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Intelligencer's swimming notebook: Looking ahead to district meet

By: **Mark Oxenreiter**
phillyBurbs.com

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The season-long ride on The Road To Lewisburg is almost over. The final stop comes Friday and Saturday in Philadelphia, where the best-of-the-best will gather at La Salle University for the PIAA District One Swimming Championships.

All the times are in, the swimmers have been seeded and the psych sheets have been finalized. Those are the lineups, which list who swims in which heat, their lane assignments and where their times stand in relation to the entire field.

This week we're going to take a look at the top competitors from area schools, where they're seeded and even take a shot at making a few predictions.

The Golden Girls

Without question, area fans should be on the edge of their seats Friday for the AAA girls 50-yard freestyle. It may just be the best, closest and most competitive race on the entire two-day card.

Souderton's Missy Doll is the top seed with a time of 24.43 seconds; second is Melanie Busch of **William Tennent** at 24.48, while Doll's teammate, Chloe Thomas, posted a season's best of 24.68 and is third.

The pick? Busch spent two years mired behind another Indians swimmer, Paige Whitmire. It's tough to pick against Doll, but unless there's a dead heat, the nod goes to Busch in what would be her first of two individual golds; she's also top seed in the backstroke (58.61) with West Chester East's Christina Leander a microscopic second (58.66) and **Central Bucks East's** Laura Ahrens third.

Doll could have entered the 200 free where she would have been the second seed, but she opted for the 50 and the 100 free where she's the top seed. She'll likely get the gold.

North Penn should strike gold in the 100 butterfly in the person of top seed Jan Ikeda. As a team, the Maidens are seeded second in the 200 medley relay and first in both the 200 and 400 freestyle relays. Souderton and SOL National power Council Rock North will test them in all three.

Knights, Patriots, Rams

In boys' AAA, **North Penn** is second by less than 0.2 to Upper Dublin in the medley relay, but top seed in the 200 free relay and third in the 400 free relay by less than a second behind Boyertown and West Chester Henderson. Look for a North Penn sweep.

North Penn's Jack Else and Sean McDonald, who finished in a dead-heat for the win at the SOL Continental meet in the 200 free, are seeded fifth and sixth by about 1.5 seconds. They're also third and fourth in the 500 and both should challenge for a spot in the top three if not the win in each event.

CB East's Riley Weber caught a break when Pennsbury's Matt Chrzanowski elected to bypass the 50 free where he would have been top seed. As a result, Weber is, and the sophomore should get the gold. He is seeded fourth in the 100 free but if he nails his start and the final turn, he'll be tough to beat in the sprint for home.

Then there is a swimmer from a school that has come a long way in the last few seasons. Robert "Call me R.J." Phiambolis of **Penrridge** is seeded third in the individual medley and fourth in the breaststroke. He'll be top three in the IM.

Hello, Kramer

With the departure of **Lansdale Catholic** in 2008 for the Philadelphia Catholic League and District 12, the area's chances for gold in Class AA are slim in the boys' meet. In a down year for **Upper Moreland**, the Golden Bears' top hope is the 400-yard freestyle relay. It's seeded fourth and will swim in the final heat with the fastest qualifiers, but its seeding time is way off the pace of

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Still, the area does have a great chance for two golds thanks to, "The Man Without a Team," senior Michael Kramer of **Christopher Dock**. Just as he has the last two seasons he trained with his club team and qualified during a regular PIAA meet and is ready to try and earn a trip to Bucknell.

His best chance is in the 100-yard butterfly where he's the top seed by nearly two full seconds. However he's seeded second in the 100 free by less than 0.3 seconds, and he has always done his competitive best when he's been right next somebody who will push him all the way.

Among the girls, **Upper Moreland's** best hope rests with senior Sam Conard. She finished fourth in the 500 free at the SOL American meet in 5:38.27, nearly five seconds better than her previous best.

Bill Keen can be reached at 215-345-3184 or bkeen@phillyBurbs.com.

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