

FHS girls aim for 3 wins in one day

Knights will split squad for three foes in two meets

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The Fairview girls swim team has pulled off its share of major accomplishments, including one team state title and four runner-up finishes over the past five years.

On Thursday, though, the Knights will try for a new feat -- winning in two places at once.

While half of the team is dueling Mountain Range at South Boulder Recreation Center, the other half will be squaring off with Fort Collins and Loveland at the Mountain View High School pool.

Both meets start at 4 p.m.

"I'm madly rushing around because parents want to know (where their kids will swim)," Knights coach Bob Smartt said of drawing up his lineups Monday. "We've never done this before, in my memory, in Fairview history."

When the Knights and rival Boulder High moved to the Front Range League this year, that gave the conference 11 swim teams. Since teams are allowed only 11 meets during a season, conference members didn't want to use up 10 of their available schedule dates with league teams. So each team was assigned just five league opponents.

The only problem for Smartt was that the Knights didn't get Fort Collins. Although Monarch won the FRL championship meet last year, Fort Collins was the conference's highest-placing team at state.

"In our maiden season, we wanted to kind of take on the strongest team," Smartt said. "This was kind of the best thing we could work out."

Fort Collins and Loveland were already set to meet on Thursday, and the two schools allowed Fairview to join in on the competition. While all three will swim against each other in the same races, separate team scores will be kept for Fairview vs. Fort Collins, Fairview vs. Loveland, and Loveland vs. Fort Collins.

Aside from deciding who will swim where, Smartt has the added difficulty of dealing with the absence of several of his top swimmers. Lauren Rigg will be at the U.S. Junior Nationals, while the rest will be resting after a three-day club meet last weekend.

Still, Smartt believes the Knights' odds of three victories are good in large part to the team's depth. Fairview has 86 girls out for swimming.

Fairview hasn't lost a dual to anyone besides juggernaut Cherry Creek since falling to Smoky Hill five years ago. The Knights had held several of their swimmers out of that meet because the Boulder Valley Invite was the next day.

"We'll certainly have a good chance," Smartt said. "I'm optimistic."

Smartt said five or six of Fort Collins' top swimmers were also at the club meet last weekend, but the coach is hoping that the Lambkins will nonetheless be swimming their top lineup to challenge some of his athletes who will be gunning for state-qualifying marks.

"Even if it means we'd lose the meet, I'd rather swim fast and lose than swim mediocre and blow them away," Smartt said.