

Hi everyone, my name is Erica Sorensen and I am so excited to be the head coach of Somerset Rec Club this year!

- I have been involved with swimming for the past 17 years...I started out swimming for Highline Swim Club and KING Aquatic Club, and also swam for Kennedy High School and Kent Swim & Tennis Club in the summers. After high school I went to Whitman College and continued swimming on the Whitman Varsity Swim Team all four years of college. In my own swimming, I was mainly a backstroker and breaststroker, but I also did well in the IMs.
- In terms of coaching, I started coaching KSTC the summer after I graduated from high school. I coached KSTC for three summers during college. This last year I got involved again in USA Swimming by becoming an assistant coach for Issaquah Swim Team.

Summer league swimming is all about having fun while still improving both stroke technique and racing times. This season, stroke technique will be a highlight of every single practice...especially for the first few weeks. Having good technique is vital to swimming fast and preventing injury, and my assistants and I will be working hard to try to make sure your kids are swimming efficiently in the water. We will use different drills and techniques to achieve this goal, and we will all be walking the pool deck during practice and helping every single swimmer with his/her technique.

Some of our expectations during practice and swim meets are that the swimmers are on TIME, treat each other with respect, listen to the coaches and make an effort to do what is asked. Under no circumstances will physical or verbal violence ever be tolerated, at practice or at meets. Our swimmers should be examples and show the members of other teams great respect. It will make for a much better experience for all.

While we are having afternoon workouts, some Friday evenings we might offer a stroke/turn clinic at an additional nominal charge. We will let you know in advance as to what we will be working on that Friday and how many swimmers we will cap the clinic at. For these clinics, it will be first-come, first-served, so try to sign up ASAP!

Once we move to morning workouts, Fridays will be designated "Friday Fun days." We will play games like Sharks and Minnows, Animal Ball, cannon ball contests, free time, donut days, etc. In addition, I always try to incorporate something "fun" into every one of my practices. After all, that is the most important part of summer league swimming!

At swim meets, the main goal of our swimmers should be achieving best times. Winning their heat or winning the meet overall comes second to getting best times. We will be keeping the best times sheets that you had last year, and if a swimmer achieves 8 or more best times over the course of the season, he or she will receive a prize! It is my personal goal to make sure every swimmer swims every single event at some point over the course of the season. It is good for swimmers to get used to the idea of swimming different events and events that may be challenging for them. I don't want anyone to get in a rut of swimming the same events meet after meet...that gets boring!

At swim meets, it is very important for every swimmer to come and talk to one of the coaches before AND after each race. That way, we can give them pointers before their races and valuable feedback afterwards. Kids should also get in the habit of asking their timers for their times after they swim...that gives them the knowledge of what their best times actually ARE and shows us that they are consciously trying to improve their times. Checking in with us before/after their races is a must!

Eating and drinking the right things while at swim meets is very important. There may be many meets this summer where the weather is hot and dehydration is a definite possibility. Swimmers should NOT be drinking soda of any kind during a swim meet. Water or sports drinks such as Gatorade or Powerade rehydrate the body and help replenish electrolytes. Pop and coffee only further dehydrate them. Also, eating carbs and protein is important. Candy, junk food, etc. will only lead to a sugar high and a large crash at an unpredictable time...maybe right before the race!

Private lessons can be very beneficial in improving stroke technique. This year, we have a binder in the front office of the pool with available private lessons from all of the coaches. Each coach has a tab in the binder and you can flip through to look for days and times that work for you. Private lessons are 30 minutes long and cost \$20. In my experience, private lessons are the fastest way a child can improve his or her strokes. The one on one attention is invaluable and the kids seem to really enjoy it!

Again, I am so excited to begin the season. I look forward to meeting everyone next week and getting started! I will give my email address out to all of you and I hope you will email me with any questions or comments throughout the season!

Now I will say a little bit about Chris Bendix, our full-time assistant coach, since he is still at college until next Monday. Chris is just finishing up his freshman year at Whitman College, where he is planning on majoring in philosophy or English. Before going to college, Chris swam for Bellevue Club and Eastside Catholic High School. I had the pleasure of watching Chris compete at the NW Conference Championships this past February - I got to see him crush the old Whitman record for the 1,600 yard freestyle and become the new record holder. He was also a finalist in the 200 yard breaststroke. Chris is dedicated to teaching good technique and I feel lucky to have him on our team.

Now Danica and Alison are going to give you a brief introduction to their swimming/coaching experience and then we will be around to answer your questions. Thank you!