

2019 WI Swimming Sportsman/Sportswoman of the Year Nominations

This award embodies a male and female 13 & Over swimmer from Wisconsin who exemplifies great sportsmanship, makes lots of cross-team friendships and/or is encouraging or motivating or energizing on the pool deck. The award must be nominated by an athlete and will be voted on by the athletes in the WI Swimming HOD.

Male Nominees

Listed in the order they were submitted.

Cole Bell (BAC)

Christian Hedeem (Fon du Lac)

Ben Gabbey (WEST)

Female Nominees

Listed in the order they were submitted.

Carinna Monroe (PX3)

Maggie Teng (EBSC)

Kiarra Kahl (BAC)

Carly Miller (SWAT)

Megan Bingenheimer (EBSC)

Carina Monroe nominated by McKenzie VanDixorn

Hello Wisconsin swimming! I swim for the Pleasant Prairie Patriots, and I would like to nominate Carina Monroe for sportsman of the year. Carina has always exemplified a positive attitude on the team, as well as creating a community of support on our swim team. Our team would not be the same without her! Thank you for your consideration!

Maggie Teng nominated by Kara Cowell

I nominate Maggie Teng, EBSC. As someone who's been present on the pool decks of Wisconsin club swimming for almost my entire life, I think it is important to recognize who I have really seen stand out this year. I met Maggie a few years ago but didn't really get to start talking to her until rather recently. She never fails to get a goofy conversation started with a boat of random strangers behind the blocks to lighten the mood or just give a wholehearted smile. Her branching out to so many people from other teams really inspires me to meet more people from this crazy swimming community around us. Thank you.

Maggie Teng nominated by Campbell Stoll

I nominate Maggie Teng from Elmbrook Swim Club. Maggie is someone who not only shows leadership to her teammates but to other teams as well. She always shows encouragement and is so kind to everyone around her even if she's not having the best day herself. She always lifts other's spirits and puts others before herself. She is a great teammate and I believe that she role model for all of us.

Maggie Teng *nominated by Reegan Tiltmann*

I would like to nominate Maggie Teng from Elmbrook Swim Club. This is because when ever she is at meets I always see her cheering for others, both on her team and for others that she knows. I'm always seeing her go out of her way to say hi to others on the deck and is always spreading positivity. I don't think I've ever seen another athlete that has so many other friendships with other swimmers from other teams, especially for never being on another WI LSC team besides EBSC. For example when I walk with her at meets, every couple of steps she is saying hello or waving to swimmers and coaches that she knows. Maggie loves watching her friends succeed and is always cheering them on when they do great things. Maggie is one of a kind with her constant positivity and great sportsmanship that is obvious to everyone when she steps onto that pool deck.

Kiarra Kahl *nominated by Alexandra Prange*

The person who I feel should win this award is my best friend (and a great swimmer) Kiarra Kahl. Kiarra who swims For Badger Aquatics Club(BAC) has not only made swimming my favorite sport but she also always manages to cheer me up after a not so good race. Kiarra is also my sister from another mother and has taken the spot of my sister. I say this because I am an only child and feel lonely sometimes. To wrap it up Kiarra is an amazing swimmer and an amazing friend and I believe she deserves the award!

Carly Miller *nominated by Sydney Miller*

I would like to nominate Carley Miller from SWAT for the SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR. Carley is the most positive and encouraging person I know. She motivates her teammates and congratulates them after every race. Every meet she is the first person to get behind a teammates lane and start cheering for them. Before she races, she always wishes her competitors good luck even if she doesn't know them. She also gives her competitors a high five when the race is over. Whenever another teammate is about to swim she goes behind their lane to give them an encouraging pep talk. When a teammate is swimming she runs up and down the lane with them, cheering them on. When she cheers, she is one of few people you can actually hear when you're swimming! She has made many cross team friendships through friendly competition and at zone meets when everyone becomes one team. She frequently greets friends from other teams with a hug hello at the beginning of a meet. She is genuinely happy to see others succeed and reach their goals. She is passionate and positive about the sport of swimming, and is a great representative of Wisconsin Swimming.

Cole Bell *nominated by Jack Bell*

I am writing to nominate Nicolas (Cole) Bell, Badger Aquatics swimmer, as Sportsperson of the year. Cole is my brother, which might seem weird in my nominating him, but he has also been my teammate in summer league, high school at Madison Memorial and at BAC, as well as high school Soccer. I believe that there is not a more deserving person of this award. Cole's love for a team, and any sport he dedicates himself to, is obvious. Cole is the guy who loves to practice almost more than race, partly because he pushes himself to bring the best to every minute, but because he loves being with teammates. Cole was disappointed when our high school coach had less morning practices one year, because he loved starting his day with the team. He also loves to see teammates succeed. I'm told a story in which I was a 5-year-old

scared summer swimmer, who was placed on a relay with my brother and 2 other 8 year olds. I was AT LEAST twice as slow as everyone else. But my brother pulled this little relay team together and said “boys, we gotta swim harder than ever, because Jack might earn his first ribbon if we can go fast for him”. We got that third-place ribbon, and Cole was as excited to earn that as any first places they could have had. A few years later, Cole started winter club swimming, and earned a full list of swims at 12 and under State as a 10-year-old. He was so excited to represent his club, so excited in fact, that he slipped on the playground 24 hours before his first race and broke his collarbone. Despite lots of pain and sadness, Cole insisted on seeing the team at pasta dinner that night and spent a long three days on the deck with a sling and ice, to cheer on everyone else, despite how hard it was to see “his” empty lanes.

Fast forward to my time with him as a teammate in high school. Cole and I are two sport athletes, we play soccer in spring and Fall, and swim in winter and summer. In the higher levels of Club, you probably know this is hard to “keep up” with swimmers who swim all year. Even socially, swimmers create stronger friendships when they are traveling to the same meets and practicing every day together. At the end of our Fall soccer seasons, Cole and I return to BAC for a high school warm up. I’ve been lucky to walk on the pool deck with him as we return. And every time, I notice the warm welcome Cole gets from so many guys including coaches. He’s a swimmer that everyone likes and loves to welcome back. High School swim is no different. Swimmers from across the state know that Cole will be having fun and making the races less stressful behind the blocks and always shaking your hand before and after a race, no matter if he is above or below you on a podium. Cole is also the swimmer who is usually last to leave a meet, it takes him that extra time to be sure he’s congratulated swimmers, checked with coaches and even cleaned up our space. Our home is the lost and found because Cole is that swimmer who picks up everyone’s stuff. As a captain (both in soccer and swim) he led the team with his motivation and hard work. He didn’t just do this in the pool, but by supporting others. For instance, Cole gets the team to show up at a dive meet which is appreciated. Not all divers get that support from their teams. In the recent Senior Club State meet, Cole was placed on a F relay, with some guys nearly 4 years younger. At 18, as a senior in a final meet, some guys might take this as an insult to the ego, and not want to swim with “kids” on a lower relay. Instead, Cole rallied the team, getting them pumped up and laughing before the race, which made the younger guys feel more at ease. I believe he even swam a best time as lead off, showing the guys that it didn’t matter who was with him or what seed the relay was, he would always go after his best. Last summer, Cole started coaching the littlest ones at our summer pool. His love for swimming, his positive encouragement and gentle coaching made him a favorite coach quite quickly. It’s not uncommon to see Cole with 2-3 little swimmers hanging off him at any time during practice.

All that I write to you is my impression that my brother is a well-respected swimmer in our state. But I think anyone who was watching the most recent Div. 1 state meet would agree that the respect Cole has earned across teams, across the state was most obvious after Cole swam under a minute in the 100 breast, which has been a goal for a long time. While he bumped a whole heat, that didn’t matter to him. It was the pure joy of reaching a goal, and the joy of seeing so many react in happiness for him. His post swim hug with a rival in the next lane nearly delayed the meet! I was lucky to be on deck for that, but even as his brother I had to wait in line to hug him, because so many from other teams wanted to do the same. To me, that told the whole story. Cole is a swimmer who supports so many, but that moment the respect and support was returned to him. Cole was once again one of the last out of the Nat that night, not because our team got any

of its big honors like in the past, but because Cole was sure to be congratulating so many others and savoring those last moments on the Nat deck in a sport he loves.

Cole is not the fastest of the fast in WI. Being a two-sport athlete has its up and downs. I'm quite certain Cole would be "faster" if he chose to focus on one sport. In fact, many of Cole's friends from high school drop out of Club swimming – feeling as if they don't "keep up" with top level if not swimming all year round. But each year, Cole returns to BAC after high school swim season and before soccer. He always swims to his "final" meet, even if his closer buddies are not, and even if he's on an F relay, he makes new friends at practices and meets. Sophomore year his final meet was Club state, Junior year was long course Speedos, and this year, he is proud to be able to represent BAC at NCSAs. He doesn't have many swims, nor any high school teammates to hang out with, but it's important to him to finish what he started, to keep making new friends and to represent the team he has swam for so long. And I'm pretty sure the guys are happy to have him around, not for his speed, but because for Cole, it's mostly about the friendships and experiences swimming has given him.

Christian Hedeem *nominated by Brennan Hoem*

When I saw Wisconsin Swimming was awarding a sportsman of the year, I could not think of anyone in my life more deserving than Christian Hedeem, from Fond du Lac Swim Club. When I think of a role model in my life, the first person I think of is Christian Hedeem. Despite him being the same age as me, and a heck of a lot faster, I still strive to possess the elite character and impact on others that Christian has. There were many Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday morning practices this season that I was dreading to wake up for, but knowing I could be around Christian's uplifting character did not only get me out of bed but excited for practice. Swimming behind him during every morning practice was an honor because no matter what was thrown at us, he was always joking around and getting the best efforts out of those around him. No matter how fast or slow the swimmers around him are, he always encourages them to lay everything out on the line during practice. I remember one time someone said to him "It must hurt so bad going as fast as you on these 175s repeats" but he responded with "The pain is all relative to each individual, we are hurting just as bad as you are right now, but we can get through it together". This humble character carries into meets where he never talks about his own times, but instead the inspiring performances of his friends and teammates around him. You can always find Christian at meets behind someone's lanes cheering them on. All in all, I have been so thankful to have him as not only a role model but a close friend. People like Christian show what the sport of swimming is all about by enhancing the lives of those around them. This fall he is attending the University of Indianapolis where he will continue to positively impact the lives of others in both the classroom and pool. Thank you for considering Christian for this award.

Ben Gabbey *nominated by Emily Cain*

I would like to nominate my cousin, Ben Gabbey, for the Wisconsin Swimming Sportsman of the Year Award.

Ben has been swimming competitively in Wisconsin since he was 8 years of age. During that time he experienced a tremendous amount of success as a breaststroker. He has been a WI State Champion and a WIAA State Champion. Next year, he plans to continue swimming for the University of Illinois at Chicago with a Division I scholarship.

Ben's accomplishments in swimming, however, are not why I want to nominate him for the Sportsman of the Year Award. Ben has always been a leader on whatever team he swims with. When we were small, we swam together on SEA. Later, Ben's family moved and he swam with SWAT. Today, he swims for WEST. In 2018, after having only swam for WEST for the Spring and Summer seasons, he was awarded the team's Leadership Award for his ability to bring his teammates together and encourage others to reach their goals. Ben never has an unkind thing to say about anyone and always tries to make people around him feel good about themselves.

On his high school team he was a captain both his junior and senior years, and was the first person there to welcome freshman and encourage boys who were new to swimming to stay with it. In 2018, he even gave his time, and served as a team manager for the girls swim team at his high school. He was an "honorary" coach for the girl's JV team. He was the biggest cheerleader on the deck and off for those girls, making sure he was at their conference championship to offer support and advice. Parents of swimmers on both the girls and the boys teams have gone out of their way to thank Ben for his support.

As Ben became a senior swimmer, the number of boys begins to thin out and only those who were more committed to swimming remained. Ben has befriended other senior boys from across Wisconsin, and keeps in touch with them on their swimming and progress. While swimming at National meets this past season, he continued to connect with these same senior boys and cheer them on as they advanced to some of the highest levels of swimming.

Ben also serves as a Student Athlete Representative for Wisconsin Swimming. In April of 2019, he and the other athlete representative will travel to Colorado Springs for a Leadership Conference. Ben is aware that while he stands out as a leader in and out of the pool, he appreciates that there is always room to improve. Attending this conference and participating on the board are just additional examples of why Ben is a standout athlete.

My cousin Ben has truly demonstrated true sportsmanship as a swimmer in Wisconsin, and I believe he should be named the Sportsman of the Year.

Megan Bingenheimer *nominated by Kathryn Bingenheimer*

Hello! My name is Kathryn, and I would like to nominate my sister, Megan Bingenheimer for the Wisconsin Sportsman of the Year award.

Among being the hardest worker I know, Megan is the best teammate I know. She is constantly cheering on swimmers younger and older, more experienced and less. It is not uncommon to hear of Megan texting a teammate words of hope, congratulations, and encouragement before or after a big race.

Megan recently competed at the Speedo sectional meet in Rochester, Minnesota, a meet she didn't plan on going to. She had been training to achieve her biggest goal- an NCSA cut and a chance to swim down in Orlando, Florida representing the Elmbrook Swim Club. Megan unfortunately missed the 100 Fly cut after a swim at the Wisconsin State meet and an additional time trial. Although she was disappointed at not achieving her own goal, Megan stayed on deck after her time trial to cheer on and later **consolated** another swimmer from the Elmbrook Swim

Club who missed her own NCSA cut. Megan put aside her own disappointment to support another swimmer. Acts of selflessness like this are regular actions from her.

Megan constantly sets aside her own wants to compromise and support her teammates. After a race no matter how out of breath she is, Megan is always the first to lean over the lane line and congratulate the other swimmers on their race.

Additionally, Megan takes charge to include the entire team. On her recent Speedo trip which was a team travel meet for Elmbrook Swim Club, Megan was the first to make a group chat of all the swimmers making sure all were included in it. She also took the initiative in organizing a carbo cram, helping younger swimmers know what to pack, and making a grocery list for the chaperons. Megan consistently goes above and beyond to ensure her teammates feel welcome and encouraged.

Megan's sportsmanship also extends beyond the boundaries of Elmbrook Swim Club. She has formed numerous friendships over her seven years of swimming, many of which are with swimmers from other teams. When seeing people she knows at swim meets, Megan will ask how they are doing, and of course wish them luck in their races.

Megan is also a strong teammate at practice, constantly bringing a positive attitude, a smile, and a strong work ethic to practice. As any swimmer knows practices can get long and hard, especially during the school year, and so this past year Megan took charge of keeping up her teammates spirits by dubbing her lane the "positivity lane," which actually extended to the entire pool. She would yell out words of encouragement before hard rounds of the set and remind her teammates what their end goals were and how worth the pain would be in the end.

Megan gives back to the community and inspires the next generation of athletes through teaching young swimmers at the Elmbrook Swim School.

Finally, Megan is always willing to go the extra mile for her teammates. At this years past Long Course State meet, a teammate was experiencing severe cramping after a race. While numerous swimmers were shocked and didn't know how to help, Megan sprang into action, grabbing a coach, a water bottle, and support for her teammate.

Megan's attitude, support, and genuine care for her teammates makes her a true example of what an athlete and a swimmer is.