

## SWIMMER PROFILE: EMILY MEYER

By  
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Aside from taking a one-year break after college, Emily Meyer has been involved in swimming or coaching most of her 31 years. A competitive swimmer since the age of 5, she swam on club teams throughout childhood, swam for her high school, and then for Marymount University, in Virginia.

Born and raised in Maryland, Emily relocated to Peachtree City with her husband, Jared, in 2015. She had discovered U.S. Masters Swimming (USMS) prior to the move, so when they landed in a home across the street from the Kedron Aquatic Center, in Peachtree City, it didn't take long for the former collegiate swimmer to find the Southside Seals Masters team. She had been working from home as an interior designer and swam

during lunchtime at the conveniently-located Kedron pool, so when she learned about the Seals, she joined. One year ago, Emily became their coach. "Up until last summer, the girl that was coaching was actually (former USMS President) Rob Copeland's daughter, Meghan. I became really good friends with Meghan outside of the pool as well. After she moved, she asked if I would want to coach, and since I had been with the team for a little while, I knew the people, and she had faith in me that I could do it," she explained.

This year, at the urging of Georgia Masters Board of Directors member and Southside Seal teammate, Karol Welling, she joined the board and became co-coach's Chair (along with Star Brackin). She isn't yet certified as a coach, so she will make it official by earning her USMS Level 1 Coach certificate. As she explained about her new board position, "Karol is very convincing... It's a way to help out with something that feels natural to me... I think I will at least do just the first [certificate], because I feel like you have a different relationship with swimmers when you're in the pool versus when you coach. I feel like we didn't have that many triathletes when I was swimming, or I just don't remember, but we

have so many triathletes [now]. Our Masters team is super laid back, so that makes it easy.”

Curious about the transition from swimming to coaching, I asked Emily what she enjoyed most about coaching as well as her greatest challenges. She replied, “Over the years in swimming, especially in high school and college, my coaches were my favorite coaches, and I think I realized that I wanted to give back like they gave to me.” She has especially enjoyed helping the less experienced swimmers work through and overcome obstacles, and then seeing their improvement over time.

The challenges Emily has experienced while coaching include, “Trying to figure out how to run three different levels of swimmers in practice. During the winter when high school is there, we only have two or three lanes, and so trying to squeeze everybody in, especially when there’s 10 or so people that would show up. Having to coach and learn; and, adapt myself to who was there at the time—more so just trying to figure out the different swimming ability levels. Somebody like Rob who has been swimming his whole life; I can just throw out a set and they know what to do. Then, there’s the next tier down who can swim, but they’re not super confident in reading the clock or making sure they are counting the right way. And, then there are the triathletes who are used to training completely different. They may not know how to read the clock... things that you take for granted when you swim your whole life...”

Another challenge was the COVID pandemic. “Coaching was my only secure outlet that I knew I had each week before all this was happening, so that was really like I need to go, I need these people... It was the only thing we had that was routine... coaching was my outlet.”

One of the reasons Emily doesn’t swim on a consistent basis is the time constraints between her full-time day job, coaching in the evenings, and her family life, which includes Jared and their young daughter, Josie. As she explained, “Before I was coaching, I was in the pool, and then we had [Josie] after summer in 2020. I [swam] while I was pregnant, and then I got to some point where I couldn’t even flip turn, because my stomach was so big,” she laughed. “[Josie] takes up my life right now... [Swimming] is always going to be part of my life whether it’s coaching or being in the pool... I’m back to full-time work now, and my daughter is at Montessori school full time, so we are back to a routine again...there is more time to focus on myself and working out and/or swimming. I think in the future, I would like to get back in the pool, but I feel like I can’t put a date on it.”

Meanwhile, Emily stays in shape by running and working out in their basement. (She has run three marathons, but a fourth is not in her future, she said emphatically!)

When Emily returns to competition in the future, you will find her in the 100 and 200 breaststroke races, her collegiate specialty events. “My goal would be just to get back in—I’ve never been a super competitive kind of person, so I think if I were to get back in, it would just be to feel the water and be back with what I have loved my whole life.”

It was that love for the water that inspired her to return to swimming following her post-college break from the pool. “I missed the team aspect of swimming, I missed being in the swimming shape that I was; and I think just the people, and being in the pool atmosphere...”

When I asked what she enjoys most about swimming, she said, “There are so many things—Probably the friends I’ve made over the years from it.”

Emily especially enjoys Masters, because, “Well, just the easy going... I feel like we always joke at practice. I’ll give them a set and they are like, ‘No, I’m not going to take that set,’ and I’ll go, ‘Well, it’s Masters!’ When you’re younger and you swim, it’s very competitive and it can be kind of political, and I think looking back I loved my swimming career in high school and college, but Masters is just totally different and laid back. I’m sure there are some people that are super competitive. When I went to my first meet, I was not expecting to hit my college best times, but I think maybe it’s just the atmosphere is so different that I was just so laid back. So, I was like all right, I’m just going to get up there and do this, and it worked!” It was that experience of matching her collegiate race times with her mom watching from the stands that proved to be one of her favorite Masters memories.

What was Emily’s *favorite* Masters memory? “Probably when I realized that the team would swim for 45 minutes, and then we would get out and go to Wendy’s for Frosties. That’s when I knew that these are my people.”