

Emma Jane Tagliaferro:

The very phrase, “Swimming in the NHSA” brings countless memories to mind. The adrenaline rush at the sound of the starting whistles. Events scrawled on my arms. Card games. That epic A relay. I’ve drifted in and out of sports, friends, interests, etc but swimming has always remained a constant. The pool has watched me grow and develop into the person I am today. The pool has seen my first dive, race, and flipturn. It has seen me goofing around with friends during warm down, crying into my goggles about some now long forgotten problem, and sprinting down the lane on a Saturday morning for a get out swim. The pool has seen my best race and my worst. With swimming for many years, I have experienced all the ups and downs and have grown stronger as a result. Swimming is such a mental sport and I believe I have built up a mental toughness due to what it demands from the individual. Resilience and passion are two of my biggest takeaways from this humbling sport. No matter how fast the interval is, even if you are barely making it, you touch and go. So what I didn’t get a good push off the flip turn, I press on. The dedication and passion I have been lucky enough to learn from my teammates. My teammates pushing me to do the harder interval at practice, high fives after we had finished a set became high fives up behind the blocks as the time and laps we put in at practice were all paying off. The passion my teammates have for the sport inspires me to swim harder in practice and in meets and this is the energy I try to bring into everything I do whether it be school, swim lessons, or other sports. I hope to build an environment where people are inspired to be themselves and do their best. The lessons I have learned and the people I have met I wouldn’t trade for the world. While missing countless dances, sleepovers, and games for this sport, leaving me with straw hair, dry skin, and goggle marks around my eyes, I couldn’t be more grateful it has given me.