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Norristown and Montgomery County, PA



SPORTS

PW's Chialastri in good spot for 200, 100 freestyle races

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By DENNY DYROFF
For the Times Herald

The waiting is over. The long and grueling training sessions are a thing of the past. The time has arrived when the top swimmers from area public high schools head to La Salle University for the District 1 Championships.

The meet gets underway with the first-day boys' session Friday morning at 10:30 a.m. at La Salle University's Kirk Natatorium. The girls' session is scheduled for 4 p.m. On Saturday, the boys' meet gets underway at 9 a.m. and the girls' second-day session is slated for 2:30 p.m.

The area's swimmer with the best seeds in the Boys Class AAA meet is Plymouth Whitmarsh's Alex Chialastri. The Colonial senior is seeded second in both the 200-yard freestyle and the 100 freestyle. Unfortunately, his chances of winning a gold medal in either event are a bit slim.

In both races, he will swim alongside two of the top swimmers in the region — Haverford's Shane Ryan and West Chester Henderson's Andrew Kosic. In the 200 free, Chialastri's seed time is 1:45.43 while Ryan's top-seeded time is 1:40.31.

The challenge is almost as stiff in the 100 free. Chialastri's seed time is 46.75 while Kosic checks in almost a full second faster at 45.72 — and a full second is a lot to overcome in a blazing sprint race like the 100 free.

Still, opponents over the last four years have learned not to ever underestimate Chialastri, who was the Times Herald's 2009-2010 Boys Swimming Athlete of the Year.

Last year, Chialastri finished second in the 200 free and fourth in the 100 back at districts.

Then, at the state championship meet, he finished sixth in the 200 free and made it to the consolation finals of the 100 back.

His Colonial teammate Kyle Lukens also has a number two seed at this weekend's meet — and also faces a tough challenge. Lukens is seeded at number two in the 100 butterfly — behind Kosic. The P-W ace is also seeded fourth in the 100 backstroke.

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Methacton's Kyle Magee gets to challenge Kasic in both of his individual events as fifth seed in the 100 fly and ninth seed in the 100 free. His Warrior teammate Louie Seefeld has the second seed in the 100 breast behind Avon Grove's Ryan Hausler.

"I've been training really hard this season," said Magee, after finishing his events at the Perkiomen Valley Invitational two weeks ago. "I'm really broken down and that's good. It means I should have a good taper for districts."

North Penn's always large contingent to districts features a number of swimmers with good seeds including Peter Kolokithias (fifth, 200 free), Patrick Dunigan (second, 200 IM; third, 500 free), Jason Deana (second, 50 free; fourth, 100 free) and Matt Ortlieb (sixth, 100 fly).

Other local swimmers whose seed times have put them in the final (and fastest) heat are Upper Dublin's Bobby Bantley (sixth, 100 back), Wissahickon's Chris Chiodo-Ortiz (fourth, 50 free; sixth, 100 free) and the Spring-Ford duo of Billy Drennen (sixth, 200 free; sixth, 500 free) and Aaron Cancro (sixth, 200 IM).

Several local teams also have high seeds in the Class AAA relays, including three of the top five in the 200 medley relay — Upper Dublin (third), Plymouth Whitemarsh (fourth) and North Penn (sixth). North Penn has the top seed in both freestyle relays. In the 400 free relay, Upper Dublin is seeded second and P-W checks in at number three.

In the Boys Class AA Championships, Upper Merion is seeded third in the 200 medley relay, fourth in the 200 free relay and sixth in the 400 free relay.

The Vikings' swimmers with the best individual seeds are Jason Lameroux (third, 500 free; sixth, 200 free), Peter Soll (third, 100 breast; fifth, 200 IM) and Nick Eppinger (fourth, 100 back; sixth, 100 free).

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