

SPORTS

Top-level trainer joins Seaside swimming team coaching staff

By **KATHERINE LACAZE**
For Seaside Signal

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, the Seaside swim team has continued going strong.

At the semiannual swim meet hosted by the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District in late July, more than a dozen team members between the ages of 6 and 18 competed.

And the coaches are looking forward to taking the program to the next level.

In August, Carolyn Heymann was brought on to coach alongside head coach Mike Kadi, who has run the program for about six years.

“This a game-changer,” Kadi said.

USA Swimming program

Heymann, who relocated from Lake Oswego and started in mid-August, has a wealth of knowledge and experience. In the past, she’s trained Olympic qualifiers.

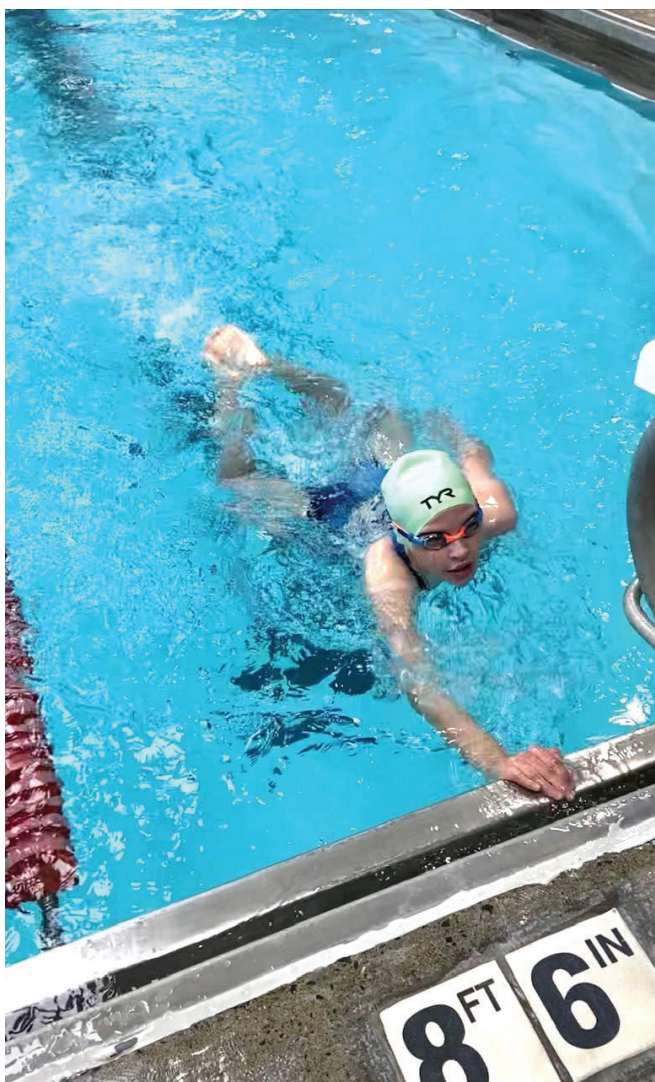
“She’s amazing and I’m learning so much from her,” Kadi added.

The program is year-round, with a short break around the start of the school year. Children can join at any time, as the team always has capacity for newcomers, Kadi said.

The program is broken into three levels: bronze, for novice; silver, for intermediate and advanced students; and the gold level for high schoolers when their official season isn’t in session and other highly advance swimmers. The park district’s swim lesson programs are structured to prepare swimmers for the swim team as early as age 6, or with coach approval.

Like Kadi, Heymann is a USA Swimming-American Swimming Coaches Association swimming-certified coach, which sets the team up to achieve USA Swimming membership status in the near future. This has been a longtime goal for the park district, and one they were aiming to achieve before the pandemic hit and stalled the process.

“You can only go so far without trying to compete or at least visiting other facil-



Ella Crater of the Seaside swim team.



Seaside swimmer Isla Manship at a July meet.

ities, even in a noncompetitive capacity,” the park district’s aquatics and recreation manager Justin Smith said. “We’ve tried to go up one notch.”

That provided the impetus for bringing on another coach — particularly one with the credentials to meet USA Swimming criteria.

“We have potential Olympic swimmers out there, I feel that,” Kadi said.

Although becoming a USA Swimming member will create new opportunities for children who want to compete at swim meets

outside the area and take their sport to the next level, the Seaside swim team will continue to be accessible to beginners as well.

“We’ll always keep that novice side,” Smith said.

In Kadi’s experience, as long as a child can make it across the pool, then he can work with them. As a result, he’s coached more than 200 young people during his tenure and observed several going on to succeed in the high school program.

He referenced Henry Garvin, a recent graduate from Seaside High School

who helped the 200-yard freestyle relay team win a state championship. Overall, the boys team — which included several former Seaside swim team members — took third at state in the spring.

A positive outlet

The pandemic has caused some logistical challenges for the swim team, primarily by shortening the length of time team members can be in the facility for training and the number of kids who can be onsite simultaneously.

During the early stages of the pandemic, they only had two athletes training at once — using either side of the pool — and they’ve had to occasionally close down for two- or three-week periods.

However, the pandemic hasn’t stifled enthusiasm. If anything, it’s kept children engaged in a positive environment.

“Because of COVID, kids needed an outlet, and swimming was one they could do, and they could do safely,” Kadi said, adding “the numbers are growing quickly.”

Despite the volume and training time limitations, Kadi has maintained the same coaching philosophy, with an emphasis on fundamentals.

The 45 minutes kids can be in the facility is enough time to focus on refining strokes, starts, turns and finishes and improving balance in the water.

“We can slow it all down and put it together when the training hours increase,” Kadi said.

He is also used to children flowing in and out of the program when they want to try other sports or activities. Swimming remains a consistent opportunity that also carries lifelong potential.

“It teaches you to really start something and finish something,” he said. Additionally, “it’s good for you, it’s therapeutic, it’s mindful. This is something you can do when you’re 50, 60, 70.”

Passing on his love of swimming to young people in the community has been rewarding for Kadi as well.

“You want to do right by these kids and put them on the proper path for a good life,” he said.

Portland State football has a Camp Rilea connection

By **GARY HENLEY**
The Astorian

Every (normal) summer, the North Coast brings in visitors of all types — beach volleyball players, Hood to Coast runners, surfers, boaters, campers, etc.

Over the last few years — 2020 notwithstanding — you can add football teams to the list.

While the local high schools teams already host their summer seven-on-seven drills and youth camps, a few outsiders have recently made off-season trips to the coast a part of their regular training regimen.

The West Linn Lions — one of the top 6A high school football programs in the state — have, for the last three years, made a trek to Seaside for an annual team-building camp.

Coached by former University of Oregon Duck and NFL quarterback Chris Miller, the Lions spend three days in Seaside, enjoying the town, the food, the games and the beach. And, while they’re at it, working on their football.

How it all started, Miller said, was he and his wife at the time “were driving through Seaside during the Ducks at the Astoria golf event, and noticed the tall field lights off Highway 101.

“We went and looked at Broadway Field, and I said,



Portland State University

Portland State University football players go through drills at Camp Rilea in 2019. The Vikings were scheduled to practice at the coast, but canceled the trip due to coronavirus concerns.

“this would be a great spot for a team camp.”

Three years later, the West Linn football team just made its third summer trip to Seaside, where the Lions worked and played for three days in late July.

“The kids love it, my coaches love it,” Miller said. “We stay at Rivertide Suites, so we do it up right.”

He added, “There’s a lot of fun things for the kids to do in Seaside, and beach access is great. It’s all within walking distance, so it’s convenient. Our Thursday night goal-setting, player call-out team bonfire is a great team-building event. It’s a great 48-hour getaway.”

And “Broadway Field is a nice surface, nice field, as well,” he said.

Local businesses benefit, too.

“Each year we have a

team dinner at Fultano’s Pizza, and a coaches dinner at Seaside Brewery,” he said.

In addition to West Linn’s annual visit, the Portland State University football program schedules a yearly workout session at Camp Rilea, where the Vikings practice, scrimmage and spend a few days at the coast in preparation for their upcoming season.

Portland State held workouts at Camp Rilea before the 2019 season, or as the Vikings called it, “72 hours of team bonding.”

Their 2020 visit — like the entire fall season — was canceled by the coronavirus pandemic.

Unfortunately, with the virus still hanging around a year later, Portland State had to cancel its 2021 trip.

With Clatsop County’s

coronavirus numbers spiking again, the Vikings said “thanks, but no thanks” to the North Coast, and canceled their scheduled practices at Camp Rilea in August.

In a statement on the Portland State website, it was announced that “Portland State had planned to travel to Camp Rilea on the Oregon Coast again this pre-season for a handful of practices. However, this weekend’s trip was canceled in the interest of keeping everyone healthy in the current environment.”

Hopefully Portland State football can return to the coast in 2022, and make it a repeat of their last visit in 2019, when the Vikings brought 46 letterwinners, along with 16 redshirt players, 27 signees and a number of walk-ons to Camp Rilea.

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