers, trying to “hack” my own over the years, and helping athletes develop their own routine have shown me what it takes each swimmer to do their best is unique.

The pre-race routine is custom to each swimmer.

It's tempting to look at what our idols do before they race—Phelps' double arm backslap, for instance—and seek to emulate it. But it's not the double arm backslap that helped Phelps swim fast, it was the comfort and routine of that movement that helped him swim his best.

Here are some ideas on putting together a pre-race routine that will help you swim like a rock star at your next swim meet.

What does it take for you to feel ready?

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

- 1.) Aquatics Coordinator Message
- 2.) Featured Articles
- 3.) Group Updates & Social Media

11/4/25 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.



Swimmers often ask me what they need to do to perform their best on race day. But the truth is, you already know. The things that help you swim at your best are littered throughout past performances.

Look back at the swims where you swam out of your mind. Those moments where you exceeded expectations and surprised yourself. What was your mindset like? What were you thinking about? What was your emotional state?

Work backwards from these things, developing a race day routine that builds you to that high-performing mindset and emotional state.

Avoid trying out new things on race day.

One of the big benefits of a pre-race routine is that it gives you control. Even though things might be going nuts around you—the people in the stands, the fast swimming of other athletes in the pool—you can lean on your routine to keep you stay calm and focused on doing the things you need to do to perform your best. That sense of control goes out the window if you start switching things up on race day. A new diet. A different hand placement on your pulling motion. Trying a start that you've never done before.

The work has already been done, your technique is dialed in (for better or worse). Stick to your plan and avoid the urge to do last minute tweaks to your preparation.

Stay warm.

Pool decks aren't always the warmest of places. Cold metal bleachers plus sitting around between your races means that our body temperature can fall quickly. Bundle up and get another warm-up in 15-20 minutes before your race for optimal performance.

Have a plan as part of your overall race day routine to stay warm and loose during those long sessions at the pool.

Do your own thing.

When I was a young age-grouper, I would typically spend half the meet watching the older, national-level swimmers. I would jump into their lanes during warm-up. Study the things they did behind the block. Marvel at their technique and efficiency.

I would usually end up imitating some part of their preparation. The logic was that if it worked for them, it should work for me. As I got older, I realized the value in having a pre-race routine is that was my own. What I needed to feel prepared didn't always match up with what my idols were doing.

Pre-race routines provide familiarity and control—if you are constantly changing things up on the fly, it reduces the sense of control you have. Have your own plan for race day.

Remember that nerves are normal.

The stress and pressure of competition is real. The physical symptoms are something we *all* experience—[one study](#) of ballroom dancers found that the physical stress response before competing is as stressful as *jumping out of an airplane*—but how we frame and experience it makes all the difference. During those stomach-churning minutes behind the block, remember that the nerves are normal. Instead of trying to quash the nerves (which usually just backfires and makes it worse), reframe them as excitement and ride them to faster swimming.

Writing out “Nerves are part of the process,” and “I’m excited to see what I can do,” into your pre-race routine serve as critical reminders that what you are feeling is normal and even beneficial to your race performance.

Write out a list of performance cues for your race.

Okay, so we've made it to the block. We hunch over, grip the edge, and when the starter finally beeps, we launch ourselves into the water. At this point your race strategy and performance cues kick in.

What are performance cues? Simple phrases that keep you focused on your race. *Easy speed* is a cue that will help you not spin out on the first 25 of a 100. *Snap and explode* when you head into the wall to turn. *Hulk smash* when there is just 15m left.

Performance cues give you specific things to focus on that keep your attention on maximizing your performance, and not getting distracted by what's happening in the lanes next to you.

The next step

A pre-race routine should be part of your overall competition preparation. Something you can work on over the course of the season and tweak as necessary so that when you step up on the block during championship season, you will know you've done everything possible to throw down on your PB's.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

PAC:

- TBD

SWIM:

- **Nov. 7-9** - MAC A3 Invitational at the RecPlex in Pleasant Prairie, WI. Entries are closed.
- **Nov. 8** - The NEW Winter League Series Meet #1 is @HOME! Entries close Oct. 29th.
- **Nov. 21-23** - Patriot Premiere Meet @HOME. Entries are closed.
- **Dec. 6-7** - NASA Winter Blast-Off at Northwestern University. Entries close Nov. 12th.
- **Dec. 10-15** - Winter Junior Nationals in Austin, TX.
- **Dec. 12-14** - FOX Holiday Classic in Hobart, IN. Entries close on Nov. 11.

WATER POLO:

- **Nov. 8** - Premier game for Black Team at Naperville North. 12U Championships at Lyons.
- **Nov. 15** - Futures game for the Green Team at Naperville North.
- **Nov. 17** - NIPC Winter Water Polo Registration is OPEN!

DIVING:

- **Nov. 8-9** - Fall Back Invite at Schroeder Y in Brown Deer, WI.

Patriot's Nutrition Corner with Coach Chandra:

Fueling Performance -

Proper nutrition is the foundation of every great performance. Whether you're training for competition or just pushing to reach a new personal best, what you eat directly impacts your energy, recovery, and overall results. In this section, we'll highlight key nutrients, smart food choices, and simple strategies to help athletes stay strong, recover faster, and perform at their peak.

GROUP UPDATES

SWIMMING

ELITE - Coach Kevin
kzakrzewski@d125.org

Congrats to all of the girls who competed in their HS conference meets this past weekend. Good luck at Sectionals this coming weekend. We are less than 3 weeks away from our hosted Prelim/Final meet. Going to start doing final preparations for that event. This coming weekend at the MAC meet will be our first trial run in numerous events. It's time to step up and RACE!

PATRIOT PLUS - Coach Carolyn
cgrevers@d125.org

The group had a pretty good weekend at the Fall Classic and we are doubling down on working turns and breakouts before the MAC A3 Meet this weekend. These three weeks are dedicated to prepare for the Patriot Premier meet (At HOME). Suit up and get ready to compete! Ladies returning from girls HS swim: if you need a break after HS, please take it the week of Thanksgiving.

PATRIOT - Coach Kee
keehng@gmail.com

There were nice time drops by our swimmers in the PAC Fall Classic. It was a great opportunity to measure the progress as well as to prepare for the next meet in 3 weeks. Early this week, we will hone in on more technique work and will continue the focus of anaerobic and aerobic training into its third week. A reminder that only by attending full swim and dryland practice sessions can help achieve optimal progress.

JR PATRIOT - Coach Thomas
tschwingen@d125.org

Another weekend of some fun and fast racing. Jr swimmers represented on Sunday during the 50FR Eliminations with many qualifying for the top 8. Here are a few that made it to the top 2. 10&U Girls second place was Fiona Schneider, 10&U Boys winner was Arjun Shinde. 11/12 Girls winner was Alex Phillips with second place going to Zoe Kovacs. 11/12 Boys winner was Jayson Clark with second place going to Michael La Porte. Great job to everyone! We have a few weeks before our next big meet here at home. So, we will continue building our endurance and speed with challenging sets. Make sure to attend all the practices that you can.

LIL PATRIOT - Coach Megan
mosullivan@d125.org

Another great meet this weekend with many new times. This week we will continue to build upon our basics while increasing some of the intensity/racing in our practices. We will also add starts & turns to the end of practices as time permits each day.

WATER POLO

HS Water Polo - Coach Rose
rwimer@d125.org
 Black team plays Saturday 11/8 at Naperville North

Regular practice this week

HS Girls- Winter Registration is not open yet. Emails will be sent once registration is available!

Age Group WATER POLO:

12U championships are this weekend at Lyons Township High School

If you are unable to attend the games please email rwimer@d125.org

10u WATER POLO:

Regular practice Thursday/Sunday this week.

Winter registration is open for returning athletes.

DIVING

COMPETITIVE DIVING
 Coach Jonathan - jroby@d125.org

Make sure you're signed up through DiveLive for this weekends meet! No practice Wednesday

DEVELOPMENTAL DIVING

No practice Wednesday due the sectional sight warm up, Schroeder fall back invite this weekend!

LEARN TO DIVE

Saturdays are over for the fall, but L2Ders can come in for practices Tuesday and Friday 5:30-7pm

PAC Social Media
INSTAGRAM:

[@patriotaquaticclub](https://www.instagram.com/patriotaquaticclub)

[@nipc_wp](https://www.instagram.com/nipc_wp)

[@pac_diving](https://www.instagram.com/pac_diving)

FACEBOOK:

Patriot Aquatic Club -
 Lincolnshire, IL

YOUTUBE CHANNELS:

Patriot Aquatic Club
 Northern Illinois Polo
 Club

**MOTIVATION OF
 THE WEEK:**

**"Success comes
 from knowing that
 you did your best to
 become the best
 that you are
 capable of
 becoming."**

John Wooden