

Samantha Deana, North Penn**Posted by:** D Weaver, on 2/22/2008

Samantha Deana doesn't often find herself in the spotlight on a North Penn Maiden squad loaded with big name swimmers.

That figures to change real soon.

After capturing gold in the 50 free and the Maidens' 200 free relay at last Saturday's SOL National Conference meet, the North Penn sophomore's days of swimming under the radar are all but over. She also picked up a pair of silvers in the 100 backstroke and the 200 medley relay.

"When she won the 50 free at leagues and dropped some time in the 100 back, people are really starting to notice her," Maiden coach Kristen Bartlewitz said. "I think people know her by name now. She's phenomenal."

The Maidens' coach calls Deana a "critical piece of the puzzle on our team."

"I consider this whole group a puzzle – everyone has a spot, and everyone has to perfectly fit together if we want to win a district title," Bartlewitz said. "Everyone knows their roles. Everyone is a piece to the puzzle."

The Maidens' coach knew she was inheriting a talent when Deana came on board last year.

"We had been watching her for a while," Bartlewitz said. "She was a pretty big stud in her age group program with North Penn Aquatic Club. We knew she was coming. We know the kids who are coming."

As a freshman, Deana made an immediate impact. She was a member of the 200 free relay that not only broke the school record but also posted the fastest time in the state in 2007.

This year, Deana has not only medaled in leagues, she has scored important dual meet individual points.

"She's improved her endurance," Bartlewitz said. "Hence her time drops in the 100 free and 200 free."

"She's a critical part of the medley and 200 free relays."

Deana has dropped her times from last season. In the 50 free, she has a season best time of 24.71. Last year, her personal best was 25.08. Last year, Deana just barely broke a 1:03 in the 100 backstroke. This year at leagues, she swam a 102.5.

"She's going in unshaved, unrested with that time," Bartlewitz said. "I'm hoping she jumps in and cracks the top eight in districts."

Deana has been swimming competitively since her 8-and-under days with Nor-Gwyn.

"I just started because my friends did it," she said.

Deana also played softball and basketball, but swimming was her sport of choice.

"It kind of just came naturally to me," she said. "It wasn't like I had to work really, really hard."

When it came time to enter high school, Deana was ready.

"I knew a lot of the people on the team," she said. "And I would have already qualified for districts with the times I had."

"I don't really think there was as much pressure because we had a really strong team last year, so it was just fun. I think this year there's more pressure, but it's exciting. You kind of have to put pressure on yourself if you want to do well – take it seriously but not too seriously."

Although Deana takes her swimming seriously, she admits there are days when she is not particularly fond of practice.



"Some days it can be a pain to practice – I don't love practice, but I love meets," she said.

It is that competitive drive that has made Deana such a formidable opponent in the pool.

"You need kids on your team like that," Bartlewitz said. "They are quiet, but they know what they have to do.

"Without her on those relays, we would be in trouble."

Deana and her teammates will close out the season with their two biggest meets of the season – districts and nationals.

"That's what the whole season is working toward," she said. "I just want to do well.

"(At leagues), we weren't tapered, and we had a hard week of practice. I have a feeling I can do better at districts tapered."

If she does, it won't surprise anyone because Deana's days of swimming under the radar are officially over.
