

# Swim and Dive Mid-Season Update

BY FAITH FITZHUGH



Concordia Saint Paul Swim Team. Photo Credit: Josh Deer

**RACHEL BUSCH** and Aaron Carlson, the coaches for the CSP women's swim and dive team, have led the team to a successful season so far this year. Coach Busch was named head coach for the team in early August. She came from Buffalo High School, where she coached the swim program for six years. In that time, she sent 22 swimmers to the state meet and captured a conference championship back-to-back in 2017 and 2018. Additionally, Busch had been named Section 8AA Head Coach of the Year in 2018 and then again in 2020. She brings her 10+ years of coaching experience to her new CSP team and provides great coaching and guidance to the members of this new program.

The team is comprised of Stephanie De Leon, competing in the fly, free, IM, and breaststrokes; Sydney Flemming, competing in the backstroke and IM; Charly Horn, competing in the breaststroke; Dejah Jackson, competing in the IM, back, and free strokes; Farida Maher, competing in the freestyle; Imani Simmons, competing in the free, breast, and fly strokes; and Laura Vekony, competing in the fly and free strokes. The team is mostly freshmen, with the exception of Jackson and Flemming. There are also a few international students on the team, Maher, Vekony, and Horn, who add a great dynamic to the team, are model students, and caring teammates. All the girls make a strong unit of sisters—training together, bonding together, and working together. This team dynamic has led to success in the pool.

Coach Busch stated, "The girls had a very successful meet at the Augustana Invite on November 18th-20th. Many girls

had season-best swims at this meet. By the end of the meet, Farida Maher was sitting at the top of the conference in the 100 freestyle and 200 freestyle. She also achieved the cuts for the NCAA tournament in those same two events, which is a program first."

These girls work tirelessly, getting up for six am swim practices, and then doing land workouts later in the day. They do hundreds of laps in the pool and weight training out of the pool. These girls push themselves every day to improve, become stronger, chase personal records, and achieve their own personal goals within the sport. Despite their rigorous schedule, they still manage to have lots of fun and high spirits. These girls are the definition of what it means to be a Golden Bear at CSP. They may be few but they are a powerful, physically and mentally strong, resilient group of young women. The girls have competed in six invites so far, leaving them halfway done with their season. There is one meet coming yet before the holiday break at St. Kate's. Then, after classes resume, the team heads to MSU Moorhead on January 14th for an invite. The women will get one last meet in before the NSIC Championships with the NSU Triangular on January 28th. Then, the postseason begins with a conference starting February 9th and nationals starting March 9th, for the qualifying members.

The team is always looking for new additions, especially divers, so if interested, please email Coach Busch at busch@csp.edu or Coach Arron acarlson1@csp.edu for more information.