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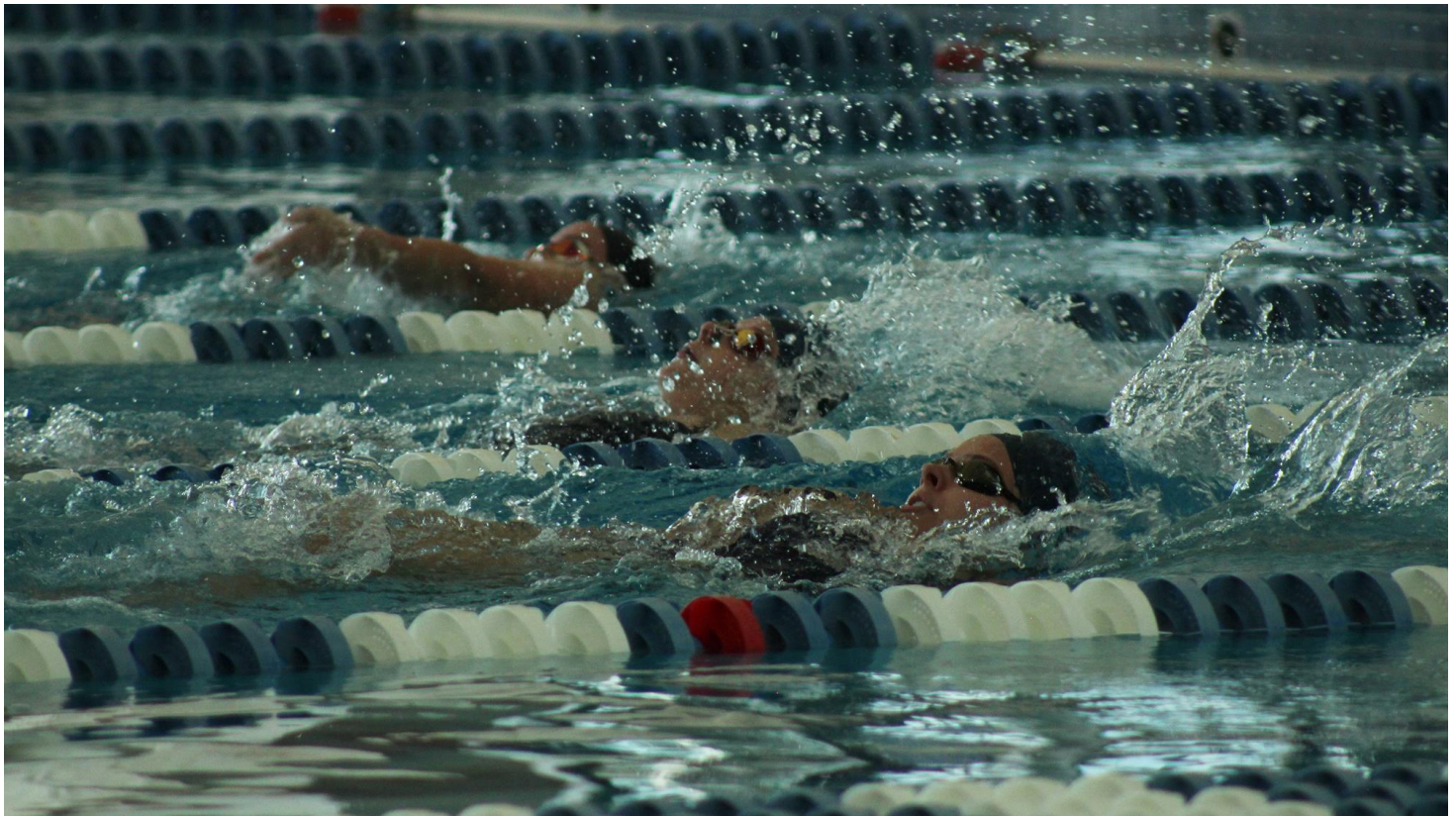
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SEASON PREVIEW: GS Swimming & Diving Building For Success In 2018-19

New head coach Amanda Caldwell looks to have the Eagles competing for CCSA Championship; GS opens season Friday
Swimming and Diving

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STATESBORO, Ga. - The Georgia Southern women's swimming and diving team opens the 2018-19 season on Friday, traveling to Savannah to take on defending NAIA national champion Savannah College of Art & Design at the Chatham County Aquatic Center.

New head coach [Amanda Caldwell](#) took over the program in May, and brought aboard new diving coach [Collin Vest](#) in August. Together with returning assistant coach [Kristin Walker](#), the staff are excited about the upcoming season as Georgia Southern will participate in eight events in 2018-19, leading up to the 2019 CCSA Swimming & Diving Championships in February.

Georgia Southern has finished fourth in the CCSA Championships each of the last two seasons, following third-place finishes in 2015 and 2016. Coach Caldwell wants the Eagles to be swimming their best at the end of the season, but the foundation for that to happen is laid early on with preseason and now early season practices.

"It comes from your training program," Caldwell said. "Right now, I've spent the first two Saturdays of our in-season training just explaining what the first nine to 15 weeks are going to look like for the team. So they can understand that I'm not in a rush to do the race pace training, or the specificity training. Right now we are in a building phase. Some coaches jump in way too quick to do that, and their teams peak early - peak at midseason meets.

"I'm just trying to get them to look at the big picture and not rush into stuff," Caldwell said. "I know they're ready to go. They say, 'When are we going to do the fast stuff.' It's coming, and you'll get your fill of it."

The Eagles open the season with five events over the first five weeks of the season. In addition to a diving-only meet in Moultrie, Ga., this weekend, Georgia Southern opens up its home schedule on Oct. 19th vs. UNC Asheville, then will face Campbell and Tulane before wrapping up its Fall schedule at the Liberty Invitational in mid-November.

These early season competitions for the Eagles will be key and coach Caldwell has a plan for getting the most out of her team this Fall.

"In this first phase of training, we're focusing on technique," Caldwell said. "And maintaining that technique while we build their aerobic capacity. So when we get into these competitions, I want to see them maintaining their technique when they're going out on early speed - because that's what we've got right now. We feel good in the beginning of races, and then we don't feel good at the end of races. I want us to hold onto that technique to finish races because we don't have that yet. That would be the big piece I'm looking for."

When the Eagles come back to Statesboro in January, they will have a home meet vs. North Florida and a diving competition vs. Liberty, both at the Aquatics Center, to tune up for the conference meet, which takes place on February 20-23 in Lynchburg, Va.

Postseason for the Eagles includes the possibility of qualifying not only for the NCAA Championships but also the CSCAA National Invitational, with those events taking place in March. Last season, Georgia Southern sent three divers to the NCAA Zone B Diving Championships, a program best. This year, success for Coach Caldwell isn't a one-year-only thing. Trying to build a Georgia Southern swimming & diving program that is in it for long-term success is her true goal.

"If we could finish this season," Caldwell said. "Take time off, come back the following week for spring training and have conversations like, one: I can do better on the training, in respect of where they are at, and two: if they can reflect and say 'I could have been better at this.' If we can look and take ownership on both sides, I think that's the first step in holding themselves accountable in their own training. Knowing that I will be the first person to beat myself up for that week, until we come back to the pool, of what I could have done better. If they can look and see that too, I think that's big in the learning process."

"If we can finish that championship meet and say, 'You know what? We had a lot of fun, we tried to put all our effort in - let's do it again.' It's like taking a family road trip across the country. There's highs, there's lows, you want to vote someone out of the van in Kansas because it's a little flat and boring. But if you can get to the other side of the country and say, 'I loved it, had fun, let's do it again,' then it will have been a good year."

The Eagles return 24 student-athletes from last season's squad, and add three newcomers to the mix for 2018-19. Be sure to follow GS Swimming and Diving on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and check out results from their season-opening meet on Friday at gseagles.com. Also hear more from Coach Caldwell and Coach Vest below!

Coach's Corner - Amanda Caldwell



Coach's Corner - Collin Vest