

Dobie ready for strong finish

By Elwood K. Shelton Camera Sports Writer
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BROOMFIELD, Colo. — Before Kia Dobie could charge forward with her senior season, the Broomfield standout decided to take a step back from swimming.

After collecting two top-eight places at last year's Class 4A state meet, Dobie hung up her cap and goggles -- skipping her club season for the first time in nine years.

But she had a good reason.

If there was one area that needed conditioning it was Dobie's mental game. And she found the best workout regime was none at all.

"I needed to clear my head," Dobie said. "It wasn't how I was swimming, it was I was tired and worn out. I needed to take a break."

Dobie's rest and relaxation has her entering Friday and Saturday's Boulder County Invitational at the South Boulder Recreation Center as a swimmer to beat. But in a more important step, it also set her on the path to state title contender in three races.

Dobie has proven her potential in the 500 freestyle, 100 butterfly and 200 individual medley this season. But her top times have created the biggest obstacle of her senior year -- deciding which two events she will swim at state.

Perhaps the most intriguing argument can be made for the 500 freestyle -- a race Dobie won a 4A title in as a freshman.

"I would love to prove I'm capable of achieving in that race again," she said. "Not only to the rest of state, but to myself."

Some of Dobie's need to take a step back from swimming might have been due to her early success in the 500 freestyle. Winning the title so early in her career bred sky-high expectations for a string of state championships.

They never materialized, but it wasn't for lack of performance. Instead, as Emily Austin points out, it was more of a conundrum many top swimmers face.

"When you're really, really, really good at something it's hard to get better," the Broomfield coach said. "(Kia) was at that place in her life as a freshman where she was constantly improving. Then she leveled off."

While Dobie hasn't won a state title since her freshman year, she has collected five top-eight finishes at state between the 500 freestyle, 200 individual medley and the 100 butterfly. And she has continued to find ways to reinvent herself.

The highlight of her senior season, so far, has been her improvement in her 100 butterfly. The race that might be Dobie's strongest this season has seen her making strides more common to freshmen.

"I hadn't broken 59 (seconds) in the race all year," she said. "Then at the Coaches Invitational (in December) I dropped below that by two seconds. That's amazing in a sprint."

Whatever races Dobie ends up swimming in, she is certain to give the state a run for its money. She's always had the championship talent, now she appears to have the unflappable attitude to go along with it.

"I really want to go out with a big finale," Dobie said. "Just really go out there, level it all in the pool and have fun doing it."



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