

Coe coach began swimming in Lake Erie

Written by Christine Bekebrede
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Brian Ruffles has been a swimmer his whole life and gets to continue that passion as head coach for the Coe swimming and diving teams.

Ruffles has coached swimming for six years and this year he was promoted to head coach for both the men's and women's squads.

Ruffles is from Buffalo, N.Y., which is where he gained his love of swimming.

"I took swimming lessons at a very young age," he said. "My parents' house was just off Lake Erie, so we would go down to the lake. My mom and dad got us involved in swimming."

But it wasn't until high school when he started to swim for competition.

"In high school I had a bunch of buddies on the team who talked to me about going out and I've been doing it ever since," he said.

Ruffles went to the State University of New York at Fredonia and earned a degree in mathematics in 2008.

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"It wasn't until my senior year of college that I really started to think about becoming a swim coach," he said, "just getting involved in all the aspects of coaching with recruiting with my old head coach, and just looking at training methods, and getting involved in that sport. It was all very intriguing to me and I wanted to learn more."

Ruffles attended Coe for graduate school for a Masters in Education and joined the Kohawks as an assistant coach.

Ruffles' coaching philosophy is simple: "You work hard to earn what you want."

He said the swimmers need to set goals. "I try to help teach swimmers that the harder you work the better chance you have towards reaching their goals," he remarked.

"You have a lot of personalities that you work with and learning what to say to certain types of athletes, to motivate them to get them to work harder, to swim harder, learning how to teach different skills to different mindsets is my biggest (challenge)," he said.

Ruffles' biggest rewards from coaching are the little moments after the race.

"The moment after a swimmer swims their race and the swimmer is walking back towards the coach after the race and they have this big smile on their face," he said. "No matter what age they are, it's a great feeling."

Ruffles is happy in his new position at Coe. "I got really lucky to get put into such a great position," he said, "I have an excellent assistant and an excellent diving coach and the administrators in the athletic department are extremely supportive."