

Vollmer helps Lady Pirates to 4-5A swim title

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by RICK MAUCH

The tradition continued for Granbury High School and the Vollmer family Saturday at Wilkerson-Greines Activity Center in Fort Worth. For a fifth consecutive year, a GHS swim team featuring a Vollmer won a district championship.

Olympic gold medalist Dana Vollmer, following in the footsteps of her older brother Nick, now swimming at TCU, helped the Lady Pirates win the District 4-5A girls championship. In each of the previous four years, Nick helped the Pirates win a boys district championship at the 4A level.

Dana also set a state record and broke three Wilkerson-Greines pool records in the process. She posted a state-record time of 23.15 in the 50-yard freestyle to lead off the winning girls 200 free relay, had a time of 1:49.23 in the 200 free and clocked a 54.68 in the 100 butterfly.

The Lady Pirates edged perennial power Mansfield 82-81. The Pirates finished third with 44 points, behind Mansfield with 114 and North Crowley with 69.

For the Lady Pirates, it was a second consecutive district title. The Pirates had won five straight titles before Saturday.

"Her brother was on four district championships, and she saw that and wanted one badly," Granbury coach Robert Laura said. "It's pretty special having a Vollmer be a part of another championship. "This was a team win. She was there to do her part, just like her brother Nick did his part for four years."

In all, the Lady Pirates qualified three relays (200 free, 400 free, 200 medley) and seven individuals in seven events for regionals. The Pirates also qualified all three relays and five boys in five events for regionals.

The regional meet is Feb. 11-12 at Loos Pool in Dallas.

Vollmer helped the women's 4x200-meter relay win a gold medal and set a world record of 7:53.42 during this past summer's Olympics in Athens, Greece. Saturday, she was named the Female Swimmer of the Meet, and Laura was named Girls Coach of the Meet.

Nick Vollmer advanced to state three consecutive years. Dana can only do so once because she is a senior.

"Being my only year to compete, this is very special," Dana said. "You always want to go out strong and all the girls really picked it up and made sure that happened."

Laura said he wasn't certain that Vollmer's time in the 50 free Saturday would actually go down in the state record books since it wasn't recorded in individual competition.

"I don't know if the UIL officially recognizes relay splits in a district. I've got to check," Laura said. "But I suspect she'll go faster at regionals and break it again."

The previous record was 23.24 set in 1990.

Vollmer was joined on the winning 200 free relay by Lauren Farris, Xela Steenberge and Seabre Pope. The foursome swam a time of 1:44.61 to win by nearly eight seconds.

Vollmer won the 200 freestyle (1:49.23) by more than 23 seconds, and the 100 butterfly (54.68) by more than six seconds. She bested the previous 200 free record of 1:51.34, set last year by Codie Hanson, Erin Wehrmann's time of 58.17 in the 100 fly in 2001, and Jeanne Doolan's time of 23.59 in the 50 free in 1986.

Doolan's record was the longest-standing at Wilkerson-Greines. Vollmer now owns six of eight pool records.



Freshman Seabre Pope was a major factor in helping the Granbury Lady Pirates win the swimming championship

In addition to Vollmer's school-record performances individually and on the 200 free relay, she helped the 200 medley relay win first place with a school-record time of 1:56.56. She was joined by Mary Hidalgo, Carrie Greene and Pope. Pope anchored all three relays. The 400 free relay, which also featured Greene, Christin Prater-Hidalgo and Steenberge, was third with a time of 4:00.98.

"Seabre was the risk I took, having her on all three relays, but it paid off for us," Laura said. "She swam tremendously." In fact, Pope's time of 56.77 seconds during her split of the 400 free relay would have won the 100 freestyle individual competition.

"Seabre's freestyle time was amazingly fast," Vollmer said. "She was also very fast on her leg of our 200 free relay."

Greene, despite battling shoulder and hamstring injuries, won the 50 freestyle individual event with a time of 26.18. She was also second in the 100 free in 59.80.

"She was in a lot of pain before she even went up to the blocks," Vollmer said of Greene, her good friend. "But she really wanted it."

Steenberge was third in the 500 free (5:50.04) and the 200 individual medley (2:24.19). Hidalgo claimed bronze in the 100 back (1:13.02).

Also qualifying individually for regionals from the Lady Pirates were Pope in the 200 IM (fourth, 2:25.57), Prater-Hidalgo in the 200 free (fourth, 2:19.53) and 500 free (sixth, 6:22.46), and Farris in the 100 fly (sixth, 1:11.23).

Each of the Pirate relays placed third.

The 200 medley relay had a time of 1:55.64. It featured Jacob Cypher, Tim Greene, Matt Weyandt and Justin Kindred.

The 200 free relay was clocked in 1:40.68. On it were Brier Steenberge, Robert Weber, Daniel Harber and Weyandt. Steenberge, Kindred, Weber and Weyandt were on the 400 free relay that posted a time of 3:52.31.

Steenberge also qualified twice individually, in the 100 free (second, 52.67) and the 50 free (third, 23.51). Qualifying individually in one event each were Weyandt in the 100 fly (third, 1:04.38), Cypher in the 100 back (fourth, 1:07.41), Weber in the 100 back (fifth, 1:08.98), and Harber in the 100 breast (fifth, 1:14.79).

Tim Greene returned to competition after having shoulder surgery. He and Steenberge advanced to state on the 200 and 400 free relays last season, as did Carrie Greene and Prater-Hidalgo on the 400 free relay for the girls.

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