

## Vollmer leads four GHS swimmers to state

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by RICK MAUCH

ADDISON -- The world is not enough for Dana Vollmer. The Olympic relay gold medalist now has her sights set on conquering the state of Texas. Vollmer took a couple more steps, er, splashes, in that direction Saturday when she easily won the 200-yard freestyle and the 100 butterfly for Granbury High School at the Class 5A Region II Meet at Loos Natatorium.

Vollmer's next stop is the University of Texas at Austin and the University Interscholastic League State Swim Meet Feb. 25-26. But she will not be going alone.

Joining the senior will be freshmen Seabre Pope and Xela Steenberge and sophomore Carrie Greene. They, along with Vollmer, make up the 200 freestyle relay that also qualified.

"They performed really well today," Vollmer said of her teammates. "All three girls dropped a lot of time today."

Unlike Vollmer, who easily won both of her individual events, the relay had to wait a while to see if they would get to state as a wild-card entry. Plano blitzed the field Saturday with a time of 1:38.36, more than two seconds faster than Granbury's runner-up time of 1:40.47.

But the Lady Pirates were fast enough to be among the wild-card entries.

The top finisher in each event at each of the eight regions automatically qualified for state. The remaining eight qualifiers came from the fastest times across the state, with no more than four qualifiers from each region. Granbury got in under the wire as the eighth wild-card.

"I guarantee you we are not the 16th-seeded relay at state," Granbury coach Robert Laura said. "There were regional winners with slower times than us."

Vollmer set two more school records with her winning times of 1:47.18 in the 200 free and :54.10 in the 100 fly. She won the former by 6.63 seconds and the latter by 3.17 seconds.

The 200 free relay time was also a school record, but Greene said the record might not last for long.

"I know I can go faster. I think we all can," said Greene, who also finished seventh individually in the 50 free with a time of 25.66. "We're going for a win."

There's ample reason to be confident for the Lady Pirate swimmers. They competed in a region that featured some of the fastest times across the state in both the boys and girls events across the board.

"I knew they'd be fast, but wow!" Greene exclaimed. "We had three swimmers in the 50 free go 24 seconds. Anywhere else if you get one, you're lucky."

The same group of girls swam on the 400 free relay. Even though they set a school record of 3:41.69, they finished seventh.

"That time's a great time. There'll probably be a few schools at state that won't go that time," Laura said.

Vollmer's story is well-documented. She helped the U.S. women's 800-meter relay team win the gold medal at the Olympics in Athens, Greece with a world-record time of 7:53.42.

Greene advanced to state last season as part of the Lady Pirate 400 relay.

But for Pope and Steenberge, this is a first.

"It won't seem real until we're there in the blocks," Pope said.



Dana Vollmer dives into the water as teammate Xela Steenberge finishes her leg of the 200 freestyle relay

As for swimming with an Olympian, Steenberge said she prefers to call it swimming with a good friend.

"She's just part of the team," Steenberge said.

Other Lady Pirate results included:

\*200 medley relay (Mary Hidalgo, Greene, Steenberge, Pope), ninth, 2:01.33.

\*Pope, 14th in 200 individual medley, 2:23.64.

\*Steenberge, 17th in 200 IM, 2:26.60.

\*Hidalgo, 24th in 100 back, 1:13.57.

\*Christin Prater-Hidalgo, 25th in 200 free, 2:18.24; 27th in 500 free, 6:15.66.

Pirate boys results included:

\*200 medley relay (Jacob Cypher, Tim Greene, Matt Weyandt, Justin Kindred), 15th, 1:53.14.

\*200 free relay (Brier Steenberge, Greene, Robert Weber, Weyandt), 16th, 1:38.42.

\*400 free relay (Steenberge, Daniel Harber, Kindred, Weyandt), 22nd, 3:50.52.

\*Weyandt, 16th in 100 fly, 1:01.57.

Steenberge, 17th in 50 free, :23.73; 22nd in 100 free, :59.93.

\*Cypher, 21st in 100 back, 1:04.79.

\*Weber, 23rd in 100 back, 1:06.23.

\*Harber, 25th in 100 breast, 1:14.44.

"I told all of the guys that this was a great experience for them that they can use next year to their benefit," Laura said.

"They are all back and most of them swam best times."

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