

Cherry Creek steadfast

Traffic, illnesses can't stop Bruins in win at Fairview

By Angie Mudd, Special to the Rocky

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As if facing its toughest competition two weeks before the state swim meet isn't nerve-wracking enough, the top-ranked Cherry Creek girls' team faced plenty of other challenges in its dual meet against Fairview on Thursday.

With President George W. Bush heading to the Cherry Creek area, the Bruins had difficulty getting out of the neighborhood. The traffic delayed the school bus and the team arrived at the South Boulder Recreation Center only 15 minutes before the start of the meet.

Then a Cherry Creek swimmer got sick. Another had to leave the meet early. Another had difficulty breathing. Another swimmer started suffering back spasms. A diver hit her finger on the diving board in warm-ups.

But with their depth and talent, the Bruins held on to earn a 100-86 victory over the No. 2-ranked Knights.

"This was definitely not one of our more relaxed atmospheres," Cherry Creek coach Eric Craven said. "We were panicked getting the girls warmed up, and we were nervous the entire meet.

"But it was nice to have some competition. They gave us a great meet, and we always expect that from them. Fairview came to our pool last year and beat us. Revenge is a good motivator, and so we came to their pool and beat them. I'm glad it's over."

While Fairview managed to steal some of the relays, the Bruins started strong with a couple of big individual wins from junior Loren Brandon in the 200 and 500 freestyle races.

"I won my races so I was really excited about that," said Brandon, who began suffering upper-back spasms in the 200 freestyle relay. "We love seeing Fairview at this point in the season. It's good to know what we're up against, and we were really motivated this year because they barely beat us in our dual meet last year."

Because the Bruins have cruised through the season dominating their competitors, Brandon said it was fun for her team to face a team that could challenge it.

"It's so much more fun when you're racing a team that you know you're not just going to beat them easily and there's some real competition," Brandon said. "It's more fun when you have someone to race, you get more into it, the team is more involved."

While the Knights weren't able to pull out the victory this year, Fairview junior Tasia DeMuth said she saw a promising performance from her team.

"We did really well, some of us got our personal bests and some of us swam great races today," said DeMuth, who won the 50 and 100 freestyle races, as well as being a part of the Knights' victorious 200- and 400-freestyle relay teams.