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Maidens splash by Rams

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By Andrew Marcus
Sportswriter

LANSDALE – The North Penn and Penridge swimming coaches are never sure how the girls will respond to the holiday training until they dive into the pool. In January there have been occasions where swimmers have flattened in the past, but as the Maidens and Rams proved last Thursday, they are hitting their stride. The Maidens swam away with a 109-69 victory, but both teams set personal bests and inched closer to district qualifying times.

The holiday training coach Matt Weiser puts the Maidens through is not for the faint at heart, but the girls know the hard work will result in the times they want to see come championships. Starting with the meet against Hatboro-Horsham and Penridge, the girls are already seeing the seconds on their swims disappear.

“They always seem to surprise me,” Weiser said. “They have some great swims when they’re a little tired, a little broken down. It’s always great to see. It was great to see some people have some pretty good breakout swims here today.”

The Maidens took home first place in every event against Penridge. Eight different swimmers won individual events, led by Jan Ikeda’s wins in the 500-yard freestyle and the 100-yard breaststroke. The Maidens may be tired, but they sure are not swimming like it.

“I am very happy with the meet because we had people improve their times,” Weiser said. “They may be worn down a little bit, but hopefully we are stronger as a team. Whenever I think we might be about to plateau, they surprise me.”

The relays have become the Maidens’ strength because no matter what quartet of swimmers Weiser puts in the races, they somehow seem to hit the wall with their hand after the final lap before their opponents.

“I could not even tell you what an ‘A relay’ team looks like for us,” Weiser said. “We have so many options and we use them all.”

The Rams’ relay team is no slouch itself as it has recently broken a school record in the 200 medley relay for the second year in a row. The Rams have qualified their relay teams to districts and now are concentrating on some specific individual events.

“They have all really responded well to our training program,” Rams’ coach Ryan Griffiths said. “Freshmen Chelsea Weiss has really helped the relays out a lot. Now we need Gabi Rinaldi and Alicia Detweiler to qualify in their individual events.”

Rinaldi, a promising sophomore, and Detweiler, the lone senior on the Rams’ team, are right on the verge of qualifying. Both important cogs in the record breaking relay team, Griffiths expects them to break through on their individual events very soon.

Hitting some of their best times of the season for the Rams against the Maidens were Alli Poirer, who finished second in the

200 freestyle, Shelby Shaffer in the 200 individual medley, and Megan Hahn in the 50 freestyle. For the past few years it has been strokes in the right direction for the Rams' program and with the guidance of Griffiths and the hard work of the swimmers, it could be an extremely successful year come postseason time with more swimmers than ever qualifying and some even making it to the state round.

"It is a lot of hard work, but everyone is giving all they have every day," Griffiths said. "Some people did not come back from last year because of the difficult training, so we are a smaller group, but we are tighter group, and we have so many kids right on the verge."

North Penn 109, Penridge 69

200 medley relay - North Penn (S. Deana, C. O'Neill, M. Morris, J. Ikeda), 1:56.82; 200 freestyle - Brooke Else (NP) 2:03.93, Jayme Craig (NP), Kristi Baur (NP); 200 individual medley - Karlie Vogt (NP) 2:23.90, Meghan Quinn (NP), Alyssa Tate (NP); 50 freestyle - Sarah Hannings (NP) 25.55, Megan Hahn (P) 26.42, Katie Patterson (NP); Diving - Ashley Liss (NP) 200.2, Shauna Hannings (NP), Erica Smale (P); 100 butterfly - Katie Patterson (NP) 1:02.75, Colleen Stiles (NP), Meghan Quinn (NP); 100 freestyle - Sam Deana (NP) 55.24, Mary Morris (NP), Chelsey Weiss (NP); 500 freestyle - Jan Ikeda (NP) 5:25.28, Kelly Rogers (NP), Rebecca Hoch (NP); 200 freestyle relay - North Penn (Hannings, Patterson, Else, Morris), 1:43.50; 100 backstroke - Colleen Stiles (NP) 1:02.73, Claire Thompson (NP), Brittany Patterson (NP); 100 breaststroke - Jan Ikeda (NP) 1:13.51, Casey O'Neill (NP), Taylor Connolly (NP); 400 freestyle relay - North Penn (Else, Hannings, Stearns, Stiles), 3:49.11.

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