

# The Weekly Pineneedle



Camp Kawaga Newsletter

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## Cover Stories This Week:

Welcome to the first edition of the 2026 Weekly Pineneedle! The Weekly Pineneedle is the perfect place to get updates on camp life and to learn more about Kawaga's people, culture, and accomplishments.

Every week, you'll find articles about major updates and events that happened at Kawaga in the past week. You'll also be able to read Saturday's sermon, witness camper accomplishments, and learn about some of Kawaga's special programs and traditions. The goal of the Weekly Pineneedle is to give campers, staff, and families an organized place to remember or learn about all of the amazing things happening at Camp Kawaga.

## Campers of the Week: Enthusiasm



Chip: Leo Merar



Sioux: Lincoln Hoss



Mohawk: Thomas  
Budzynski



Oneida: Jonah  
Nakisher

## Principle Summary

The campers above did a phenomenal job during the first week of camp of exemplifying Kawaga's core principle of enthusiasm in every point of their week. They are enthusiastic leaders who are eager to participate and enjoy all that camp has to offer. They are passionate about their roles at camp and wish the best for everyone around them. Congratulations to Kawaga's campers of the week!

# Saturday Sermon



## Jonah Satyr's Sermon

**10th year on staff  
Oneida Counselor  
*Noble Deer***

Shabbat Shalom. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Jonah Satyr. This will be my 10th year on the Shores of Kawaga and my 5th year on staff. I didn't think I'd ever be up here giving another sermon, let alone working on staff again but here I am. In 2024, I delivered what I thought was a goodbye sermon, the message being to live in the moment at camp because, at some point, there will be a day that you won't be able to come back. I'd have to call myself at least a little bit of a hypocrite because not only am I back at camp, but I don't think I've quite followed the message of my previous sermon.

Since leaving camp in 2024, I have very much struggled to live in the moment, as almost all of my thoughts were fixated over what could go on in the future and ruminating over mistakes of the past. After leaving camp in 2024, I entered the corporate world and felt defeated. It was heartbreaking going from witnessing my campers become strong leaders to sitting behind a computer in a cubicle eight hours a day.

For the longest amount of time, I would try to suck it up, tell everyone I was enjoying work, even though internally it was not at all how I felt. I always felt like entering the corporate world was inevitable because it was what my family and friends always thought I would do. My family has always had traditional jobs, and it was a formula that worked for them but didn't align with my personal internal encodings.

Last year during my internship, I found a weekend to visit with a few of my fellow CITs, driving down with Josh Zirin, Bryan Gnehm, and Jack Decker. Upon arriving at dinner, the Mess Hall greeted all of us with

# Jonah Satyr's Sermon

I say that moment was nothing beyond special. Rehashing old camp memories with my boys in my age group, my past campers, and getting to meet new people at camp instantly uplifted my spirits from the mental prison I felt trapped in. That weekend that we visited were hands down the best few days of my entire summer.

Leaving our visit at Kawaga, made it just that much harder for me to cope with the reality that was the real world. I felt weak. There are so many people that work in the real world, really hard every single day. They put their heads down every morning, provide for their families, and may not love what they do but do it anyway. When I accepted my return offer for my job, my whole family celebrated my accomplishments, as I was internally suffering from the idea of directing my energy into something that I was passionate about.

I didn't feel like I was making an impact, at least an impact on the world in a way that I could see. The cubicle became a dark place for me to the point where it was hard to even physically put myself in the same surrounding environment. I envied others who seemed to so smoothly get by their days. It got to a point where I didn't even know what it was like to feel happy anymore. For the first time in my life, I had to battle intense anxiety and depression.

One person I was jealous of for the longest amount of time was my friend David Puckowitz, or Puck as my college friends call him. Puck doesn't have an internal monologue. That voice in your head that talks to you when you're reading a book or talking to yourself. He doesn't plan out conversations ahead of time, thinks before he talks, or anything. He just does stuff. I am the polar opposite. My internal monologue is always talking to me, and it's usually pretty cruel.

Camp in the past has always been a perfect combatant for my internal monologue. Whenever I had that voice in my head telling me that I wasn't good enough, I would always have an outlet to try to prove it wrong, or at least distract myself. The absence of camp in my life left me without a way to silence my doubts, so I began to believe that voice in my head. The environment of Kagawa allowed me to be authentically myself. Because of that I was able to be in control of my own visions, hold leadership positions, and act confidently. The second I left camp, I didn't feel like that same person and it caused an identity crisis. Who was I - the camp version of Jonah Satyr, or that anxious version of Jonah Satyr who second-guessed myself about everything that I did?

# Jonah Satyr's Sermon

Towards the end of the summer, I told my parents what I was going through, and I began the journey I desperately needed to get my mental state back on track. Over the past year, I've worked tremendously hard to rewire my thinking patterns and become a more productive person. All that time telling myself I wasn't good enough wasn't making me a better person; you need to take action to improve yourself.

It's crucial to note that, in my journey, I realized that it is imperative not to change yourself too much. The same reasons I had been going through so much hardship and doubt were also the reasons why I'm a hard worker, get fixated on cool niches, and retain my creative spirit. I think that at the end of the day, we're all our own harshest critics, and we all go through our own unique hardships catered to us individually.

Maybe you are dealing with friendship struggles at school; maybe you lost someone who is really important to you; maybe you battle obsessive compulsive disorder like me; maybe you're going through a complex family issue; maybe you tried your hardest at something you cared about and failed miserably. No matter what it is, we all have something that bothers us. It's up to you whether you deal with your problems in a productive way or choose to procrastinate on them until you get to the point where you can't even be there for others or the ones you care about. That's why I encourage you all to talk about the things that bother you, and reach out to someone if you are struggling. Talking about my problems with people that care about me is how I got better. In the same vein, it is always important to treat others with kindness, as you do not know what they are going through.

Towards the end of my journey, I realized that at the root of a lot of my problems were acting how others think I should be acting and not for myself. If there's one thing Kawaga always taught me, it was the power of being unauthentically yourself. The reason this place is so special is because unlike the real world, there are so many people at one place that are non-judgmental of others when they act authentic. I encourage each and every one to allow as much of your authentic self to shine in the real world, even after we say goodbye to each other on Banquet Night less than seven weeks from today.

I've decided what I want to do, and although my family and friends may not understand me entirely, they do support me. Because of that, I get to spend at least one more summer on the Shores with you all. To Jordi, Zirin, Tomas, and Bryan: I can't tell you guys how much it means to me to spend another summer with you guys. You are my guys for life, and I love you all platonically, as our old counselor Jackson Gruber ]

# Jonah Satyr's Sermon

used to always say to us. To Ty, Lauren, Ben, and Kappy: thank you guys for your mentorship throughout my adolescence. You guys have all had so much influence on me and I hope you all know that. Bri: From you being my counselor, my friend, and just observing your work ethic, words cannot describe how much I've learned from you. No one works harder here than you to make this place awesome. You're so humble that I'm sure there are lots of campers and maybe even staff that don't know how much you run the show behind the scenes even if it was in 2020 when you weren't here physically. To Ryan: I hope I can make you proud this summer. If there's anybody who lived to their fullest being unauthentically themselves, it's you.

Words cannot describe how excited I am to watch the summer unfold and be up here, on the Shores of Kawaga Bay, with you guys for the next few months. We're just getting started. Thank you.

## Blue Gold Cup

Kawaga is proud to continue the Blue Gold Cup as a summer-long competition, with the 2026 summer introducing Blue Gold Cup games that count toward the standings of the Cup's main event during second session. New campers found out their teams and wore them with pride, competing in various sports and gathering to watch Sioux basketball under the lights right after!



# Spectacular Update



**The University of Arizona  
Head Coach: Gabe Rosen**



**The University of Indiana  
Head Coach: Tyson Daube**



**The University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Head Coach: Jordan Mokhtarian**



**The University of Virginia  
Head Coach: Philip Kaplan**



**Stanford University  
Head Coach: Josh Levitan**



**The University of North Carolina  
Head Coach: Eli Metz**



**Long Island University  
Head Coach: Jonah Swift**



**East Carolina University  
Head Coach: Logan Flater**

# Pre-Camp Reflection

## By Spencer Drake

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My name is Spencer Drake and this is my second summer at Kawaga. This year I was extremely grateful to be asked to come earlier to camp and help finish some of the incredible projects that happened during the off season. Being here a whole month earlier allowed me to see camp through a different lens and truly appreciate what it takes to make this place so magical. Kawaga provides endless opportunities for both staff and campers to succeed and truly appreciate what matters in life and I hope I am lucky enough to come back for many more years.

Pre camp at Kawaga for me this year was special, seeing new and old faces, playing games whilst really learning what it takes to lead with purpose and intention. The sessions allow us to not only get to know each other and break the ice but to also get in touch with our mental health and remind ourselves why we do camp and what it means to us. Camp also provides so many learning opportunities. Kawaga constantly provides opportunity, and also support, there is no place I have ever felt such community. I have made friends for life, whilst also meeting leaders and role models I will remember forever. There is no place quite like it. I am so glad to be here and excited for the summer ahead.

ENGLAND TO WIN THE WORLD CUP

Spencer Drake



# Big & Little Brothers

First year campers each receive a big brother. A big brother is an experienced older camper who helps guide a new camper through camp life, traditions, and experiences. A camper's big brother is one of their first introductions to Kawaga and is often one of the people they credit most with the personal growth they experience while at camp. Big brothers swim the bay with their little brothers and participate in many activities with them, such as evening programs, in order to help acclimate them to camp life.



# Bay Swims



Every year, first-year campers attempt to swim across Lake Kawaguesaga to prove that they are ready for camp activities in open water such as water skiing, free swimming, and sailing. These campers each swim with a lifeguard and their big brother. After completing the swim, these campers receive a canoe paddle to signify their accomplishment. This is no easy feat and is something that every camper who even attempts the swim should be extremely proud of.



# Chippewa Social

After an amazing first week of camp, the campers traveled to Chippewa Ranch Camp for a social! The night was a fantastic time for both camps, with various opportunities from campers of all backgrounds to connect. There was food, music, games, and overall plenty of opportunity for campers to have a great night!



# League Standings

## Chip Blue/Gold League

Team Name	W	L
Kol L. & Matt C.'s Team	0	3
Ezra G. & Xander Z.'s Team	3	0

## Chip Breakfast League

Team Name	W	L
Andrew Z. & Guillermo B.'s Team	3	0
Mate M. & Caleb R.'s Team	1	2
Tomas O. & Will B.'s Team	2	1
Jack B. & Josh R.'s Team	0	3

## Sioux Meat League

Team Name	W	L
Andy B.'s Team	1	1
Quinn K.'s Team	0	2
Jarett G.'s Team	2	1
Max S. & Luca B.'s Team	3	0
Cam W. & JP M.'s Team	1	1
Dean G.'s Team	0	3

## Sioux Blue/Gold League

Team Name	W	L
Mau V. & Santi R.'s Team	2	1
Paul S. & Richard G.'s Team	1	2
Aaron L. & Franta P.'s Team	2	1
Hayden F. & Oisin T.'s Team	1	2

## Mohawk Blue/Gold League

Team Name	W	L
Levi S. & Dustin W.'s Team	0	1
Will G.'s Team	1	0
Joe P.'s Team	1	0
Philip K.'s Team	0	1

## Mohawk Fish League

Team Name	W	L
Tobin B. & Gabe R.'s Team	1	0
Sam A. & Spencer D.'s Team	1	0
Tyson D.'s Team	0	1
Danny G.'s Team	0	1
Jonah A. & John M.'s Team	0	1
Jordan M.'s Team	1	0

## Oneida Blue/Gold League

Team Name	W	L
Josh Z.'s Team	0	2
Jonah S.'s Team	1	1
Bryan G. & Meyer R.'s Team	2	0
Josh L.'s Team	0	2
Chance K.'s Team	2	0
Ethan K.'s Team	0	0

## Oneida Cheese League

Team Name	W	L
Tyson A.'s Team	1	0
John H.'s Team	1	0
Sam S. & Eli M.'s Team	1	0
Ethan L.'s Team	0	1
Logan F.'s Team	0	1
Jonah S.'s Team	0	1

# Camper Pineneedles

## Day 1 M/O Capture The Flag by : Joey Goodman

The match started hot with some elite offense from guys like Wesley Saber, Trip Kirby, Parker Cohen and Benji Goodman, with their efforts leading to a 1-0 lead for Blue after game 1. The second game kicked off with some great defense from guys like Joe Patey and Michael Moksins, and explosive offense from Dani Goodman and Sam Lippman, however it wasn't enough, as Mason Hirschfeld sprinted across D2 to win game 2 for Blue. This momentum continued into game 3, with Joey and Eli Goodman played lights out defense, not allowing the flag to move the entire game, leading to an eventual Blue win.



The 4th game was insane with guys like Noah Hiudt, Oakley Daube, and Miles Wright launching the flag back and forth, leading to a final sequence where both teams were about to score, but a great double block from Joey and Eli Goodman allowed Mason Hirschfeld to score once more. Game 5 was much slower, with neither team really putting together much offense, but Gold eventually came away with the win. The final game was crazy, with both sides coming super close to scoring, however Gold came away with the win. Great time had by all!



## Sioux Meat League Newcomb By: Gideon Korach

At the start of Leagues at the pits, our team coached by Cam Watson and JP McManus faced off in newcomb against Dean Guttman's team. The game started in the pouring rain, and Cam and JP's team took an early 4-0 lead, before Jack Stone led a comeback to bring the score to 4-3.

Luca Ramalingam made some great catches all over the place, teaming up with Teddy and I to get an 18-12 lead to win game one 21-14. The second game didn't start so good, with Dean's team taking a quick 12-5 lead. Before we could come back, they won game two 21-9. The third game was crazy, with guys like Corey Zalay making great catches and throws, but Dean's team still pulled ahead to an 8-5 lead. We brought the game to a tie and eventually pulled ahead, winning the game! Great time had by all!

# Notable Achievements

## Birthdays

**Tyson Adelman (20)**

Paul Stiegler (20)

**Javier Sanchez Ramirez (23)**

Andrew Zemnick (17)

**Chase Adair (13)**

## First Fish

**Jax Lewison**

Dylan Kriegshaber

**Cory Zalay**

Sam Stone

**Owen Brenner**

## First Bullseye

**Taylor Cohen**

Preston Stone

**Asher Jacobs**

Jax Lewison

**Dylan Kriegshaber**

Theo Martin

**Chase Davidoff**

## Miracles

**Kian Martin (Drop Ski)**

Robbie Budzynski (Drop Ski)

**Oliver Tuperitis (2-Ski)**

Robbie Budzynski (Slalom)

**Nolan Dolge (2-Ski)**

Adam Schneider (2-Ski)

**Owen Brenner (2-Ski)**

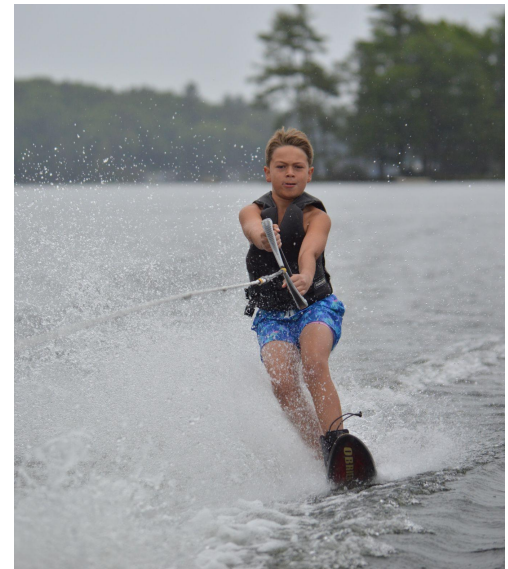
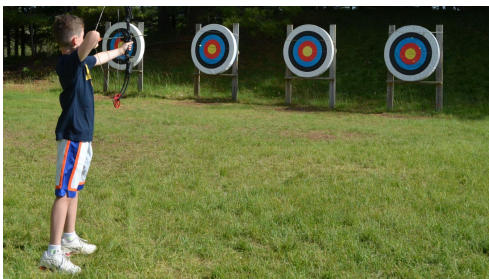
Ian Richmond (2-Ski)

**Owen Roth (2-Ski)**

Jude Holzer (Slalom)

**Nolan Schmidt (2-Ski)**

**Judah Knapp (2-Ski)**



## Chief's Corner

We had an amazing week for the Chips. We started off the session with a bang, kicking things off with a few great evening programs. Their energy was off the charts, and they were playing together within seconds. What impressed me most was their camaraderie. This group definitely has a lot of energy, and I can't wait to see what they're capable of.

Something we'll be focusing on this week in our pow-wow is fellowship. As a group, we want to work on moving as a unit and getting along, both in the cabin and around camp. As we grow, that sense of togetherness is what we're building toward.

I'm confident that this tribe, with all their energy and enthusiasm, is going to do amazing things. It's great to watch them grow close and become such good friends with each other.

-Ethan Kaufmann, Chief of the Chips



# Kawaga Leisure

## CAMP KAWAGA WORD SEARCH



**Word Bank:**

Kawaga · Rec Hall · Road · Stadium · Sachem · Paddle · Omni · Marina · Bay swim · Miracle · Waterfront · Mess hall · Crows Nest · Baker Lake · Ron's Garage



## 7-Day Forecast

Sun 21		19%	Mostly Cloudy
Mon 22		6%	Partly Cloudy
Tue 23		48%	PM Showers
Wed 24		39%	Showers
Thu 25		24%	Partly Cloudy
Fri 26		16%	Partly Cloudy
Sat 27		24%	Partly Cloudy

## Funny Photos This Week



**Editors**

Editor-In-Chief: Jarett Goldblatt  
 Camper Editors: Jacob Stillman, Gabriel Kaufmann, Max Kalish, Joey Goodman