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DISTRICT 1-AAA GIRLS DIVING: North Penn's Elias, Liss qualify for states

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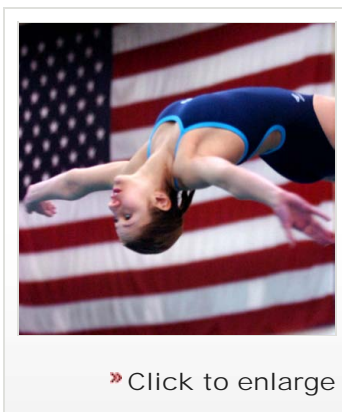
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By DENNY DYROFF
For The Reporter

FORT WASHINGTON — Each year, only the top seven finishers at the District 1 Class AAA Diving Championships qualify for the PIAA Championships. This year, three of the seven are divers from the area.



The top local finishers at this year's district meet, which was held Saturday at Upper Dublin High's natatorium, were North Penn's Erica Elias and Ashley Liss along with Upper Dublin's Corey Johnson. All three earned medals — and state meet berths.

West Chester Henderson's Angelika McGhee captured the gold medal with a score of 455.25. Central Bucks South's Lindsay Schmidt snagged the silver medal at 451.80 followed by Downingtown West's Kelly Thatcher (445.95).

The Maidens' Elias placed fourth with 434.05 points with Liss (433.45), Johnson (428.35), Central Bucks West's Rachel Saunders (419.00) and Haverford High's Kelly Quinn (415.00) filling the list of medal-winners.

Elias' dives in the prelims were one-and-one-half pike, double somersault pike, back somersault with one-and-one-half twists and back dive.

"I had a good hurdle on my double," said Elias, a junior. "And, I got around really well on my back somersault with one-and-one-half twists. In the semifinals, I did reverse pike, inward one-and-one-half tuck and back one-and-one-half with a

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half-twist. I liked my reverse pike best but they were all pretty solid.”

Her three dives in the finals were two-and-one-half tuck, reverse one-and-one-half tuck and inward pike.

“That was the best I ever hit a two-and-one-half,” said Elias. “I had good height and a really good entry. That’s what boosted my score. Then my inward pike was great. I ripped it for 9s.”

Liss, also a junior, said, “My best dives in the prelims were my back dive and my front double tuck. I had good height and good entry on my back dive and good height and a strong kickout on my double.

“In the semifinals, I did reverse pike, inward one-and-one-half pike and front one-and-one-half pike and they were all consistent. In the finals, I did a full twisting one-and-one-half, a front two-and-one-half and a reverse one-and-one-half. I had a good breakout on the two-and-a-half and good height and good entry on my last dive.”

Three other divers from the area were among the 16 finalists — Plymouth Whitemarsh’s Lize Keefer (10th, 400.95), Upper Dublin’s Kelly Toner (12th, 392.65), Wissahickon’s Meg Berardelli (13th, 385.75) and North Penn’s Heather Paolone (14th, 372.35).

“I was disappointed with my first couple rounds but then it got better,” said Keefer, a Colonial junior.

“I was very happy with my reverse one-and-one-half. It’s been a dive that I’ve been nervous about but it went really well. I stood up the takeoff really well and I was spinning fast.”

Berardelli, a Trojan freshman, said, “I liked my inward one-and-one-half pike the best today. I had a better start than usual – and a nice entry. My back dive was also strong.”

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