

Benjamin Adamonis

3/6/2025

What Swimming in the NHSA Has Meant to Me

The moment I first plunged into a training pool, I discovered that early morning practices outdoors in June were far from enjoyable. What began as childhood swimming lessons quickly blossomed into a transformative journey that has defined my character and shaped my future.

Though outsiders often perceive swimming as solitary, the NHSA revealed to me its true nature as a deeply community-based sport. From predawn practices where teammates motivate each other through exhaustion to championship meets where collective energy excites each team on deck, I've never truly swum alone. I'll never forget one of my first meets at NHSA states—paralyzed with nerves until my team's seniors talked with me, sharing their wisdom and pre-swim rituals. That day not only taught me how important a strong role model is to newer and younger teammates but also that I wasn't just swimming for myself, but for everyone who believed in me.

The NHSA community soars beyond team boundaries. Between races, bitter adversaries become fast friends, bonding over shared sensations that only swimmers understand: chlorine-damaged hair, insatiable hunger, and constantly aching muscles. This sense of camaraderie manifested even at my first NHSA state championship meet. Despite representing different teams, I found myself comparing practices and discussing times and new tech suits during warm-ups. I also shared pre-race rituals with swimmers I'd never met. During finals, I was cheering alongside athletes from across the state for every race, regardless of team affiliation.

Most profoundly, the NHSA has shown me that true achievement is collective. Every personal gain best reflects the contributions of supportive teammates, encouraging coaches, dedicated parents, and challenging competitors who pushed me to excel. While medals may eventually tarnish, the connections forged and lessons learned will endure. As I approach my final NHSA season, I realize my greatest takeaways aren't measured in laps or times but in the character I've developed, the friendships I've formed, and the growth I've achieved. The NHSA hasn't merely taught me to swim faster—it's taught me to live better, a gift I'll forever cherish.