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GIRLS SWIMMING

GIRLS SWIMMING: Determination drives North Penn's DiStefano

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Posted: Monday, December 1, 2014 8:15 pm | Updated: 12:31 pm, Tue Dec 2, 2014.

By Bill Keen Staff writer

TOWAMENCIN — In her first three seasons as a member of North Penn's girls swimming powerhouse, Olivia DiStefano never backed down from a challenge.

Ask her to lead off the medley relay, anchor the 200 free foursome or tackle the other team's ace in the backstroke, and she accepts with just a hint of a smile that silently says, "Gladly."

When she hits the water, the only speed she knows is "full out" until her mission is complete, a one-track determination Maidens head coach Matt Weiser says she shares with countless North Penn swimmers over the decades.

"Olivia has a killer instinct when she's racing," Weiser said. "She doesn't want to lose no matter what it is. She always wants to win and ultimately to do what's best for the team. That truly is her biggest asset; she's a team player."

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Chloe Elmer/Staff Photographer

North Penn swimmer Olivia Distefano poses during practice on Monday, December 1, 2014 at the school.



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She is also a versatile athlete who swam the 50 free and the backstroke at last spring's District One Class AAA meet, two events that are dramatically different.

"I've always liked the 50 so I swam that at districts my freshman year," DiStefano said. "My sophomore year I did backstroke (at districts) and I did well; I got sixth place and went on to states.

"Last season coach Weiser decided to put me in both events at districts to see how I would do."

What she did was collect two gold medals, the 50 in 24.03 seconds and the backstroke in 56.22, and added fourth and seventh place finishes, respectively, at the state meet at Bucknell University.

With the start of her senior season a few days away, DiStefano expects her teammates on an extremely deep and talented roster to help her improve on her finishes at states, and to hopefully better their third place finish in the team standings.

"I'm confident in myself but I'm looking for my teammates to push me during the season to make me better," she said. "I'm really looking forward to our team adding second place in relays and the overall team standings (at states) and maybe even first."

A check of the list of pool and school record holders on wall of the Rick Carroll Natatorium shows DiStefano owns the mark in the backstroke. It's a far cry from how she viewed her future back in ninth grade.

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"My freshman year I never expected to be one of those top swimmers; I never saw myself that way," said DiStefano, who preferred to talk of the success of others. "There are so many other girls on the team who are great in events I'm not strong in. It's going to be a big year especially at the end at districts and states where everyone can succeed in their events."

Olivia DiStefano — ever the team player.

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