




CLASS OF 2026





#5 JOE AZAR

(Jill & Nick)

2 years on JV; JV captain
2 years on Varsity; Varsity captain

What was your <u>first</u> SLUH Water Polo memory?
My first SLUH water polo memory is when we had preseason at Chaminade before my first JV season freshman year. I recently had to buzz my head because I lost fantasy football that year and a Senior at the time, Joe Zarilli, asked me if I had shaved it for the water polo season. For some reason I thought it'd be more embarrassing if I said it was because of fantasy football so I just told him yes.

What is your <u>favorite</u> SLUH Water Polo memory?
My favorite SLUH water polo memory was absolutely the Stevenson game my junior year. It was a super intense matchup that was back and forth all game. Someone made a play on defense that allowed for a counter the other way where I was swim dribbling the ball all the way up. I was so focussed on the opportunity to score that I missed Nick being wide open to the right of me, but I was able to make up for it when I barred-in to go up one. I never felt like I had made a large impact in a close game like I had right then, and it boosted my confidence in playing in games like those for the rest of that season.

Is there anything noteworthy you've learned being part of the program?
I've been extremely lucky to have played for the two best coaches in the area for my four years at SLUH and one of the things I've picked up on since playing for them is that they always know we're capable of being better. In some games we'll score a goal and turn to hear Coach P screaming at us on the sidelines because it was the wrong thing to do, whereas I think 99% of other coaches in the area would be proud of their team for scoring. Coach P and Coach Baud's ability to never settle has pushed me to be the best version of myself at all times in the pool, and that mentality will follow me through all steps of my life.

In 40 years, when you're reliving your glory days, what is the moment that you'll recount first?
The York game my junior year. Not only was it my first Chicago game on Varsity, but it was really my first real taste of competition being apart of the SLUH water polo program. I had never been so nervous playing in a game before, but being on the sideline for the comeback was a great experience, and one I won' forget.

Want to give a shoutout to anyone?
Thanks to my mom and dad for making me get into water polo in middle school, and for their support at games anywhere from Michigan to Dallas. As well as a special thanks to the countless coaches over the years for making me the player I am today.

Plans next year: Marquette University, Biology

#14 WESLEY BALSAMO

(Ann & Tony)

2 years on JV
2 years on Varsity

What was your first SLUH Water Polo memory?
My first memory was of preseason practices at Chaminade, especially doing jumping jack circles and swim dribble.

What is your favorite SLUH Water Polo memory?
My favorite memory is of our practices at the sunny MICDS pool, doing scrimmages in the deepest end by the diving boards.

Is there anything noteworthy you've learned being part of the program?
The most important lesson I've learned from this program has been mental toughness. It important to keep going, even when you're exhausted.

In 40 years, when you're reliving your glory days, what is the moment that you'll recount first?
I'll talk about the one time I stuffed a shot from Aiden on 6 on 5.

Want to give a shoutout to anyone?
Shout out to Derek Nester, who was a very good teammate and friend, and who was always encouraging.

Plans next year: Loyola University Chicago, Double Major in Statistics and Theater, and a minor in Spanish.

#12 JACK BRAWER

(Heidi & Peter)

2 years on JV; JV captain
2 years on Varsity

What was your first SLUH Water Polo memory?
Freshman year at Chaminade I accidentally splashed coach P with a ball and said I was cut and I believed it.

What is your favorite SLUH Water Polo memory?
Absolutely Slaughtering Morton Sophomore year.

Is there anything noteworthy you've learned being part of the program?
I learned commitment to someone or something other than myself, and to be mentally tough.

In 40 years, when you're reliving your glory days, what is the moment that you'll recount first?
Hitting a backhand tip with under a minute left to put us up against Lafayette.

Want to give a shoutout to anyone?
Coach Baud has been helping me and guiding me since the 5th grade, helping me to be a better player.

Plans next year: Auburn University, Mechanical Engineering

#4 AIDEN JONES

(Debbie & Jeff)

2 years on JV
2 years on Varsity

What was your first SLUH Water Polo memory?
Having Coach Baud teach me how to throw a pass in the summer practice thing.

What is your favorite SLUH Water Polo memory?
Beating De Smet in the State final.

Is there anything noteworthy you've learned being part of the program?
I have learned that whatever Coach P says is what you should do.

In 40 years, when you're reliving your glory days, what is the moment that you'll recount first?
I will probably think about winning state.

Want to give a shoutout to anyone?
I want to shoutout my coaches and my parents.

Plans next year: Mizzou, Finance

#1 NICK ROBERT

(Erin & Tyler)

1 year on JV
3 years on Varsity

What was your first SLUH Water Polo memory?
I remember first going to MICDS for the joint varsity and JV practice and having freshman goalie "tryouts." I remember learning how to play goalie from Coach Rea and all of the other goalies in the program.

What is your favorite SLUH Water Polo memory?
My favorite SLUH water polo memory is being able to shutout in state for almost 3 quarters and win my first state title as a starter.

Is there anything noteworthy you've learned being part of the program?
I learned how to really work as a team and why dedication can really pay off if you truly put in effort.

In 40 years, when you're reliving your glory days, what is the moment that you'll recount first?
I think a moment that I'll be able to recount is our overtime win against York in my junior year after a second half comeback.

Want to give a shoutout to anyone?

I want to give a shoutout to my parents especially and also Jack Brawer and Derek Nester for getting me to join water polo freshman year.

Plans next year: Mizzou, Biochemistry

#7 WILL STEURER

(Maureen & John)

2 years on JV
2 years on Varsity

What was your first SLUH Water Polo memory?
My first SLUH water polo memory is at try outs freshman year when I realized there are levels to the game.

What is your favorite SLUH Water Polo memory?
My favorite memory is my JV Chicago tournament when me and Aiden scored 20 combined goals in the Morton game.

Is there anything noteworthy you've learned being part of the program?
You can always improve. Even if you are the best team in the state and beat teams with ease, you always have room to grow as a player and a person.

In 40 years, when you're reliving your glory days, what is the moment that you'll recount first?
The infamous 6 on 5 full court assist to me from Nick.

Want to give a shoutout to anyone?
My parents and coaches have been with me every step of the way. Thank you.

Plans next year: Mizzou, Business

#13 NICK ZIMMERMAN

(Sarah & Mike)

2 days on JV
4 years minus 2 days on Varsity; 2x Varsity captain

What was your first SLUH Water Polo memory?
My first memory is going to watch my brother play on JV when I was in 8th grade. The water polo seemed so impressive and Mr. Baud seemed scary.

What is your favorite SLUH Water Polo memory?
My favorite memory is hitting the game-winning shot with 30 seconds left in the state final my sophomore year.

Is there anything noteworthy you've learned being part of the program?
I have notably learned how to be a good leader and how to learn from my peers.

In 40 years, when you're recounting your glory days, what is a moment, that you'll recount first?
I will remember winning state my junior year in a blowout game against De Smet.

Want to give a shoutout to anyone?
I am very grateful for all of the coaches, and also my brother who I have spent my whole water polo career with up until this year.

Plans next year: Santa Clara University, Finance and Applied Mathematics