

Alexa Kutch Local Swimmer Goes to Olympic Trials



When it comes to the swimming world, Alexa Kutch, says it best. “The friendships, socialization and camaraderie are what the sport is all about.” Now headed to the Olympic Trials in Omaha, Nebraska for the June 4th meet where she will compete in the 100 backstroke, Alexa reflects on her swim career and the time spent training for this opportunity of a lifetime – challenging at times due to COVID. But in the end, this Easton, PA native is ready to set her mark!

Alexa remembers when she first heard the words “Olympic Trials.” At the tender young age of seven, she remembers swim Coach Ed Black making a statement that she will never forget. ‘With hard work, you too could make it to the Olympic Trials.’ It was a dream and personal goal for Alexa, who started swimming competitively for Coach Black at the Easton Aquatic Club.

From there, Alexa had an illustrious swim career at Easton High School under the tutelage of Matt Ellis where she set individual school and district records in the 100 backstroke and free relays, and was the district champion in the 100 backstroke and 100 butterfly in her senior year, advancing to states all four years. She also achieved All-State and All-American status, which granted her induction into Easton Area High School's Wall of Fame. Alexa also swam for Coach Mike Ortiz at Lehigh Valley Aquatic Club where she competed in high profile meets including Middle Atlantic Long Course Senior Champs where she still holds the fastest long course 100 back time!

Alexa continued her swim career at Drexel University under Coach Adam Braun where she set team and conference records in the 100 and 200 backstroke and competed at the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) meet where she was awarded Rookie of the Year after winning the 100 and 200-yard backstroke events. By her senior year, Alexa was the first female in conference history to sweep the 100 and 200 back at four consecutive CAA swim championships, receiving a total of 14 gold, 3 silver and 1 bronze over the course of her college career. Alexa also owns the 26 fastest times in Drexel history in the 100 back and

200 back after competing at national competitions, including NCAA championships, the Toyota US Open, and the Phillips 66 National Championships. For her accomplishments, Alexa received academic all-American honors from the College Swimming and Diving Coaches of America and was nominated for the NCAA Woman of the year award in 2020.

During her junior year, Alexa realized her dream when she made an Olympic Trial Cut at the 2019 Winter Nationals in Greensboro, NC with a time of 1:02.36 in the 100-meter backstroke preliminaries that advanced her to A-finals where she finished eighth!

Prior to COVID, the average training day was intense, with double two-hour practices Monday through Friday. A three-hour practice waited for Alexa on Saturdays where it was a combination of swim, stretching and dryland.

According to Alexa “Once COVID hit in 2020, trials were postponed and we were sent home from school. It was disappointing, but I didn’t let it deter me.” With no access to a pool, Alexa continued to exercise, performing dryland exercises, walking and biking. “I didn’t get into a pool until June, joining the Emmaus

Aquatic Club (EMAC) in Allentown where I trained with other collegiate and area high school swimmers.”

Preparing for the trials is much different than college swimming. “College swimming is intense,” says the 2020 Drexel graduate, who was also a 2020 CAA female scholar athlete of the year and a three-time member of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* all area swimming and diving team.

For the Olympic Trials, the balance to keep in shape prior to trials is the perfect medium. Alexa continues to do lifting and cardio training in the morning and swims in the evening at the EMAC pool.

EMAC has been honored to have Alexa train with them, and now have her as part of the coaching staff. “Coaching vs. swimming is different. I did what I had to do when I swam, but I didn’t know mechanics. So, for example, how does an 8-year-old swim butterfly?” As a coach training for the Olympic Trials, Alexa is learning the anatomy of swimming, writing sets and helping swimmers with their stroke.

“I’ve become a better swimmer because of coaching.” This helps to fuel Alexa for the big meet. “I’m excited about what I can do at this meet, but I have no expectations. I’m just happy to have made it,” Alexa says, achieving a goal she set at the age of the swimmers she now coaches.

Pitch to Michael Blouse – Morning Call.