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TOKYO OLYMPICS

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SWIMMING

A ripple effect of success

Smith's Tokyo run has helped grow hometown swim club — and a legion of colorful followers.

By CHRISTINA LONG
christina.long@startribune.com

At the U.S. Olympic swimming trials in Omaha last month, it wasn't difficult to pick out the group from Riptide Swim Club in Apple Valley. They were the gaggle of giggling kids clad in pink T-shirts with bright pink Crocs and covered head-to-toe in temporary tattoos. They were the ones there to watch their hometown hero, Regan Smith.

A group of about 40 people, grown-ups and young ones alike, from Riptide traveled to watch Smith in the trials. The 19-year-old Smith, who joined Riptide at age 13, is known for wearing pink Crocs, swim caps and nail polish at competitions, and young fans from the club wanted to emulate their idol. They decorated signs to show their support for Smith and enjoyed red, white and blue Ring Pops after she qualified for the Tokyo Games.

"It's been incredible," said Paul Smith, Regan's father and the Riptide co-program director. "I'm so happy to see so many of our families and

See **RIPTIDE** on C10 ▶

Sunday: Regan Smith's medal quest begins at 5:12 a.m. with a 100 backstroke preliminary heat. Semifinals are 9:53 p.m.

Top dogs find pack is catching up

JIM SOUHAN



SAITAMA, JAPAN — Apex predators don't usually spend much time wrestling with self-doubt, but the U.S.

women's soccer team had to search for mantras and confidence after getting pummeled by Sweden in its first game of the Olympics.

If there were a drive-through window for sports psychology, they would have rented cars.

Saturday night in Tokyo, the U.S. bounced back from that 3-0 loss to Sweden with a 6-1 victory over New Zealand at Saitama Stadium, as First Lady Jill Biden watched from the otherwise empty stands. The U.S. had four goals erased by offside calls in the first half yet dominated play, meaning that a draw or victory over Australia will advance the Americans to the quarterfinals.

They fell in the quarterfinals in Rio in 2016, losing to Sweden and failing to win Olympic gold for the first time since 2000. In the run-up to the New Zealand game, the Americans adopted a new mantra.

See **SOUHAN** on C9 ▶

Men's basketball: U.S. vs. France, Group A preliminary round, 7 a.m. Sunday



U.S. gymnast Shane Wiskus of Spring Park soared through his high bar routine during Saturday's qualifying round. He finished 26th. CHANG W. LEE • New York Times

MEN'S GYMNASTICS

Air of achievement

Ex-Gopher Shane Wiskus helped keep the mood light as the U.S. gained Monday's team final

By RACHEL BLOUNT
rachel.blount@startribune.com

TOKYO — Once spectators were banned from Tokyo's Olympic venues, athletes began to wonder how it would affect their experience. Would they miss the energy of the crowd? Would it be uncomfortable, or even dull?

According to the U.S. men's gymnastics team, it's actually kind of nice.

"Honestly, it was pretty chill," former Gopher Shane Wiskus said. "It's still the Olympic Games. There's still pressure there. But it just felt like another day in the gym."

While it might not sound very special, that atmosphere was just

what the American men needed — and what they hope to use to their benefit again in Monday's team final. Wiskus and his teammates treated Saturday's qualifying round like a training session or a team camp, aided by the relative quiet of Ariake Gymnastics Centre.

They rode that relaxed atmosphere to fourth place in the

qualifier, earning a spot in the eight-team final. Two gymnasts — Brody Malone and Sam Mikulak — advanced to Wednesday's all-around final, and the U.S. secured four places in individual event finals. Mikulak will compete on parallel bars, Malone on high bar, Yul Moldauer on floor exercise and Alec Yoder

See **GYMNASTICS** on C8 ▶

MORE COVERAGE INSIDE

Men's volleyball: After a late start, an early run lifts the United States to win over France. **C8**
Softball: Cat Osterman pitches her team to victory and herself back to prominence. **C9**
Men's basketball: Injury puts Wolves' Hernangomez in the midst of controversy. **C10**

MEDALS RACE

Through two days of Olympic competition:

1 United States: 6 **2** China: 5 **3** Japan: 3 **3** Australia: 3
 ● 1 ● 2 ● 3 | ● 3 ● 0 ● 2 | ● 2 ● 1 ● 0 | ● 1 ● 1 ● 1

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