

Denver Post preseason swimming & diving report

Depth gives Mustangs edge in repeating in 4A

By Brady Delander

Special to The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 11/27/2007 11:48:38 PM MST

Katie Johnson and Arianne Lujan, juniors on Ralston Valley's swimming and diving team, draw the line on their friendship when they hit the water.

They started swimming together around age 7 and are close friends. Judging from some of last season's times at the Class 4A state meet, however, it is clear that they turn into competitors at the sound of the starting gun.

"When we're in the water, it's all about competition," Johnson said.

"Once we are out of the water, it's like, 'Forget about it,' " Lujan added.

Lujan and Johnson finished first and second, respectively, in the state championship 200-meter individual medley race last season and were separated by just three-tenths of a second. They also helped the Mustangs win titles in two relay events.

More gold medals are the goal again as the 5A and 4A seasons begin Thursday. Ralston Valley appears to be a heavy favorite to repeat as the 4A team champion, while traditional power Cherry Creek heads the 5A field with a surging Regis program on its heels.

Ralston Valley coach Joani Glidewell-Anderson took over the fledgling program five years ago and turned the Mustangs into a force. In addition to the state title, the Mustangs have won three 4A Jefferson County League titles and have a roster loaded with 38 swimmers and four divers this season.

Glidewell-Anderson didn't want to jinx her team's chances, but she said it's only human nature to want another championship.

"You get that title the first time and you absolutely want it again," she said.

A talented freshmen class will add strength to the already solid relay teams, and senior Jordan Quick could contend for titles in the sprint freestyle events.

"I really am pretty confident," Johnson said. "We heard that Rock Canyon (state runner-up last season) got some transfers, so they should be better. But we have all improved from last year."

Johnson recorded an Olympic-trials qualifying time of 2 minutes, 35.48 seconds in the 200-meter breaststroke, an event not on the prep docket, during her club season. She will have a chance to compete in June at the Olympic trials.

"Katie and Arianne are both swimming really well. They could get at least one first, if not two, at state," Glidewell-Anderson said.

In 5A, Cherry Creek remains the team to beat, but Regis is developing a reputation around the state and could be on the verge of dominating the big schools as the Raiders' boys team has done for more than a decade.

"It's in process," said Bob Smartt, whose Fairview team finished a close second at state to the Bruins. "If you look closely at their kids, a lot of their younger girls are significantly faster than the others in the age bracket."

THE SEASON

Today: First meet

Feb. 12: Final seeding for state meet

Feb. 14-16: Class 5A and 4A state swimming and diving championships at Edora Pool Ice Center, Fort Collins

The Denver Post/9News poll

Class 5A

1. Cherry Creek
2. Regis
3. Fairview
4. Rampart
5. Mountain Vista

Class 4A

1. Ralston Valley
2. Rock Canyon
3. Estes Park

4. Mullen

5. La Junta

Swimmers, divers to watch

Loren Brandon, Cherry Creek, Jr.

Taylor Curado, Rock Canyon, Jr.

Kyla Dahlquist, Mountain View, Sr.

Kia Dobie, Broomfield, Jr.

Breann Fuller, Brighton, Sr.

Shannon Garlie, Fossil Ridge, Sr.

Jenna Gregiore, Rampart, So.

Lauren Hewson, Estes Park, Sr.

Katie Johnson, Ralston Valley, Jr.

Taylor Kitayama, Fairview, So.

Laura Kollar, Fort Collins, So.

Emily Kuhr, Dakota Ridge, Sr.

Sophie Lucas, Fairview, Sr.

Arianne Lujan, Ralston Valley, Jr.

Olivia Martens, Grandview, Jr.

Kirsten Milberg, Rock Canyon, Jr.

Vanessa Pollitt, Regis, Jr.

Lauren Rigg, Fairview, So.

Jana Ruimerman, Grandview, So.

Kristin Schmid, Regis, Sr.

Caroline Shea, Mullen, Sr.

Alyssa Swanson, Regis, Jr.

Lindsay Zeberlein, Mountain Vista, Jr.

Mikella Zglicynska, Fairview, So.