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# New Beginnings for Redhawks Swimming

Tyra Okuda, Copy Chief/Online Editor

As the Seattle University swim team begins their season with a new head coach and coaching staff, they are excited to see where the year takes them. After a national coach search, Joe Dykstra was named the new head of the swim team, July 1, 2022.

“Every decision we make is centered around the student-athlete experience. We’re really excited to have Joe Dykstra on board,” Director of Athletics Shaney Fink said.

Dykstra most recently served as the head coach at the University of Utah for nine years before coming to Seattle U. Prior to that, he spent seven years as the head coach at the University of North Texas and six years as the associate head coach at the University of Washington.

“The chance to come back to Seattle was big for me,” Dykstra said. “This is home to me. It was a great opportunity to come back home.”

With more than two decades of experience, Dykstra brings knowledge and new ideas to the table.

“We are doing things quite a bit differently than what I think they have done in the past,” Dykstra said.

A new coaching staff means change, but also a new way of approaching the sport. While the transition of coaches was recent, the athletes have already felt a difference. Max Chesno, a senior majoring in finance, has enjoyed working with the new coaches and is excited for the rest of the season.

“Things are changing in a good way,” Chesno said. “It keeps everything fresh. It keeps things interesting and makes it a lot more exciting.”

Senior and civil engineering major, Michaela Day, has no worries anymore. It was nerve-racking for her to meet the people that she would be working with for the next six months.

“You’re putting a lot of trust into these people to ensure that they know what they are doing,” Day said.

She has since grown to trust her teammates and coaches and is looking forward to the rest of the season.

“Everyone has been super great and it has been really good. I trust them,” Day said.



Adeline Ong

Seattle University swimmer dives into the water.

After spending the first month of training breaking down technical fundamentals and doing two weeks of conditioning, the swim team opened their season with a win against Simon Fraser University. The Redhawks hosted the Red Leafs for a two-day competition Oct. 15 and 16.

Leading after day one, the women's team was able to hold onto their lead and finished the second day with a score of 206-185. The men's team trailed after the first day but was able to pull through to a 199-192 win after day two.

"It was pretty much a tight race the whole way. First day we were down a couple points. Even through the second day we were down a little bit, but we pushed through the back half of that second day," Chesno said. "It was really fun, we got the team going and we ended up winning."

Dykstra was satisfied with how some of the times came out, and he was pleased with the way the team competed with their energy more than anything. The positive spirit from their teammates helped the athletes lessen their nerves.

"It went better than we could have ever imagined," Day said. "The energy on deck was fantastic, everyone swam great, we were all encouraging each other and it felt like such a positive environment."

The team is hoping their opening win will translate to the rest of their season. They want to keep the momentum going while continuing to improve not only their times, but also the team atmosphere. With seven freshmen this year, they are filling in spots on the team in order to achieve collective success.

"I'm really excited just from the first month that we have gotten to work with everyone new," Day said. "It's been going really well so far, so I'm excited for the rest of the season."

The Redhawks traveled to Phoenix, Arizona Oct. 21-22 for a meet against Grand Canyon University. The women's team also faced San Diego State University and Loyola Marymount University.

The men fell to Grand Canyon University with a team score of 136-65. The women's team also lost to GCU 153-30 and to San Diego State University 168-36, but came out with a win against Loyola Marymount 142-60.

Dykstra is eager to help the team achieve greatness but acknowledges that there is still a lot of learning to do. First and foremost, he wants everyone to improve. When it comes to team bonding, he believes that as long as everyone is improving and having a great experience, the team dynamic goals will fall into place on their own.

"They come at it every day with such an incredible work ethic," Dykstra said. "It's really motivating to me how excited they are to learn and work hard and get better."

With new leadership and continued perseverance, Dykstra and the team are working on a winning season.