

Team-By-Team Girls Swim Capsules

By Bill Keen Staff writer | Posted: Monday, December 5, 2011 12:00 am

Abington

Coach: Joe Lennon (13th year)

Last year: 5-7 (1-6 SOL National)

Key performers: Sr. Emily Ryan (breaststroke, freestyle); So. Alyssa Leatherman (butterfly, individual medley); Fr. Frances Erney (backstroke, freestyle); Fr. Aiofe Garvey (breaststroke, freestyle).

The season: With eight seniors lost to graduation, there are a lot of holes in the lineup that have to be filled. The good news is the strongest freshman class in years will help to fill them. The Ghosts will have a tough time in the SOL National but a winning record is not out of the question.

Archbishop Wood

Coach: Charlie Stillwell (14th year)

Last year: (9-2, 6-0 PCL)

Key performers: Sr. Bridget McGrath (breaststroke, sprint free); Sr. Orla Cole (backstroke, freestyle); Sr. Alexandra Fitzgerald (sprint free, backstroke); So. Hanna Cochrane (utility); Sr. Kristina Halner (distance free); Fr. Dominique DiRienzo (diving); So. Claire Cochrane (utility); Jr. Jennifer McGrath (butterfly); Sr. Haley Henzel (freestyle, backstroke).

The season: You can't lose athletes like Taylor Kane and Grace Cochran to graduation and not feel it. They will be nearly impossible to replace but there is a bevy of talent waiting in the wings that can't wait to try. Look for the Vikings to again be the team to beat in the Philadelphia Catholic League.

Central Bucks East

Coach: Tom Kane (36th year)

Last year: 8-3 (third SOL Continental)

Key performers: Sr. Kelly Kater (diving); Sr. Kendall Kirsteier (butterfly, individual medley, sprint free); Sr. Lindsay Dilemno (individual medley, distance free); Sr. Sarah Richards (freestyle); Jr. Nicole Guss (butterfly); Jr. Ellie O'Brien (individual medley, breaststroke, distance free); Fr. Hannah Whittman (individual medley, freestyle).

The season: Anyone looking for a strong darkhorse team to contend in the rugged SOL Continental, this is it. A total of 10 district qualifiers return in a lineup that is loaded with depth. The Patriots could easily better last season's regular season record and should be flying high for the post-season.

Central Bucks South

Coach: Kevin Murray (seventh year)

Last year: 6-4 (fourth SOL Continental)

Key performers: Sr. Sam Evangelista (individual medley, butterfly, distance free); Sr. Kelsey Schmidt (freestyle); Sr. Lindsay Schmidt (diving); Sr. Elicia Yoffee (sprint free, butterfly); Sr. Emily Quinlisk (backstroke, freestyle); Jr. Stephanie Nickerson (individual medley, backstroke, distance free); Jr. Sydney Mrozinski (individual medley, breaststroke, freestyle); So. Cali Corbett (freestyle, backstroke); So. Isabell DiNallo (individual medley, backstroke).

The season: At first glance, the Titans lineup resembles swiss cheese because there are holes everywhere. However, Lindsay Schmidt is back after taking home the bronze medal at states and there is sufficient talent among the returning swimmers to stamp this group a team to watch heading into the league championships.

Central Bucks West

Coach: Vibeke Swanson (21st year)

Last year: 8-5 (fifth SOL Continental)

Key performers: Sr. Andie Blaser (butterfly, sprint free); So. Quinn MacMillan (freestyle); Jr. Rachel Saunders (diving); Jr. Jen Strohmeier (individual medley, backstroke, freestyle); Jr. Katherine Baltes (butterfly, distance free); Jr. Beth Hutchings (breaststroke); Sr. Crystal Kim (utility).

The season: The good news is junior Rachel Saunders, one of the finest divers in the state, is back. The bad news is nine seniors were lost to graduation, and the roster this season is small in numbers. Depth may be a problem, so look for individuals to push hard for district qualifying times as the season progresses.

Germantown Academy

Coach: Richard Shoulberg (44th year)

Last year: 10-0 (Inter-Ac and Easterns team champion)

Key performers: Jr. Rachel Zilinskas (utility); Sr. Madeline Maher (individual medley, breaststroke); So. Meg Dollard (freestyle); So. Emily Erwin (backstroke, individual medley); So. Natalie Dowzicky (utility); Fr. Ally Acker (breaststroke, middle free); Fr. Madison Visco (utility).

The season: Everybody knew last season's team was deep in talent but only the insiders expected the freshman and sophomore class to produce some of the team's steadiest performers. Despite the loss of several extremely talented seniors, this is easily the area's strongest team once more.

Gwynedd-Mercy Academy

Coach: Heather Norman (eighth year)

Last year: 5-6

Key performers: Sr. Annalise Zaengle (breaststroke, individual medley); Sr. Rachel Tumolo (backstroke, distance free); Sr. Meg Curley (distance free); Jr. Emily Fesnak (middle free); Fr. Kieragh McMenamin (utility); Fr. Molly Riemenschneider (individual medley, utility).

The season: Hopes are riding high around the Monarchs' camp. A talented group of underclassmen advanced to districts last season. After bagging a bevy of season-best times, including all three relays, all signs point to a much more successful season with a trip to states a possibility for several girls.

Hatboro-Horsham

Coach: Kip Emig (21st year)

Last year: 7-6

Key performers: Sr. Abby Hitchens (breaststroke); Sr. Rachel Engelhardt (sprint free); Sr. Carey Johnson (freestyle); Sr. Kelli Fitzpatrick (sprint free, breaststroke); Sr. Rachel Riemenschneider (individual medley); Jr. Liz Schmele (sprint free); Jr. Meghan Pellecchia (backstroke, butterfly).

The season: The Hatters will definitely not be hurting for senior leadership, as five girls who qualified for districts are back for their final go-round. Also back are three others who made the trip to La Salle, which means nobody should take this team lightly, especially with the league looking to be wide open from third place on down.

Lansdale Catholic

Coach: Bob Birnbrauer (17th year)

Last year: 2-7 (second place District 12 class AA)

Key performers: Sr. Katie Murphy (sprint free, middle free); Sr. Maura Conley (breaststroke, individual medley); Sr. Dana Salanik (middle free); Sr. Julie Young (distance free); Jr. Nicole Marshall (backstroke); So. Amanda Matylewicz (distance free); So. Mary Murphy (utility).

The season: The Crusaders have a strong freshman class ready to contend for spots in the lineup and an excellent nucleus of returners to show them the way. After struggling in the regular season a year ago, there is every reason to expect the team to be considerably better and significantly stronger.

North Penn

Coach: Matt Weiser (4th year)

Last year: 11-0 (7-0 SOL Continental)

Key performers: Sr. Brooke Else (freestyle, butterfly); Sr. Val Stearns (freestyle); Sr. Anna Janoff (freestyle); Sr. Ashley Liss (diving); Sr. Erica Elias (diving); Sr. Heather Paolone (diving); Sr. Charlee Branson (diving); So. Tara Rogers (freestyle); So. Eve Kosten (freestyle, breaststroke).

The season: Ben Franklin called death and taxes the only constants in life, but the Maidens being the team to beat in the SOL Continental and one of the top two or three in District One is about as close as you can get to joining them. The difference this year is some of the strongest contenders for district and state honors are underclassmen..

Penridge

Coach: Ryan Griffiths (sixth year)

Last year: 4-8 (sixth SOL Continental)

Key performers: Sr. Alexis Detweiler (butterfly, individual medley); Jr. Chelsea Weiss (sprint free, backstroke); Jr. Julia Nadovich (individual medley, breaststroke); Jr. Katie Green (diving); Jr. Nikki Laderer (diving).

The season: Over the course of the last four seasons, school records have been falling like leaves in autumn. Considering the team lost only two seniors to graduation, there is every reason to expect even more records to fall and for the Rams to take a solid group of swimmers to districts.

Quakertown

Coach: Wendy Yons (fourth year)

Last year: 0-7

Key performers: Sr. Megan Renn (sprint free); Sr. Cheyenne Kressely (sprint free, distance free, backstroke).

The season: Only 10 girls answered the call this season but most of them were there last season as well. They've learned what it's like to compete against some of the strongest programs in the district on a regular basis and that can only make them stronger. The team goal is qualifying as many individuals for districts as possible.

Souderton

Coach: Todd Bauer (fifth year)

Last year: 12-2 (6-1 SOL Continental)

Key performers: Sr. Ann Fadden (sprint free); Sr. Sarah Kesack (breaststroke, individual medley, distance free); Jr. Alyssa Santangelo (backstroke, freestyle); Jr. Erica Witoslawski (freestyle, individual medley); Jr. Laureana Zrada (distance free); Jr. Megan Furey (butterfly, individual medley); Jr. Bronwyn Smith (distance free).

The season: Only one district qualifier graduated from a team that beat everybody last season except North Penn in the league. Is this the group that will unseat the Maidens? They very well could. Depth is not a problem nor is talent in every event. The Indians are loaded.

Upper Moreland

Coach: Mel Rowland (eighth year)

Last year: 3-7 (1-5 SOL American)

Key performers: Sr. Natalee Szopo (diving); So. Sydney Szopo (diving); So. Amber Saint Clair (backstroke); Jr. Anna Hakes (distance free); Jr. Saige Wenik (middle free).

The season: There are other teams that will have more depth than the Golden Bears but very few have as many legitimate contenders for individual District One gold medals. The Szopo sisters should go 1-2 in every diving competition, possibly through districts, while sophomore Amber Saint Clair was a huge surprise last season and looks to continue her quest for gold.

William Tennent

Coach: Lisa Forlini (22nd year)

Last year: 7-5 (3-3 SOL National)

Key performers: Sr. Shannon Connors (freestyle); Sr. Bridget Dooling (backstroke, freestyle); Sr. Staci Schaffling (butterfly, freestyle); Jr. BJ Clune (butterfly, individual medley, freestyle); Jr. Deanna Battis (freestyle, individual medley); Jr. Sarah Alps (breaststroke, individual medley); Sr. McKenzie Merrick (diving); Jr. Amanda Crawford

(diving); Fr. Shannon Battis (freestyle, backstroke); Fr. Karlie Brasch (backstroke, freestyle); Fr. Kendal Brasch (freestyle); Fr. Madi Crognale (breaststroke).

The season: The Panthers have been working hard to improve to build the kind of quality depth that will be important to the team's chances in the SOL National. If the girls can hit their stride in December with multiple individuals meeting district qualifying time, the rest of the season could be an enjoyable ride to the postseason.

—Bill Keen