

## Women in Sport Week Celebration!

### Helen Kennedy, Head Coach at Trident Swim Club

I got involved in swimming because of my son. I taught swimming and lifesaving many moons ago during my college years, as well as coaching gymnastics. I ran a gymnastics club in Carrick on Shannon for thirty years but got back involved in swimming when my youngest son started swimming. One of the other mums encouraged me to do my coaching qualification; Level 1 & 2. After this we started helping out on deck with Trident swim club.

I met lots of wonderful coaches and officials who shared their knowledge and expertise along the way. When our head coach moved on, in 2019, we took on the role of head coach, jointly. It has worked really well as we offer different skill sets to the swimmers and the committee.

In 2021, I got the chance to complete my Level 3 Coaching Qualification via Swim Ireland's WIS Coaching & Mentoring Programme. Through this I met a great group of coaches that I could ask questions to, bounce ideas off and share knowledge with. Then in 2022, I began Swim Ireland's Female Coaching Mentoring Programme. It has been great meeting and chatting with the other coaches who have been involved in the sport for a long time.

The biggest thing I have gained is the confidence to have patience; times will come for the swimmers when all the processes/parts fall into place and we all (Coaches, swimmers, parents) have to have patience to allow this to happen. Our club, Trident SC, has gone from strength to strength and I look forward to seeing it continue to progress over the next few years!

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### Zoe Smyth, Assistant Coach at National Centre Dublin

I've been around swimming my whole life! Starting with swimming lessons, then representing East Cavan Swim Club. Along the way, I became a lifeguard and swim instructor, and once I finished swimming with my club, I became the assistant coach there.

During the first lockdown of Covid-19 I completely fell in love with coaching, and now I am the apprentice/assistant coach at the National Centre Dublin, with the primary focus on coaching the 'Project 28' Squad.

I have learned so much from doing this mentorship programme-but the one thing that stood out and has stuck with me is 'Figuring out about YOU! ! and finding what works for YOU! It's so important to be yourself and be your own person. It is much easier to bring your own personality to the table, as opposed to pretending to be someone that you are not. The world wouldn't be much fun if everybody was the same!

Another thing I'm realising through the mentorship is that you better get comfortable, being uncomfortable! In order to make things work there will be many times where you will have to step out of your comfort zone. We can only do so much planning and preparation but you have to expect the unexpected, while controlling the controllables and accepting the uncontrollables!

Advice I would give to others would be "try to understand that when you are tasked with responsibility, there is at least one person that thinks/believes you can do it! And that's all it takes".

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### Jade Murphy, Assistant Coach at National Centre Limerick

I originally swam with Sligo Swim Club during my school years and then moved to Limerick for University. I trained in Limerick with the National Centre Limerick under head coach John Szarnek, assistant coach Mikey McCarthy and S&C Coach Lorna Barry.

Fast forward a couple of years, I finished my swimming career and jumped straight into coaching, which I fell in love with from the beginning! I starting out coaching with Limerick Swim Club and now I'm lucky enough to coach with the club and be an assistant coach at the National Centre Limerick, working with some of Ireland's top swimmers!

The most important thing I've learnt from participating in the female coaching and mentoring program is the importance of collaboration and communication amongst coaches, having a network of coaches in which you can rely on. It's important not to be scared to ask other coaches about sets, or training plans or advice on how to handle situations, more than likely they will have dealt with similar in their coaching careers and have a wealth of knowledge which they are willing to share!