

"What Swimming in the NHSA Has Meant to Me"

Often, people don't realize their true potential until they are forced to go beyond their limits. I was one of those people until swimming gave me the opportunity to realize what I could achieve. During every practice, I did something that I thought I couldn't do; whether it be an entire set or just one lap. At the start of my commitment to the sport I would notice cut times in an event that I was not close to, and think that I couldn't do it. Then, a year or two later, I would not only beat that time, but consider it to be slow. Swimming competitively has given me the opportunity to continually improve myself athletically, and build confidence in my abilities. Seeing myself improve has made a positive impact in every aspect of my life. I have become a more decisive person and am more confident in my judgement. More importantly, it has helped me to trust myself and my abilities. That trust in myself and what I can do has led me to reach my goals. I will carry this confidence into college, knowing that I have the ability to do well, no matter how out of reach a goal or standard seems.

One of the most memorable things about my time swimming is my team. I was lucky enough to be on a team with some of the most motivated, supportive, and hard-working teammates out there. Being part of that kind of a team helped me learn how to be a better teammate and friend. I learned how to support my teammates after a meet or practice, whether it be good or bad, and in turn received that same support. I wouldn't be where I am without my coaches and teammates. I have had the most dedicated coaches in the past few years, and their constant support has meant the world to me in my time on the team. During practices, we all learn from each other's mistakes and successes. Although swimming is an individual sport in terms of times and places, the people around me make it a team sport. We are all open to learning from each other and sharing advice. We all realize that no one is perfect at every single thing and we have the open-minded attitude needed to learn from each other. This attitude contributes to a positive team atmosphere, which is one of the most special things about my team. I will never forget my coaches and teammates and what they have meant to me in the years I have been a part of the team.

Putting my time and effort into swimming has motivated me to have a good work ethic. Every race in which I cut time becomes positive reinforcement to keep pushing harder. I can see the improvement that I am making, and am rewarded by a sense of pride and satisfaction. These qualities don't come from taking shortcuts. There are no excuses, and there is no giving up if you want to swim faster. If you really want to meet a goal, whether it be athletic or academic, you have to put in the work. In the context of academics, The same holds true for education; getting a perfect score on a test doesn't necessarily mean that you met your goal of understanding the material if the work wasn't honest. Swimming has helped me to meet a lot of my athletic goals. As I move on to the next stage of my life, I look forward to going into it with the confidence, work ethic, and support system that competitive swimming has given me over many years.

