

My Path at Rancho San Dieguito

By Liam McCloskey

Over the past seven years at RSD, I've had a lot of time to do some solo searching which has helped shape me into the man I am today. I am so incredibly grateful for the people who helped me get there. Starting my competitive career back on Red Group with Coach Bryan I learned about the fundamentals of stroke technique, how to properly calculate when to leave on a certain interval, and most importantly, I learned to have fun when racing. Progressing on to White Group with Coach A-Lisa, we explored the importance of turns and underwaters. A-Lisa was such a positive influence on my swimming career and eventually helped me to progress on to Coach Paul's Blue Group. In Blue Group I was truly challenged by new intervals, grueling kick sets, and having to balance middle school pressures with swim. This was the first case where I had the option to go out with friends and not attend swim practice. Middle school was a tough time for me as it is for a lot of kids who are trying to find out who they are and what kind of social groups they belong in. I chose to hang out with friends during my Blue group years which impacted me moving straight up to seniors. Looking back on it, I'm very glad I had those experiences with my friends, but it also helped push me into Coach Richard's Senior Development Group which gave more incentive to work as hard as I could so one day I could swim with Coach Joe. When that day came to swim on Seniors, Joe was rather hesitant as he wasn't quite sure if I belonged in that group. I was tested right on the first day of Senior Group... 20x200s. Quite a set to start out with for a freshly minted 13 year old. I'm just glad to say I successfully completed the set. I will never forget these words which came out of Josh Mangus' mouth following the set, "Welcome to seniors buddy." Little did I know Josh would go on to become one of my best friends, although the relationship started on a rather awkward note. I eventually got used to the 6,000 yard workouts, the double practices, and the early Saturday morning race sets, Seniors was a pretty cool gig.

As the months passed in Coach Joe's group, I learned small technical tricks which helped develop my freestyle into more of a loping style. Once this happened, I was in a new realm of swimming. I started to drop time very steadily at the age of 14. The goals kept getting bigger and bigger as I was checking them off my list for each season. Joe has been a huge influence on my swimming career and has had extreme diligence with me and my flaws. I struggled up until Senior year to complete sets to their full ability, and Joe was very patient with me through these difficult times. Joe and I have been to three sectionals, four Junior Nationals, and in June of 2016, we will attend U.S. Olympic Trials in hopes of making semi-finals in the 100 meter butterfly. RSD has made so many doors open to me that would not have been available if it wasn't for the help of all the tremendous coaches. Living the RSD team values is something that I've made very apparent in my life over the past year. Before this year, I thought of them as just words written above our locker rooms but after some introspection, I've really found how valuable they are. The swimmers, coaches, and parents at RSD are some of which you cannot find anywhere else. I am so incredibly grateful for my time at RSD and will never forget how much the club and team has done for me. I wish all of you the best in your future endeavors and I'll be seeing you at the beginning of August!