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2007-2008 Girls Swimming Preview

By KEV HUNTER

Staff Writer

Since moving into their plush new pool at the start of the 2005-06 season, the North Penn girls swim team has never lost a home meet.

It doesn't look like that will change this year.

The Maidens go into the season stacked in every event, and are looking to three-peat as district champs, which would be a first for the North Penn girls swim program. It also could be another top-10 finish at states for the Maidens.

Following is a team-by-team look at the area:

CB West

Coach: Vibeke Swanson (17th season)

League: Suburban One League Continental Conference

Last year's record: 9-5

Key Returners: Adria Lamba, sr., fly/sprint free; Lucy Burrage, jr., diving; Angela Stoehr, so., distance free/back/IM; Ellie Nolan, sr., free/fly; Kelly Duggan, sr., breast/free

Outlook: The Bucks have enough stars on the roster to keep them competitive in the conference, and could be a team that is looking pretty strong by season's end.

Gwynedd Mercy

Co-Coaches: Heather Clarke (fourth season) and Julia Azeff (fourth season)

League: Catholic Academies

Last year's record: 3-7

Key Losses: Shelly Lawn, utility; Meg Paul, 200 free and 100 breast

Key Returners: Charlotte Greenwood, sr., 50 free/100 free; Molly Kristiniak, sr., 100 breast; Taylor Bettinger, jr., 200 IM/100 fly/100 free; Katie Hee, so., 50 free/100 free

Outlook: The Monarchs have a small team but are turning out to be strong across the board. They came in very prepared for the season.

Coach Clarke says: "We have good 200 free and 400 free relays, and the medley relay is coming along. We usually send about 10 girls to districts, and right now I can count on my hand 10 girls who could definitely go. States depends on relays."

Lansdale Catholic

Coach: Bob Birbrauer (12th season)

League: Pioneer Athletic Conference

Key Losses: Kathleen Schoenberger, all-district

Key Returners: Christine Gorge; Allison Husk; Kelsy Husk; Natalie Kulik

Key Newcomers: Bridget Augustine; Jessica Gidzinski; Victoria Gawel; Jennifer Matylewicz; Lauren McGeehan; Kerri Pavlik

Outlook: The Crusaders have a strong roster, bolstered by four returning district competitors.

Coach Birbrauer says: "The returners will serve as a great foundation for the new swimmers. In swimming, you always look for missing pieces of the puzzle to field a strong dual-meet team or challenge the best at the postseason championship level. This year's team may just be able to complete the puzzle. The girls team will be fun to watch this season."

North Penn

Coach: Kristen Bartlewitz (fourth season)

League: SOL National

Last year's record: 12-1 overall and 7-0 in the conference; won District One Class AAA title

Key Losses: Allison Warwick, 100 and 200 free; Lauren Baur, 100 fly and 400 free relay; Jill Morris, 100 free; Emily Stiles, 200 IM/100 back/500 free; Megan Sisko, free

Key Returners: Lauren French, sr., sprints/fly; Julia Tate, jr., diver; Nicole DiBonaventura, jr., free; Becca Hannings, sr., distance/free; Samantha Deanna, so., sprint/back; Heather Fellmeth, jr., sprint/free

Key Newcomers: Laurie McLaughlin, diver; Mary Morris, fr., utility; Jan Ikeda, fr., fly; Sarah Hannings, so., free; Shelby Rinker, jr., fly; Colleen Stiles, so., back

Outlook: The Maidens may have an even better team than the one that won districts the past two years, and this team may be good enough to be the first North Penn girls team ever to win three straight district titles.

Coach Bartlewitz says: "Our toughest two meets of the season are the last two, against Souderton and Emmaus. Our strength has always been our depth, and we have so many girls in all of the events. That's a good problem to have. We want to get better as the season goes on and see what our best lineup is for those last two meets."

Pennridge

Coach: Ryan Griffiths (second season)

League: SOL National

Last year's record: 3-7

Key Losses: Melissa Gallagher, distance free; Steph Lewis, utility; Breanna Oschlager, distance free; Megan Scover, diving

Key Returners: Lauren Maurone, sr., sprint free; Alicia Detweiler, so., sprint free; Ellen Leibenow, sr., fly

Key Newcomers: Megan Hahn, fr., distance free

Outlook: The Rams have an infusion of water polo players, and that should help round out the squad.

Coach Griffiths says: "Last year, we only qualified relays for districts but we have a lot of individuals who want to qualify as well this year."

Souderton

Coach: Todd Bauer (first season)

League: SOL Continental

Last year's record: 12-2 overall and 7-0 in the Continental

Key Losses: Monica Boyer, Eileen McHenry, Briana Pagliaro, Danielle Palski, Natalie Pyrz, Michelle Velez, Bryn Whitmire, Kendra Ridley

Key Returners: CJ Corcoran, sr.; Angela Severn, jr.; Katie Curzon, jr.; Paige Whitmire, jr.; Arielle Fry, jr.; Ashley Kichline, jr.; Mariel Kush, so.; Missy Doll, so.

Key Newcomers: Lauren Peachey, jr.; Rachel Peddie, jr.; Julia Penkal, jr.; Chloe Thomas, fr.

Outlook: The Indians should have a great chance to defend their conference title and also could challenge for the district title.

Coach Bauer says: "With a new coaching staff and some more state experience, this team will look to build on last year's success and reach our maximum potential."

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