

# WELCOME TO THE



Senior Spotlight 2020



## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT 2020



**Alex Kovell** attends Byrnes High School and is planning on attending University of South Carolina in the fall. He plans to major in business. Alex says he will miss the “team” most as moves on to the next chapter. One of his fondest memories at YSSC was qualifying for Y-Nationals! He credits Coach Assey (HS coach) and Coach Jacob, formerly of Jnr 2, for having a tremendous impact in his swimming career. He encourages athletes that may be contemplating leaving the sport with “you will be much better off in all aspects of life if you continue to swim on a team”. Alex advises the younger swimmers to “focus on technique, not just on swimming fast”. His most embarrassing moment in swimming is racing the Individual Medley in the wrong stroke order. Alex says he would have been a runner if he were not a swimmer and that his favorite treat is Jolly Ranchers! *We are excited to see what your future holds! Best of Luck, Alex!*

**Rebecca Martin** is also graduating from Byrnes High School. She will be studying and swimming at Denison University in the fall, majoring in Health Exercise Science Studies. When asked what she would miss most about YSSC, Rebecca states, “I will definitely miss the people. The teammates that I have trained with are the absolute best, and I will miss the sense of family and community that we had in our group. I will also miss the amazing coaching staff and all the support that they showed me throughout the years at YSSC”. She cites achieving her first Y-Nat cut in the 400 IM (long course) as one of her greatest swim moments. To the rising seniors, “Especially with some of my last races being taken away from me, I say to live each race like it’s your last. No matter the meet or time of season, treat every race like your last and enjoy every second you are given of being with your friends”. Rebecca advises athletes contemplating leaving the sport with “while you may be able to make good friends at school or through other sports, their friendship will never be able to compare to the unbreakable bond of a YSSC friendship ☺”. Rebecca says Coach Dan has had the greatest impact on her swimming because he is the “most supportive coach that I have trained under” and helped Rebecca athletically AND mentally. He helped her reach goals and prepared her for her next steps in college. She says that, looking back, she is “embarrassed at how much my mom wrote “Eat My Bubbles” on my back”. Haha! She loves root beer floats and said “If I wasn’t a swimmer, I honestly have no idea what I would do. I was awful at soccer and scored for the opposing team multiple times. I dislike running, couldn’t figure out gymnastics, and don’t have the coordination to dance. So, I guess it’s a good thing swimming worked out!” *We wish you the very best, Rebecca, and look forward to seeing what you accomplish in your next chapter!*



**Grace Clayton** attends Mauldin High School and will be heading to New York University where she will swim competitively and work towards a degree in Business. Grace cites Coach Dan as having the greatest impact on her swimming. “He changed the practice atmosphere for the better, more positive and encouraging” She says what kept her swimming is the same thing she will miss most about YSSC: her friends. She advises younger swimmers to “keep working hard and one day it will pay off”. Achieving her first Y-National cut was one of the greatest swim moments she had at YSSC. She advises rising seniors to “start the college search early and keep all options open”. Her most embarrassing swim moment was racing in her practice suit at her first Ys! She said if she weren’t a “swimmer”, she would have been “sad” and that brownies are her favorite treat! *We will always be rooting for you, Grace! Glad you are part of the Cuke Family Forever!*

**CONNOR IDE** is graduating from JL Mann High School. He will swim and study(Visual Arts) at St Andrew's University in North Carolina. Connor is grateful for Coach Eduardo and Coach Allie and their ability to push him in practice. He also credits his very first coach, Coach Roy Dessloch, for having a positive impact on his swimming saying "he got me and knew how to make me work". He advises the seniors of YSSC to "follow what you are passionate about" and encourages younger swimmers to "make friends that will push you to your fullest". He believes being part of the YSSC swim team and being part of the Cuke Family is his fondest memory related to the sport. For those contemplating leaving the sport, Connor recommends "find what really matters to you on your team". His friends, or YSSC Family, are what he will miss the most as he cycles out of Cuke competitive swimming. He says his favorite "treat" when not in training is when the groups get to play water polo at practice! *Cuke Nation wishes you the best, Connor. Best of luck on your new adventure!*



**Lindsey Skidmore** attends Mauldin High School and will continue her academic career as a tiger at Clemson University. She plans to major in Biology on the Pre-Med track. Lindsey cites Coach Ted as having the greatest impact on her swimming "by helping me fall in love with the sport" and adds that "Coach Dan has had the greatest impact on my life and on me as a holistic person". Swimming in a scoring final for the 200 fly at 2018 Long Course Y Nationals is one of her greatest moments in the sport. She advises our younger Cukes to "always remember how much fun it is to be swimming and never lose sight of that". Lindsey says teammate, Alaina, helped her keep going in the sport especially during the most recent season as well as the college recruiting process. To rising seniors she says to "know it is okay to not swim in college, just do what makes you happy and don't give up on your last season". Her most embarrassing swim moment was at the Tennessee meet when she was disqualified three times in one race (200 back). If she had not been a swimmer, Lindsey would have continued playing tennis. She has a huge sweet tooth so anything sweet is a treat when she is not in training mode. *It has been great having you as part of the Cuke Family, Lindsey. We expect great things! Go Tigers!*

**Sophie Caggiano** is graduating from Oakbrook Preparatory School and will be heading off to Rocky Top to attend the University of Tennessee in the fall. She plans to pursue a Biology degree following in the track for Pre-Med. When asked what she will miss most about YSSC, Sophie replied "my Senior 1 Girls. They truly made my last year my BEST year and have become my best friends". Her advice for athletes contemplating leaving the sport is "Don't leave. You will miss it more than you would ever imagine. Too many hours were spent at the pool to just give up". She is grateful to Coach Ted for his impact in making her fall in love with the sport and for being an excellent coach that helped her grow as a swimmer. Sophie says Coach Eduardo made her last year of swimming special. He, along with the Senior 1 girls, "made me realize how much this sport meant to me" and that Coach Eduardo "never gave up on me". She believes making the move to Middle Tyger Y was a pivotal point in her swimming because she was surrounded by a "great support system that pushed me beyond my limits and allowed me to have the best time while in the pool. This (senior 1) group helped me fall back in love with the sport and I will cherish the short time I had here". Sophie says she would have been a softball player or gymnast had she not been a swimmer and that her favorite treat is a Snicker Bar! Her most embarrassing swim moment was when she was running on pool deck, about to miss her race, when she "slipped and busted it in front of everyone". ☺ *We will miss you, Sophie! You are a bright spot wherever you go and we look forward to hearing about your college experience!*





**Copeland Viney** will be graduating from Riverside High School and will be a tiger at Clemson University this fall. He plans to pursue a degree in Engineering. When asked what he would miss most about YSSC, Copeland replied "I'll miss seeing some lifelong friends every day". He said Coach Tim had a tremendous impact on his swimming because he "really helped me improve while also loving the sport at the time". Copeland adds that "Coach Ben was a great coach that pushed me hard and helped me achieve more than I thought I could". He recommends younger swimmers to "have fun with friends...do what the coach says and the speed will come with it". For the rising senior Sea Cukes, Copeland urges them to finish out their swimming so you "don't look back and think it got cut short". When asked to comment on his greatest moment/accomplishment in swimming, Copeland responded, "I have been swimming for YSSC for 12 years so I have a several great moments, but they all revolve around my teammates and my team". He said his friends were what got him through a tough meet or season. Cope said he would have pursued basketball if he had not been a swimmer and when asked what his favorite treat is when not training, Copeland said "irrelevant, because I eat whatever while in training". ☺ *You will be missed on pool deck, Copeland! We expect great things and look forward to you visiting Cuke Nation.*

**Hannah Ownbey** is also graduating from Riverside High School. She will swim and study as an Auburn Tiger this coming fall. She plans to pursue a degree in Pre-Physical Therapy. When Hannah has experienced a tough meet or season, she says it was her "teammates and self-motivation" that encouraged her to "just keep swimming". Her advice to the younger Cukes is "to work hard, have fun, and be close with your teammates!" Hannah has been part of YSSC for her entire competitive career and could not choose just one coach as having the most impact. She says "All of my coaches have had a huge impact on my growth as an athlete and a person, so shoutout to them all!" To the rising seniors, Hannah recommends to "work hard and to cherish your last memories". She says her greatest moment in swimming is when she and teammate, Annika, achieved their Olympic Trials Cuts! When asked what she will miss the most about YSSC, Hannah replied "my teammates and my swim buddies". Her most embarrassing moment was when she fell in the gutter at practice. She would have continued to play basketball if she was not a swimmer and her favorite treat is chocolate! *Hannah, we will be cheering for you and look forward to hearing all about your adventures in Alabama! Best of luck!*



**EVAN STANISLAW** is part of Mauldin High School's Class of 2020. He will be part of the Michigan State University Swim Team while he pursues a Computer Engineering degree. When asked what he would miss most from YSSC, Evan said "the boys". He says his greatest swimming accomplishment was making Finals at Winter Juniors Swim Meet. He feels that Coach Dan had a tremendous impact on his swimming. "He really helped me improve and bring my swimming to the next level that I never expected to get to. He gave me tons of confidence in my swimming". Evan advises swimmers that may be thinking of leaving the sport behind that "swimming is the best sport out there and the bonds you create with the other swimmers are unlike any other". He says that keeping his goals in mind and continuing to work helped him after a discouraging meet or race. Evan would have been a baseball player if not a swimmer and his favorite treat is famous "Mama Slaw's Cookies". *We are proud of you, Evan! Can't wait to see what you*

*do as a Spartan at MSU! Good Luck!*

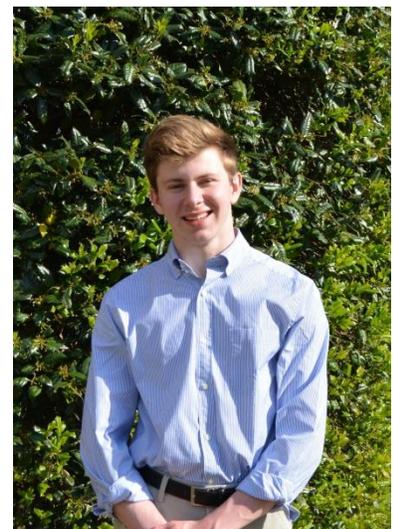
**Alaina Smith** will be graduating from Dorman High School and is looking forward to swimming and studying at Gardner-Webb University this fall. When asked what coaches have had significant impact on her swimming career, Alaina says “I have had many coaches over the years and I have tried to take something valuable from each of them to carry with me. From Ted, I learned to be coachable. From Scott, I learned to have fun in the sport of swimming. From Lindsay, I learned that technique is key. From Bart, I learned to step up my game when I needed to. From Harmilee, I learned how to be disciplined and how to swim confidently. From Dan, I learned how to come back from obstacles, how to have perseverance, and to never give up on myself. But the coach that has been there since the beginning is Colleen Miller. She taught me how to swim, believed in me, supported me throughout the years, mentored me, and most importantly she taught me joy in the swimming. Not only do I look up to her as a coach, but as one of the dearest and most special friend I have ever had”. She will miss most the YSSC team spirit and love for each other that we have at National travel meets. These are some of her favorite times as a Cuke. She tells seniors to “cherish every single minute” and tells the younger Cukes to “have fun, work hard, and listen to your coaches”. Her most embarrassing moment was when her LaZR (tech suit) split at Age Group Sectionals on the block. And if she weren’t a swimmer, Alaina says she would have been “fat”. Haha! Her favorite treats are Hershey kisses, smarties, and strawberry cake. *We will be rooting for you, Alaina. Looking forward to hearing about the fun and success you will have at GWU!*



**Bode Neale** is part of Mauldin High School’s Class of 2020. He will be attending University of Maryland Baltimore County. He looks forward to swimming at the next level for UMBC. To the rising senior Sea Cukes, he suggests to “enjoy every moment”. One coach that had an impact on Bode was Coach Harmilee. Before Coach Harmilee came on staff, Bode was thinking of leaving the sport. But, Harmilee made the difference Bode needed to keep swimming. The greatest moment for Bode as part of YSSC was “finally winning an event with the boys at Ys”. When having a rough season or meet, he says “the boys” kept him swimming. He also cites “the boys” as what he will most about YSSC Swimming. As for as Bode’s most embarrassing swim moment, he recalls the time he lost his suit when he dove in for a race. If he weren’t a swimmer, Bode would have been a soccer player. His favorite treats are ice cream sandwiches. *Hard to believe the last Neale swimmer is off to college! We will be cheering for you,*

*Bode! Best of luck...you will be missed!*

**Preston Jennings** will be graduating from St. Joseph’s Catholic School and heading to Providence College in Rhode Island. Preston will be part of the swim team and plans to study Economics. The Coaching Staff, atmosphere, and most of all “my boys” are what Preston will miss the most as he starts his next chapter. When asked what kept him swimming during a discouraging season, Preston said “a strong desire for a Y-Nat cut and not wanting to fall behind my teammates”. He encourages others that may think about leaving the sport, to remember why they started...“if that love and desire for the sport is still there, give it another chance.” For the younger Sea Cukes, Preston advises to focus on what you can control and to try and be happy for teammates’ achievements. He cites several coaches as having significant impact. “Coach Austin because he instilled confidence and helped create my swimming foundation. Coach Harmilee improved my technique and got me to train at an elite level. Coach Dan got me to see the bigger picture of swimming and broadened my horizons for what is possible”. A great swim memory was achieving his first Y-Nat cut at the very last possible moment at 2018 LC State Meet. Most embarrassing moment: stopping at the 150 mark in the 200 free at High School State his freshman year and thinking he had won. His favorite treat is Sour Patch Kids. *Best of luck, Preston! Cuke Nation is proud of you and looking forward to following your adventures in Rhode Island!*





**Kai van den Bosch**, Riverside High School Class of 2020, will be attending Clemson University this fall pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He says all of the YSSC coaches have taught him different and unique skills. Kai will miss his teammates and the grind at practice most as he moves on from YSSC Swimming. To those who may be contemplating leaving the sport of swimming Kai encourages them to “stick with the sport. It’s only a part of your life for a short amount of time.” Kai’s advice to the rising seniors is with regard to college. He says “do what is best for you and take your time to decide”. Kai believes it is important to keep working toward goals especially when an athlete is having a discouraging time. He says “knowing that I have a higher potential than just a bad swim/season” is what kept him swimming. Kai reminds our younger Cukes to “keep working hard, but don’t forget to have FUN!”. Kai says his most embarrassing moments were having to sit by teammate, Copeland, at meets. Haha! ☺ He would have been a runner or basketball player if he had not pursued

swimming and his favorite treat when not in training is “anything with sugar”. *We will miss you, Kai! You have been an amazing teammate, buddy, and athlete! Best of luck in Tiger Town!*

**Benaiah McDowell** will be heading to Carson-Newman University this fall. He plans to pursue a degree in Finance and will be competing with the swim team. When asked what he will miss most about YSSC, Benaiah said “the brotherhood—the guys always being there for each other”. To the seniors, Benaiah recommends to “enjoy it while you can. You never know when it will be taken away from you.” One of the greatest moments in his swimming was when he achieved his first Y-Nat cut, adding “it’s like all the hard work finally paid off and the support of my teammates was overwhelming”. Benaiah said he was able to thrive under Coach Harmilee’s leadership and adds Coach Harmilee was easy to talk to. To the younger swimmers, Benaiah states to remember that “encouragement from your peers goes a long way”. He would have likely been a soccer player if not a swimmer and his favorite treat is “probably a pop tart”. *Best of Luck on your next adventure, Benaiah! We are proud of you and look forward to following your swimming at CNU.*



**JACK PARKER** will graduate from Dorman High School and will study Pre-Med/Biomedical Science at Xavier University in Ohio. He says one of his greatest moments was breaking the 4 minute mark in his 400 IM at Juniors. Jack said “the boys” kept him going by pushing him to do better. Coach Harmilee had a significant impact on Jack’s swimming career. Jack says “My 8<sup>th</sup> grade year was a rough one. I struggled mentally the entire year, but Harm came in and built me up to become a better swimmer physically and mentally”. To the rising seniors, Jack suggests to “take every moment serious and do not waste it. Before you know it, it will be over”. He tells the younger Cukes, “enjoy this time and work on perfecting technique as much as possible. Once that is down, you have the best chance of dropping more and more time as you progress”. His most embarrassing moment was at a high school meet when he did 100 breast instead of the 100 fly! Jack will miss the people of YSSC the most. He adds “I have built strong relationships with the people in my group and it will be hard to leave them.” He would have been a lacrosse or basketball player if he had not pursued

swimming and his favorite treat is “homemade cookies”. *We are excited to follow your swimming at Xavier, Jack! We love to watch you swim. Good Luck and hope you visit Cuke Nation often!*