

# Three girls dominate Continental Championships

By Bill Keen Staff writer | Posted: Sunday, February 17, 2013 12:00 am

TOWAMENCIN — King Midas wasn't the only one with The Golden Touch.

Central Bucks East's Hannah Wittman and North Penn teammates Tara Rogers and Emily Kosten each had it Saturday at the Suburban One League Continental Conference girls swimming championships.

The trio took home six of the eight individual golds. Wittman won the 200-yard individual medley and the breaststroke, Rogers took the 200 and 500 freestyle, and Kosten — the younger of two talented siblings — made off with the butterfly and the 100 free.

Pennridge freshman Hannah Zurmuhl won the 50 free like older brother David, the winner of the boys 50 on Friday, and North Penn sophomore Olivia DiStefano won the backstroke.

Wittman and CB West's Hannah Blaser were even in the IM until the third leg. The Patriots' sophomore had the lead before taking her first stroke.

"I knew going from back to breast my turn would get me ahead," Wittman said. "As soon as I pushed off, I was (thinking), 'You are not tired, do not give up,' because it was going to be such an intense race."

Wittman set a pool record in the individual breaststroke with her teammate and constant training partner, Ellie O'Brien, in second. Seeded sixth with a time of 1:10.26, the senior was in Lane 7 and started with realistic goals.

"I wanted to go a 1:08 and I was pretty relaxed," said O'Brien, whose 1:06.41 was only 0.11 seconds off the former pool record and gave her an automatic spot in the District One field.

"I did a double-take with the time because that's like a second-and-a-half faster than I did last year at districts, which is a *big* difference; I was not expecting that at all."

Emily Kosten set a pool record in the 100 free, but she and CB East's Jess Jozefiak were locked in a tight race in the butterfly until the turn for home.

"I took it out really fast in the beginning, but you don't want to die off in the end," Kosten said. "I work a lot on, not just sprint training, but I'll do distance, too.

"It's not easy, but you try to get that rhythm in the pool so you can finish it off at the end."

Rogers' winning time of 5:04.54 in the 500 was seven seconds faster than her seeding time and 14 seconds better than runner-up Laureana Zrada of Souderton. By contrast, the 200 free was a nip-and-tuck battle with CB West's Quinn MacMillan; Rogers won in 1:52.56 to 1:52.66 for the Bucks' junior.

"I was expecting it to be a really close race, and I think that helped us because we were pushing each other the entire time," said Rogers, whose opening leg of the 400-free relay set the Maidens off on a pool record that was 4 seconds better than the former mark set by Emmaus in 2008.

"We always say, 'Get out to a good lead whoever is going first,' and then we just have to finish, and today, everybody really got into it."