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Maidens' Tate toughing it out

By KEV HUNTER, Staff Writer

North Penn junior diver Julia Tate is one of the favorites to win districts later this month, and also make it back to states.

Right now, she is persevering through a knee injury.

"The kid wants to dive," Maidens coach Kristen Bartlewitz said after Tuesday's meet with Emmaus. "She wanted to get on the board (Tuesday). But no way were we gonna risk it. She has a possibility of winning a district title."

Tate has missed the last couple meets, and will probably miss the Suburban One League National Conference diving, but she was scheduled to have an MRI Wednesday, and is hoping to be back for districts.

She placed fourth at districts last year and went on to get ninth at states, Advertisement in just her first year of high school diving. She made a quick transition from gymnastics.

Tate owns the North Penn girls record at the Rick Carroll Natatorium, and is hoping to make it back to Bucknell University for the big meet. It's been a year to remember for North Penn diving.

"Laurie McLaughlin could make it (to states) too," Bartlewitz said. "And there's a possibility of two or three boys making it. I give a lot of credit to our diving coach, Sue McDonald. She always has kids go to states

in diving. No matter what happens, she always gets boys and girls divers to states. You can't ask anything else out of a diving coach."

Knights hitting the books

The Knights aren't just one of the fastest teams in the state.

They might also be one of the smartest.

"We have eight seniors who are going off to do some impressive things," North Penn coach Brian Daly said. "We have two seniors with perfect math scores on the SAT. We have guys looking at some of the most selective colleges and universities in the country and studying some very challenging majors. It's tough to graduate a group like this. As a coach, I've been kind of spoiled with great leaders, great athletes, kids who get great grades, and they've just been tremendous role models for our underclassmen and our community aquatic club."

And it could be a great finish for this senior class.

The Knights lost to defending state champ Emmaus on Tuesday, but have a reputation of quickly bouncing back from such adversity.

"Knowing this group, that translates directly into the next morning's practice," Daly said. "They come in, and they want to win - it's a competitive group."

This current North Penn girls team had never lost a home meet. The past four years, they were undefeated at home until losing to defending state champ Emmaus on Tuesday. "I think that's a testament to the kids on our team," Bartlewitz said of the home winning streak. "That's so impressive." ... The Knights' C.J. Millonig has been the team's symbol of work ethic. And it payed off for him with a district-qualifying time in the 100 back. "That's great to see because C.J. has improved so much this year. What he has added to the team is just outstanding - his contributions at practices and at meets." ... The Suburban One League National Conference Diving Championships will be held Wednesday and Thursday at Abington High School, with the swimming events held that Friday and Saturday at North Penn.

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