

The Red & Black

A look at potential standouts in the 2018 Georgia swimming class

Michael Hebert | Sports Editor Jul 9, 2018 Updated Jul 9, 2018



Georgia swimming and diving head coach Jack Bauerle smiles while watching his team during their meet against Emory University at the Gabrielsen Natatorium on Saturday, Jan. 28, 2017 in Athens, Ga. (Photo/Thomas Mills)

Georgia swimming head coach Jack Bauerle will introduce 20 new members to the team for the 2018 season.

In past seasons, Georgia has seen success from its freshman performers, including the likes of Javier Acevedo, among others.

Bauerle will hope for similar success from this year's group, as the Bulldogs hope to continue to build off their 10th place finish in NCAA's from both the men and women's sides.

Here is a look at some of the freshmen who could make big contributions this season:

Eva Merrell - Merrell, a native of Newport Beach, California, was the No. 1 recruit in the nation for the class of 2018, according to swimswam.com. Merrell attended Crean Lutheran High School and was a member of the US National and Junior National teams.

She excels in sprint events, specifically the 50-meter freestyle event, where her personal best is 22.26 seconds. For a Georgia team that needed better performance from its sprinters, Merrell could be a viable asset in that area.

Andrew Abruzzo - Abruzzo is a native of Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, and is the No. 16 recruit in the nation for the men's side of the class of 2018. He attended Germantown Academy and won the 400, 800 and 1500-meter freestyle events at the 2017 FINA Junior World Swimming Championships.

Abruzzo's biggest asset for Georgia is his long-course swimming, with his best being in the 1000-meter freestyle with a time of 8:56.26.

Dakota Luther - Luther is the daughter of former US Olympian Whitney Hedgepeth. She hails from Austin, Texas, and is coached by former US Olympian and three-time medalist Brendan Hansen.

She holds the Texas High School record for the 100-meter butterfly with a time of 52.27 seconds. With her background and speed in short-distance events, Luther could be another asset, along with Merrell, in the sprint events.

Caleb Harrington- Harrington is a familiar last name to Georgia swimming, and his older sister, Lauren Harrington, was an All-American swimmer that helped the Bulldogs to straight national championships in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 seasons.

The younger Harrington has made a name for himself also. As a four-time Tennessee state champion in the 50-meter freestyle, 100-meter butterfly (two times) and the 100-meter freestyle. His best times include 23.60 seconds in the 50-meter freestyle and 52.63 seconds in the 100-meter freestyle. He looks to help Georgia in the sprint events.

