## Senczyszyn's wins lead way as swim team secures 2nd in North Shore meet

A familiar challenge faced the Grafton girls' swimming and diving team when it hosted the North Shore Conference meet last week.

And once again, the Black Hawks rose to the occasion to stake their claim among the area's top squads.

Despite being overmatched in numbers, Grafton made the most of its talent to secure second place in the overall standings after Saturday's swimming competition.

Perennial power Cedarburg dominated the meet, piling up 437 points in a successful defense of its team title. The Hawks had a firm grip on the runner-up spot with 342 points, 18 more than third-place Whitefish Bay.

Homestead was fourth with 296 points. Among other local teams, Port Washington was seventh with 120 points.

Cedarburg won eight of the 12 events, including a sweep of the three relay races and individual firsts from Natalie Johnson in the 200-yard and 500 freestyle events.

Matching Johnson's effort was Grafton's Sam Senczyszyn, who won the 100 freestyle (52.53 seconds) and 100 breaststroke (1:05.82).

"We don't have the numbers that other people have, but what we were able to do was clump some points together in several events," Grafton coach John Douglass said.

"The bigger teams like Cedarburg, Homestead, Whitefish Bay and Nicolet all had 36 entries in

the meet, and we had 23. So for us to take second place is pretty cool."

Senczyszyn, a sophomore, continued to lead the Hawks, breaking her own team record in the freestyle. She was also a member of two top-three relay teams.

The Hawks got off to a solid start by scoring 31 points in diving, which was held Oct. 25. Gabby Kraus placed third with 338.55 points, and Paige Schommer was fourth (a personal-best 325.8).

On Saturday, Grafton maintained its hold on second in the team standings with steady scoring in swimming.

Besides Senczyszyn's double win, the Hawks got seconds from freshman Natalie Keshemberg in the 100 butterfly (1:04.45) and 100 backstroke (1:01.15) and the 400 freestyle relay of Senczyszyn, Keshemberg, Rachel Hauer and Stephanie Haebig (3:45.95).

The Hawks' other top-10 finishes were a third by the 200 medley relay of Keshemberg, Senczyszyn, Rachel Hauer and Haebig (1:53.53); fourths by Haebig in the 200 freestyle (2:04.81) and backstroke (1:02.61); a fifth by Anna Hauer in the 500 freestyle (5:44.77); sixths by Anna Hauer in the 200 freestyle (a personal-best 2:07.33), Rachel Hauer in the 200 individual medley (2:21.0) and breaststroke (1:12.97) and the 200 freestyle relay of Kaitlyn Brooks, Katherine Bordetskaya, Anna Hauer and Ally Sandoval (1:48.66); a seventh by Bordetskaya in the breaststroke (1:13.54); eighths by Brooks in the 50 freestyle (27.17) and Bordetskaya in the butterfly (1:06.26); a ninth by Lilly Kaplan in the individual medley (a personal-best 2:30.69); and a 10th by Brooks in the 100 freestyle (59.25).

Douglass noted that the breaststroke was particularly productive for Grafton, which got 35 points in the race from a sophomore and two freshmen.

Maximizing their scoring was the only way the Hawks could offset the numbers shortage, he said.

"The plan is coming to fruition. We've had a lot of kids sick at times during the season, but once we got everybody back, things started to work well for us," Douglass said.

Port continued to get its best finishes in diving. Senior Hayley Seitz led the Pirates with a second-place score of 339.85, trailing only Cedarburg's Kelsie Hall (399.75).

Also for Port, divers Kristen Smith (292.6) and Becca Murray (264.1) finished eighth and ninth, respectively.

“Our divers have put in a bunch of work in off-season club programs. That’s been one of the biggest benefits for them,” Port coach Melissa Hoogester said.

The Pirates’ top swimming finishes were sevenths by the 200 freestyle relay of Kelsey Brockman, Elise Andersen, Allyssa Laabs and Kelsey Zeman (2:00.1) and 400 freestyle relay of Brittany Heinen, Sarah Lesniak, Madeline Binsfeld and Laabs (4:52.48).

Port also got eighths by Zeman in the 500 freestyle (5:52.61) and the 200 medley relay of Brockman, Zeman, Binsfeld and Andersen (2:20.29) and a 15th by Zeman in the individual medley (2:35.74).

Although the Pirates finished well back in the team standings, Hoogester was pleased with their effort.

“We had a lot of personal records. Our expectations remain the same — to improve our strokes and times,” she said.

Grafton and Port will both set their sights on bigger challenges this weekend when they participate in a WIAA Division 2 sectional meet at Plymouth High School.

Diving will be held at 6:30 p.m. Friday, followed by swimming at 2 p.m. Saturday.

The winners of each event qualify for next week’s state meet in Madison along with the next 12 best performances from all four sectional meets.

Douglass expects his squad to be near the top at Plymouth, but noted the Hawks will face plenty of competition, most notably from Shorewood, the defending Division 2 state champion.

“In a perfect world, we’d like to qualify in every event,” he said. “But realistically, we hope to have eight to 10 kids and two relays go on to state.”

Image Information: AMONG THE STANDOUT performers in individual events at last week’s North Shore Conference swimming and diving meet were Grafton freshman Natalie

Keshemberg (bottom) and Port Washington senior Hayley Seitz (top). Keshember placed second in the 100-yard butterfly and 100 backstroke. Seitz took second in diving.
Photos by Sam Arendt