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Seattle University Swimming Kicks Off Their Final WAC Season

Diego Dumlao, Volunteer Reporter

Swimmers take position on the blocks, cheers and chants echo inside the pool, and the energy on the crowded pool deck resonates among all patrons. The officiant blows his whistle silencing the room. Over the microphone he says, "Take your marks," then seconds after a loud horn sounds while an orange light flashes. The swimmers hit the water and just like that, they're off. Friday Oct. 2, Seattle University hosted their conference rivals, Grand Canyon University along with California Baptist University for the first swim meet of the 2024-25 season.

Both the men's and women's teams are looking to bounce back from 2023 seasons that were not up to par with the program's standards. Both teams are mainly made up of first and second-years, but many upperclassmen have taken on leadership roles on the team.

"I was excited to see what I could do... to contribute to the success of my team," Junior swimmer and Social Work Major Sarah Cook said.

Cook had a very successful meet, making the podium in all of the events she participated in, including a Second-place finish in the 400 Individual Medley (4:29.99) and third place finishes in the 100 Butterfly (57.39), 100 Breaststroke (1:06.39), and the 200 Individual Medley (2:08.25).

The team's performance this weekend seemed to surpass many expectations.

"I'm really pleased... times were way faster than they were to start the last season across the board," head coach Joe Dykstra said.

The team has been training rigorously in the weeks prior to the meet. To some, this could mean tiredness and fatigue, but given the times that the teams posted, the hard work seems to be paying off.

"I'm pretty beat up from all the training we've been doing the last couple weeks, but I got my team behind me and we're standing strong," Senior swimmer and Finance Major Cole Lanting said.



Sasha Volovnikov

SU swimmers high five GCU swimmers after Saturday's meet.

Lanting also put on a very good performance over the two-day meet. Lanting placed First in the 200-yard Individual Medley posting a time of 1:52.47 and placed Third in the 100-yard Freestyle posting a time of 45.58. In the 100-yard Freestyle, Lanting fell short of second place to his teammate and fellow senior, Nicholas Imig (45.43).

Imig and Lanting were also the first and second legs in the Men's 400-yard Freestyle Relay that came in second place posting a time of 2:59.79, along with Sophomore Hawkins Wendt and Sophomore Danielis Kvederis.

The 2024-25 season is an interesting one for the Redhawk swim program. Seattle U Athletics will be making the transition to the West Coast Conference (WCC) for the 2025-26 season, joining the likes of Pepperdine University, University of Portland and Santa Clara University, just to name a few. What makes this strange for the swim program is that the WCC does not offer swimming as one of its sports. The announcement of the conference change left the athletes and the coaches with some uncertainty about what this would look like for Seattle U swim.

Fortunately for the Redhawk swim program, the school recently announced that Seattle U will be joining The Big West Conference for swimming, and swimming only. Seattle U Swim will be joining the likes of the University of Hawaii, University of California Santa Barbara, and California Polytechnic State University, along with many other West Coast schools. Grand Canyon University will also be making the transition with the Redhawks, keeping the conference rivalry alive. Swimming's head coach Joe Dykstra expressed immense excitement when asked about the conference change.

"I was excited, I knew that we would have a couple of really good options... it's a perfect situation for us," Dykstra said.

This conference change really is like Dykstra said "a perfect situation" for the Seattle U swim program. The Big West will combine other WCC swim programs and already affiliated Big West programs, creating a conference with lots of great swim competition.

"Put[ting] them together makes one great West Coast swim meet," Dykstra said.

Although the Redhawks finished in third place for their first meet, there were many positive takeaways and some fast swims, showing that there is a ton of potential for success from this Seattle U swim program. These teams will be fun to watch this upcoming season as they say farewell to the WAC.