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## SWIMMING: Emily Kosten joins elite company at North Penn

By KEV HUNTER  
khunter@thereporteronline.com

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North Penn's Emily Kosten finishes first in the 50 freestyle event against Pennridge during the teams' meet at North Penn High School on Thursday, Jan. 3, 2013. (Photo by Mark C Psoras\The Reporter)

North Penn's Emily Kosten is setting records and having fun doing it.

"A great personality, a great kid to have around," Maidens coach Matt Weiser said of the sophomore. "She certainly works hard, and just the influence that can have on other swimmers is great. She's very loose — very, and that's almost kind of scary for a tenth grader."

Kosten just seems at ease, and her latest performance, which included a pair of individual wins as well as two relay wins, helped North Penn improve to 4-0 with a victory over conference rival Pennridge.

"It felt good. I think we're at that point in the season where we're still building up," Kosten said. "We're kind of broken down right now (from winter training) but we still had pretty good times I thought."

Kosten has already had some record-breaking times this year, in fact, as she set the 100 freestyle team and pool record with her split on the 400 free relay in a win over Methacton earlier this year. Her time of 51.56 broke a 31-year-old record (52.23), set by Juli Schulte in 1981.

Kosten was also a part of a record-setting relay as the anchor on the 200 free, along with her big sister, Eve, and Emily's not far off from a couple of records too, including the 50 freestyle.

"I'm hoping to break them all soon," she said smiling.

Her first year of high school swimming couldn't have gone any better.

"It's such a good atmosphere to be in," the sophomore said of the Maidens. "To get all these people cheering for you, it's so exciting."

Doing the hard training when no one is cheering is sometimes the tricky part, and the Maidens pushed themselves through the long hours of winter-break practices with purpose.

"Those are tough practices over winter break — some of the hardest practices of the year," Kosten said. "To be able to build strength right now is most important for where we are."

Kosten enters the second half of the season with plenty of momentum, due in large part to her phenomenal efforts in the 100 freestyle.

The record and the time are impressive enough, and it's even more impressive when you consider who the previous record holder was: Juli Schulte, now Juli O'Reilly, who went on to swim at the University of Virginia.

"She looks like she's gotta lot of promise, that's for sure," O'Reilly said of Kosten. "She looks fantastic."

O'Reilly was impressed to find that Kosten is listed in the top 100 times for 11-12-year-old 50-meter long course on the USA Swimming website. It got O'Reilly reminiscing about her days growing up in the pool and then swimming for NP.

"I just remember being pleased about the time, caring less about the record and just being happy that I had a really good swim and a really good time even though I wasn't shaved or tapered," O'Reilly said of when she set the mark back in 1981 as a sophomore.

The Maidens went on to win districts and finish second at states that year. Success in the postseason is something Kosten has been focused on all along, and something that can provide lifelong memories.

"It was so great to be involved with that program," O'Reilly said.

Juli now lives with her husband, Brian, and her two children down in McLean, Virginia. She's from a swimming family, as her brother, Jim, was a longtime great coach at Souderton and now a referee, and he's also the play-by-play announcer for the Souderton basketball games.

O'Reilly has been highly successful in her career, and she's now the head banking lawyer for American Express, with a team of 18 people. Teamwork is something she's still thrilled to be a part of.

"That, I took with me from North Penn," she said.

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