

The Road to Lewisburg goes through Philadelphia

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By 8:30 or so Friday night, everybody will know which area swimmers stamped their ticket to the PIAA state championships at Bucknell University in Lewisburg.

The PIAA District One Class AA and AAA Swimming Meet is set, and so is our annual look at the area's top hopes in each AAA event.

Unfortunately the AA psych sheet wasn't released online, so we'll wish all the area's small-school athletes the best with hopes there are a trip or two to the highest step on the podium.

What follows is merely a guess, with a high degree of bet-hedging to be safe.

On the boys side, **North Penn** could have two double winners. Jason Deana has recovered from the scare that threatened to end his season and is seeded first in the 100 free and second in the 50.

He will probably have more adrenaline in his system than blood, and could take both. The 50 could be a photo finish, with a dead heat not out of the question. David Zurmuhl of **Pennridge** is the third seed, Kevin Musteraid of **Souderton** is fifth with **Central Bucks East's** Riley Weber sixth.

You can toss a washcloth over the field.

Having an even better chance to double is Deana's teammate, Patrick Dunigan, seeded first by nearly two full seconds in the individual medley and by well over a second in the 500 free. Another North Penn standout, Tomas Gimenez is third in the IM, Connor Forlini of **William Tennent** is second in the 500, 1.10 seconds back.

Forlini is also seeded fourth in the 200 free; Upper Dublin's Bobby Batley is the top seed with North Penn's Jack Morris second.

Mike Chen of **CB West** has looked great in the butterfly and is the third seed; I can't count him out. Gimenez is seeded third in the breaststroke, while North Penn's Brandon Anders will have to go some in the backstroke; at No. 5, he's the top area seed.

Of the three relays, area fans should have a ball in the 200 free. North Penn is seeded first, Upper Dublin is second, Tennent is third and Souderton fourth.

The best guess at what would be called an upset? David Zurmuhl in the 50. Biggest lock? Dunigan in the IM, although Deana in the 100 free appears to be a close second despite Bantley seeded second, with Weber, Morris and Zurmuhl in striking distance as the third, fifth and sixth seeds.

Switching to the ladies, the 100 free is a gold-plated area showcase. The fastest girl ever at CB West and around the family dinner table, Quinn MacMillan, is the top seed at 53.06 seconds — but like baseball Hall of Famer Satchel Paige said, "Don't look back."

North Penn's Tara Rogers is the second seed. Her time is 53.09, and she is followed closely by Council Rock North's third-seeded Tommie Dillione at 53.13 and MacMillan's teammate, the girl whose record she grabbed away, Andie Blaser, fourth-seeded at 53.28.

The pick? Climbing out on a limb big time, Rogers.

The Maidens' sophomore is seeded second in the 200 free, a half-second off the top seed. When the winner hits the wall, Rogers will be celebrating. She's my pick to double.

Don't blink in the 50 as the latest Souderton speed queen, Ann Fadden, is a fingernail out of the top-seeded spot. Defending champion Shannon Rauth is in at 23.73, Fadden is 23.88.

Fadden's teammate, Alyssa Santangelo, is seeded second in the backstroke, two seconds behind the district record-holder, Christina Leander of West Chester East.

Blaser is fourth best in the butterfly, Souderton's Laureanna Zrada sixth in the 500, while CB East's flying freshman, Hannah Wittman, is second behind Leander in the IM (OK, so that's a long shot) and in the breaststroke, her specialty. It says here the breaststroke is her best shot.

There you have it. We'll take a look next week at how things turned out.