
Area titans clash again Friday

By: **PHIL GIANFICARO** (Mon, Jan/28/2008)

When girls swimming powers **Souderton** and **North Penn** splash down at Rick Carroll Natatorium on Friday afternoon at 3:45, several top performers from last year's PIAA Class AAA state championships will be in the water.

A year ago at states, the Indians and Maidens did the Suburban One League proud, placing seventh and 10th, respectively, in the team standings, and combined to win five state medals and turn in six top-10 finishes.

And many of those talented swimmers will compete against each other this week in a non-league meet that, in swimming circles, will have the feel of Super Bowl Friday.

In the 50 freestyle at last year's state meet, Souderton junior Angela Severn medaled with a fifth-place finish, and Souderton junior Paige Whitmire and North Penn senior Lauren French also did well, placing 16th and 19th, respectively.

In the 100 freestyle, Severn placed ninth, missing out on a medal by .20 seconds, and French finished 14th.

In the 100 backstroke, Whitmire placed second, and her teammate, junior Katie Curzon, finished 32nd.

In the 100 breaststroke, Souderton senior C.J. Corcoran finished 30th.

In the 500 freestyle, North Penn senior Becca Hannings placed 23rd.

In diving, North Penn junior Julia Tate placed 10th.

In the 200 freestyle relay, Souderton placed third and North Penn fourth, separated by only .04 seconds. And both teams should again be that close this year, as the Indians return their team intact (Severn, Missy Doll, Corcoran and Whitmire), while the Maidens return three (French, sophomore Sam Deana and junior Nicole Dibonaventura).

In the 400 freestyle relay, North Penn returns French and Dibonaventura from a team that placed fifth.

While coach Todd Bauer's Indians (9-1) and coach Kristen Bartlewitz's Maidens (9-1) enter the meet with near-perfect records, history favors the Maidens. North Penn has won the past four meetings by margins of 17, 40, 54 and 28 points. The Indians' last win was a 99-86 verdict in 2003.

North Penn went on the road last year and dunked Souderton, 101-84. The teams split the 12 events, but the Maidens' depth proved to be the difference.

North Penn won two of the top three places in seven events, including first and second in the 200 individual medley, the 500 freestyle and diving, where Tate, who won, and Laurie McLaughlin, who finished second, return.

When they met two years ago at North Penn, a 113-73 victory by the Maidens, six pool records were set.

And for those wondering if the rivalry can get hotter, there's this: North Penn joins Souderton as a member of the SOL Continental next season.

Can you feel the water temperature rising already?

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