

# The SOCAL Spotlight

Volume 28, Issue 3

Spring 2016

## SOCAL WATER POLO

### Inside This Issue

What's New in the Pool	1
National Team selections	2
The SOCAL picnic	3
PCA Players of the Summer Session	4
Oh the Places You'll Go!	5

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE POOL?

Welcome to Summer. If you feel the Summers are getting shorter, they really are. Next year, in 2017, the National Junior Olympics will likely take place a week earlier than in past years, so some of you can begin your vacations sooner and some of you can begin school the first week of August. Isn't that crazy?

This is an Olympic year, so we shout out to Rachel Fattal, Courtney Mathewson, and Dan Klatt as SOCAL players and coach who will compete for Gold in Rio. I sure hope you watch every Olympic water polo game. On July 16th at the Olympic Send Off Gala, SOCAL will receive the Chairman's Cup for best

club in the United States of America. SOCAL could not do this without the help of innumerable Coaches, Parent Volunteers, Administrators, and Member families. Thank you.

Our Summer Picnic on June 11 was quite an affair with Coach Dave Carlson as "MC", our keynote speaker Brian Alexander, fun games, and the BBQ truck. Thank you all for coming out as the rains parted for our event. Before the Picnic, Coach Jason Lynch presented to more than 30 SOCAL Coaches about "Sweating the Details" -- planning and doing the little things that create water polo success.

A big thank you to the 14 Gold's Coach Tom Curran, who has been leading many of us through a book called *What Drives Winning*; we encourage our parents to read it as well and work through it with their players.

Enjoy the few remaining weeks of summer as we accelerate to a fantastic finish at Stanford University in the last week of July for NJO's. It's summer time, full steam ahead!

Andrew Rowe  
SOCAL General Manager

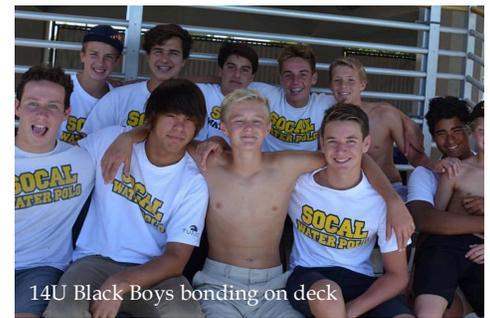


## SOCAL YOUTH TEAMS QUALIFY FOR JUNIOR OLYMPICS

Congratulations to all the SOCAL youth teams that placed well in JO Quals. The tournament took place the weekend of June 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> and spanned pools across Orange County; the high school teams will compete the weekend of June 23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>. Youth teams competed in anywhere from 5 to 7 games in order to qualify for the National Junior Olympics this July, the ultimate tournament of the summer season. SOCAL entered 8 youth teams this year. Notable finishes include first place from both the 14U boys and girls, and a 6<sup>th</sup> place finish for the 14U girls Gold team. Overall, all Black teams placed in the top four in their age groups. The Junior Olympics alternate between being based in Norcal and Socal every other year; this year's games will take place in the San Jose Area from July 23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> for the boys' teams and July 28<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> for the girls' and 10U teams. Good luck in July!



12U Boys relax in between games



14U Black Boys bonding on deck

10U Mixed	3 <sup>rd</sup>
12U Girls	4 <sup>th</sup>
12U Boys Black	4 <sup>th</sup>
12U Boys Gold	19 <sup>th</sup>
14U Girls Black	1 <sup>st</sup>
14U Girls Gold	6 <sup>th</sup>
14U Boys Black	1 <sup>st</sup>
14U Boys Gold	13 <sup>th</sup>



A successful weekend for our girls!

## 2016 ODP Pipeline National Team Selections Announced: SOCAL players named to all levels of ODP pipeline!

Congratulations to the following SOCAL players:

### Women's Youth National Team

Valerie Ayala  
Madison Stamen  
Noelle Wijnbelt

### Men's Cadet National Team

Kai Hanson  
Noah Hodge  
Joseph Molina

### Men's Developmental National Team

William Harrison  
Riley Pittman  
Dylan Patist

### Women's Cadet National Team

Tea Poljak

### Women's Developmental National Team

Isabela Gazzaniga  
Destiny Hernandez

## Meet the Coach- John Wright

10U Mixed and 12U Boys Head Coach John Wright has been involved in water polo since high school, where— fun fact! —he was a drum major! He entered the coaching world at his old club, Golden West, and went on to coach at Marina High School, Golden West College, Santa Ana College, and Concordia University. He also racked up an impressive resume coaching within the ODP pipeline, assisting the Men's Junior National Team and Women's National Team and serving as an assistant coach for the Women's Junior National Team, whom he led to a gold medal at the World Championships in Perth, Australia in 2001. After a brief stint with the SOCAL 18U girls in 2008, working

with Coach Cardey's father Mike Cardey to a bronze medal, Coach John moved to SOCAL aquatics because his kids were starting to swim. Now, Coach John isn't just a water polo coach; he's also a water polo dad, and his three kids— Makenna, Bobby, and Jack— have been with SOCAL since 2009. Coach John loves being a part of the SOCAL community and overseeing players' development. In his rare moments off deck, Coach John enjoys stand up paddle boarding and claims he can NEVER get enough time at the beach.



## Noelle Wijnbelt to compete at Pan American games in Canada

Congratulations to Noelle Wijnbelt, who will be traveling to Canada with the USA Water Polo Cadet National Team to play in the 2016 Pan Am games. Noelle was one of 13 athletes selected out of the 70 at the National Training and Selection Camp this June. Noelle will be competing in Canada over the course of two weeks, playing teams from across North and South America. Noelle has a busy schedule ahead of her this summer: in addition to her commitments with SOCAL, she'll also be training with the Cadet team until she leaves for the Pan Am games on July 14<sup>th</sup>. Yet despite the work ahead, Noelle looks forward to the challenges, and is excited to represent the United States as she travels. Way to go Noelle, and good luck!



## SOCAL has a blast at Grommet Cup

The first weekend in May has long marked a hallowed SOCAL tradition: a three-day trip down to San Diego to participate in the San Diego County Cup, known in the SOCAL Family as Grommet Cup. This year SOCAL entered 7 teams into the tournament, allowing a record high number of players to join in on the excitement. Grommet Cup has always been a "fun" tournament for our Youth teams, and the players had a blast both inside and outside of the pool. From spaghetti dinners and Jacuzzi bonding to running around the hotel, the athletes didn't seem to let the rain get in the way of a good time! For the first time ever, the High School Girls also fielded a team that competed in San Diego the next weekend; the girls had a

blast, exploring the haunted Hotel Del Coronado and going shopping around the island. And despite the emphasis on Grommet as a "fun" tournament, SOCAL teams still placed very well, including a first place finish from the high school girls and a bronze medal for the 14U Girls Black Team. Great job to all of our athletes!



# Congrats to the Black and Gold at Cal Cup State Championships

This past April, 9 SOCAL teams competed in the Cal Cup State Championships. Each year, SOCAL teams from all levels participate in Cal Cup league games with other Southern California teams throughout the fall and spring; these games determine the standings for the State Championships in April. This year's championships took place locally for the youth teams and high school girls, who competed in the Inland Empire and Orange County,

respectively. The high school boys got to travel to Clovis to battle it out for the championship. Overall, SOCAL finished with an impressive record: all teams finished in the top four, and 6 teams made it to their division's gold medal game. Our 10U Team even went undefeated, winning the tournament. Great job to all of the athletes who participated!



16U Boys take home gold!



The 14U Boys with some hardware

10U Mixed	1st
12U Girls	2nd
12U Boys	4th
14U Girls	2nd
14U Boys	2nd
16U Girls	4th
16U Boys	13th
18U Girls	2nd
18U Boys	3rd



18U Boys with Bronze medals!

## SOCAL 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL SUMMER KICK-OFF PICNIC A SUCCESS

The SOCAL Water Polo Family came together on June 11<sup>th</sup> for an afternoon of awards, games, food, and fun. The picnic kicked off with a barbecue lunch. Players then competed in games such as a water balloon toss and bubble gum blowing contest and gathered around to hear keynote speaker Brian Alexander. The afternoon concluded with a ceremony in which standout players were awarded for their commitment to bettering the game and exemplifying the SOCAL spirit.

**Congratulations to the following athletes who were rewarded for their achievement:**

### SPRIT OF BLACK AND GOLD

- Tyler Son – 12U Boys Black
- Alon Elbaz – 12U Boys Gold
- Riley Pittman – 14U Boys Black
- Elijah Clark – 14U Boys Gold
- Dierdre Murphy – 12U Girls Gold
- Julia Reid – 12U Girls Black
- Lauren Watkins – 14U Girls Gold
- Mallory Reynoso – 14U Girls Black

### PLAYER'S PLAYER

- Jace Rodriguez – 12 Boys Black
- William Bennett – 12 Boys Gold
- Guillermo Ocasio – 14 Boys Black
- Shayan Sadig – 14 Boys Gold
- Annika Doelman – 12 Girls Black
- Ellie Zerer – 12 Girls Gold
- Julia Janov – 14 Girls Black
- Hannah Miller – 14 Girls Gold

### MOST IMPROVED

- Colin Morgan – 12U Boys Black
- Nathan Jones – 12U Boys Gold
- Whittaker Worland – 12U Boys Black
- Ethan Harris – 12U Boys Gold

- Annabella Storar – 12U Girls Black
- Kaitlyn Kong – 12U Girls Gold
- Malia Allen – 14U Girls Black
- Delaney Dersher – 14U Girls Gold

### Brian Alexander speaks to athletes about goals, success, and mental training

A big thank you goes out to Brian Alexander, a SOCALer and sports psychologist who spoke to the athletes at the summer picnic. Brian started his water polo career at SOCAL as a 10 and under and played with the club throughout high school, earning national championships at Speedo Cup and JO's as a 14. A self-described late bloomer, Brian has earned some impressive accolades, including

Brian now turns his attention towards sports psychology. Brian spoke to the athletes on focusing their efforts on how they can supplement their physical training with the right mental training. Brian urged athletes to focus



on two things: to know why they are competing, and to align their values with their goals. As SOCALers of all ages eagerly listened, Brian described how competition should really be about coming together and having fun rather than individual goals. Ultimately, Brian's message was simple, and one that aligns with SOCAL's own focus on building character: that players should focus on building themselves as people, not just as athletes.



recognition as All-American at both Foothill and UCSB. Brian trained

with the National team from 2004 to 2012, traveling to Spain, Greece, Australia, Canada, Italy and China, competing in four world championships, and earning a gold medal at the Pan American games as well as a selection as first alternate at the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games.



14U Girls award recipients



12U Boys earning some hardware!



14U Blacks pose in between rounds of water balloon toss!



The 10U Mixed team takes the stage



A great turnout from our high school boys!



# PCA Players of the Quarter

Congratulations to our SOCAL PCA Players of the Spring Quarter

These athletes were chosen by their coaches for demonstrating excellent sportsmanship, teamwork and dedication.

## 10U Mixed- Michael Ashier

Michael has been with SOCAL WPC since the spring of 2016. He is also a member of the SOCAL Aquatics Swim Team. He is a good teammate and brings a great attitude, work ethic and enthusiasm for the game.

## 12U Boys- Nathan Jones

Nathan is the prototypical coachable player. Nathan comes to practice ready to listen, learn, and work hard in the pool. He consistently transfers the fundamentals and skills we cover in practice to the games enabling him to make great progress at a rapid rate. Nathan is always up for a new challenge or to try a different position and never complains about his coaches or his teammates.

## 12U Girls- Annabella Storar

Annabella is a rapidly improving 12 year old who will continue to grow immensely in the next years. Annabella has great attendance, always smiles and has learned the game tremendously since joining SOCAL. Annabella prides herself in practicing at top effort. She is highly competitive and raises the bar for her teammates. Annabella focuses on process more than outcome, on herself more as a young lady than as water polo player. She is poised under pressure. Annabella is a stellar teammate.

## 14U Boys Gold- Brad Clansen

Brad did some tremendous improvement throughout the quarter. He went the extra mile and earned his place in the starting 7.



## 14U Girls Gold- Morgan and Kendal Rio

The Rio twins Morgan and Kendal are the type of girls who Coaches love to coach because they listen, apply, and ask questions. They are upbeat, positive, and uplifting. They have improved because they put in impressive effort, have high attendances, plan around absences, and are always focused on doing one thing better each time they touch the water. They are great team players and make sacrifices to improve. Morgan has a slight edge in swimming, but Kendal has a slight edge on defense.



## 14U Girls Black- Celeste Wijnbelt

Celeste is the first two-time winner of the PCA award. Celeste is consistently at the top of her class in effort and learning. She helps her teammates improve by competing against them. Celeste is a thoughtful and eloquent team leader who values fairness, keeps an open mind, and brings teammates together. Celeste's dedication to swim conditioning pays off handsomely with minutes in games. Celeste takes on any game assignment she is given. Recently, she facilitated the team's creation of their Summer Mission Statement.



## 14 Boys Black- Dylan Patist

Dylan is a leader in and out of the pool by being outspoken, intelligent and a great teammate to rally behind. He leads by example and works hard at every practice and game. Great Job Dylan!

“Water Polo-“Oh, the Places You’ll Go!”

## Rachael To Start College in Canada



When Rachel Jaffe began the college water polo recruiting process her junior year, all the schools she was initially interested in had one thing in common: they were in the United States. Yet as summer wore on, she began receiving some of the strongest interest from the University of Toronto. Though Rachel initially brushed it off – college in *Canada?!?! – she began to realize that between the academics, the team, and the location, it was the best fit for her, and has committed to play water polo at the University of Toronto next fall.*



Despite Rachel’s initial skepticism, the school’s Toronto location actually became a big draw for her. Complete with a mall, Exploratorina, and hockey stadium just blocks from the downtown campus, Toronto is actually the third largest city in North America – like New York, Rachel says, but cleaner and with Tim Horton’s donuts. Rachel also feels very confident about adjusting to the Canadian culture. She says college in Canada isn’t that different from college in America, but she’s found the people tend to be nicer in Canada. She also was drawn to how professors in Canada, and at the U of T specifically, seem to care more about their students, taking a personal interest in their development. Of course, the one adjustment that may prove a bit harder is the weather, but Rachel assures us that Toronto isn’t *that* cold – it’s comparable to New England in temperature, and at least it’s still warmer than Montreal.

At U of T, Rachel plans on pursuing a major in Life Sciences with a minor in economics. She looks forward to pursuing biological research during her time in college; U of T is internationally regarded in the life sciences, so Rachel will have some amazing opportunities in the field. Outside of the classroom, Rachel will be playing for U of T’s water polo team. She’ll compete mostly against other Canadian teams, but the team is looking to travel out for an NCAA tournament next year. Despite being only one of three Americans on the team, Rachel doesn’t feel nervous at all: Head Coach Gross was a goalie himself once, after all, so Rachel is in good hands.

Fun Photos



SOCAL Spotlight  
Published quarterly  
Lisa Gorlinski- Editor  
Lana Gorlinski- Assistant Editor  
Michele Scott, Ed Reynolds, Robin Baia  
Contributing Editors

Printing courtesy of the  
**THE REYNOLDS GROUP**  
Restoring the Earth and Groundwater  
[www.reynolds-group.com](http://www.reynolds-group.com)

Like us on Facebook!

Send photos for Facebook to:  
[socialmedia@socalwaterpolo.org](mailto:socialmedia@socalwaterpolo.org)  
GOT PICS? SOCAL is on Instagram!  
[@socalwaterpolo](https://www.instagram.com/socalwaterpolo)

Send It In!

Student of the Month? Accepted to College?  
Helped your Community?

We want to know! We’d love to share the accomplishments of our athletes outside the pool. Send your news to Lisa Gorlinski @ [lisagorlinski@socalwaterpolo.org](mailto:lisagorlinski@socalwaterpolo.org)