

## **Swim team members give lessons to children**

Coaches lead children to top of division **By Billy Byler** *Staff Writer*

Neighborhood swimming pools have long served as a pleasant escape from the summer heat. At Farmington subdivision in Evans, several high school athletes are taking that idea to the extreme.

**"This is my passion. Swimming is all I know,"** said Josh Andrews, a rising senior at Evans High School and an assistant coach on the Farmington/Northwood Swim Team.

Andrews is one of four young adults who make up the swim team's coaching staff, along with rising Evans senior C.J. Hendry and Evans graduates Pam Splichal and Ashley Scott. Scott and Splichal were once swimmers on the Farmington squad and are giving back to the neighborhood by teaching the next generation of swimmers. Hendry and Andrews both compete and coach on the team.

**"It doesn't interfere that much,"** Hendry said of her swim workouts and her duties as a coach. **"I've been part of Farmington since I was 8 years old. I've known the families all along, and now I can coach their kids."**

Scott, who serves as head coach of the 140-member swim team, took over last season. The four coaches meet daily to instruct their swimmers on the basics of swimming and prepare them for dual meets in the CSRA Swim League.

Scott said the coaching duties can take up as much as 25 hours per week. Andrews also offers private lessons. With all the work that's done, many parents said they're appreciative.

**"It's a wonderful summer program,"** said Mary Slaughter, who has two children swimming at Farmington. **"It gets my kids up and out. They're not in front of the TV."**

The neighborhood team started in 1997 as a member of the CSRA Swim League's Division 1, the smallest of the three divisions. Almost a decade later, the team has climbed to the highest division and is undefeated this season.

Farmington's next meet will be against annual powerhouse Fermata.

**"Fermata is known as the best team around,"** Scott said. **"I think it's going to be close. It's much more fun when you have a really tight meet. The more cheering, the better."**

As heated as the competition is, Scott said it's not all about winning and losing.

**"We've had little kids dive into the water and end up in a totally different lane. The 6 and under boys are the hardest to handle,"** she said as a cluster of boys waddled by acting like ducks at a practice Tuesday. **"They have so much energy, it's sometimes hard to keep them occupied."**

Though the oldest competitors such as Andrews and Hendry consistently win at the highest level, the team also has room for those younger and smaller. Two 4-year-olds are part of the team, in addition to Paddy Wolford, a 6-year-old boy with cerebral palsy.

**"He couldn't do much at first, but now he can swim a whole lap,"** Andrews said.

Tuesday's showdown against Fermata will start at 6 p.m. at the University of South Carolina Aiken pool.