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Princeton Tiger Aquatics Water Polo Accumulates Success at National Championships

Summer is national championship season for those who care most about water polo. "This has been the best summer ever, with five teams competing successfully at national championships", says Derek Ellingson, head coach of Princeton Tiger Aquatics Water Polo Club. "The highlights of the championship season were the silver medal our U18 boys achieved by placing second in the gold bracket at the Junior Olympics, the premier club championship in the USA, and the third place finish our girls achieved at the National State Championship, both held in California over the summer."

The Princeton based water polo club qualified five teams for national championships. For the first time, a team of Tiger girls qualified to compete at the National State Challenge held in Coronado, CA at the end of August. The team competed against other high school teams from across the nation. "We were delighted to earn the third place. What is really exciting about this result is that most of our girls will be returning to play for us again in the new season", explained Ellingson. "In fact, about half the team will be with us for several more seasons. The girls have worked really hard, have come together well, and are achieving great results while they have a lot of fun together."

Three Tiger Aquatics boys teams qualified for the Junior Olympics, held in Los Angeles toward the end of the summer. The U18 boys qualified again after successful campaigns in '07 and '09, and equaled their best results with a second place finish in the gold division. For the first time, Tigers also took both U16 and U14 teams to the national competition. "It's a wonderful sign for the future", boasted Ellingson. "One of the highlights of my summer was watching the highly spirited U14 boys play under the setting Californian sun in front of a big crowd. We won by a single goal in a tightly contested game to qualify for the top bracket on the final day of the tournament." The club also qualified to compete at the U20 Men's National Championships. The young team, including a number of players that will be able to compete at this age group for a few more years, finished eighth.

Tiger Aquatics Water Polo has been attracting the area's top water polo players for several years. They train out of the DeNunzio complex at Princeton University under the tutelage of Ellingson, assistant coach to the University teams. "The wonderful thing about this club," says Roddy Carter, a senior coach in the program, "is that our focus is not winning championships until the summer. Throughout the year, we care most about our athletes growing and having

fun. This must come first. All of our athletes are passionate about the sport. It is an honor to support them in their passion, and to watch them getting better, sometimes by the day. Then, in the spring, we begin to turn our attention to the national championships. I think that our greatest success is that we train for fun and compete for victory – it's a great lesson for any youth athlete.”

About Tiger Aquatics Water Polo Club

Tiger Aquatics is a club for all players from the age of 8 through adults. The club's goal is to encourage the development of water polo, to promote excellence in the sport and to provide all players with the opportunity to reach the level of personal achievement that their determination and ability allow them to attain. The program is designed for players of all ages and levels. The club trains year round at the DeNunzio Pool on Princeton University campus. The head coach, Derek Ellingson, is assistant water polo coach at Princeton University and the regional coordinator of the Olympic Development Program of USA Water Polo. Further information is available on the club website, <http://www.tigersaq.com>.