

2019 Spring HOD Athlete Report
May 11th, 2019

Prepared by: Molly Hewett(Senior Athlete Representative) and Molly Brennan (Junior Athlete Representative)

Over the past few months, the athlete representatives have worked hard to provide leadership opportunities for our athletes.

In March, we conducted the election for the incoming Junior Athlete Representative. It was our second time holding the election during Championships and using electronic voting. To solicit candidates, an application was posted on our Instagram. We received one candidate's information, and her bio was shared on Instagram. An athlete meeting was held on the Friday of Championships and nominations for the position were made from the floor. There were three candidates on the electronic ballot. Voting was conducted electronically using Survey Monkey, and Suzanne Sokoloski from Webster Bluefins was elected to the position. Her term will begin in September.

Also during Championships, with the help of Courtney Christ, the Disability Committee Chair, we coordinated a photo contest on our Instagram using the hashtag #NIGolds2019. Many people posted with the hashtag and their pictures were featured on our page for the chance to win a Niagara Swimming drawstring bag. This was a great way to spread the word about our Instagram. We had a team winner and an individual winner, the team winner being Mexico Tiger Sharks and the individual winner was Matt Koffman and his friends from Vestal Area Swim Team.

During the month of April, the LSC sent three athletes to national leadership summits through USA Swimming. We posted an application on our Instagram to solicit interested candidates to attend these leadership development opportunities. The athletes on the board selected Summer Pierce of Thrashers to attend the SheLEADS Summit in Colorado.

Later in April, the LSC sent Alex Switalski of Titans and Joshua Stegner of STAR Swimming to the USA Swimming Leadership Summit at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado. They used the Niagara Instagram page to vlog their experience which generated interest in future opportunities. All three participants enjoyed their experiences, developed their leadership skills, and are excited to bring their new skills back to their club, LSC, and sport.

We have another opportunity for athlete development coming up, the We LEAD Summit in Norcross, Georgia from June 28th-30th. The application is posted on our Instagram as well as on the Niagara Swimming Facebook page. The summit is open to all athletes grades 10-12. The application closes on May 15th. The LSC will send one male and one female swimmer to the summit.

USA Swimming is making a greater effort to provide athlete leadership development opportunities outside the pool, and we are thankful that the Niagara LSC Board of Directors sees value in sending athletes from our LSC to grow their skills.

Finally, the athletes have been in discussion with Samantha Livingstone, the Olympian, about how we can raise awareness for mental health. With her help, we plan to post more on our Instagram about mental health and ways to support athletes who may struggle in this way.

As this is my last HOD report as Senior Athlete Representative, I would like to thank the Niagara LSC board members and volunteers, especially Mr. Jim Stromski, for all they do for the athletes and teams of Niagara. Participating on the Board of Directors has opened my eyes to everything that goes into providing safe, educational, competitive and fun swimming environment for all athletes. I am grateful for the opportunities I've had to build my leadership and communication skills while representing Niagara and doing my best to improve the athlete experience.