



Erik Johnson For Erik, speed has always been a part of his life, whether it was his times as a swimmer at the old high school pool or his current position of running the service department at Mason City Power Sports.

Erik Johnson, who now lives in Clear Lake, graduated from Albert Lea High School in 2000, where he participated in swimming for the Tigers. As an upperclassman, he was a sprint freestyler in the 50 and 100 yard events. He still holds the school record in the 100 freestyle. As a younger Tiger, his main events were the backstroke and 200 freestyle events. His favorite memory of his swimming career in Albert Lea was winning the Big Nine championship in 1999. “We had been undefeated in the conference since 1991 and then we lost three meets in a row at the end of the season but came back to win the championship,” he said. He credits his parents and his coach, Albert Lea High School Hall of Famer Jon Schmitz, as the most influential

people in his swimming career. His high school coach had high praises for Johnson. “He was one of the best sprint and mid-distance freestylers in the state of Minnesota,” Schmitz said. “He won individual championships and multiple sectional titles in freestyle events. He also earned All-State honors with a silver and two bronze medals at the state championships. “At the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, he got All-American status in the 100 and 200 Freestyle.” Schmitz also praised him for being an assistant coach for the Albert Lea girls’ swimming and diving program for 13 years, where he was instrumental in developing team conference champions and multiple individual All-Conference, All-State and All-American athletes. His advice for young athletes is to learn the craft. “Think critically and understand why coaches and leaders do what they do because there is always a reason,” he said.