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Featured Athlete/Coach Archives

Note: All Archive Files are in PDF Format.



Previous Featured Articles for 2008

- [Walnut Creek Aquanauts Top Junior Team and Trio in the Nation](#)
- [Crow Canyon Sharks Place Second at Far Westerns](#)
- [Young Terrapins Shine at Pre-Olympic Trial Swim Meet](#)
- [Crow Canyon Sharks Shaila Yoder](#)

AT Special Feature:

Chelsea Chenault, 13-Year-Old Phenom



We met **Chelsea** in 2003 when she was eight-years-old, swimming for Dewing Park under the direction of the infamous "**Chicken**" (aka **Brian Holm**) when we asked him if he'd like us to feature any of his swimmers. He chose his 8 & UN girls relay of which Chelsea was a part. And, we told her and Brian then that we would be keeping close tabs on her, as we saw swimming greatness in her.

Well, here we are, five years later, and it has been such a pleasure, joy and delight to watch her grow as a swimmer and a person. Chelsea has been very blessed to have had her younger development years with two phenomenal adult coaches who train stroke technique, not laps. The other coach besides "Chicken" was Cal Alumni (and Cal's women's swim team captain), Springbrook former head coach, **Erin Jesfeld**.

Chelsea went year 'round about a year ago and is now under the direction of the very talented, seasoned, proven national coach, **Paul Stafford**. And, at 13-years-old, she has two Olympic Trials qualifying times!

[Olympic Trials, Here we Come!](#)

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[Las Lomas Freshman Bryan Snyder](#)
[50 Freestyle - Swimming at it's Finest!](#)
[Suzanne Heim-Bowen Inducted into the IMSHOF](#)
[Tiburon Mile-Part 2](#)
[Crow Canyon Sharks USA Team on the Rise!](#)
[Tiburon Mile-Part 1](#)
[Gold in the Water-Book Review](#)
[Robert C. Placak The Man Behind "Tiburon Mile"](#)
[Brian Bacharach Returns to Coach De La Salle](#)
[Matt Martinez Matt Martinez ATOM Student Intern](#)
[14 & 680 14& Under Girls Take USC WP Championships](#)
[Aquanuts Shine](#)
[Four Teams Merge to Form 680 Drivers](#)
[14 & Under Girls JO Qual.Tournament](#)
[NCS Swimming Championships](#)
[Four WC AQUANUTS make 2008 Olympic Team](#)

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[NCS WP Championship-Monte Vista Girls-Photos](#)
[NCS WP Championship-De La Salle Boys-Photos](#)
[NCS WP Championship-Miramonte Boys-Photos](#)
[NCS WP Championship Games-Articles](#)
[Monte Vista Girls WP-Part 1](#)
[Monte Vista Girls WP-Part 2](#)
[ALGA-CUDA C, B, A+ Swim Meet](#)
[Cal Alumni Meet](#)
[Treasure Island to YMCA-Part 3](#)
[Treasure Island to YMCA-Part 2](#)
[Treasure Island to YMCA-Part 1](#)
[Kate Dwelley Picks Stanford](#)
[Tiburon Mile-Part 2](#)
[Tiburon Mile-Part 1](#)
[Aquabear Toni Diaz-Open Water Swimmer](#)
[Vallejo C, B, A+ Meet](#)
[Miramont WP Coach James Lathrop](#)
[County Championships Part 2](#)

But, Chelsea still finds time to play with the family's two energetic yellow Labs - 18 month-old brother/sister duo, Leo and Lady, and plays basketball for a local AAU team called the "ZING" and CYO basketball for Saint Mary's. And, in her spare time, Chelsea enjoys listening to music and hanging out with her friends.

As a bright seventh grade student, Chelsea's favorite class is "Teens Around The World" - a class about teenagers outside the United States. She had this to say about this insightful class "It gives me time to think about other people in other countries and the types of issues that many teenagers face outside the U.S. These issues are quite different than the issues teenagers deal with here in the California and makes me appreciate living in Walnut Creek."

Swimming fast most certainly runs in the family, as sister Christina (11), swims for Springbrook and is a force to be reckoned with. There's no stopping those Chenault girls! And, behind every great swimmer are "SUPER PARENTS" (there should be a special t-shirt and T.V. show... Can't you just see that big SP on the front?!), and Chelsea really appreciates all the extra time and miles her parents put in transporting her to and from practices and meets in the early mornings and afternoons.

And, again, we'll continue to keep a watchful eye on her, as she progresses not only in her swimming career, but in the shaping and molding of her character and the wonderful life journey that lies before her!

Recently, Chelsea and her parents took time out to answer some questions for us...

ATOM: When did you start swimming?

I started swimming when I was five-years-old because I wanted to spend more time with my friend (**Ruthie Fredrick**) who was on the Dewing Park Swim Team in Walnut Creek. I enjoyed being around other friends from school during the summer months when we did not have to be in the classroom. I started enjoying the competition in swimming when I was eight-years-old. When I was five, I just

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[Mitchell and Mom Inspire Heim-Bowen](#)
[2004 Olympic Gold Medalist Brendan Hansen](#)
[2006 NCS Championships](#)
[2006 BCS Championships](#)

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[Michael Phelps at May's Stanford Grand Prix](#)
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[Olympic Diver Kimiko Soldati-Part 2](#)
[Olympic Diver Kimiko Soldati-Part 1](#)
[DVC Men's Water Polo](#)

swam to swim/ [But,] when I turned eight, I decided to start to work on improving my technique/stroke. Then, I started to win races.

ATOM: What motivates you?

After achieving some success at the recreational level, I now want to reach what ever potential I can within the USS level because I enjoy the tougher competition. It makes me more determined to improve on my abilities and I also enjoy the friendships that come with traveling with other swimmers that are in my age group.

ATOM: What is you favorite stroke/event?

My favorite stroke is freestyle and my favorite event is the 200 meter freestyle event. I enjoy this event because it is a race that you can sprint at full speed and you do not have to pace yourself during the race since it is considered a short distance event. "I like to blow and go!"

ATOM: Do you have any funny and or inspirational stories to tell?

When I was at the Winter Invitational Short Course Swim Meet in Los Angles(Commerce CA), I swam the 500 yard freestyle preliminary and qualified for the championship finals in the evening. During the championship race, my speed suit's zipper broke on the first turn of a 20 lap race! I did the best I could and swam the remaining 19 laps with the entire zipper down! I ended the race in 4th place and only added 4 seconds to my time from the earlier swim. I was disappointed during the race that my swim suit zipper broke, but I realized that this could have happened to anyone. I no longer have that swim suit - it miraculously disappeared shortly after the race.

[Aquatic Times Hosts Bottomline Aquatic Clinic](#)
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[Natalie Coughlin in at NorCal in WC](#)
[Olympic Diver, Kimiko Hirai Soldati](#)
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[Aquanut Show II](#)
[Aquanut Show I](#)
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[WHO's Charlotte Brown](#)
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Previous Featured Articles for 2003

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[Katy Erhardt-Diablo Valley College](#)



Photo courtesy of Ron Miller

ATOM: What was it like qualifying for the Olympic Trial at such a young age and to be swimming with the elite swimmers such as at Santa Clara?

At first, it was surprising to qualify for Olympic Trials. Although it had been a goal since the beginning of the season, I could not believe that I would be swimming in Omaha, Nebraska this summer! Sometimes I still cannot believe that I am going on this trip to the Olympic Trial! To swim for the first time with some of the elite swimmers in the world can be "nerve wrecking". I cannot believe that I walk the pool decks with swimmers like **Michael Phelps** and **Natalie Coughlin**! When I see them, I try not to stare at them as they walk by.

ATOM: Is there another swimmer who has inspired you?

Natalie Coughlin has been my inspiration since my first visit to the Cal Berkeley Swim Camp three years ago. Natalie was the guest speaker and she talked about what motivated her and what training she does to prepare for her races. *ATOM: Who are your role models?*

My role model is **Laura Davis**, who is still swimming with the Terrapin Swim Team. She swam at Stanford University and continues to help me better improve my conditioning and stroke development. *ATOM: How have your coaches (past and present) contributed to your success (Chicken/Brian, Erinn, Paul)?* Chicken/Brian Holm (Former Dewing Park Swim Team Head Coach) taught me how to swim from the age of five. He told me that I would be a fast swimmer one day. He also recommended

[Blake Henderson](#)
[Sean Peneyra-Vista Diablo](#)
[Sam Craven-Vista Diablo](#)
[Jocelyn Chang](#)
[Ryan Wall](#)
[Dewing Park 8&un Girls](#)
[Jimmy Bailey-Diablo Valley College](#)
[Blake Henderson](#)
[Chelsea Allard](#)
[Suzanne Heim-Bowen](#)
[Dave Boatwright](#)
[Kate Dwelley](#)
[Lauren Rogers](#)

that I should swim USS Competition at some time in the future to develop to the best of my abilities. Erin Jesfjeld (Former Springbrook Swim Team) helped me with my flip turns and starts. Erin also helped me with mentally preparing for my races. Paul Stafford (Terrapin National Team Head Coach) helped me develop my middle distance swim pace. Paul also continues to improve my stroke technique. USS swimming has main events that are significantly longer in distance than recreational swimming, so Paul's teaching is extremely important in my development in the middle distance swimming events.

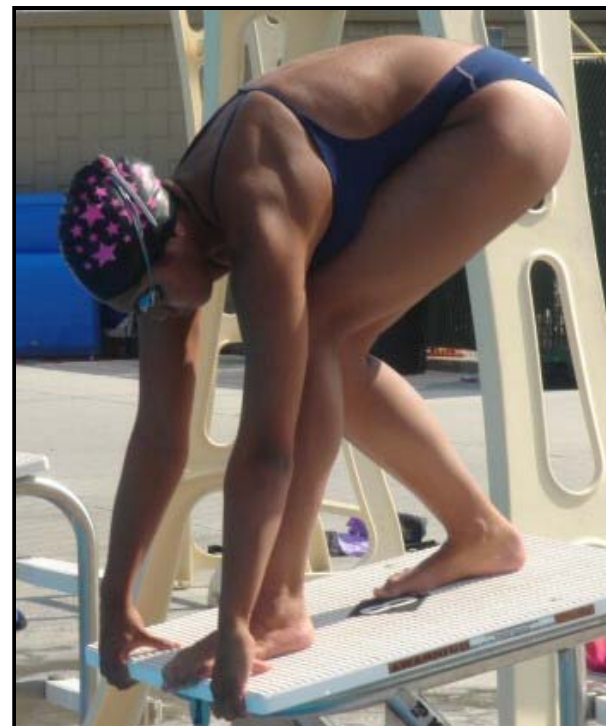


ATOM: Do you still stay in contact with Chicken and Erin?

I see Erin on the pool deck at Springbrook Swim Club when I visit my sister's teammates during the summer. Last year she had a baby and I look forward to seeing her this summer. Chicken was at the Santa Clara International Swim Meet and wished me well in my 200 meter freestyle event prior to the race.

ATOM: What has the transition been like going from rec to USS?
First it was hard because I did not know any of the swimmers. All of my friend were recreational swimmers. Then, after swimming in a few USS meets, I began to meet more people and started to become more comfortable with the distances of the swims at these meets. The practices were extremely tough on me the first few months. I was not sure that I was going to be good enough to continue with the longer workouts. But, my body started to become conditioned to the longer drills in the pool.

ATOM: What is your most memorable swimming experience?
In January 2007, the Pacific All-Star Meet was held in Vancouver, British Columbia. It was my most memorable meet. It was one of the first travel meets that I ever attended and it helped me see the different swimming competition that I would face in other parts of the country and in Canada.



ATOM: What are your goals for this summer?

My goals are to continue to improve my technique, starts, turns and other events outside freestyle. I also would like to improve my swim times at Olympic Trials this summer.

ATOM: How do you prepare for your swim?

I prepare by getting my swim suit on early and I will sit down listening to music on my ipod, usually laying down and resting and drinking water.

ATOM: Are there any team mates, swimmers on other teams, family members, coaches or friends who have helped or pushed you?

Laura Davis and **Nick Egan** of the Terrapin National Team push me in practice every day to give my best effort.

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