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Sophia Kosturos - An athlete whose goal is to treat athletes

By Jon Kingdon



Photos UCLA athletics

Going back to the 1960 Olympics when a 13-year-old from Lafayette, Donna de Varona, swam in Rome, there have been numerous women from Lamorinda who have found great success in the pool in swimming, diving, water polo and synchronized swim.

Continuing that tradition at UCLA is junior Sophia Kosturos - a graduate of Miramonte High School. At the Pacific XII conference swimming tournament, Kosturos swam in three individual (50 free, 100 free, 100 back) and four relay races (back stroke in the 200 and 400 medleys and 200 and 400 free style) amassing a personal best 48 points for the Bruins. "That was the most points I ever scored, and it was the first time I had made it into the final eight in a race," Kosturos said.

Kosturos, whose goal has been to advance to the NCAA championship, missed by one spot as a freshman and this year came agonizingly close to moving on in her best event, the 100 backstroke. "It was a bummer that my event had so many top competitors in it," Kosturos said. "I missed it by 3/100's of a second which was so small, it was very frustrating. The cutoff to make it to the NCAA was at 40 and I finished in 41st."

Like so many growing up in Lamorinda, Kosturos began swimming at the age of 6 with rec swimming, in her case at the Orinda Country Club which she participated in through the eighth grade. "It was a lot of fun training with people that would become my best friends, spending the whole summers with them," Kosturos said.

"It sparked my love for the sport and allowed me to make friends who remain my friends to this day. I first became friends with Katrina Drake and Giorgio Allessandria when we were young and now we're attending UCLA where I am swimming, and Katrina plays for the women's water polo team and Giorgio plays for the men's water polo team."

After her time at the Orinda Country Club, Kosturos went on to swim with Orinda Aquatics and then with the Crow Canyon Country Club along with swimming at Miramonte. Despite no longer swimming for OCC, Kosturos served as a swim coach there every year through high school: "I attribute much of my success in the pool to my OCC Coach Steve Haufler. He taught me how to be the swimmer I am today."

Kosturos still holds the California high school record in the 100-yard backstroke set in 2019 and now has two school records at UCLA in the 200 and 400 medley relays.

Kosturos, who describes herself as a sprinter, specializing in the events up to 100 yards, has shown a lot of improvement, dropping half of a second in the 50 free event. "That may not seem a lot but in the 50 free it's a lot," Kosturos said. "I'm hoping for the NCAA to make the 100 individual medley an event which was particularly big at the OMPA and is why I'm so good at it and why I love it so much. It's just a full-on sprint."

She attributed her overall improvement at UCLA to the weightlifting program that the team does multiple times a week, something that is not recommended for high school swimmers as their bodies are still developing. "It has helped me a lot as I have gotten so much stronger, mostly in my arms along with improving my technique," Kosturos said.

A psycho-biology major, Kosturos was a CSCAA Scholar All-American First team in 2020-21 and is planning on a career in sports medicine. Whether she decides on going to medical school or physician's assistant school, Kosturos plans on working with athletes. "I'm really interested in treating injuries having suffered injuries that I have had to deal with and going to rehab every week for preventive and rehab treatment," Kosturos said.

Her appreciation for the proper treatment of athletes goes back to her time at Miramonte when she was treated by the Matadors' trainer, John Grigsby. "I had a bad ankle during my club season, and he helped me

a lot. He is a great athletic trainer and a great guy."

Kosturos and her family have been something of an institution in Lamorinda and Miramonte. Her parents were both Miramonte graduates with her father, Tommy, going on to play football and rugby at Cal and her mother, Katie, running track at Chico State. According to Kosturos's uncle, Kendall Langan, there are 20 members of the extended family that graduated from Miramonte. The family was also very much involved with the OMPA meets as Kosturos' grandfather and uncle were both OMPA directors at some point.

Contrary to Thomas Wolfe's novel, "You Can't Go Home Again," Kosturos is still a Lamorindan at heart. "I loved my childhood and growing up in Lamorinda because my parents grew up here as well. With my parents being athletes and having graduated from Miramonte, I loved that I was able to follow their path, going on to UCLA. I love being able to say I'm from the area and will always cherish my childhood years there. With so many of my family in the area, I'm sure that they'll never get rid of all of us throughout Lamorinda."



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Reach the reporter at: sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com

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