

# The SOCAL Spotlight

January 2018

**SOCAL**  
**WATER POLO**

## Inside This Issue

- What's New in the Pool 1
- College Commitments 2
- PCA Players 3
- SOCAL helps in the Community 3
- Oh the Places You'll Go! College Edition 4



## What's New in the Pool?

SOCAL Water Polo will once again come out on top this New Year when the Coaches lift their Chairman's Cup trophy in 2018 as the best club in the USA. However, it is not the scoreboard that matters.

This Holiday Season the SOCAL community and its extended family collectively raised over \$33,000 for our 12U Youth Boy's Coach John Bell and his family. John's son John, a SOCAL Water Polo player, was diagnosed with a serious illness called ulcerative colitis. Lisa Wright initiated a "GoFundMe" page that can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y77zr9hz>. The donations so far gave the Bell's some breathing room to seek the world's best treatment. Thank you, all. Also, once again, thanks to many donations from the SOCAL community, Santa and his elves were able to visit some of the neediest families in Tustin. I will never forget a single father with nothing weeping uncontrollably on Santa's shoulder when he opened his gift box with grocery cash.

Our "beyond the pool" stories are really what SOCAL is about. Giving molds and shapes our Youth when they see their parents exemplifying the values of our community. This newsletter lists the great colleges our players will attend. However, I have been at the club long enough now to see the life successes beyond university of our SOCAL players.

One of our former little 10U's -- Paul Pickell -- passed through officer training and SEAL training over the holidays and is willing to put his on the line to serve his country. He graduated from UCLA and was married just before New Year's Day. Another of our Youth Girls, one of our greatest age group goalies of all time -- Emily Feher -- now serves her country as Executive Director of Teen Health Mississippi. The examples of great SOCAL water polo players growing into great human beings abound and increase each year. We are proud.

And as we enter the New Year, may the spirit of Thanksgiving -- Thanks and Giving -- give us perspective on Youth Sports. May we all exhibit sportsmanship on the pool deck and off the pool deck. The game of life is much more important than any game in the pool. Bring this wisdom to the pool deck when the whistle does not blow SOCAL's way.

**Happy New Year!**

Andrew Rowe, President and General Manager



## Meet the Coach- Randy Galza

Coach Randy Galza may only be in his second year at SOCAL, but he coaches for more teams than anyone else in the club. As a specialized goalie coach, he trains goalies at all age levels and abilities. Randy grew up in Scripps Ranch, San Diego, where he swam and played water polo at Mira Mesa HS. He continued to swim and play water polo at Palomar Junior College before matriculating to the University of California, Riverside, graduating with a BA in History and a Minor in English. Coach Randy started out coaching both field players and goalies. It was during his time there that Coach Randy realized his passion and dedication towards coaching goalkeepers, and consequently focused on training and recruiting goalies at his next job at Occidental College.

Shortly after moving to Aliso Viejo, Coach Randy began coaching at SOCAL in February of 2016. Coach Randy says he likes coaching at SOCAL because of the club's mission statement of "winning and teaching life lessons in a positive environment", a message which Coach Randy infuses into his own coaching style. Coach Randy considers himself a lifelong learner and works to instill this in his trainees, believing that the mentality of constant improvement applies equally to blocking shots and succeeding in life. During his time at SOCAL, Coach Randy looks back most fondly at two memories: training goalies Morgan Jones and Heidi Ritner, who now play at UCI and Michigan respectively, to win Gold at the 18U Junior Olympics in 2016, and coaching from the bench while goalie Liam Harrison helped the 14U Boys to a first-place finish at the Junior Olympics, this past summer. In his free time, Randy loves to fish, traveling as far as Baja California for deep sea fishing or staying close and fishing at local freshwater lakes.



Coach Randy with 14U Gold Medal Goalie Liam

**SOCAL is grateful for all of Randy's contributions across age levels and is looking forward to seeing what he achieves in the future!**

# SOCAL Scholar Athletes Make College Decisions

Playing a competitive team sport like water polo has many positive benefits, such as learning team-building skills, making friends, developing a strong work ethic, and becoming physically fit. For many SOCAL athletes, playing water polo in high school has opened doors to play water polo in college at a variety of commitment levels. SOCAL Water Polo student alumni currently play NCAA water polo at Azusa Pacific, Bucknell, Cal Baptist, Cal Lutheran, Cal State Long Beach, Cal State Northridge, Concordia, George Washington, Harvard, La Salle, Loyola Marymount, Orange Coast College, Pepperdine, Princeton, San Diego State, San Jose State, Santa Clara, U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, UCLA, UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, University of Hawaii, University of Michigan, USC and Whittier College.

**SOCAL Water Polo is pleased to announce these outstanding student athletes who have recently committed to play water polo in college next year:**

Bella Baia, UCLA  
Brock Peterson, UCLA  
Brooke Barlow, Fresno State  
Chase Peterson, UCLA  
Delaney Binette, San Diego State  
Erin Tharp, USC  
Grace Halliday, San Diego State  
Grace Thawley, Harvard  
Isabella Barajas, Loyola Marymount

Jamie Hutton, Cal Baptist University  
Jessica Lynch, UCI  
Kai Hanson, Cal State Long Beach  
Madison Stamen, Stanford  
Noah Hodge, Harvard  
Noelle Wijnbelt, UC Davis  
Val Ayala, UCLA  
Zane Scott, USC  
Taylor Hensley, Iona



## SOCAL Alumni make an impact on their college teams-

SOCAL alumnus Bobby Lee had a successful freshman campaign at the United States Naval Academy, leading his team in goals and earning recognition twice during the season as the Mid-Atlantic Water Polo Conference Rookie of the Week.

**Congratulation Bobby- SOCAL is proud of you!!**



# PCA Players of the Quarter



Congratulations to our SOCAL PCA Players of the Winter Quarter

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

## Girls 12U Black-Yana Sadiq

Yana is a wonderful, hard-working teammate in and out of the pool. Yana has a background in synchronized swimming, which makes her one of the best eggbeaters in 12U! Through practice, scrimmages and tournaments she has been applying corrections and making adjustments as her Coaches recommend. It's really great to see someone make an effort consistently to do the best they can.

Her focus is so contagious and she sets a great example for all of our 12U girls to follow. Yana has excellent attendance at practice and swim conditioning, benefitting her game and knowledge. She also followed her brother's (SOCAL 16u) high school season into CIF playoffs, learning from high intensity competitions and becoming a serious student of the game! She's also one of the kindest girls, welcoming and engaging with all of her teammates. We really enjoy having Yana as a part of our 12U youth girls!

## Girls 12U Gold - Addison Spoonhower

Addy Spoonhower packs a punch in her pint-sized stature. She is quietly observant and never to be underestimated in the pool. Her tenacity and awareness make her a threat in all aspects of the game. Center defender, driver and Goal Keeper when we need her- all with relentless effort! Addy absorbs direction and new skills, thanks to her drive and dedication. Her voice is starting to really stand out in the water, as she becomes a defensive leader and offensive attacker!

She is also very willing to help her teammates out when they don't understand a skill, and challenge them when they do. She is a great asset to everyone on deck, uplifting those around her with her smile and friendly nature. Addy is definitely one to watch out for in the future!

## Girls 14U- Emily Ausmus

Emily helped lift her team to a new level this Autumn and return them to the Gold Medal podium. She brings such intensity and passion to her practices and games that her teammates can't help but be uplifted. In every moment, Emily is learning and adopting new skills and strategies into her games. She takes instructions once and applies what she hears. Many champions relish the challenge to be their best and smile doing it. Emily leads by playing in the current moment, not dwelling on moments past.

## SOCAL IN THE COMMUNITY-SOCAL Continues Tradition of Holiday Generosity with 6th Annual Adopt a Family Program



Michael Ann and volunteers from SOCAL, Operation Warm Wishes and Exchange Club of Tustin

SOCAL Water Polo parent volunteer Michael Ann Pevehouse was working as a health aide at Thorman Elementary School in Tustin several years ago when she heard about several school families going through some tough times. Teachers shared stories about how some parents were unable to work and were struggling financially due to long-term illnesses or having to take care of a disabled child at home. Some of the children who came to visit Michael Ann in the Health office expressed that they didn't expect to get any gifts for Christmas.

Having a heart of gold, Michael Ann shared the idea of SOCAL Water Polo "adopting" some of these families for the holidays. Boxes for donations were brought to SOCAL practices for the athletes to drop off their donations, and the response from the SOCAL community was tremendous. Six years later the tradition continues as the project has grown to adopt more families. Michael Ann works with the school liaison to identify the most deserving families, and each year SOCAL moms wrap hundreds of gifts which are then delivered by Santa and his Elves—accompanied by SOCAL coaches and athletes.

This year, in addition to our Holiday Adopt a Family project, Michael Ann harnessed the holiday spirit of the SOCAL community to also help homeless veterans as well as partnering with the Exchange Club of Tustin and Operation Warm Wishes to bring holiday cheer to 23 motel children living in Tustin.

**We are very excited about these impactful projects!**

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

## College Edition



## Bella and Val head to UCLA

Little did Bella Baia and Val Ayala know as wide-eyed 8-year-olds competing as 10-and-unders that they’d someday be playing together at the collegiate level. Bella and Val have been playing together with SOCAL Water Polo for nearly 10 years, and they are excited to continue as teammates for another four: the two committed to playing water polo at UCLA next year. Since 10U, Bella and Val have had their fair share of strong finishes, including gold medals at the Junior Olympics as 12U and again more recently as 18U, as well as first place finishes at Grommet Cup in San Diego and Champion’s Cup in Indiana.

Both girls also played up a lot and had many a bonding moment eating meals in each other’s cars while splitting age groups at tournaments. They share fond memories of making up secret handshakes, dressing up as boys for fun, and eating way too much Jimmy John’s at TYR Cup. In high school, the two began to play against each other as well. The girls remember coming head to head in the CIF quarterfinals this past year, with Bella on Mater Dei and Val playing with Foothill. The game went into several rounds of sudden death and culminated in a shootout; Bella and Val said that for much of the game, they guarded each other.

Bella and Val had joked about going to school together before even as kids, and were looking at many of the same schools as they got older. They had always thought that if they’d end up at school together, though, it would be at USC--both girls’ families are big fans of the Trojans, and they even used to tailgate in the same spot at USC!

The girls will be joining SOCAL Alum Bridgette Storm and Brooke Maxson on the team at UCLA, and Bella will be joining her sister and SOCAL Alum Sophia Baia at the school. The girls are excited for the new academic and athletic challenges UCLA will present. Though they both had many choices for colleges, the girls were drawn to the high level of competition at UCLA: “It’s always going to be a grind and a competition,” says Bella. The girls were also drawn to the new head coach of the women’s program, Adam Wright, who they say cares about them not just as athletes but as students and as people. Bella plans to study either psychology or sociology, while Val is leaning towards history or political science.

The girls will begin practicing with UCLA this summer while continuing their play as SOCAL, looking for one last championship. It’s been a long journey with SOCAL, and Bella and Val couldn’t be more excited to continue together at the collegiate level.

Says Bella, “We never went to high school together, but SOCAL’s the one thing that kept us as friends and teammates.”

**Best of luck to Bella and Val!**

### 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)

While we can’t promise we’ll print it, we’ll sure try!

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SOCAL Spotlight

Published quarterly

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