

What Swimming In The NHSA Has Meant To Me

To ask me to put into words what the NHSA has meant to me, after being a part of this community for eleven years, is a near impossible task. I started swimming not long after I turned seven, I have eleven years worth of laughs and tears, of triumphs and disappointments. However, it would be a gross understatement to say that the NHSA changed who I am as a person, since, in reality, it ultimately made me who I am today. I grew up a part of this organization, and it has given me the opportunities I needed to learn countless life lessons that helped me navigate my life inside and outside of swimming.

It was swimming that taught me resilience. Every time my coach made the interval faster, the distance longer, or the number of repetitions greater, I kept my head down and worked through it. Long ago were the days when I would have complained, since we all know that complaining is a sure-fire way to make the set worse. The culmination of all those horrible practices would result in a glorious time drop, something that made it entirely worth it to come back the next season, even though you knew the practices were just going to get harder.

Swimming has taught me perseverance, but also how to find my limits and push past them. It was the practices where my coach gave me a hard set in the last twenty minutes, when I was tired and all I wanted to do was get out, that I felt the most accomplished after. Those were the practices that made you feel the best, the practices that made you happy you left your house. The ones that kept you coming back. Those practices taught me that you never know your limits until you make yourself uncomfortable, and that giving 100% of yourself to something is always rewarding, no matter what the result is.

Even though swimming is considered an individual sport, it was swimming that taught me everything I needed to know about teamwork and friendship. It was my teammates that got me through a hard practice, and it was my teammates who made the long meets not only bearable, but fun. I have made lifelong friendships that have transcended the boundaries of teams, towns and states. I am still in contact with people that I have not had the privilege of swimming with in years. And I have made friends with people who I have never had the privilege of swimming with under the same banner.

I have grown up with NHSA, and though these are the things that stand out the most, there is no way to create a comprehensive list of all the ways NHSA has improved my life. The pool has been my home away from home for as long as I can remember, and I cannot put into words how valuable the experiences and opportunities that I have gained through the NHSA are. My ten (almost eleven) years here have cultivated a love for the sport of swimming, and it is impossible for me to envision my life without the NHSA in it.