

post preps: swimming

Cherry Creek phenom splashes to double victories

By Michael Hicks
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Cherry Creek's Bonnie Brandon won the 200-yard individual medley by more than four seconds, finishing in 2 minutes, 6.15 seconds. (Andy Cross, The Denver Post)

LOVELAND — Next week, Bonnie Brandon will celebrate her 15th birthday. But it wouldn't be fair to say that the Cherry Creek freshman is getting better with age. She's plenty good already. The nationally ranked swimmer proved that Saturday afternoon at

the Mountain View Aquatic Center.

In the first of her two finals at the Colorado Coaches Invitational, Brandon displayed her prowess. In the 200-yard individual medley, the 14-year-old left no doubt, winning in 2 minutes, 6.15 seconds, more than four seconds ahead of Ralston Valley's Arianne Lujan.

"I've always known that I'm, like, high on the competition. But I'm really surprised that I'm doing this well," said Brandon, who started in summer leagues when she was 4 and year-round competition six years ago. "It's really exciting. I'm really happy with my swimming."

She had more reasons to be happy later Saturday when she won the 100 backstroke. Brandon finished in 57.30, compared with the 58.86 by Rock Canyon's Kirsten Milberg, a three-time state champion in the event.

As a team, Cherry Creek and Rock Canyon enjoyed success heading into the mandatory holiday break. The Bruins headed Class 5A with 314 points. Regis was second with 243 and Fairview third with 204.5. In 4A, Rock Canyon's 167 points easily outdistanced Broomfield's 83.

Despite the impressive victory, Bruins coach Eric Craven said his team has room to improve.

"We've still got some work to do, believe it or not, but I think this sets a really nice tone for us, a good tone for the rest of the season," he said. "They realize what we've got to work on and had a great day."

"We have the attitude we don't want anything handed to us. Everything, we've got to work for and earn it, and the girls understand that. Even though everybody keeps telling us we're unbeatable, we're

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beatable."

Chatfield's Shelley Perkins took first place in the 50 and 100 freestyle. She entered the 50 as a favorite based on her preliminary time and won it in 24.00. Fairview's Rachel Cazden was second in 24.57. But in the 100, her preliminary run didn't indicate how well she would do in the finals.

The double victory was a goal coming in, and Perkins ended up making it a reality.

"It was definitely what I was aiming for," Perkins said.

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