

NYAC Women - US Champions

From July 18th through July 20th, the NYAC women's water polo team competed in the US Open of Water Polo held in Commerce/La Mirada, CA. The 16 team national championships included some of the best competition the US has to offer. As three-time defending champions, NYAC coaches Chris Vidale and Pat St. Cin, as well as Chairman Chris Judge, had high expectations.

The NYAC A team, led by 2012 Olympic champions Betsey Armstrong and Jessica Steffens, gave little hope to opposing teams, especially after convincing wins against Diablo B, 11-0, and OC Riptide, 14-4, in the first two rounds. On the second day, the first game saw US team members KK Clark (UCLA) and Colleen O'Donnell (USC) lead an offensive charge that Santa Barbara Blue was unable to match. The second game pitted NYAC A against NYAC B. Stanford standouts Annika Dries and Lauren Silver proved to be too quick as NYAC A won, 14-3.

The final day's elimination game matched Santa Barbara Silver against the winged foot women. Tied at the start of the fourth quarter, the NYAC A ladies had to do something special to reach the final. With one minute to go, Courtney Morinello (UCLA) and Kelly Rulon (UCLA) capitalized on a perimeter steal and pass to put the ball away and secure the team's chance to play in the championship game.

In the final game, the NYAC A team dominated against Bruin Water Polo from start to finish, winning 13-6. National team member Priscilla Orozco won MVP as well as Molly Cahill (UCLA) and Melissa Seidemann garnered All-Tournament recognition.

The NYAC B team also played aggressively, upsetting Diablo 7-2 and Commerce 11-5. Led by NYAC captain Kendall Dacey and Stephanie Schnugg (Cal Berkley), the NYAC B team showed a solid offense. Displaying dominance defensively, goalie Cassie Wycoff (Indiana) and two-meter defender Aimee Stachowski (UCSB) kept the defense tight. With hard fought losses against Bruin, 16-11, and Stanford, 10-4, NYAC B team finished in a strong eighth place

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The winged foot men also sent two teams to compete in the 2014 US Open of Water Polo over the same July weekend in California. Competing against a full fleet of water polo powerhouses, coaches Scott Schulte and Carlos Omana, as well as Chairmen Chris Judge, had a very busy weekend.

Anchoring the NYAC A squad were 2012 Olympians Merrill Moses and Jesse Smith in goal and two-meter defense, respectively. The tournament began with a demolition of Carlsbad 28-3. The second game was against Sun Set San Diego. Three-time Olympian Wolf Wigo and London Olympic Games captain, Tony Azevedo, were relentless and by the end of the fourth quarter, the winged foot men had won by a 17-goal margin.

In the third game, 2012 Olympic silver medalist Maurizio Felugo, from Italy, and current Brazilian national team member Felipe Perrone delivered crushing offensive performances with back-handed goals to lead the team 17-4 against Miami Water Polo. A win in the fourth game versus Bruin Water Polo would take the NYAC team to the final. Attacker Matthew De Trane (Pepperdine) put the NYAC comfortably ahead by the end of the first half. Matthew Rosenthal hammered away big goals from the very first minute of the second half to solidify a 12-4 win.

In the championship game against the Olympic Club, every time John Mann touched the ball in the first two-minutes of every quarter, he scored. NYAC goalie, Moses, also blocked repeated Olympic Club goal attempts in the waning minutes of the fourth quarter. At the final buzzer, the scoreboard read NYAC 12 to Olympic Club's 6. Mann picked up MVP honors and Perrone and Moses received All-Tournament nods.

The NYAC B team also had a long weekend of tough competition. Long-time member Jamal Motlagh (Princeton) and Richard Hyden (Bucknell) paced the team offensively with whole-set prowess. Quick left-hander Dan Werner (Cal Berkeley) and NYAC driver Brian Bacharach (Cal. Berkeley) also put away some easy perimeter shots throughout the tournament. Even with last minute wins against Alumni Water Polo 10-9, the NYAC B team suffered losses against Santa Barbara, 10-4 and Bruin 9-7, to conclude the tournament in 8th place.

- By Kendall Dacey