

**Saint Stanislaus College Rock-a-chaws  
Swimming Championships  
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The sport of swimming is the youngest sport on campus sanctioned by the MHSAA. The governing body for high school athletics did not officially sanction the sport until 1992. Prior to 1992, the sport was solely governed by the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and later US Swimming.

The Olympic-size pool was built in 1970 following the destruction caused by Hurricane Camille. Brother Albert Ledet, SC, was the first coach of the swim team in 1970. Despite the state not sanctioning the sport, the Rocks hosted the first interscholastic state tournament at the pool in 1972.



The Rocks won the state diving championship and placed third in swimming. Swimming was dropped after that year as the state did not sanction the sport and some schools still did not allow black students to participate in AAU sports.

The sport was revived and sanctioned by the MHSAA beginning in 1992 and SSC followed suit and brought the team back. The state sanctioned an all-encompassing classification meaning that all schools, no matter the size, competed against each other.

Leslie Thornton, a former Olympic swimmer for France who was on staff at SSC, coached the team from 1992-94 followed by Shawn Tusa in 1995. Donald Sherrill won the state title in the 50-yard freestyle event in 1993 to become the program's first medal recipient. In 1996, Joe Gex (SSC '88) took over the program and coached the team to the first team title in program history when the 1996 and 1998 teams won the Gulf Coast championship, was South State runner-up both years and finished fifth in 1996, 10<sup>th</sup> in 1997 and seventh overall in the state championship.

Due to the increasing participation by schools in the sport, the MHSAA created two classes – Class I and Class II – in 2011 and that classification system remains in effect today. The Rocks compete in Class I. In 2011, the Rocks finished as state runner-up in Class I. In 2016, the team finally broke through to claim the Class I state championship with Aaron Levenson as coach.

**Despite the youth of the sport, the Rocks have been relatively dominant in the pool. The championships won by the Rocks in swimming include:**

- **1996 – Gulf Coast championship, South State runner-up**
- **1998 – Gulf Coast championship, South State runner-up**
- **2009 – South State runner-up**
- **2011 – Class I South State runner-up, state runner-up**
- **2015 – Class I South State runner-up, state runner-up**
- **2016 – Class I South State champions, state champions**