

Hello Tommy!

I miss you so much! Lake Forest has been beautiful and the fun times have been fun but the hard times have been hard. My biggest dilemma right now is my health. Our practice schedule looks like this:

MWF- Lift 5:50-7:30 am, general swim 4-6:20pm

Tues.- Sprint 6-8am

Thurs.- Fly 4-6:20pm

I don't mind the schedule but my class work has been really heavy. Last week I had 2 nights where I got less than 3 hours of sleep before weights. I'm trying to figure out ways I can handle both. I talked to some upperclassmen and deciding at 11pm I'll be done and need to sleep. I think this will help me better manage my time throughout the week and weekend so that I'm done before then. Hopefully this works better and I'm not hurting myself anymore!!!!

I know the coaching staff wants me to get better but they just prove to me more than you're the best coach ever...

Today he told us that if we aren't going up in weight every lift and going until failure (he specified this meant dropping the weight) until everyday then we aren't doing it right and won't get better... interesting concept...

We're on fall break right now. We start class back on Wednesday. Our practice schedule has been doubles Saturday and Sunday and then we have our normal training today and tomorrow. We've done some tough sets!

Academics has been tough (mostly because of time management) so I've had some confusion with what I really want to do. Biology has been really hard but I think I'm starting to figure it out. Part of me is wishing I was able to go to a bigger school so I could just focus on animal science rather than general bio. I'm really loving my literature class though so I'm hoping I can minor in lit!

One HUGE revelation I've had is just how independent I am! I room with two other girls and really really appreciate my alone time. Next year I want to live alone for sure. I am totally comfortable going places alone and doing my own thing.

#### STORY TIME:

In September I was really struggling with independency and wanting to go home. I decided I was going to take the last weekend before swim season to visit home and surprise everyone. The only people I told were friends, my grandparents, and Jake's mom (it was his birthday weekend so I was going to surprise him too). I bought my own plane ticket, took the train into Chicago, took the L to O'Hare

and got to my gate with no problem! I felt so independent and confident in my abilities. I was really adulting. My flight had already been delayed once because of a storm in the midwest but I thought nothing of it and figured I'd get home eventually. They delayed it two more times and then canceled it. In fact United canceled hundreds of flights. It was a stressful and scary night with lots of crying. I didn't get on a plane and I couldn't go home. This also meant that I didn't have a way back to campus because at this point it was a little dangerous for me to ride public transit back and I didn't want to ride an uber alone either. Luckily I was able to get a swimmer to take me home and my friends all organized a movie night to cheer me up. I have really great friends here. While I was so so sad that I couldn't go home, I was glad I learned from that experience.

I also joined a sorority! I will be an initiated Tri Delta on November 9th! They are the sweetest girls and are so focused on their philanthropy.

I love Chicago!! I've done some exploring and have gone to some fun free food festivals!

My mom wants to come visit and take me out for my birthday in November. She surprised me with Hamilton tickets (I'm ecstatic!) for November 20th. This is where I need some advice, it gets long. On Wednesday I would have to leave swim about 10 minutes early to make it to the 7:30 show on time. So I'd have to ask coach to leave a little early for that. I'm not really sure how to bring it up considering he's very strict and intense... help please! I also have these field trips to see plays on some Thursdays. I have one on the 14th and the 21st. Here lies another problem. Last field trip I was able to go to sprint practice on Thursday morning instead of fly in the evening, that way I could go with the class to the mandatory trip. If I were to do it this way, I'd be asking coach to adjust my practice schedule 3 days in 2 weeks. So not great. This is my thought process, I can maybe find a way to make it to the theatre on my own. This would possibly make me a little late to the show but I think it'd be easier to convince my professor than my coach. ALSO for my birthday surprise my mom wants me to spend the night in Chicago with her on the 20th after Hamilton and then go get breakfast with her the next morning-implying that I wouldn't be able to adjust swim and go in the morning for sprint. SO basically I'm going to be cutting everything reallyyyy close. That's a lot but basically I just don't know how to ask my coach to spend time with my mom.

Sorry for the novel! I clearly had a lot to say!

Miss you!  
Ashlyn