

Super sophs a big plus for FHS swimming

Knights finished second in state last year

By CJ Powell For the Camera
Tuesday, November 20, 2007

Imagine swimming in the championship heat you've been training for your entire freshman year.

Standing on the starting block with nerves, excitement and anticipation rushing through your body, you take off. Before you know it the heat is over and you've claimed a second-place finish, the first top-three finish of your high school career.

Time for a huge celebration, right?

Not quite — at least not for Fairview swimmer Lauren Rigg.

Rigg swam in the 100 butterfly and placed second in the 2006-2007 Class 5A state swimming finals, then had roughly four minutes to prepare for the 100 free, in which she placed 10th.

But the unlucky circumstance didn't really bother Rigg.

"It was actually kind of exciting," the sophomore said, "I wanted to give it my all in both events, and once I finished in the fly and saw I did really well I was kind of on a high."

Rigg is one of 21 returning state qualifiers for Fairview, seven of whom are only sophomores. The 21 returning qualifiers is the largest number in state.

Joining Rigg in the "super sophomore" class, as coach Bob Smartt calls it, is Taylor Kitayama, Julie Anderson, Emily Scraggs, Keeley Hernandez, Ali Mullin and Mikella Zgliczynska.

Zgliczynska finished fourth in the state 200 IM and ninth in the 500 free. She and Rigg will be called on to lead this team to another top-three state finish. Fairview placed second in state last year, trailing Cherry Creek by 27 points.

In addition to the seven returning sophomore state qualifiers, there are nine returning juniors and seven seniors that also qualified for state last year.

"I think there are a lot of really good girls on our team," Zgliczynska said. "I don't feel like I carry anyone's burden because everyone contributes, everyone tries and everyone gives their best to the team."

One swimmer who could possibly be Fairview's wild card by season's end is senior Elizabeth Rovira, who missed her sophomore and junior campaigns with a back injury.

After a stellar freshman year, in which she was part of the title-winning 200 free relay and the 200 medley relay teams, Rovira was on pace to record a magnificent high school career. Smartt said that if she produced similar results throughout her time in high school, she probably would have gotten between 20 and 40 colleges offering her scholarships.

But two seasons and four surgeries later, Rovira is still trying to fix her back. Because she's a sprinter and not a distance-swimmer, Smartt said that she'd need less training to get back to a level where she can compete.

Boulder ready

for a title run

Boulder coach Curt Colby doesn't mind playing second fiddle to the traditional swimming powerhouse Fairview. In fact, with Boulder expected to finish top 10 in state this year, the Panthers have a legitimate shot at breaking out of the Knights' dark shadow.

"It is a motivation to have a such a great team in town to compete with," Colby said. "It's a very friendly rivalry.

Outshining a stacked Fairview squad will be tough, but Boulder's team definitely has the firepower to contend with depth across the board.

Starting at the top, the Panthers have plenty of senior leadership. Its three senior captains — Ellie Shetter, Abbi Hebein and Olivia Baber — along with Mackenzie Cook, Alex Scringeur and Lauren O'Hair will guide the way for the team.

The strength of this squad, though, lies in the junior class — Sophie Allen and Alex Kahn, in particular. Colby expects Allen to finish in the top eight in the 100 back and a sprint freestyle event.

"She's a strong, dedicated swimmer," Colby said. "She's got really good team spirit."

Kahn can swim the 50 or 100 free, and also has a good butterfly.

"She's a real competitor," Colby said. "When she's in a race, she puts it all out there. She's pretty fearless and not easily intimidated."

More than Banning

Even though Lindsay Banning gets all the attention, Silver Creek coach Debbie Stewart wants you to know there is more than just one swimmer on her team.

"She is a good swimmer, but I have a lot of talented swimmers," Stewart said. "She is one of my top swimmers, and I have quite a few."

Banning took eighth in the 50 free at state last season. Stewart is also adding freshmen Stephanie Bates Kenni and Taryn Stewart to her lineup, making it a formidable force in the Class 4A.

"My goal is to actually make a showing at state," Stewart said.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.