



The Spin Lob

The Boys Water Polo Blog for Cincinnati, Ohio

If you would like a topic discussed on the Spin Lob, just let know.

Cincinnati: Twitter @cinciwaterpolo Email: Cinciwaterpolo@gmail.com

The New Year Spin Lob 1/1

Welcome to 2018! Let's take a moment to look back at the year that was 2017. Here are some major recaps of the year including our major award winners from across the state. We also have two amazing interview features; one with Coach Tameris of Princeton High School and one on the head of the Ohio Water Polo Refereeing Association Chad Packer. It has been a packed year of polo in Ohio including a return trip to the Junior Olympics for Moose Water Polo out of Cincinnati, the creation of a tournament in the world Largest Pool, SunLite Shoot-Out, as well as player across the city receiving top awards.

2017 Year in Review

Great Lakes Zone ODP: We have continued to see player head to the Olympic Development program through USAWP and 2017 was no different. To try and gather more local interest, the Midwest zone had been split a few years back into the Midwest (Illinois, Missouri being its big draws) and the Great Lakes (Michigan, Ohio and Western Pennsylvania being its big draws). More details to come in our January edition along with an interview with Coach Paul Splitt and Coach Jessen Link.



USA Water Polo
Olympic Development Program



Great Lakes Zone League: In its 2nd year, the Great Lakes Zone League run by Paul Splitt of Moose Water Polo saw teams from Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania compete for three weekends to win the championship in May. Ohio teams included Cincinnati's Moose Water Polo Club and Marlins Water Polo, Columbus Water Polo, Napoleon's Black Swamp and Toledo's Glass City.

18 and Under Boys: Michigan's Wolverine took home the Championship over Columbus Water Polo

14 and Under: Michigan's Wolverine won the championship over Michigan's Spartan Water Polo



Cincinnati Shoot-Out Jose Cerda Memorial Tournament: This summer saw the 7th annual tournament packed with eight 16 and under teams and ten 18 and under teams which include Ohio teams of Marlins Water Polo, Columbus Water Polo and Moose Water polo. 5 Collegiate teams also made an appearance at the College meet and greet.

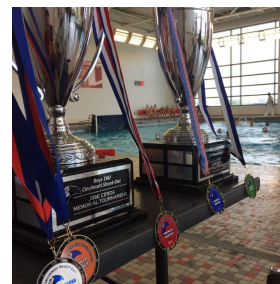


Michigan's Spartan Water Polo club wins its 2nd 16s championship 9-7 over Columbus water polo. It was an all St. Louis final for the 18s

as Jungle Cats defeats Mad Dog 13-11 Next year's tournament is slated for July 6-8th
Want to watch Saturdays Local teams and 16s Championships:

<http://icrctv.com/video/2017-jose-cerda-water-polo-tournament-saturday>

Check out the Championship Sunday live stream. Teams start with Mad Dog (St. Louis) vs Chicago Park District. <http://icrctv.com/video/2017-jose-cerda-water-polo-tournament-sunday>



Junior Olympics with Cincinnati Moose Water Polo Club: Moose once again qualified in Michigan under the leadership of Coach Perera. Coach Rasmussen took the team out to Southern California to compete. Players from Sycamore, Princeton and St. Xavier went to take on teams from across the country. At the same time that Moose was out, Mason Goalie Brian Karl was making his debut with Rockford, a Michigan team that competed in California as well. For more details on the team's trip to California, check out the following article.

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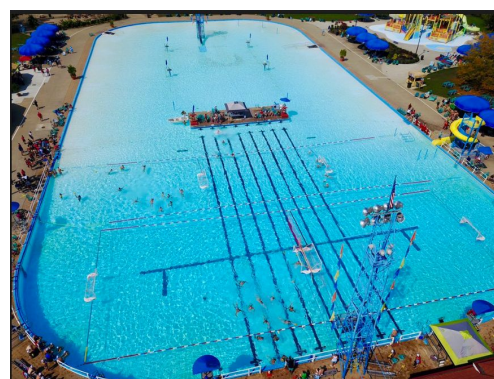


The SunLite Shoot-Out: In the largest circulating pool in the world, St. Xavier hosted its first SunLite Shoot Out at The Sunlite pool of Coney Island. Last year they hosted the first fall outdoor tournament in Cincinnati at Powel Crowsley JR YMCA, but this year they stepped up their game creating a three course tournament on September 16 and 17th for Junior Varsity and Varsity teams. 27 teams in total with over 350 athletes and coaches competed as Naperville, IL took home the championship in both the JV and Varsity Levels. What other tournament features coaches having to take a boat to coach a game on an island? St. Xavier and the tournament was featured on <http://ohiowaterpolo.com/sunlite-shootout/> as well as a mention on USAWP's Counter Attack:

https://youtu.be/qEmByo_HNik?t=6m16s

Cincinnati Equirer photos:

<https://www.cincinnati.com/picture-gallery/sports/high-school/high-school-sports/2017/09/21/gallery-st-xaviers-sunlite-shootout-water-polo-tournament/105841494/>



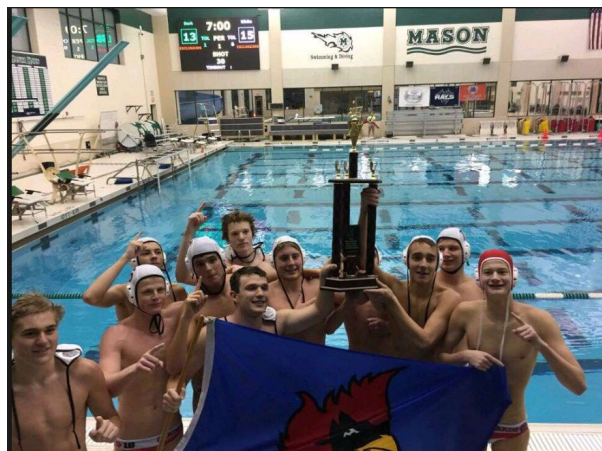
2017 State Tournament Recap: Mason, Ohio

By **BRAD EMERINE**
THISWEEKSPORTS.COM

The Thomas Worthington High School boys water polo team rallied twice from a five-goal deficit and edged St. Charles 15-13 in overtime in the state championship match Oct. 28 at Mason.

The top seed, Thomas went 3-0 in the 12-team tournament, which began Oct. 27, and finished the season 32-9, with just four losses to teams from Ohio.

"It was the most incredible sporting event I've witnessed in my lifetime," Thomas coach Rick Yurich said. "It's a testament to the boys and their will and perseverance. They just kept battling back. I'm ready to pass out with all this excitement. It's going to be tough to drive home. I'm emotionally drained."



Senior Taylor Weinsz broke a 13-all tie in the second of two three-minute overtime periods and Thomas added an insurance goal with 5 seconds remaining after playing keep-away from St. Charles, which finished 19-8.

"Our seniors were outstanding and we had four of them make first-team all-state — Owen Roesch, Jack King, Taylor Weinsz and Brendon Zurovchak," Yurich said. "Owen was outstanding in goal, Taylor and Brendon did most of our scoring. But for me, if they named a tournament MVP, it would be Jack King. But the entire team did great and played well."

The other tournament games: In the 3rd place game St. Xavier topped Princeton 13-7. The battle for 5th place saw Upper Arlington edge out St. Francis 9-8. Mason beat out Milford 9-5 for 7th place and Sycamore finished its tournament in 9th place beating out Worthington Kilbourne 12-5. Rounding out the 11th place, Napoleon topped Sylvania 11-8. With graduation and an increasing number of players playing in the club seasons, the 2018 championship is up for grabs.

Cincinnati Players Awards State, National and Collegiate Awards

Congratulations to

Max Diehl (Sycamore 2019)- Academic All American from USAWP

Caleb Bloodworth (Mason 2018)- Academic All American from USAWP

Alex Puthoff (St. Xavier 2016) earned 1st team all Conference with Ohio State

Lucas McCutcheon (Sycamore 2016) earned 2nd Team all Conference with Clemson in the SEC

2017 State All-Tournament Team

(Ranked in order by coaches voting points)

Boys

Field Players

<u>Name</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Points</u>
Jack King	12	Thomas Worthington	42
Michael Gutman	12	St. Charles	35
Taylor Weinsz	12	Thomas Worthington	35
Jonathan Sugar	11	St. Charles	21
Brendon Zurovchak	12	Thomas Worthington	18
Gavin Voss	12	Upper Arlington	16

Goalie

Owen Roesch	12	Thomas Worthington	49
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2017 ALL OHIO 1ST TEAM**BOYS**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
Caleb Bloodworth	12	Mason	Field
Nick Czepukaitis	12	St. Xavier	Field
Michael Gutman	12	St. Charles	Field
Jack King	12	Thomas Worthington	Field
Patrick Pema	12	St. Charles	Field
Gavin Voss	12	Upper Arlington	Field
Alex Wade	12	St. Xavier	Field
Taylor Weinsz	12	Thomas Worthington	Field
Brendon Zurovchak	12	Thomas Worthington	Field
Owen Roesch	12	Thomas Worthington	Goalie

2017 ALL OHIO 2ND TEAM**BOYS**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
Alec Caswell	11	Upper Arlington	Field
Carter Dwyer	12	St. Xavier	Field
Sam Fallon	12	St. Xavier	Field
Justin McDaniel	12	Princeton	Field
Connor McGowan	12	Sycamore	Field
Aaron Plvan	12	Princeton	Field
Jacob Sobczak	12	St. Francis	Field
Jon Sugar	11	St. Charles	Field
Christopher Tarvardian	12	St. Xavier	Field
Charley Heyd	12	St. Xavier	Goalie

Princeton High School Boys Head Coach Gary Tameris

Most people know Coach Tameris through his head coaching role at Princeton High school, or from Girls at Sycamore, or from Milford High School Boys and Girls before that, oh and Sycamore again before that. But a lot of people do not know that he was also the man behind the seen for countless years as the head of the Coaches association. This year, Coach Tameris stepped down as head of the Coach Association which will give him more time to help continue the upward power of Princeton High school who finished 4th in the State this year.

(Picture of Coach Tameris and Coach Sofia coaching Sycamore Girls)

Cinci Water Polo: Coach Tameris, what have been the highlights from your time at Sycamore, Milford and Princeton?

- My Coaching career at these three schools (Milford, Sycamore & Princeton) has been amazing. All the parents & athletes that I've been associated with is what keeps me going. From the coaches throughout the state who I've been blessed to compete against, to the different officials that I've seen come & go throughout my years of coaching Water Polo have made it a fantastic job. All the success goes to the players that I've had a honor of coaching. Without them, this would not have been possible. To this date, I stay in touch with so many of them and it never gets old talking about memories with any of them. It's hard to believe to this date, between girls & boys at the three different schools, that I've coached 1,248 games of Water Polo. Which means I've been around this game a long time.

Cinci Water Polo: What has been your best moments as a coach?

- This has to go back to the 2006 Boys Water Polo team when I was at Milford. That 2006 State Championship was such an incredible event to happen in my coaching career. That team was developed back when they were 7-8 years old. For the most part they grew up together and were all involved in my swimming program. These individuals believed in the system I had in place and trained so hard to become an elite group of swimmers who took the game of Water Polo to another level with their ability to swim fast & understand how Water Polo was suppose to be played. The 2006 group went 34-4-3 that season. When they won the state title that year it put Milford on the map as one of the premier schools in the state. My biggest accomplishment was that all of those players that played for me were all home grown and not developed by anyone else. To take a program from scratch and to win 2 state titles with it just stands out so much on the memory chart. To see so many of my players go on to the next level and see how successful they have become whether it's D1, D2 or even club is also at the top of the list.

Cinci Water Polo: What was it like seeing your kids play water polo and coach against them

- Having & seeing my own kids play against me, man that was tough. That was one of the finest lines I had to walk as a coach and as a father. I had three of my four kids (Jaclyn - '03 graduate, Heath - '05 and Jenna Lee - '09) in that situation of playing Water Polo & Swimming at Sycamore High School, while I was coaching Milford. Unfortunate the wins against them, didn't usually come my way. All three of them were such amazing players that I just couldn't stop them. I would always use their numbers when coaching & playing against them, instead of calling them by their name.

During the games I tried to set up schemes to stop them, but that hardly ever work. I remember in a South Regional game for the Milford girls, with a chance to advance to the State Championships when Jenna Lee was playing for Sycamore, she outscored us by herself and I was trying to put a triangle around her to keep her from getting the ball, but to no avail. She made every shot that game from every area of the pool. But in the end it made us (Milford) better for playing that type of talent.

Cinci Water Polo: Your daughter is being inducted into the Sycamore Water Polo Hall of Fame. What are your thoughts on this honor?

- My oldest daughter Jaclyn is being inducted into the Sycamore Athletic Hall of Fame on January 27, 2018 for her Water Polo & Swimming career. This is well deserved. Her career at Sycamore was phenomenal as well as playing for Indiana University for four years. Getting to travel to Bloomington, Indiana all those years or all around the country was such a thrill watching her develop and be a starter and captain for a premier D1 program like Indiana University. Her resume as a High School & Collegiate Water Polo player speaks for itself. This award is so inspiring as to what kind of individual talent that she developed not only in Water Polo but as a student. My son Heath was inducted into the Sycamore HOF in 2014, like his older sister Jaclyn, for his contributions to Sycamore Water Polo & Swimming. Which in turn, makes me gleam with pride.

Cinci Water Polo: Where do you see the future of water polo going in Ohio?

- Future of Water Polo? Cincinnati has always been a hot bed for Water Polo and I don't see this changing anytime soon. The lack of facilities in the state as well as Cincinnati is what will keep this sport from reaching greater heights. If you look at what teams in Cincinnati that play this sport, the majority have their own facility located at their own school. I brought Water Polo to Milford when I opened that facility in 1990 and used it as a tool to make the Swimming program better. Water Polo is a swimming game and it takes speed to be successful. As I keep telling my players today, which is NO big secret and it doesn't matter what sport you are playing, "Speed Kills". It's hard making these players that are involved in this game now understand this concept. You have to develop your speed in the water to your highest potential, then your Water Polo skills along with the team will excel as well. It's hard putting these thought processes in play, but when it happens great things will come your way.

Cinci Water Polo: How have you seen what polo change during your career?

- Change is always good. This sport has received greater notoriety cause of the outstanding coaches we have in this area. Those coaches of the past and those that are on board now care about this sport so much. Their willingness to excel has made everything succeed that much faster. Some of the rules that govern the game now have made it more attractive to the spectators. Once you have watched this game and see how fast paced and exhilarating the game is you can't help but fall in love with it.

Ohio Water Polo Referee Association Head and Midwest Zone Co-Head Referee Chad Packer



We sat down (via email) Princeton Graduate, former Sycamore and Princeton Head coach and now Head of the Ohio Water Polo Referee Association and Midwest Zone Head Referee Chad Packer to get his take on his career in water polo. There is a wealth of Polo knowledge that has built in his 30 years of polo. Take a look

Cinci waterpolo: Mr. Packer, what got you started in water polo?

- In the summer between my 8th grade and 9th grade years, I began to become friends with some of the high school guys who were on my community swim team. They told me about water polo and asked if I wanted to come out and play. We spent some of the summer throwing the ball around the deep end at Springdale Community Center. When the high school year began, I just followed the crowd to the pool and that was that.

Cinci waterpolo: What were your highlights from coaching Sycamore, Princeton?

- Believe it or not, I can't remember but a few games here and there. Of course, I remember us winning some of them and losing some of them, but that's not what I remember most. The highlights were the times spent outside the pool with the kids doing dryland stuff (we played ultimate frisbee just about everyday when I was at Sycamore) and the times between games at tournaments. It was nice to come back to Princeton and coach for the last 11 years of my career. I'll never be able to thank Scott Kaufman, Princeton's AD, enough for his support and for the opportunity to do that.

Cinci waterpolo: What has been your best water polo moment?

- Best moment for water polo has collectively been seeing the same folks year in and year out in Ohio for the last thirty years. It's hard to believe it's been that long since my freshman year of HS, but some of the faces still haven't changed.
- I have a very specific memory from a semi-final game in which we drew a Penalty Throw and then made it to play for a state title. That sounds kind of like very specific event, but what makes it memorable is that my dad was video taping the game and his voice carried over the crowd into the camera. I have exactly three audio recordings of my dad's voice and that's one of them. As a coach, it would be watching the kids one big games each season; too many to choose from to pick one. As a referee, I'd have to say solo refereeing the last game at Princeton's old pool between Milford and Princeton.

Cinci waterpolo: What was the transition like from being a coach to a referee?

- It was significantly more difficult than I thought it would be. I refereed three years in college before starting coaching at Sycamore and refereed soccer about 15 years as a kid and into my 20's. I knew the rules and refereed just about every practice I coached. I remember the first tournament I did: it was a Sycamore JV Boys tournament, and I remember by teeth buzzing I was so nervous. When you're the one on the sidelines and are the one who has to referee to the advantage of the offense (both offenses) and your whistle is the one which stops/starts play, it becomes a whole different experience than refereeing the games from the bench as a coach. I'm thankful I have that perspective because it helps me with coaches, players, and fans. Because I coached and watch a ton of games in the off-season, I try and watch the games 3-5 seconds "ahead of time." That way when a shot is coming, I can be down on the goal line, if an exclusion or penalty is coming, I can be in position to whistle it, and if a contra is likely to be whistled, I can begin transitioning from the perimeter referee to the attack referee.
- There's a saying with motorcycle riders: "If I had to explain to you why I don't wear a helmet, you wouldn't understand." Well, if I had to explain to you the stress of what it's like to referee, you wouldn't understand. Thankfully, I'm getting the opportunity to referee a lot of games each year, so it's getting easier to see the game from that perspective.

Cinci waterpolo: What is your biggest challenge as a referee?

- The opportunity to find bigger games which push me out of my comfort zone. Going to JO's has been helpful with that. The coaches and players out there are faster and more knowledgeable about the game so that 3-5 seconds I was just referencing is now down to 1-2, which changes the game. The other part continues to be learning the nuances which separate excellent referees from above average referees. Just when I think I'm getting good, you watch someone else better and he or she sees the game and all the pairs better than I do. When I referee with someone I've never refereed with, it is a challenge to get on the same page as quickly as possible. If you don't get there quickly, the game can spin out of control quickly.

Cinci waterpolo: What advice can you give Cincinnati players?

- If I could give "former player" advice, it would be this: play as many games as possible because the window to play is pretty short. When I was in HS, there were no club teams and no games outside the season (which ran from the first day of school to mid-October). I probably played between 18-20 games a year. Now kids get the opportunity to play over 70 games a year if they play HS and club season. Too often, we don't see Cincinnati kids travelling to play every opportunity they can. It's not just Cincinnati, it's Ohio as well.
- If I were to give "referee" advice to players it would be to roll with the calls as quickly as possible. That's the biggest difference I see between average players and elite players. Elite players generally understand things like the following:
 - the crash defense will likely result in the ball playing out without a whistle
 - being in poor position needs to be hands up or you put yourself in a position for the referee to whistle an exclusion or penalty
 - you are going to get kicked off of and held in the transition
 - keep playing when being fouled at the center as referees try to let you play it out for the opportunity for a penalty instead of an exclusion

Cinci waterpolo: What advice can you give future referees and why should people become one?

- You have to referee. You have to get yelled out. You have to know the rules. You have to have thick skin. You have to bury a bad call and be ready for the next one. You have to have confidence in yourself and project that out. You have to control the game. The last one involves maintaining everyone's bearing in the game: Coaches coach, players play, fans cheer, and referees ref. It is up to the referee to maintain the presentation of those roles. Coaches are going to push referees to see what they can get. Players and going to foul as hard as they can if the referees will let them. Fans are going to have opinion about just about everything.

Cinci waterpolo: How does one become a referee?

- If you want to referee, you can join USAWP or OWPRA and get involved in training opportunities. As we continue to grow the knowledge and professionalism of Ohio referees, we are seeing referees getting more opportunities to improve themselves and their games. It's up to us to root for each other and develop as a team.



We hope that 2017 was an exciting year of water polo for you. For more Cincinnati and Ohio water polo check back soon. If you would like to see a topic discussed in the Spin Lob, send us an email. cinciwaterpolo@gmail.com Happy New Year.

The Spin Lob 10/3

Entering into the weekend of the last major Ohio tournament before the Ohio State Championship, the bracket scene is really taking, but some shake ups this weekend could really see some teams on the move.

What to Watch this weekend

The Milford / St. Francis game could see these two teams move up or down. Milford is coming off a stinging triple overtime loss on senior night to Sycamore and will be coming fired up on their home tournament. A Milford win will give Upper Arlington an edge over St. Francis in the otherwise tied standings, and could put St. Francis within reach of Mason and put Milford within reach of Sycamore in the standings.

Sycamore is in for a challenging weekend but could play spoiler to a lot of people's movement upwards. The Sycamore / Princeton match will only be the 2nd match up of the season, but this is a pivotal game for both teams. To stay top 3, Princeton needs to win to secure the series. If Sycamore wins this game, it ties the series and Princeton would have to find a way to win on the road on Sycamore's Senior night. The Sycamore / UA match up will be the rubber match between the two teams. UA has been on a hot streak since mid season and is knocking on the door of the top 4. Sycamore also plays St. Francis. A win by Sycamore here could knock St. Francis down below UA as well. It is currently also on the doorstep of the top 4.

Mason will face off against Princeton in the tail end of the tournament. This is going to be a tough game for both teams as exhaustion sets in, but a win by Mason to avenge their senior night loss this week could allow St. Xavier to jump up into that 3rd place spot going into the final week of the season if they are able to secure wins this weekend.

The top 4

It is no shock to anyone that St. Charles, St. Xavier and Thomas are in the top 4 in state at this point in the season. From the beginning of the season, these teams have dominated the water with their few in state losses coming to each other. The shock of the top is Princeton who has been playing extremely solid water polo throughout the season. They have recorded over their in town rivals at Mason, Milford and Sycamore as well as holding back the swimming power of St. Francis. The intense match ups between Thomas and St. Charles were seen again this past weekend as the teams competed at Upper Arlington, with the winning goals coming down to the last few moments of the game. Any match up between these two teams in the state tournament is going to be exciting to watch. Thomas holds a 2 game lead over St. Charles at this late point in the season.

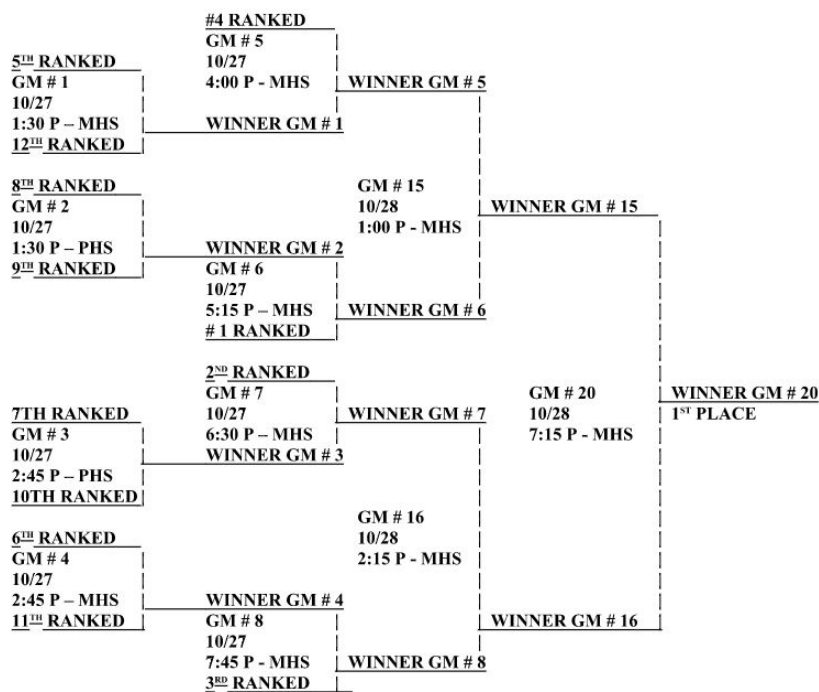
Breaking into the top 4

Upper Arlington and St. Francis are currently tied for 5th but are on the verge of breaking into the top 4. They are trailing St. X. Strong showings this weekend could see them jump up into that top 4 spot. Upper Arlington held a lead at their Invitational this past weekend over St. Charles going into the 4th quarter, but the Cardinals powered back to get a 1 goal win. St. Francis recorded only 3 losses the entire month of September to the #2 and #3 ranked teams in Ohio and the tournament champion Naperville at Sunlite. Mason did come up with a big tie against them in the Sunlite Shoot-out

Why does top 4 matter.

First round bye- Not every coach likes a first round bye. Some like having a game to compete in early to get their team going, rather than jumping into a competitive game cold. But that first round bye does mean that any of those teams that have been battling and getting hot at the end of the season, will have to play a full game before facing one of these four teams.

If there is a story you want to see talked about, send us a message to cinciwaterpolo@gmail.com



Central vs South- The Mason Tournament

Nothing is better than all deep water polo. It shows the true level of goalies, shooters and stamina of players. With the Mason tournament wrapped up, we saw two major teams emerge this weekend to showcase their power. From the upcoming rankings, you wouldn't you wouldn't imagine that St. Xavier is the power house, but this weekend demonstrated continued to demonstrate they are under ranked. Their rank is misleading as they use their large program to field multiple varsity teams during tournaments. This weekend Thomas Worthington and Upper Arlington, 2 teams in the top four on the early standings squared off against St. Xavier. It wasn't a shock to anyone watching these games, that X was going to be strong. Having only 7 fields players, the team was able to run and gun the ball using their extensive swimming background to rack up a combined 30 points against their strong opponents.

St. Charles also came to the tournament play. Netting over 60 goals against their 3 opponents puts them as the team to beat right now in Ohio. They are perfect against teams in Ohio with only 2 losses overall. The matchup to look for this season will be the St. Charles / St. Xavier Match. That game itself could come close to 60 goals with the way those two offenses put up points.

Other close matchups to watch this season will be Upper Arlington and Sycamore- Those two teams battled it out to a one goal difference with neither team able to hold a 1 goal lead for more than a minute. Do not count Thomas Worthington out either as their only Ohio loss comes to St. Xavier. They were able to win decisive victories over their two opponents at the Mason tournament and support a 9-2 record.

How the Rankings Work

Speaking of Rankings, here is how they work. In an effort to eliminate biased voting that plagued the rankings in the past, the coaches looked for a more non-biased way to get rankings for the state tournament. Each team earns its points over the culmination of the season. A team gets a 2 points for a series win which means who ever gets the most wins head to head against an opponent over the course of the season. If they end up even by the end of the season, each team will get 1 point. The points are then divided by the number of series played to make sure a team is not penalized for the amount of series they play.

Drawbacks- teams that split tournaments or cannot play other opponents can skew the rankings. Evidence last year was a St. Xavier team ranked low last year who was a clear top 2 program in the state. Steps were taken at the end of the year to remedy the situation such as counting only 1 varsity programs wins and losses in a tournament / weekend of play. This helped eliminate losses and wins against Varsity B programs.

New Coaches

A couple of new faces around the pool deck for boys program. Up in St. Francis, Karl Strauss has joined the Knights. He was formerly the St. Ursula coach. Down south in Cincinnati, Mason found a new consortium of coaches with Caity Desfosses at the helm being assisted by Maddie Franzoni and Johann Perera. Good luck to these coaches with their new programs.

The Spin Lob 8/20

Rumor Mill

There has been word floating around Ohio of Cleveland re-emerging into the water polo scene. Rumors have trickled through the Twitterverse that St. Ignatius in Cleveland will be fielding a team this year. St. Ignatius is a power swimming school who has routinely placed high in the state Championships in swimming. This could mean another fast program to rival to speed teams already in Ohio.

Rumor Confirmed- St. X will be hosting their tournament at the world's largest circulating pool- Coney Island. Last year, St. X became the third team to utilize an outdoor pool in the fall for their varsity tournament. This year they are moving it to the massive space of Coney Island. Preliminary diagrams show a three pool set up around the perimeter of the pool that will host 16 Varsity teams and 12 JV making it the largest single weekend tournament in Ohio. Ohio cup has more competitors over two weekends with the boys and girls tournament.

Invasion of Michigan

This weekend, a large portion of teams in Ohio were in Michigan or on the border with teams competing in the The Pioneer/Skyline Early Bird in Ann Arbor or the St. Francis in tournament in Toledo. 5 Teams travelled to the Early Bird tournament from Ohio - Thomas Worthington (Columbus), Worthington Kilbourne (Columbus), Sycamore (Cincinnati), St. Charles (Columbus) and Upper Arlington (Columbus)- with Mason (Cincinnati), Sylvania (Toledo), and St. Xavier (Cincinnati) competing with St. Francis (Toledo) at St. Francis.

Many of these teams saw their first action last weekend at the Courtney Fisher Memorial Tournament in Napoleon. With these tournaments so early in August, this gives the teams a chance test the water with their teams.

Outcome:

Thomas Worthington flexed its strength up north going 3-1 with its only loss coming in sudden death overtime to Ann Arbor Huron. The same can be said for St. Charles who also went 3-1, with its only loss coming in the first round in a game that saw 31 combined goals against Ann Arbor Huron. Upper Arlington drew the unfortunate draw of the eventual tournament champion and last years Michigan state champion Rockford first round and Sycamore saw them the next round. UA finished the tournament 2-2 after losing to St. Charles in their final game. After a first round win against Worthington Kilbourne, Sycamore struggled against the Michigan teams going 1-3 and Kilbourne finished 0-4.

The Break Down

South West Ohio

St. X looks to be the power in the south again and it has increased its numbers to 60 players with some strong returning players and its powerhouse of swimmers as well as having one of the best goalies in state. Just missing out going 4-0 in Michigan in its first weekend with an overtime loss in Rockford Michigan, Coach Roberts is able to get his players playing in multiple tournaments giving them a lot of game experience which will only benefit them as the team progresses through the season. Across town Coach Hellwig enters his 10th season as head of Sycamore Water Polo, making him one of the longest continuous coaches in the school's history, 2nd only behind Coach Larry Lyons. After graduating 13 seniors last season though, he has a relatively unknown varsity crew that will need time to develop. Oakwood, in Dayton, graduated their top players out and are in a rebuilding year. Mason secured a coach late in the summer and is settling in, hosting its home tournament this weekend. Across town, Milford got its first win against a norther opponent in Napoleon, but then faced off against strength of Central and northern Ohio but will use those games to build off of.

Central Ohio

The two power house teams of Central Ohio look early on to be St. Charles and Thomas Worthington. Even with a large graduation last season, it is not a shock that St. Charles looks is in that top group. Coach Gear is consistently able to mold new and young talent into a well oiled goal scoring machine. What should also not be shocking is the strength of Thomas Worthington. Last years 3rd place winner over Oakwood, Thomas has already tallied 7 wins this season in only two tournaments. Their schedule has contained mostly Michigan teams so far, but they have amassed 4 wins over those teams with a combined total of 54 goals in 5 games. They also own a decisive victory over Mason who is also fielding one of the top goalies in Ohio. Don't count out Upper Arlington either as they have also secured 6 wins in their last 8 games.

Northern Ohio

Without knowing what or if St. Ignatius is going to field this season, St. Francis will look to be in control in the North. Behind their new coach Karl Strauss, St. Francis was able to 4-0 at its home invite defeating Mason in the finals. St. Francis can also be proud as its Alumn Logan Schofield, now at Bucknell, was named to the U.S. Roster for the FINA Junior World Championship. A recent win against Ann Arbor Pioneer puts their win streak at 5 in a row and 7 of the last 9.

Coming Soon

September is going to be a big month for water polo in Ohio as 2 major mid season tournaments will be going back to back, both having all or half of their games being played outdoors. The Ohio Cup in Columbus hosted by Thomas Worthington has often been a gauge to see where teams are halfway through the season. This year teams will have back to back weekends of very strong competition as the weekend after that is the Sunlite Shootout at Coney island hosted by St. Xavier. Both tournaments should really set the bar and leader board for the rest of the season.