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SOL Swimming Notebook (2-26-14)

Posted by editor

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Divers from CR South, North Penn and Upper Moreland are featured in this week's notebook.

National Conference

Aronson bound for states - Matt Aronson will be going to the PIAA Class AAA meet for the second consecutive year.

But this year the junior diver from Council Rock North feels that he really earned it.

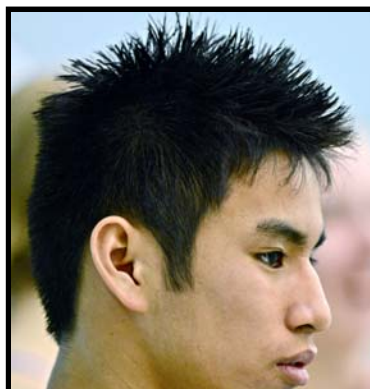
Last year Aronson finished 11th at the District One meet, one spot shy of a state berth. But a diver in another district scratched from the meet, and Aronson, the first alternate, got the call and competed at states, finishing 29th.

At this year's District One competition, Aronson finished in ninth place with a score of 400.60 to secure a state spot.

"This year I feel like I really did my best," Aronson said. "All the practicing I did really paid off. Going through the meet I felt that I kept my head level.

"Some dives didn't go as well as others, but I kept working through it."

He is excited to be returning to states.



"Last year as an alternate I was unsure about what to do," he said. "This year it's going to be so much easier because I already know that I'm going, so there are no questions about what I should be doing or how or if I should prepare."



Although he did not make it past the first cut at states last year, the experience was beneficial.

"It definitely helped me prepare for this year," he said. "I knew what to expect and being at states last year helped me to mentally prepare for this year."

"I definitely had a lot of confidence coming into this meet. There were some good new people coming in, but we also lost a lot of good seniors from last year so I still felt good about my chances, although it really was such a relief when I found out that I definitely was in the top 10."

Continental Conference

Yacopino a force to be reckoned with - Marie Yacopino isn't flying under the radar anymore.

The North Penn sophomore diver finished second at the District One Class AAA competition.

She posted a score of 482.05 points over 11 dives to capture second place and better her own 11-dive pool record of 468.15, set weeks earlier en route to the Continental Conference title.

But Upper Dublin's Corey Johnson topped her with a score of 483.25 to capture the gold medal, pool record and district record, which was previously held by Melanie Coats of Spring-Ford (480.57, set in 1998).

But no matter.

Last year Yacopino finished sixth in her first district meet, then went on to a breakout performance at the PIAA championships, where she finished second and showed herself to be a name to be reckoned with.



"Last year I was kind of oblivious to the whole thing and I didn't have any expectations at all," she said. "It was more exciting this year and I knew what to expect. Everyone had a good meet so it was competitive and I was very happy with my performance."

Which was not to say she didn't have some jitters.

"I was really nervous about my last dive," she said. "It was a double twister one and a half. I did it really well and surprised myself."

"That's the best I've done it since states last year so it came at a really good time for me."

Going to states last year made an impression on her.

"That was so memorable that it didn't even feel real," she said. "I wasn't even expecting to go to states and then to go there and do so well was amazing. That definitely motivated me this year because of how high I placed last year."

American Conference

Wilcox finishing strong - Dan Wilcox has been down this road before.

The Upper Moreland junior finished second at the District One Class AA diving championships, posting a score of 403.00.

Despite taking the silver to Mike Prietto of Sun Valley for the second consecutive year, his second place finish earned Wilcox a berth at the PIAA meet.

"I've been working so hard this season," Wilcox said. "I had a shoulder injury and I was out three months and of course that was during the peak training time so I had some concerns."

Last year he made it into the finals at states, finishing 13th.

"That was an amazing experience," he said. "I had a fantastic time and I learned a lot. That really motivated me to try to get back there."

"I knew I was going to have tough competition from Sun Valley, but I managed to pull it out in the end and getting to states was the goal. Now I'm hoping to improve from last year's finish and move up a few more spots."



In Class AA, only the top two divers advance to states.

"I did feel the pressure to get that second spot," he said. "I didn't have my best meet this time but I did enough to get to where I wanted to go and I was confident in myself that I could do it."

Like so many divers, Wilcox started out as a gymnast.

"I was a gymnast for 12 years," he said. "When I was a freshman I wanted to go out for a high school sport and I tried diving. In my very first meet I took first place and I was like, 'Wow, I should stick with it' and I did."

"I've never regretted that decision."

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