



THE SANDPIPER SKINNY

Sandpipers of Nevada

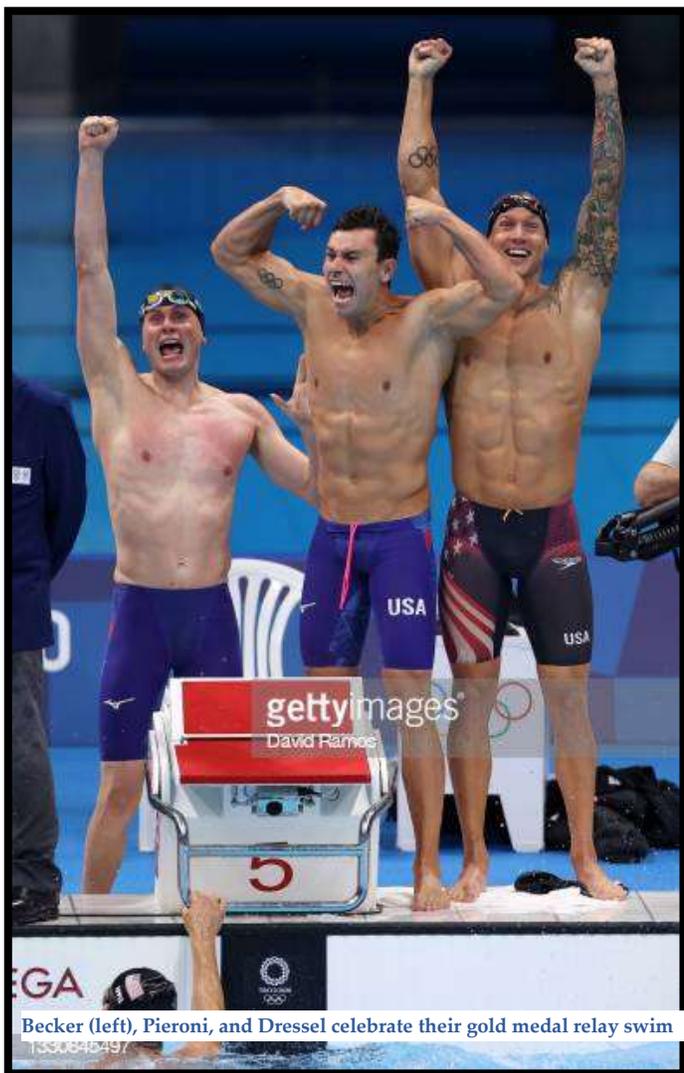
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Five Sandpipers Achieve Olympic Dream

The Sandpipers of Nevada has been making waves with the incredible feat of five swimmers qualifying for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan. Not only did they qualify but Erica Sullivan, Bella Sims, Katie Grimes, Blake Pieroni, and Bowe Becker competed in finals as well. Then, the Sandpiper swimmers shocked the world when Becker and Pieroni claimed gold and Sims and Sullivan achieved two silver medals. Grimes just barely missed a Bronze and finished fourth after swimming in second place right behind Katie Ledecky the majority of the race. The exceptional swims from these outstanding athletes prove that regardless of whether someone is the underdog, extremely young, or recovering from trauma,

with determination, hard work, and a lot of heart, anything is possible.



Becker (left), Pieroni, and Dressel celebrate their gold medal relay swim

Bowe Becker

Last year, Bowe Becker decided to retire from the sport due to burnout and exhaustion caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. After leaving Auburn University's postgraduate program to return home, Becker got a job waiting tables in Reno to support himself financially. He had plans on becoming a Washoe County sheriff's deputy using his University of Minnesota criminal justice degree.

Becker took six months away from swimming to rest physically and mentally. He also spent quality time with friends, which gave him a sense of balance and boosted his overall well-being—something he was lacking while in isolation.

Then, a call from four-time Olympic gold medalist Jason Lezak changed Becker's life. Lezak asked Becker if he was in racing shape and whether he wanted to work toward qualifying for the Olympics. "I kind of lied there a little bit," he told reporters shortly after winning gold on July 26.

Becker had a better mentality by that point and a new sense of determination. He trained for nine

months at the University of Minnesota and said he "just put my head down and went to work." The underdog worked hard, qualifying for the Olympic Trials, and then the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. He was even taken back when his 4x100 freestyle relay team with Caeleb Dressel, Blake Pieroni, and Zach Apple won the gold. His response was, "I'm still a bit speechless." Becker is proof that believing in oneself can turn a dream into a reality.

Katie Grimes

Sandpipers' own Katie Grimes wrote "Olympic Trials 2020" on her kickboard shortly after the 2016 Olympics. This was her goal. Grimes obliterated that goal by becoming the youngest swimmer to qualify for the Olympics since Amanda Beard made the 1996 team at age 14.

Grimes, who looked up to Katie Ledecky since she was little, was floored when she finished second right to her idol in the 800-free at the Olympic Trials. The two Katies were at it again in the 800-free at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Grimes swam right behind Ledecky the majority of the race. Ledecky solidified her title with gold in the event while Grimes finished fourth with a time of 8:19.38.



"It was an incredible race for 15-year-old Katie Grimes to experience and compete with the best in the world," Sandpipers Coach Jake Des Roches said. Ledecky told Grimes after her amazing swim, "Heck, you're not the future, you're the now, you're the present."

Before making the Olympic team this year and swimming side-by-side next to Katie Ledecky, Grimes had already set her prolific swim career in motion. She earned bronze in the 14 & Under Junior Olympic Championship in 2019 in the 200-yard back, 500 free, 1,650 free, and 400 IM, as well as a bronze in the 1500 free at the 2018 Western Zone Senior Championships in 2018. These are just a few of her feats as she has been setting records since first donning a Sandpiper Cap at age 5.

Grimes has proven that age cannot limit someone from attaining greatness. We're excited to see what's in store for her in the future!

Blake Pieroni

The Indiana native has accomplished a lot in the past few years. Pieroni swam at Indiana University from 2014 to 2018. The Hoosier swam alongside many of the world's best 200 freestylers, as well as other Olympians such as Zach Apple, Lilly King, Michael Brinegar, and Bailey Andison. With the combination of top-level coaches, outstanding athletes next to his side, and his own impressive motivation, Pieroni has shined in his professional swimming career.

From 2013 to now, Pieroni has claimed 11 World Championship medals (7 golds, 1 silver, 3 bronzes) and two gold medals at the Olympic Games. Pieroni won his first Olympic gold medal with teammates Nathan Adrian, Caeleb Dressel, Ryan Held, Anthony Ervin, Jimmy Feigen and Michael Phelps in the men's 4x100-meter freestyle relay at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil. His second gold was achieved at this year's 2020 Olympics, where he represented the Sandpipers in the 4x100-meter freestyle relay with Dressel, Zach Apple, Becker and Brooks Curry.

"When I was young and getting into the sport of swimming, I said it would be cool to be an Olympian one day," Pieroni said to the Chicago Tribune. He definitely attained that aspiration and more.



Bella Sims

For Sims, starting swim lessons at age 10 was the beginning spark of her fire as a competitive swimmer. Sims has had an amazing six years as an athlete—and this is just the beginning of her impressive swim journey. At her first meet with Sandpipers, she was disqualified from every event. Instead of letting the frustration bring her down, Sims decided to work harder to improve. Six years later at the 2020 Olympic Trials, Sims obtained the most Olympic Trials qualifying standards of any male or female swimmer

with 11. A new record. Sims also qualified for the 4x200 free relay, which is the event where she claimed a silver medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

“When she hit that wall and we saw the number, it was absolute pandemonium,” Sherri Hironaka, Sims’ grandmother said. “We were all crying, jumping and hugging. My husband is very reserved, and even he was yelling.”

Bella plans to qualify for all 14 events at the 2024 Paris Olympic Trials, a feat that has not yet been achieved.

“She’s an inspiration to our whole family,” Sim’s grandmother said to the Argus Observer. “We all look [up] to Bella, she’s made everybody better.”

Erica Sullivan

Erica Sullivan lost her father to esophageal cancer when she was only 16 years old. Despite the years of grief, she saw the light at the end of the tunnel and overcame adversity, persevering to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

Sullivan, a swimmer with Japanese-American heritage, had her heart set on medaling in Tokyo. She has visited Japan annually to the family’s home in Ofuna, and she felt a deep connection to the country due to her family’s roots. Sullivan wanted to make her father proud because she knew he was watching over her.

She did not disappoint him. Sullivan claimed a silver medal in the 1500 free right behind Ledecky with a time of 15:41.41.

“Erica definitely has the heart of a champion,” roommate **Regan Smith** said to Swimming World after her big race.

Sullivan stated, “I’m proud of the mental health barriers that I got through, with my dad dying in 2017 and really hitting a rock bottom in 2018 from the stress of losing a parent at age 16 and having to get over the anxiety, the panic attacks, the depression, the PTSD, all that,” Sullivan said from the mixed zone in Omaha. “I’m so happy that I was able to overcome those.”



Her journey has come full circle now. She can rest easy knowing that she has triumphed not only at the Olympics, but also within her own mind, body and soul.

After an incredible summer, Sandpipers of Nevada was named BSN Sports Swim Team of the week. **Head coach, Ron Aitken**, said this to SwimSwam. "Talent alone doesn't make a great swimmer or team. My biggest struggle as a coach is instilling a relentless work ethic in addition to tapping into every swimmer's natural talent and abilities. Each accomplishment of our team, athletes, and coaches are favorite memories. Each one has a special place for all of us and enjoying each one like it was the first or last is the same and should always be celebrated and acknowledged."

CALLING ALL SANDPIPERS!

Many of you have realized in the age of COVID, you are not be able to be on deck or even see your kid swim—other than via video. At the same time, you may no longer be able to volunteer at positions you have for years: hospitality, timing, check-in, etc.

What is the solution? Become an official, C6 operator, or administrative official! There isn't much training involved, and you get to be on deck with your kid AND support the team.

Reach out to Shay Kerby at kerbyfamily@me.com or ask your coach how you can help!

SANDPIPERS MAKE USA SWIMMING NATIONAL AND JUNIOR NATIONAL TEAMS

Every year, USA Swimming reviews the rosters for their National and Junior National teams—the elite athletes who represent USA Swimming at international competitions. To be selected for the National Team—in the pool—athletes must have sixth fastest time in an Olympic event or better. To be selected for the Junior National Team, athletes must be 18 years or younger and have one of the top two highest world rankings in an Olympic event. Open water wise, athletes must have placed in the top two spots at Open Water Nationals.

Sandpipers named 6 athletes to the National Team. They also named 3 athletes to the Junior National team. They are **Katie Grimes, Bella Sims, Erica Sullivan, Bowe Becker, Dylan Gravely, Blake Pieroni, Paige Kuwata (Jr.), Brice Barrieault (Jr.), and Nick Simons (Jr.)**.

Congratulations to all these athletes on this tremendous honor! May your determination and dedication continue to propel towards success.

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For up-to-date news, event information and more, visit the team website: www.sandpipersofnevada.com

MID-SEASON RECAP! WHAT COMES NEXT

Over the last six months—since before the Olympics—Sandpipers of Nevada has welcomed a surge of new swimmers. They've been placed in groups all across the team, from Stroke School to National Elite. We're so happy to have you all with us! Though we are expanding, we have not wavered from our commitment to each individual athlete.

So, let's take a moment to review the last four months of Sandpipers.

At the same time as the Olympics, July 22nd – the 25th, Sandpipers competed in two different Junior Olympics. 38 athletes traveled to Mission Viejo to participate in the *Southern California Junior Olympics*, while 63 journeyed to Fresno to swim in the *Central California Junior Olympics*.

Despite being in two different cities, the 100 athletes came together and proved what Sandpipers does best: Race! Between the two competitions, nearly all of the swimmers qualified to compete in finals. With their exceptional efforts, Sandpipers in both cities found best times, achieved many top place finishes—including many first-place finishes—and shattered team records. To top it off, Sandpipers placed first in overall points, bringing home total team victory in Fresno, California. The team finished in fourth in Mission Viejo against the biggest and deepest teams Southern California has to offer.

After a two-week break, Sandpipers came back to training in late August for a new season. The first competition of this season was the *Western Zone Championships*.

An open water event hosted by the Sandpipers, these races took place at beautiful Lake Las Vegas. Many athletes and families came to support the team—and swam really well. Several Sandpipers raced to finish in the top six with in their age group, which awards them the opportunity to compete in the Open Water Junior Nationals held in Florida next year



The Sandpiper Central Cal. JO Squad

Three weeks later, the Sandpipers hosted another open water event: the inaugural *Las Vegas Open Water Championships Cup*. Here, top athletes and professionals from around the nation competed in the 5k and 10k for an opportunity to be named to the USA Swimmer National and Junior National team. Qualifiers also were able to compete in the 2.5k and 7.5k races.

Sandpipers also competed in two pool events: the *SAND vs BCH Dual Meet* and the *Pumpkin Invite*. Over these meets, many personal bests and team records were crushed. Please see the record section for more details.

So, what's next? We have four more swim meets schedule through the end of the year!

It'll start off with the *November Rock the Blocks*. These Sandpiper-only meets are for all of our newer swimmers, who use them to grow comfortable and confident in the sport. There will also be a Rock the Blocks in December. If you just joined the team and haven't RSVP'd for this competition, please do so now!

The second week of November, more than 160 Sandpipers will travel to Carson City to compete in the *2021 Nevada State Championships*. This is a four-day meet with prelims and finals. December will also see another meet with this format: *Las Vegas Super Finals Invite!* This meet will be for qualifiers and take place in St. George Utah at the incredible Dixie State University.

Immediately following these meets, the team break will be from December 18th through January 3rd. These dates may vary per group, so please be on the lookout for emails from your coach.

That's it for 2021. But 2022 is sure to bring another wonderful season, so let's finish this year with a big splash!



Bodyline Swim Shop has new expanded hours, just in time for the holidays!

Mon-Thur: 11:30-5:30pm; Fri: 10-5; Sat: 10-2, Sun: closed

USA SWIMMING ANNOUNCES 2020-21 SCHOLASTIC ALL-AMERICA TEAM

To be considered for the USA Swimming Scholastic All-American Team, athletes must be in high school, maintain a 3.5 GPA, and have earned a time that met the Winter Junior Qualifying standard within the last year.

What grueling requirements! It takes a lot of grit, time-management, and effort to make this recipient list. Yet despite those conditions, 6 Sandpipers were rewarded this honor.

Congratulations to Brice Barrieault, Abby Dunford, Katie Grimes, Paige Kuwata, Bella Sims, and Audrey Yu for this incredible achievement!

For up-to-date news, event information and more, visit the team website: www.sandpipersofnevada.com

SANDPIPERS NAMED GOLD MEDAL CLUB

For the 7th straight year, Sandpipers of Nevada has been named a Gold Medal Club as part of the Club Excellence program.

This recognition comes straight from USA Swimming, who awards teams based on several different criteria. Above everything, the primary objective of this program is to recognize clubs who develop strong, well-rounded athletes on an annual basis. With seven straight years, Sandpipers once again proved they are an elite club capable of working athletes up to the highest level of performance.

To the coaches, volunteers, athletes, and parents, thank you for supporting and believing in our program! We could not receive this reward if it weren't for your hard work and commitment. While this medal goes out to you, let's strive to earn another in 2022.

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HISTORIC SCS RECORDS BROKEN IN TOKYO

8 RECORDS DOWN AT FIRST SCY MEETS OF 2021-2022 SEASON

2021 CA MVN Summer JO's—[LCM]

Jack E. Fulham: Men 13-14 50 free—25.31; 100 Fly—59.47

Ilya Kharun: Men 15-16 50 Free—23.58; 100 Fly—54.08 ***SCS Record***; 200 Fly—2:01.24; 400 IM 4:28.89;
Men Senior 100 Fly—54.08

Alex Thornton: Men 13-14 100 Breast—1:09.81; 200 Breast—2:29.09

Men 13-14 200 Medley Relay: J. Fulham, S. Thornton, J. Malmquist, C. Kattau

Men 13-14 400 Medley Relay: J. Fulham, S. Thornton, J. Malmquist, C Kattau

Western Zone Senior Champs—[LCM]

Luke Ellis: Men 13-14 200 Free—1:58.34; 400 Free—4:04.19; 800 Free—8:30.64; 1500 Free—15:59.95; 100 Back—1:00.12
200 IM—2:10.28; 400 IM—4:30.27 ***SCS Record***

Jack Fulham: Men 13-14 100 Breast—1:09.66

2020 Tokyo Olympic Games—[LCM]

Katie Grimes: Women 15-16 800 Free—8:17.05 ***SCS Record***; Women Senior 800 Free—8:17.05

Erica Sullivan: Women Senior 1500 Free—15:41.41 ***SCS Record***

2021 CA BCH vs. SAND Dual Meet—[SCY]

Bella Sims: Women 15-16 100 Back—53.85; Women Senior 100 Back—53.85

Ilya Kharun: Men 15-16 50 Free—20.74; 100 Fly—47.96

2021 Sandpipers Pumpkin Invite—[SCY]

Luke Ellis: Men 13-14 100 Back—52.04

Ilya Kharun: Men 15-16 200 Free—1:40.06; 200 Fly—1:45.94; Men Senior 200 Fly—1:45.94

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