

Newport Beach's Merrell commits to Georgia



Newport Beach's Eva Merrell will compete in college for the Bulldogs. (Courtesy of Eva Merrell)



By **Matt Szabo**

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Newport Beach swimming standout Eva Merrell has verbally committed to the University of Georgia for women's swimming, she announced Tuesday.

Merrell, who has been on the U.S. national team, starred at Corona del Mar High as a freshman before taking her sophomore year off from high school swimming to focus on the Olympic Trials. As a junior, she transferred to Crean Lutheran. Last May, she helped the Saints win their fifth straight CIF Southern Section title, and third straight in Division 2. Merrell won the Division 2 individual titles in the 100-yard butterfly and backstroke, and was on Crean's winning relay teams in the 200 medley and 200 freestyle relay.

Merrell said Georgia was just a good fit for her.

"I loved everything," she said in a text message. "The coaching staff, the team, the campus. It all gave me an amazing feeling. I know my future will be bright there."

As a freshman, Merrell set CdM school records in the backstroke, butterfly and 100 freestyle.

She swims club for coach Todd Hickman at Aquazot Swim Club.

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