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## AT Special Feature:

### Sisters Share Their Love for the Water



These two sisters, **Danielle Johnson**, 15, and **Kimberly Johnson**, 12, compete both in swimming and water polo.

Competing in two water sports can be challenging and fun. These two sisters share a love of life and a love for the water. But, this duo seems to do it with ease and in stride. Danielle, as a freshman at Las Lomas last year, landed in NCS finals in the 200 and 500 free, while Kimberly, who plays 12 & UN and 14 & UN for 680 Water Polo, earned a National 14 & UN Gold Division MVP award. Both girls captured the All-American title at the Junior Olympics!

The oldest, Danielle Johnson, 15 (sophomore), swims competitively for Las Lomas High School and for the Walnut Heights Otters. On the polo side, Danielle plays for the 680 Drivers and Las Lomas High School. Kimberly Johnson, 12, enjoys a variety land activities, and, of course, swimming and water polo. During the summer, she swims for the Walnut Heights Otters, and, like her sister, also plays polo for the 680 Drivers. Both of the girls took some time with us to share with us their success in the water.

#### Interview with Danielle:



*Archived Features & Articles from 2003-2007*



*Danielle Johnson warming up for DFAL.*

**Was transitioning from rec to high school challenging? Did you enjoy the varied events?**

I thought that in ways it was challenging. The practices were much harder and longer and the sets were larger. I did enjoy the different events, but I also found that, the longer the event the harder it got. At times I found myself very frustrated. But, when I finished a really hard set I felt really good about myself.

**During practice, what motivated you?**

My motivation was, honestly, just finishing and making the interval. I never really thought how it would help me in the race or anything. I just wanted to finish it so I was done with it. After though, I would go home and realize how successful the day was and how well I was going to sleep that night.

**To you, how do rec and high school swimming differ (practice, team, etc.)?**

High School was harder, longer and was full of older kids, compared to all ages in rec. On high school swimming, I would swim against USS swimmers, which was very different. And then I would also swim against swimmers who, over the summer, are on rival rec teams and it was odd having them on my team. Rec swimming is more family-oriented and gives more activities to do as a team. Even though we had pasta feeds and sleep-overs with high school, it felt different than rec.

**Coming into your first year as a 15-18, did high school swim training help you and how did you improve so much from last year to this year?**

I think high school swimming definitely helped me. High School was harder, which (for the first few weeks) made rec swimming a lot easier. But, as rec progressed it seemed to get harder, which made me feel more like I was in high school again. High school made me realize that I have to work really hard to place in Conference championships, NCS or another big meet. So, my determination in high school rubbed off and made me a better swimmer in rec.

**What other things do you participate/compete in?**

I also participate in water polo. Our team, 680 Drivers, placed

12th in the Junior Olympics this year. Our high school team, Las Lomas, is expected to have a good year, as well. I definitely have to say I am a water girl because, besides my water sports, I like going to lakes and hanging out or to the beach. I never seem to get enough water in my life. I also just like to hang out with my friends and be a goof ball.

**Summarize your best times, in one or two strokes, over the past four years.**

One of my biggest accomplishments I remember was when I was 12. It was the first time I had ever gotten County. Then, I had a 1:15 in the 100 yard I.M. This past conference, and 3 years later, I am now at a 1:04--more than a 10 second drop!

**Interview with Kimberly**



*Kimberly Johnson holds up her Junior Olympics MVP award.*

**How long have you been swimming and playing water polo?**

I started playing water polo in the summer of 2008. I have been swimming on a rec swim team since I was four, so eight years.

**Do you find it challenging to competing in two different water sports, or do you find that one helps the other?**

Many people say that doing water polo ruins your stroke for swimming, but I think that it's only making me stronger and in shape year around.

**During your off time, what hobbies do you enjoy?**

When I'm not in the water, I play basketball, volleyball and softball. I also love hanging out with my friends. And when I get a good book, I read non-stop.

**What do you enjoy best about polo/swimming?**

What I love about playing polo and swimming is that, they are two sports that get you into great shape. Also, they are super fun because, before a race or between games it's a blast to hang around the pool and talk to friends.

**How did it feel to win MVP in the 14U girls Gold Division for the 2009 Junior Olympics?**

It was an amazing feeling to win MVP. I definitely didn't see it coming, so it was really cool. I was the youngest person on my team, so the award made me feel very accomplished and extremely happy because I knew I was good at a sport that I loved. There were 18 teams in the division and 15 girls on my JO team. To find out later that I had also been named All-American made it all even better!

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