



Craig Brown's coaching journey reaches another peak with Crean Lutheran

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Craig Brown's unique coaching career reached another peak Saturday, not far from one of his favorite destinations known for majestic views.

The Crean Lutheran girls swim coach guided the Saints, in only their sixth season as a program, to their first title at the CIF State Swimming and Diving Championships in Fresno, about two hours from Brown's beloved Yosemite National Park.

For Brown, 69, the title not only punctuated his fourth spring with the program but added to an already-diverse coaching resume that includes 14 national titles in Junior Olympics boys water polo, a state junior college title in men's swimming and four CIF-Southern Section titles with

the Saints.

From age-group water polo to high school and club sports to college swimming, Brown has experienced nearly all aquatics can offer at the local level.

"This is probably the biggest (accomplishment)," he said Monday.

"It's hard to say. To win NJO (National Junior Olympics) titles with your son, that's pretty big. To win a state championship at Fullerton College is big. To win the four CIF's.

"But for a small school, a new school, we're establishing the traditions. ... It's right up there."

Brown was again quick to credit his swimmers Saturday, praising their perseverance for capturing a state title after finishing second the year before to JSerra.

He also noted the point projections Crean Lutheran overcame entering the state meet and the Division 2 finals and the anxiety of **Katia Young's** swollen eye on the eve of the state final.

"We had lot of tough stuff to get through and came back," he said after the state meet at Clovis West.

He also applauded his assistant coaches, **Todd Brinker**, **Tara Bletcher** and **Melissa Wilson**.

Brown's praise comes with perspective. The Buena Park High graduate started his coaching career as an assistant in the early 1970s at Foothill under **Tom DeLong**.

He later coached the Sunny Hills boys swim team and the FAST swim club.

He also helped lead the age-group water polo program at the SOCAL club, where his son, **Brian Brown**, played before becoming a standout at Foothill.

Brown emerged from a break in 2011 to coach boys water polo for two seasons at Santa Margarita. He later landed at Crean Lutheran, where his daughter, **Junell**, is a senior. On the side, he works as a commercial real estate consultant.

But despite his stacked resumed, Brown plans to continue coaching at Crean Lutheran, where fall water polo and perhaps more peaks in swimming await.

“I could quit today and be well-fulfilled,” he said. “I still feel young. I think being on the deck, being involved with student-athletes keeps you young and I’ve been blessed to do that my whole life, with a few breaks, but not many.”

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