

Making waves

In only seven years Evante Gibson has gone from a swimming class rookie to a world class competitor in the pool.

Gibson, now 17, is a first year student at Queens and a member of the men's swimming team. A native of The Bahamas, he says swimming is a satisfying sport because of the level of intensity and dedication it requires to excel.

His parents are track and field stars in the Bahamas, so he grew up steeped in the culture of athletics. But it wasn't until he got into a pool and took proper swimming form seriously that he felt a calling to work out regularly.

"I'd always been surrounded by water, obviously, growing up in a tropical setting, but I didn't know I had this natural ability to swim until I tried it," he said.

He worked hard during lessons and practiced as much as he was able. The hard work paid off as he rose to become a leading swimmer in his country. He competed in Puerto Rico, Venezuela, El Salvador, Peru, the Caribbean, the United States and Canada before joining the Royals swim program in August 2011. He placed in the top 25 in the breaststroke and the top 50 in the butterfly at the Junior World Swim Championships in Lima, Peru this past summer.

Gibson is majoring in biology and plans to open a physical therapy practice someday. He also hopes to compete in the 2016 Olympics.

Royals Swim Coach Jeff Dugdale says "Evante is passionate and persistent in his pursuit of excellence. He is committed to leaving a positive legacy at Queens."

Gibson said he's still learning to juggle rigorous academics at Queens and athletic training, and it helps that the swim team has become so close because his teammates keep him motivated.

"I wake up every day at 5:15 and go train at the pool for about three hours, then I have a full day of classes, and finally afternoon training," he says. "It's an intense sport, but I enjoy pushing myself and being surrounded by teammates who have become like family to me. I am happy and able to stay focused, and I feel fortunate to be at Queens doing what I love."

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