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## **New challenges for Knights 2008-09 Boys Swimming Preview**

By KEV HUNTER

Staff Writer

The Suburban One League did some reorganizing this year, re-shuffling the conferences according to geography.

But there is still one constant - the North Penn boys are the favorite to take the title.

The Knights return a solid group of swimmers who will be looking to lead the team to its 36th straight conference title, going back to 1973. This year, North Penn will be in the Continental Conference, with the likes of Souderton and Hatboro-Horsham.

It should be one of the toughest conferences in the state.

Even before the Knights go head-to-head with anybody, they're already competing.

Against each other.

"We certainly graduated some talent last year but one of the things is that the kids get to step up and fill some of those holes," coach Brian Daly said. "The kids step up and compete to fill those vacancies, and the kids want those spots pretty badly, so it creates a nice dynamic at practices."

What's unique this year for the Knights is that for the first time in 20 years, they don't enter the season as defending district champs. Upper Dublin ended North Penn's string of 19 straight titles last year in dramatic fashion.

But the Knights seem to have the guys needed to challenge for that crown again. Only time will tell if they have the kind of squad that could compete for the program's first state title in five years.

Souderton and North Penn will now be battling each other in the same conference, and the Indians have a conference title streak of their own with 11 straight.

Methacton will also have a new challenge this year - the Warriors move from the SOL to the PAC 10. The Warriors should be up near the top.

Lansdale Catholic will be competing in the Philadelphia Catholic League for the first time, and that is the home of one of the best programs in the state in LaSalle.

So the 2008-09 season should be a crossroads for many individuals and teams.

Following is a team-by-team look at the area:

CB West

Coach: Richard Reshetar (2nd season)

Key losses: Evan Denard; Pierre LeCorre

Key returners: Sean Cook; Antonio Dovali; Pat Keane; Matt Pyrz

Outlook: The Bucks have some state championship experience and should send a few guys back there again.

Coach Reshetar says: "I feel this will be a solid year for CB West. We have a solid group of key returners and am looking forward to a great season."

Lansdale Catholic

Coach: Bob Birnbrauer (15th season)

Key losses: Scholastic All-American and All-District One Class AA Neil Gogno

Key returners: Al Augustine; Patrick Augustine; Stanislaw Gawel; Sam Kraynak; Tim McCann; Connor Unger; Andrew Urban; Tony Mack; Brian Matylewicz; Kevin McGuriman; Brian Wisman.

Others to watch: Nick Augustine; Steve Douglas; Tim Gillen; Harry Kulik.

Outlook: The Crusaders move to the Philadelphia Catholic League and District 12, and they seem to have the guys to be able to challenge in both.

Coach Birnbrauer says: "The nucleus of the team is very strong as district event winners and state event finalists Al Augustine, Pat Augustine and Andrew Urban lead the way. District swimmers Stas Gawel, Connor Unger and diver Sam Kraynak round out the team to ensure a strong showing in the PCL and District 12. The new swimmers and returnees will add some needed depth to field a strong dual meet team as well."

Methacton

Coach: Chris Nesensohn (4th season)

Last year's record: 8-4

Key losses: Trevor Fitzgerald, diver; Andrew Gerland, free/fly; Alex Pflugler, utility; Will Brown, sprint/free; Lou Zhang, sprint/free

Key returners: Kyle McGee, so., sprint free/fly; Avi Maman, sr., sprint/breast; Jason Przyuski, jr., IM/distance; Mike McBride, jr., sprint/back; Haydon Wyatt, sr., sprint; Dave Turner, sr., back; Jason Galletta, jr., middle distance/free

Others to watch: Brian Dix, sr., sprint/back; Connor McAnaly, fr., sprint; Anthony Picozzi, so., sprint; Seth Pumilia, jr., IM/breast; Jake Weber, jr., breast

Outlook: The team was hit hard by graduation, but there is still some district and state hopefuls on the roster.

Coach Nesensohn says: "The PAC 10 will be tough. Boyertown and Owen J. will be good competition for us, and we still have some nonleague meets scheduled against our old SOL opponents like North Penn and Souderton."

Opening meet: Relay Carnival at Upper Merion on Friday

North Penn

Coach: Brian Daly (4th season)

Last year's record: 11-2 overall and 7-0 in the SOL National (now in SOL Continental)

Key losses: All Americans Dan Dingman, Nico Gimenez, Jeff Smallwood and Ryan Coupe; State qualifiers Brandon Ward and Pete Schmidley

Key returners: Nick Ortleib, sr., breast/IM; Stefan Hoch, sr., free/fly; Zac Nees, sr., diver; Brendan Hatfield, sr., fly/free; Jack Else, jr., free; Michael Kohler, jr., diver

Others to watch: Peter Kolokithias, so., back/utility; Matt Orteib, so., back/fly; Eugene Feeley, so., free; Jacob Sisco, so., utility; Nick Poulin, fr., utility; Jason Deana, fr., utility; Patrick Dunagan, fr., utility

Outlook: The Knights look poised to win the conference title - this year they move over to the Continental. And North Penn will also be looking to take back the District One Class AAA title a year after Upper Dublin ended the Knights' 19-year reign.

Coach Daly says: "(With the realignment), we'll be going against some schools that are closer in proximity to us, so we'll have some

more rivalries - a lot of these kids know each other."

First meet: at home against Methacton on Tuesday

Pennridge

Coach: Ryan Griffiths (3rd season)

Last year's record: 6-11

Key losses: Dave Apple, fly/sprint free; Brian Adams, distance/relays; Andy Piazza, utility; Brent Heverley, back/distance; Alex Servin, diver

Key returners: Rich Johnson, sr., breast; Dave McVaugh, sr., breast; Kyle VanLeer, jr., IM/fly; R.J. Phaimbolis, jr., distance

Others to watch: James Faucette, sr., distance free; Brady Workheiser, sr., diver; Richey Fly, sr., diver; Dan Walker, sr., back/IM

Outlook: The Rams are pretty balanced and have two solid divers that should help out with the scoring.

Coach Griffiths says: "The real big question mark for us is that we lost a huge leadership class to graduation - they weren't only good in the pool but they were also great motivators. They really held the team together, so we'll have to see if these guys can rise to the standard that was set before them."

First meet: CB East Relays on Friday

Souderton

Coach: Todd Bauer (3rd season)

Last year's record: 7-0 in the Suburban One League Continental Conference, 10-3 overall

Key losses: Tim Dorsch, breast/IM; Justin Nice, breast; Will Fox, free

Key returners: Jake Radcliff, sr., free; Sean Corcoran, jr., breast, free; Lee Stile, jr., free; Michael Eachus, sr., fly; Joe Reynolds, sr., free; Matt Fadden, sr., free; Alex Evers, sr., fly/ free; Dan Yocum, jr., free

Outlook: Tim Dorsch was the man last year for the Indians, so they need people to step up in his absence. The team looks solid though, probably the most solid squad Souderton has had in four years.

Coach Bauer says: "Our goal is to compete in every meet and to strive for our fastest times when it really matters. We would like to take many more qualifiers to districts and for many of those athletes to qualify for states. We won the conference the past 11 years, but this year (due to realignment), with a team like North Penn in our conference, it will certainly be challenging."

First meet: at Pennsbury on Friday

Wissahickon

Coach: Laurie Hug (1st season)

Last year's record: 8-2

Key losses: Chris Schneck

Key returners: Adam Bossart, sr.; Andrew Nagelberg, sr.; Erik Waechter, sr.; Chris Pollack, sr.; Ian Smith, sr.; Bryan Cakouros, sr.; Jake Ruser, sr.

Others to watch: Chris Chiodo Ortiz, fr.

Outlook: The Trojans should be one of the top teams in the Suburban One League's American Conference, and send plenty to districts.

Coach Hug says: "The boys are good athletes, having placed fourth at states in water polo and I expect to have a few relays and individuals make states. What could hurt us is lack of divers."

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