

Records, state on line for GHS swimmers

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by RICK MAUCH

Dana Vollmer's made quite a splash in her first and only season of swimming for Granbury High School. It's almost a given that the senior who won a gold medal in the Olympics on the 800-meter relay will win at the Region II Meet this weekend in Addison and two weeks later at the state meet in Austin.

Vollmer has already set one unofficial state record, swimming a time of 23.15 seconds to lead off the 200-yard freestyle relay at the District 4-5A Meet.

Granbury coach Robert Laura said it is uncertain whether the UIL will recognize the record as official since it wasn't in an individual event.

Vollmer also has her sights set on state and national records in both the 200 freestyle and 100 butterfly.

But when she and Laura make the trek to Austin on Feb. 25-26, they expect to have some company.

While Vollmer is a heavy favorite to win both the 200-yard freestyle and the 100 butterfly at Loos Pool Friday and Saturday, the Lady Pirates' 200 free relay is the No. 2 seed.

And yes, that relay features Vollmer leading off. But it also features sophomore Carrie Greene, the only swimmer among the foursome with prior experience at the state meet. Greene swam last year on the 400 relay. And it has a pair of freshmen who have been opening some eyes this season, Seabre Pope and Xela Steenberge.

Greene was added to the relay for regionals. Laura said the change could trim as much as a couple of seconds off the District 4-5A-winning time of 1:44.61.

"With Carrie on there we're looking at going at least 1:42.5," Laura said. "We have a chance to win it."

Plano has the fastest time in the region, 1:41.9.

The Lady Pirates and Pirates are each sending seven swimmers to regionals.

The Lady Pirates are coming off winning the District 4-5A championship Jan. 29. This is their first season to compete in Class 5A after several successful seasons in Class 4A.

In addition to swimming on the 200 free relay, Vollmer, Greene, Steenberge and Pope will swim the 400 free relay which is seeded seventh. Greene, Steenberge and Pope will be joined by sophomore Mary Hidalgo leading off the 200 medley relay.

Along with Vollmer in individual events are Greene in the 50 free, the event she won at district; Steenberge and Pope in the 200 individual medley; Hidalgo in the 100 back; sophomore Christin Prater-Hidalgo in the 200 and 500 free; and junior Lauren Farris in the 100 fly.

Boys competing from Granbury include junior Brier Steenberge in the 50 and 100 free, junior Matt Weyandt in the 100 fly, freshman Jacob Cypher and junior Robert Weber in the 100 back, and freshman Daniel Harber in the 100 breast. Cypher, junior Tim Greene, Weyandt and sophomore Justin Kindred will swim the 200 medley relay. Steenberge, Weber, Harer and Weyandt will swim the 200 free relay, and Steenberge, Kindred, Weber and Weyandt will swim the 400 free relay.

Tim Greene returned to action at the district meet after having shoulder surgery.

The winner in each event automatically advances to state. The remaining state qualifiers are the eight fastest times from all eight regions from swimmers who finished second through fourth in their respective events.



Mary Hidalgo is one of seven members of the Granbury Lady Pirates competing at the Class 5A Region II Meet

For example, a swimmer who finished third in his/her region could actually have a slower time than someone who finished fifth in his/her region, but no one who finishes lower than fourth will be considered.

And Laura expects plenty of state qualifiers to come from Region II. The Lady Pirates and Pirates will be going up against the likes of Plano, Keller, Southlake Carroll, Flower Mound, Grapevine, Colleyville Heritage, among other powerhouse programs.

"In the past, the Plano schools and Allen have been in Region III. Now they've moved into an already tough region," Laura said. "It's as tough as the one that features The Woodlands, Klein, Temple, those guys."

The same Lady Pirate foursome that Laura expects to qualify for state in the 200 free relay could get there in the 400 free relay. They are seeded seventh after swimming a 4:00.98 to finish third at district, without Vollmer on the tandem.

"Certainly adding Dana to that group will increase the time, but even still we're going to need best times from all swimmers—including Dana," Laura said. "If we get that, I think we have a good chance at getting to state."

The 200 medley relay is seeded sixth. Vollmer swam the backstroke portion of that event at district, the portion Hidalgo will swim at regionals, with Greene swimming breaststroke, Steenberge the butterfly and Pope the freestyle.

Pope was the X factor at district, Laura said. She anchored all three relays, just as she will at regionals.

In fact, Pope's time of 56.77 seconds during her split of the 400 free relay would have won the individual competition in the 100 free.

"The outstanding swimmer of the meet at district was Seabre," Laura said. "There's no way I expected her to swim that fast. And she's only getting faster."

Greene was hampered by both shoulder and hamstring injuries at district. Laura said both are much better now and he expects a stronger performance.

"Carrie knows what it takes to get to state," Laura said. "We don't have to worry about her."

"With two weeks (since district) to take care of her ailments, she should be fine."

Not only does Greene have a chance to get to state on a relay or two, but she has a shot in the 50 free. It will be close, though, Laura said, and it will require the best swim of her career.

"The top eight are going to be so close, so who knows?" Laura said. "Even if she goes a half a second faster, it will be so close. That's how tough this region is."

Despite the injuries, Greene won district with a time of 26.18 in the 50 free.

The boys are a longshot to get anyone to state, Laura said, but the regionals experience could pay off next year.

"They're all coming back next year, so this will just be a fantastic experience for them," Laura said. "It can only help them having been there."

But then, with the exception of Vollmer, all of the girls competing at regionals are back also.

"Everyone talks about Dana, but we have two freshmen on these relays," Laura said. "And Carrie, while she's been to state, is still a sophomore."

"We won't have Dana next year, but we're still going to be pretty darned good."

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