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NP's Hannings finally qualifies for states

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By DENNY DYROFF
For The Times Herald

LANSDALE — Each year, only the top eight finishers at the District 1 Class AAA Diving Championships qualify for the PIAA Championships. North Penn's Shauna Hannings came very close to making the cut in 2008 and 2009 – but, each year, she was denied entry.

At this year district meet, which was held Saturday at North Penn High's Rick Carroll Natatorium, she had the right password and that granted her access to the elite eight. That password was “consistency”.

The Maidens' talented senior started well, finished well and posted solid dives in between. As a result, Hannings finished with a personal best score of 372.75 and placed sixth at the district meet. Pennsbury's Emily Howard took the 2010 title with a score of 417.40.

“I was 11th as a sophomore and 10th as a junior,” said Hannings. “Now, I've finally done it. It's hard to describe the feeling of making states after being so close the last two years. It's just a great feeling.

“All the other years, I was very nervous. Today, I was really calm. I knew I had to focus on each dive – one dive at a time. It was definitely my most consistent meet ever.”

Hannings stayed in the top eight the entire meet. After the five-dive preliminary round, the Maiden senior was in seventh place. She was still in seventh heading into the three-dive finals

“My best dives in the prelims were my reverse-and-a-half and my inward,” said Hannings. “I had good height on my reverse-and-a-half and my takeoff was good. When I got that takeoff, I knew I could nail it.

“In the semis, I did well with my inward one-and-one-half. I had been having trouble with it. But, today, it turned out really well. My back dive in the semis was good too. In the finals, I did my twister, a back-and-a-half and a back twister.

“With the twister, usually I float it. Today, I went over a little – but it was all right. My back-and-a-half usually is not my best but it was pretty good today with height and getting down. On my back twister, I had been going over a lot lately but it was straight up-and-down today.”

Two other local divers just missed making the cut for the state meet – Upper Dublin's Kelly Toner, who finished 10th at 353.95, and Plymouth Whitmarsh's Lize Keefer, who placed 11th at 351.50.

“This was a good day,” said Keefer, a Colonial sophomore. “I was really consistent through the whole meet and that was an advantage. I started out really well with my inward and all my other dives were pretty consistent

“On my inward pike, I got good height and I stayed over the board well. In the semis, I did a reverse, a twister and a back dive. In the finals, I did a reverse one-and-one-half, a back somersault with a layout and a half-twist. I was 21st last year, so I ‘m really happy with my progress.”

Toner, a Cardinal freshman, said, “My best dives were my double, my inward, my one-and-one-half and my reverse-and-a-half. I stayed tight on my entry on my inward and had good height on my double. My one-and-one-half felt good. I had a good kickout.”

Other area finishers at this year’s district meet were North Penn’s Heather Paolone (13th), Erica Elias (14th) and Ashley Liss (22nd), Plymouth Whitemarsh’s Michaela Lapent (17th) and Kathryn Garvey (31st) and Perkiomen Valley’s Cara Lord (23rd).

District 1 Diving Championships

At North Penn High

Girls’

Class AA

Grace Dalton (Villa Maria) 384.05, Natalee Szabo (U. Moreland) 349.50, Katie Kelly (Villa Maria) 330.55, Maggie Meade (U. Moreland) 304.80, Julia Reichert (Radnor) 290.30, Alicia Raffle (Nazareth Academy) 260.15, Krista Pelton (Radnor) 258.95, Brianna Fox (Springfield-Delco) 246.60.

Class AAA

Emily Howard (Pennsbury) 417.40, Katie Sheldon (West Chester East) 413.70, Lindsay Schmidt (Central Bucks South) 410.45, Kelly Thatcher (Downingtown West) 386.00, Rachel Saunders (Central Bucks West) 374.85, Shauna Hannings (North Penn) 372.75, Angelika McGhee (West Chester Henderson) 368.70, Kelly Quinn (Haverford) 361.25.

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