

North Metro Staff

We are here to support your needs. If your questions are related to workouts, meets, events, goal setting and other swimming related needs, please contact one of the coaches. For all questions related to administrative, such as dues, safety or policy issues please contact Liz Starke.

Liz Starke- Director of Communications & Swimmer Development



She started swimming in 1st grade when she brought home a flyer from school. Originally she started swimming with the former Northern Lights Aquatics. During her age group career she achieved many state podium finishes, including multiple first place finishes and a highpoint awards. As a senior swimmer she followed Coach Dave from Northern Lights to the Great Wolf Swim Team in 2004. She swam on Great Wolf from 2004-2008. During that time she achieved high school All-American status, multiple high school records, Great Wolf Records, and participated in many Jr. Nationals. After graduating high school in 2008 she went to Florida Atlantic University on a division one scholarship. During her time on the FAU swim team she achieved senior national times, as well as broke a school record in the 100 butterfly. She obtained degrees in international business & trade as well as marketing, and minored in business law. After graduating college she moved back to Minnesota and eventually found her way back to the Great Wolf Swim Team!

Contact her at liz.starke@greatwolfswim.org

Coach Dave grew up in Anoka MN. While in high school he was an active high school swimmer. During his time on the team he set school records in the 200 and 500 free. After high school he swam at the University of Minnesota where he graduated with a degree in Physical Education with a minor in Child Psychology. During the summer months he helped start the ABC Aquatic Club based in Anoka, Blaine and Coon Rapids pools.

During his summer break Dave then had the honor of becoming the manager and assistant coach at the Olympic Training Center in the summer of 1979. While he was at the OTC he worked with multiple Olympians and Olympic coaches. After college Dave interned with George Haines, who had an athlete on the Olympic team that year (George had many Olympians throughout his career), and was a 7 time coach of the Olympic team. Soon after Dave took what he had learned from his time with George and became the head coach of the Bloomington Aquatic Club where he coached for 6 years. He had transformed the program from a struggling program to age group champions with multiple participants in junior and senior nationals. Then after teaming up with John Thomas, Dave ran the first coach owned club in Minnesota, Marauder Aquatic Club where once again he lead a team to clench another age group title, and qualified numerous swimmer to junior and senior nationals as well as Olympic Trails. Dave then had the incredible opportunity to coach at the then new pool at the University of Minnesota when they open their doors in 1991. He was recruited to coach the senior swimmers of the Gopher Swim Club. As he previously had with other team he again lead his swimmers to senior nationals. One athlete in particular, Heidi George, went from state caliber to 12th in the world under Dave's direction. Dave then took a short lived retirement from swimming to focus on business, but quickly changed his mind and returned to his home roots to coach Northern Lights Aquatics. (Formerly ABC Aquatic) Then in 2004 he along with Coach Carl started the Great Wolf Swim Team, with just a handful of swimmers. In just a few short months Dave had grown the team into one of the top teams in the state with multiple state and national records. He also had Olympic Trial qualifiers in 2008 and 2012. Dave is proud to say that countless numbers of his swimmers have gone on to swim in college with three of them winning an NCAA individual title and one swimmer setting an NCAA record which stood for 13 years.

Dave beliefs in the long term development of his swimmers.

Contact him at davidbentz@aol.com

Coaches

Dave Bentz Head Coach National Team Coach



North Metro Staff

Zack Strumbell Varsity Team Coach



Zack grew up in Eveleth Minnesota. He learned to swim because his parents could not. He started taking lessons at the local YMCA, and then after watching his sister join the school swim team, he and his twin brother decided they would give it a try. He swam for Eveleth Gilbert High School under the direction of Minnesota Hall of Fame coach Gordy Rodby. While swimming in high school Zack earned 4 individual Minnesota state titles, was a 3 time Scholastic All-American, and a 2 time All-American. He also broke many high school records (which are still there today), the high school class A state record in the 200 freestyle, and his senior year was named Minnesota Swimmer of the Year.

Zack started his club swimming journey as a 13-14 year old for Dave Bentz at the Great Wolf Swim Team. While swimming for Great Wolf Zack was top 16 in the 50 free in the 13-14 age group, and along with his teammates also broke 2 national age group records for relays and re-wrote the record books for Minnesota club swimming in numerous relays for 13-14 and 15-16. He qualified for Junior Nationals as a 15 year old, and had the chance to travel around the country going to many national and international level meets. Zack went on to swim for California Polytechnic State University where he broke 3 school relay records and also the 100 butterfly record, and qualified for the U.S. Open the summer after freshman year.

He started his coaching journey in October of 2011 under the direction of Dave Bentz. He now is the assistant national coach. Zack has taken part in coaching swimmers who have ranked the top in the nation, set Minnesota club state records, achieved multiple Minnesota state titles, qualified for Junior Nationals, and was ranked number one in the country. Zack is fortunate enough to say he coaches for the team that taught him so much, not only about swimming, but about life. Zack is lucky to have such a great group of kids to work with and looks forward to what is possible in the future. "The only way of finding the limits of the possible is by going beyond them into the impossible"

Contact him at zstrumbe@gmail.com

Carl Schulze- Age Group Coach

Carl simply loves coaching, and is the main reason he has been a coach for over 30 years. Carl first started out as a junior high swimmer at Mounds View high school under the legendary Jim Brobin. During this time he learned about Jims insisted commitment to high standards which created an incredible team to be a part of. Carl then moved on to college where he picked up coach at a local YMCA. Despite a lucrative engineering degree he continued to coach. He decided to move on to teach science, but remained a coaching for Northern Lights Aquatics in the north metro. During his time at NLA he coached multiple state top-eight finishers, state champions and state high point winners. Carl then decided to join Dave in starting the Great Wolf Swim Team. Since its inception in 2004 Carl has coached state top-8 finishers and state champions. He also had many swimmers that moved on the set national records. His success has come due to innovative work with strokes, turns, starts and his commitment to pushing his swimmers to their highest standards.

Contact him at cfs-schulze@Comcast.net



North Metro Staff

Coach John began swimming at St. Paul Highland Park High School. In the short time there he qualified and placed in the state meet. Upon graduation he attended Gustavus Adolphus College, where he practiced in one of the last 20 yard pool in the state (with no goggles because they had not been invented). In his junior year he became the MIAC champion in the 50 free. Graduating with a degree in health and physical education, he went on to teach and coach at Burnsville High School and work with the local AAU team. During his first season, one of his high school boys finaled in the 50 and 100 free at the state meet. A few years later one of the boys on his club team became the first high school swimmer to break 2 minutes in the 200 IM. Deciding it was time to move on, he went to the Mounds View Swim Club where he coached Dave Bentz(Coach Dave). After a couple of years, John retired from swimming to pursue other endeavors and raise a family. A short time later he got bit by the coaching bug, getting back into it at the Bloomington Aquatic Club with Coach Dave. While there he returned to high school coaching with Edina Girls team. During his 5 year tenure, they won the state meet 3 times, he was named coach of the year, one of his swimmer won 4 consecutive 100 butterfly championships, and another broke the national high school record in the 100 breast. After Bloomington he moved to the Marauder Aquatic Club where he helped that team win a state age group championship. (Shortly after his departure one of his boys broke the high school butterfly record that still stands). John went to work at the Saint Paul Hotel, as a concierge, where he met many incredible people including Bill Murray, Margaret Thatcher and Meryl Streep, to name a few. In 2010 John became the summer program director and head swimming coach of the University Club in St. Paul. Shortly after, he and Dave, once again connected, becoming a coach on the Great Wolf Swim Team.

John's looking forward to taking all the swimmers to a place they never thought possible. It's all about finding a way no one ever imagined. He builds great confidence in his swimmers through insistence on proper technique and race strategy.

Contact him at ibejw@hotmail.com

John Thomas Age Group Coach



Chip Fechter- Age Group Coach

Chip is one of the top developmental swimming coaches in the United States. Over the past 40 years, he has been able to identify and developed some of the best swimmer in the country. Many of the swimmers on teams chip has coached started out at the Pups level. With a progressive nurturing style, his swimmers learn the basics of competitive strokes and develop a love for the sport that have produced numerous national age-group champions, junior national champions and swimmers, senior national swimmers and Olympic Trial qualifiers. Cop has also coached at the high school level with many swimmers achieving All-American status.

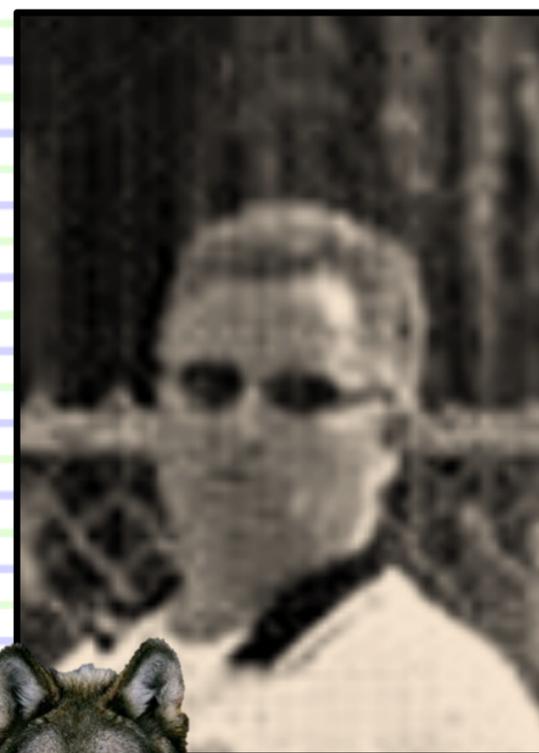
Contact him at chip.fechter@gmail.com



North Metro Staff

Blair Eckstrom- Age Group Coach

Growing up in Marshall, MN Blair was a part of the Marshall Meters swim Club where his mother was a coach. He has been swimming and coaching ever since. Before coaching for Great Wolf Blair coached at Northern Lights Aquatics, where he helped many age group swimmers to reach state finals. He then moved on to coach Mounds View Swim Club and Tsunami swim club during this time he had many swimmer win state titles, participate in junior and senior nationals. Many of his swimmers have done on to achieve division 1 college scholarships at top name universities. He then moved on to the Great Wolf Swim Team. Blair loves to correct stroke mechanics and has a passion for teaching his swimmers to swim correctly. Blair loves to combine his knowledge and experience with his wit and humor. Contact him at blair.eckstrom@gmail.com



Whitney Clark- Age Group Coach

She began swimming competitively in fifth grade when she joined a local age group team in Iowa. After moving to Minnesota she started working for our swim lesson program Swim America. In the fall of 2010 she started coaching our Pups group. In the spring of 2011 she became a site supervisor for Swim America, and moved up to coaching our trackers team. She is currently pursuing a degree in elementary education at St. Cloud State. She is excited to help her kids improve, be competitive and get excited to swim. Contact her at coachwhitney@greatwolfswim.org

North Metro Staff

Bethany Dickert- Age Group Coach

Coach Bethany started swimming competitively at age seven with the Burnsville Swim Club. She moved with her family at thirteen to Monticello where she swam for the Monticello Swim Club and then the Monticello High School Girls Team. Her favorite event was the 500 Free in high school. In college, Coach Bethany swam with Hamline University as a long distance swimmer.

Bethany started coaching in the summer of 2009 with the North Suburban Makos where she focused on stroke technique and endurance training. For the past two years Bethany has been the assistant coach of the Spring Lake Park High school teams working extensively with the JV group.

Contact her at bethany.a.dickert@gmail.com

