



Happy New Year! They say hindsight is 2020....never has this phrase been more relevant or essential. 2020 brought unprecedented challenges to us all. Looking back, the world of athletics came to a halt in March, our student-athletes transitioned into remote learning in April, and we all adjusted and adapted to “new norms” because of the pandemic. We figured out how to live in this new world in 2020 and now we are striving to THRIVE in 2021. I am excited to get into the routine of monthly newsletters, so apologies if this one is lengthy, but we all know brevity is not my strength. Every month I will be giving you updates on our program, department, and university as well as monthly “Student-Athlete Spotlights” and next month I will add in “Alumni Anecdotes”.

How did the fall go for our program?

We made big splashes in the classroom!

- We had 23 women on the Dean’s List, 12 on the President’s List, 8 women with a perfect 4.0! Our women’s Fall GPA was a 3.672 which brought our women’s cumulative GPA to a 3.710.
- We had 31 Men on the Dean’s List, 10 on President’s List, 5 men with a perfect 4.0! Our Men’s Fall GPA was a 3.560 which brought our cumulative GPA to a 3.407.
- You will find out more about our student-athletes in our “Student-Athlete Spotlight” in this newsletter along with through social media leading into Giving Day 2021 and throughout our season.

We made waves in our training!

- Our swimmers were training out of the Brooklyn Recreation Center and our divers at the Westlake Recreation Center during the Busbey Natatorium renovations.
- The renovations are coming along well and we are hoping to put water in the pool by the end of January! I am beyond proud of our Vike’s adaptation, patience, and resilience through all the adjusted training schedules.

What does 2021 look like for the Vikes?

We are slowly returning back to campus and training as a majority of our Vikes went home for the holidays. We did have a small group choose to stay in Cleveland to maintain consistent training and safety protocols. That small group became my guinea pigs testing out new training, different energy zone focuses, and all kinds of new main sets they had never done before. Through our experimenting, a holistic re-integration training plan was developed.

All our student-athletes that traveled have had to do a two-week quarantine and the general rule of thumb in swimming is it takes double your break time to get back to where you started. This means that for a two (2) week break it takes four (4) weeks to get back to where you were BEFORE the break. With this understanding, 2021 gave us a MAJOR GIFT: **The Horizon League Championship meet got pushed back to April 4-10!** Our first wave of returning Vikes were COVID tested on January 8th and resumed training. The second wave of Vikes are returning to training January 18th. We have a 10-12 week season ahead of us at a team. The “typical season” is 26 weeks but luckily Ben, Pieter, Rich and I are creative, outside of the box thinkers and we have researched, studied, and are excited to implement new approaches on training! We are working on scheduling some dual meets in February and March...more details to come.

Enhance & Evolved Training:

- **Spinning and Yoga:** In partnership with Campus Recreation Services and 16 weeks of discussion we were able to get this opportunity approved! Each class will have 14 swimmers/divers in a huge space that is socially distant. We are excited to be able to get an aerobic base through spinning and work on our mobility, stability, relaxation, recovery and body awareness through Yoga.
- **Injury Prevention Dryland:** We developed a dryland routine focusing on development of healthy and strong shoulders, core, low-back, and glutes. We purchased stretch cords to use on deck. We have one routine the swimmers will do 3 times a week and another routine they will do 2 times a week.
- **Strength-work:** Our Strength and Conditioning Coach Mike Peres has developed an awesome training plan for all of our swimmers and divers. The goal is injury prevention and very specific workouts that will help our athletes perform in April. The team is loving being back in the weight room with Coach Peres!

Giving Day is just one month away! Last year we raised \$60,000 and our goal is to match that or surpass it. How? By getting our friends and families to donate whatever they can! For some of us, that might mean donating more than what you gave last year (because you can), for others that might mean donating for the first time ever (because you can). We are asking the same from you that we ask of our swimmers and divers every day, do the best that you can. We have two goals in mind as a coaching staff, program that is dependent on your support:

- 1) To provide enhanced & evolved training opportunities so we can achieve #unprecedentedoutcomes in April
- 2) To guarantee our ability to continue providing opportunities for future Vikings through our endowed scholarships -we appreciate your continual investment in our previously endowed scholarships –
 - Robert Busbey Scholarship for Swimming
 - Tom Smolinski Diving Scholarship
 - Frank Tilocco Jr Memorial Scholarship for Diving.

The investments provide our student athletes with resources necessary to be champions in the classroom, in the community and in the pool.

Donors are invited to make a LEAD gift to the program by contacting Cleveland State Athletics or we encourage you to participate throughout the day as we drive to break yet another CSU Giving Day record TOGETHER.

As we look around the country and the globe we know these are dark times. We are plagued by a pandemic, political unrest, financial/economic hardships. However, where there is darkness there is always a light. I truly believe that we are doing something special for our Vikings. They have a purpose, a focus, a drive. They wake up every day and are grateful to be able to go to class (even if it’s remote) and to train with their best friends in the pool. We all need a purpose right now. Please help us keep this light burning and mark your calendar for Giving Day. Your gift and support helps give our team the opportunity to train in ways they never have and helps them feel like the adversity in 2020 was worth it. As we look around and see swimming and diving programs being cut we are proud to say we are here, we are adapting and thriving, and we are renovating our pool in a pandemic!

Busbey Enhancement Campaign: We know that swimming and diving is a year round sport and that each season builds upon the next. How we perform at the end of season is in part dictated by the past. One meet doesn’t define us, and one day of Giving Day isn’t the only way to help. The university invested over a million dollars into our Busbey Natatorium Renovations, and now we are asking you to show the university, the athletic department that fundraising is not a one-day ordeal. After Giving Day you will begin to hear a lot more about the Busbey Enhancement Campaign from Bob Heller, Brandon Longmeier, Tyler Jones, Scott Garrett, Wally Morton and myself. In the past fundraising was solely put on the shoulders of the coaches and I am so proud of our athletic department staff that is working hard to help make this campaign a success! Just a preview: we are fundraising for a new video board, new starting blocks (ours are archaic and the wedges keep breaking), and a new PA System. When Bob Busbey dreamt up this facility his goal was to build a pool that was 50 years ahead of it’s time. Our Natatorium turns 50 next year and my goal with this campaign is to turn our Natatorium into a high-tech training and competition venue.

Be Well & Go Vikes!

Hannah

STUDENT-ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT CAROLINE HUGHES

SOPHOMORE, SPORT MANAGEMENT MAJOR
BACKSTROKE/IM

Most Proud of: Macroeconomics

Most Excited For: Legal/Administration Aspects-PE & Sport

“In 2020 I learned how I can overcome obstacles that I did not think I was strong enough mentally and physically. I also learned that I can go to a deeper level of determination to achieve my goals. As well as the will to do my job as a part of the team. I trained all summer hoping for an opportunity to compete at the Horizon League Championship. My focus is to get back to the success that this team had last year. Each person on the team is important. Yet each person has to realize the sacrifice that they have to make for our team to be successful. We all are going to have to come together for the next 4 months and do what’s right for the team which in turn will allow us to compete at the highest level.”

STUDENT-ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT JACK KRUSINSKI

JUNIOR, FINANCE MAJOR
BREASTSTROKE/IM

Most Proud of: Introduction to Investments

Most Excited for: Real Estate Investments

“What I learned from 2020 is being more gracious for what I take for granted. In person classes, swim meets, having our really nice big pool, even having a pool at CSU, and being able to hang out with the whole team at once was something I took for granted. Now I realized to not take those experiences for granted because you don’t know when it could change or be gone. This new year/season is a chance to do what we love! Swim and get our education.”