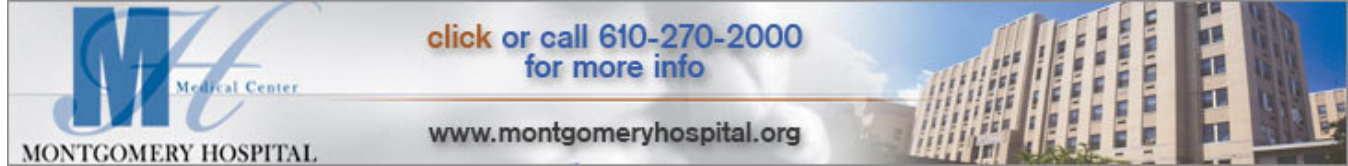


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North Penn is no shoo-in for district swimming sweep

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By DENNY DYROFF
For The Times Herald

North Penn will be looking to return from this weekend's District One Swimming Championships at LaSalle University's Kirk Natatorium with a pair of team titles. But, both the boys' and the girls' squads will face stiff tests from a number of qualified opponents.

In the Boys' Class AAA meet, another showdown between North Penn and Upper Dublin is expected. North Penn had a string of consecutive district titles that lasted almost two full decades until Upper Dublin snatched the title away last season.

Upper Dublin has the edge in relay seeds with a second, third and fourth compared to North Penn's third and two fourths. The Knights have more individual qualifiers in scoring positions.

North Penn's top seeds are Jack Else (third, 500 free; sixth, 200 free), Nick Ortlieb (third, 100 breast; eighth, 200 IM) and Stephan Hoch (fourth, 50 free; fifth, 100 fly). Other Knights seeded in scoring positions are Peter Kolokithias, Brandion Hatfield, Craig Hennessey, Sean McDonald and Aam Myzal.

Upper Dublin's pacesetters are Dan Fitzgerald (third, 200 free; fourth, 100 back), Chris Willcox (seventh, 200 IM), Calvin Starosta (sixth, 100 back; 13th, 100 free) and Sam Fearnside (16th, 100 breast).

"We're all tapering for districts," said Starosta, a senior. "This is the biggest meet of the year for us. We've all been working really hard."

Two local individuals who should fare extremely well in the two-day meet at LaSalle are Plymouth Whitemarsh's Alex Chialastri, who is seeded fourth in the 200 IM and ninth in the 100 fly, and Perkiomen Valley's Luke Quimby, who has the fifth seed in the 100 free and the 10th seed in the 50 free.

"I did a 2:01.1 in the IM at Suburbans (Suburban One League American Conference Championships)," said Chialastri, a PW junior. "It was my best time of the season. And, it was the time I wanted for my district seed."

Quimby, a Perk Valley senior, said "I had personal best times in both events at the Perkiomen Valley Invitational. I had good drops in both and these times are just what I was looking for to take into districts."

Wissahickon's top qualifiers are Adam Bossert in the 100 free and 100 breast and Andrew Nagleberg in the 50 freestyle.

In the Girls' Class AAA meet, there are quite a few teams that are loaded with talent, including Conestoga, Downingtown East, Council Rock North, Great Valley, Upper Dublin, Downingtown West, Pennsbury, Owen J. Roberts and West Chester Henderson.

All of them should vie for spots in the Top 10 at the two-day meet but it is unlikely that any have enough firepower or depth to keep Souderton from claiming the district title. In the crucial — and high-scoring — relays, the Indians have two number one seeds and a number three seed. They also have the top seed in four individual events along with a second and third seed.

If any team is going to offer a serious challenge to Souderton, it is likely to be North Penn. The Maidens are seeded second in two relays and fourth in the other. The Maidens also have 10 other girls seeded in scoring positions. Additionally, they received key scoring help from their diving squad which placed three in the top 12 at last weekend's district diving meet.

North Penn will be led by Nicole DiBonaventura, who is seeded fourth in both the 200-yard and 500-yard freestyle events, and Sam Deana, who is seeded fifth in the 50 free and 12th in the 100 backstroke. The Maidens will also be counting on scoring from Mary Morris, Jan Ikeda, Casey O'Neill, Heather Fellmuth, Colleen Stiles and Katie Patterson.

Upper Dublin has one of the meet's top individual prospects — Megan Lafferty. The Cardinals' stellar senior has the No. 1 seed in 100 butterfly and the No. 2 seed in the 100 backstroke. Other Cardinals with high seeds are Carolyn Meier, Kelly Ashmead and Erin Regan. Upper Dublin also has all three relays seeded in scoring positions.

Similarly, Methacton's three relays all fall into scoring range (top 16). The Warriors' top-seeded individuals are Blaire Kinsey (sixth, 200 IM; seventh, 100 breaststroke), Michelle Konkoly (50 free, 100 free) and Erika Rodman (200 free, 500 free).

Perkiomen Valley has both its freestyle relays seeded in the top 12. Individually, the Vikings' Bridget Hilferty has the fifth seed in the 200 free and the 11th seed in the 500 free.

The 200 free and the 500 free are also the events featuring some of the top area seeds in the Girls' Class AA meet. Upper Merion's Ann Wilcox is seeded seventh in the 500 free and ninth in the 200 free while her sister Courtenay Wilcox has the 10th seed in the 200 and the 15th seed in the 500.

The best area seed in the Class AA meet belongs to the Upper Merion's Taylor Mateja who is seeded first in the 100 backstroke. The Vikings' standout freshman is coming off a gold medal performance at the Suburban One League American Conference Championships.

In the Boys' Class AA meet, the area swimmers with the best seeds are Upper Merion's Jason Lameroux, who is sixth in the 500 free and 16th in the 200 free, and James O'Toole, who is seeded 11th in the 100 free.

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