



**MATT CIEZCZAK, A.J. QUINN, JOEY DALESANDRO, MIKE PETERS
NVHS BOOSTER CLUB FEATURED ATHLETES OF THE WEEK
BOYS SWIM PROGRAM**

The NVHS Athletic Booster Club is proud to present FOUR featured athletes this week, to represent the Boys Swim Program. Coach Allen has chosen varsity seniors Matt, A.J., Joey and Mike Joe because of their leadership over the past 4 years and said he could not have picked one without the others.

Booster Club Reporter: *I hear from Mike how physically and mentally challenging swimming can be. What have kept you guys going through rough times?*

Matt: Coach Allen is great to swim for.

A.J.: Swimming has been such a large part of my life for so long; I don't really know what I would do without it. I don't know how I'd spend all my free time.

Joey: Staying positive about it.

Booster Club Reporter: *Speaking of tough moments, name one that has stuck with you and what have you learned from it.*

Mike: I missed the state qualifying time in one of my events in my sophomore year by only one tenth of a second. I learned about how important it is to take advantage of every single opportunity to improve.

Matt: Same for me, only that I just missed both my events. I was pretty down about it but I was also on 2 relays. I didn't want to let my team down so I went out and helped both relays make it to State. That is one thing this team does it helps pick up the other guys when they are down or struggling.

A.J.: The way that high school swimming works, in order to swim at the state meet, you have to make the qualifying standards at sectionals. This makes the meet the make-or-break part of the season for many athletes. Last year, I had a pretty terrible sectional meet, and it forced me to sit down and figure out what went wrong. I learned that, especially in a sport like swimming, there is a difference between just getting the work done and doing it right.

Joey: Yes, my tough learning moment was understanding that I have to put the work in every day.

Booster Club Reporter: *What skills will you take from swimming into your adult life?*

Mike: I believe that the most important thing swimming has brought to my life is the ability to work with others. Though there are many individual aspects to the sport, my experiences competing on relays and earning points for the team has shaped how I work with others.

Matt: I learned that you get what you put in and to not to give up when things are not going your way. This year I struggled a bit with an injury coming into the season. I was worried it was not going to be a great year because my earlier meets were not where I wanted my times to be. I knew if I continued to train hard it would come in the end.

Joey: I agree. I have learned the true meaning of hard work. To reach your goals, especially in swimming, it is all about the amount of effort that you put in all season, every day, every practice.

A.J.: One of the biggest suggestions I hear as a distance swimmer is that I should “swim my own race”, meaning that I should focus on my own race as opposed to how others around me are swimming. I think that this idea can be extrapolated into other areas of life. Ultimately, in life you have to focus on yourself -it doesn't matter what other people say or think -you have to do what you think you should do.

Booster Club Reporter: *You guys mentioned how brutal is your practice schedule. How do you keep your grades?*

Mike: Time management is key!

A.J.: Hard work is integral to success, but hard work alone cannot guarantee success. You have to work hard correctly. It's like the cliché, work smarter not harder, only in order to truly be successful you have to work smart *and* hard.

Matt: During the season we are so busy with practices twice a day and meets we have to get a jump on school work whenever we have time. As easy as it is to say well let me take a break (I deserve it) you need to buckle down and knock your studies out before that break.

Joey: When in practice, you have to focus on your sport wholeheartedly. You can't let your schoolwork interfere too much or else you'll end up having a bad practice. However, right when you get home and sit down to do your homework, that's your focus. Athletics don't matter at that point, it's all about just getting the work done. It's hard to balance the two, but I've found as long as you remain focused it is certainly doable.

Booster Club Reporter: *What do you know now that you wish you had known when you were just starting?*

Mike: Every day is a new day. If you have a bad performance, shake it off. Use it as a learning experience, and come back the next day tougher than before.

A.J.: Relax. Don't get too worked up about the little things-they don't really matter. Focus on the big picture, and what you have to do each day to realize your goals.

Booster Club Reporter: *Tell me a little bit about your role models.*

A.J.: My biggest swimming-related role model has to be Jason Lezak. He's the guy who essentially saved Michael Phelps' hopes of getting 8 gold medals in one Olympics. He dove into the pool in the 4x100 freestyle relay over a body-length behind the world record holder and beat him, even though Lezak was 32 and Bernard, the world record holder, was 25.

Matt: My parents. They have always told me there was nothing I couldn't do as long as I worked hard at it. In our house my folks have always stressed the effort over the outcome. Even putting everything you got into something doesn't always guarantee you will win.

Mike: My father is my role model, as he carries many of the qualities that I wish to have when I grow up. He's smart, witty, funny, athletic, etc. When I grow up, I can only hope to be like him.

Joey: My role model is all the rich people in the world, the 1%.

Booster Club Reporter: *What would you say to someone who is considering to join the swim team?*

Matt: YES DO IT! It has been a great experience. When you go to a school with 4000 students it is easy to get lost. Being a part of this team helps make the school feel smaller. Freshman year I knew a bunch of upper classmen who were on the team and their friends. Plus, when you work out 6 days a week with a group of guys, they really become your social group too.

A.J.: There is nothing quite like being part of a team, being part of something bigger than yourself...

Mike: As cliché as it sounds, cherish every moments of the journey. It ends much sooner than you expect. Take advantage of it and enjoy it while it's still there.