

1998 District Meet...

O'Connor makes final push

Ross senior still setting new marks

By MICHAEL PIDANICK
Staff writer

Molly O'Connor was 10 years old when her family moved to Fremont from St. Aldens, Vt.

And she needed a way to meet people.

"I wanted to make some friends and get involved in things, so I chose swimming," O'Connor said.

Seven years later she has made several lifelong friends through swimming, and in the process she has become one of the top swimmers in the history of Fremont Ross High School.

"She is the best female athlete I have ever had the privilege of coaching," said Ross coach Phil Moran, who is in his 11th year of coaching.

O'Connor, The News-Messenger's Athlete of the Week, put on a show Saturday at the Section III Northwest District Swimming Championships at Oak Harbor High School.

She set three sectional records and two pool records and led Ross to a third-place finish at the meet.

"She wanted to do well because this is her last year," Moran said.

In the 100 freestyle, which she considers her best event, she finished the race in 53.95, breaking the pool and sectional record of 54.04.

O'Connor swam the 200-yard freestyle in 1:59.35, breaking the



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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Molly O'Connor profile

School: Fremont Ross.

Grade: Senior.

Sports: Cross country, swimming (200 medley relay, 200 freestyle, 100 freestyle, 200 free relay), Track (800 meters).

Hobbies: Watching TV, hanging out with friends.

Family: Parents John and Nancy O'Connor; Sisters Morgan, 13, and Brittany, 12.

News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

MOLLY O'CONNOR set three sectional records at Saturday's sectional swim meet. The districts are Saturday.

O'Connor set for districts

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sectional record of 59.58, held by Carrie Scherger of St. Mary's.

She was also part of the Little Giants' 200 free relay team, along with Courtney Abbott, Jenny Schaaf and Beth Hoezle, that placed second in 1:46.74. In the process, she set the 50 freestyle record by swimming her part in 24.82. Since she was the lead swimmer in the relay, it is considered a legal record in the 50.

Although she entered the sectional meet with confidence, O'Connor did not plan to overpower.

"I never go in expecting to dominate because it usually blows up in your face," she said. "I just wanted to improve on my times."

Next up for O'Connor and the Little Giants is the district meet Saturday at Bowling Green State University.

"We're just hoping to swim fast and make it to state," O'Connor said. "We're concentrating on our times, and not really worried with our place."

Her desire to win has been a key to her success.

"She has a great will to win," said Ross teammate Brett Spicer. "If there's a close race, almost 100 percent of the time she's going to win."

"She works real hard," he said. "Whatever she wins and as far as she goes, she deserves it."

Her coach has watched her work on her conditioning for four years now.

"She is willing to do those extra things like weights and drills at home," Moran said. "She probably spends just as much time preparing as she does in the pool."

O'Connor is also a member of the Little Giants' track and cross country teams, and carries better than a 4.0 grade-point average in the classroom.

O'Connor is also a big help to the other Ross swimmers. She is not outspoken, but leads by example.

"She has really stepped up as a leader this year," Moran said. "She does a lot of work with the younger kids."

O'Connor plans on swimming at the collegiate level, although she hasn't made a decision on what school to attend.

O'Connor qualifies for state meet

News-Messenger reports

BOWLING GREEN — Molly O'Connor is headed back to Canton.

The Fremont Ross senior won the 200-meter freestyle in a school record 1:52.62 Friday at the district swim meet. The win qualified O'Connor for next

week's state meet at the C.T. Branin Natatorium

"She felt a little tired," Ross coach Phil Moran said.

"We're all hoping she can go faster next week."



O'CONNOR

O'Connor, who qualified for state in the 50 and 100 freestyle events last year, has a chance to make state in the 100 freestyle in today's final day of district competition.

Moran said Josh Fate has a chance to make state in the 100 backstroke today, as do the boys 200 freestyle relay, girls 200 freestyle relay and girls 400 freestyle relay teams.

In other events Friday, Fate finished ninth in the 200 individual medley, Pryde Yost was 10th in the 50 freestyle and Brett Spicer was 16th in the 200 freestyle. The boys 200 medley relay team of Buck Young, Justin Hasselbach, J.J. Glaspy and Dan Schrickel was 16th and the girls medley relay team of Beth Hoelzle, Kristyn Warner, Nicole Farrell and Courtney Abbott finished 15th.

Ross divers Ryan Newman and Kyle Fisher finished second and third, respectively, in Thursday's competition to qualify for state.

Ross star wins 2nd district title

News-Messenger reports

BOWLING GREEN — Molly O'Connor won her second district championship in as many days Saturday when she narrowly missed the district record in the 100 freestyle.

O'Connor, competing at Bowling Green State University's Cooper Natatorium, swam the race in 51.00. Her time was .1 second off the best ever time at the district meet.

She won the 200 freestyle Friday and will compete in both events at this week's state swim meet in Canton.

She also swam relays Saturday.

In the 200 freestyle relay, O'Connor led off with a 50-meter split of 23.97 to set a school record.

"She had a good day," joked Ross coach Phil Moran.

The relay team finished fifth in 1:42.99.

O'Connor will be joined at state by teammates Ryan Newman and Kyle Fisher, who qualified for the state diving meet Thursday.

No other Ross swimmers qualified for state. The boys 200 freestyle relay team of Pryde Yost, Brett Spicer, Dan Schrickel and Josh Fate came the closest, finished fifth in 1:30.66. Though only the top three earned automatic qualifiers, the time was just .39 seconds slower than the final wild card entry to state.

Fate took 11th in the 100 backstroke, swimming in 55.8 to break Tom McDonald's 12-year school record.

The high finishes helped the Little Giants boys finish seventh out of 31 teams, the best district finish in Moran's four seasons as coach.

Moran browsed the Internet this weekend and learned that O'Connor's times in the 100 and 200 and second best in the state. Andrea Georoff of Kettering Alter has the top time in the 100 and Diana Munz of Chagrin Falls is the fastest 200 swimmer.

More inside

Oak Harbor girls finish third at districts. **B2**

Swimming

High School Boys

District Championships

BOWLING GREEN — Boys results from Friday and Saturday's Northwest District Swimming and Diving Championships at Bowling Green State University's Cooper Natatorium.

Team standings

(Top 10)

1-St. Francis 558, 2-Perkins 224, 3-Northview 162, 4-Napoleon 159, 5-Ashland 158, 6-Lexington 131, 7-Fremont Ross 119, 8-Fostoria 106, 9-Sandusky 96, 10-Findlay 81.

Other area teams

17-Oak Harbor 27, 26-Port Clinton 12.

Area individual results (Top two placers automatically advance to state meet)

200 medley relay: 16-Fremont Ross (Buck Young, Justin Hasselbach, J.J. Glaspy, Dan Schrickel) 1:50.42; 30-Oak Harbor (Zach Gloer, Joe Hiss, Cory Barrett, Ray Hower) 1:59.15.

50 free: 10-Pryde Yost (FR) 22.43.
100 free: 12-Yost (FR) 50.45.
200 free: 8-Barrett (OH) 1:47.18 (school record); 16-Brett Spicer (FR) 1:52.72.

200 IM: 9-Josh Fate (FR) 2:03.03.
200 free relay: 5-Fremont Ross (Yost, Spicer, Schrickel, Fate) 1:30.66.

500 free: 3-Cory Barrett (OH) 4:45.89; 16-Spicer (FR) 5:05.04.

100 back: 11-Fate (FR) 55.8 (school record); 32-Gloer (OH) 1:04.81.

400 free relay: 6-Fremont Ross (Yost, Spicer, Young, Fate) 3:28.21.

High School Girls

District Championships

BOWLING GREEN — Girls results from Friday and Saturday's Northwest District Swimming and Diving Championships at Bowling Green State University's Cooper Natatorium.

Team Standings

(Top 10)

1-Napoleon 345, 2-Northview 249, 3-Oak Harbor 234, 4-Notre Dame 207, 5-Wauseon 135, 6-Mansfield Senior 111, 7-Bowling Green 105, 8-Perkins 103, 9-Anthony Wayne 99, 10-Fremont Ross 97.

Other area teams

21-Margaretta 17, 24-Port Clinton 11, 27-Huron 6, 29-Sandusky 2.

Area individual results (Top three placers automatically advance to state meet)

200 medley relay: 1-Oak Harbor (Andrea Lajti, Lindsay Lange, Kelly Van Horn, Amy Tabbert) 1:49.21 (district record); 15-Fremont Ross (Beth Hoelzle, Kristyn Warner, Nicole Farrell, Courtney Abbott) 2:02.85.

200 free: 1-Molly O'Connor (FR) 1:52.62 (automatic state qualifier, school record); 30-Fran Darr (OH) 2:10.01.

200 IM: 6-Amy Tabbert (Oak Harbor) 2:17.02; 13-Linda Leow (Oak Harbor) 2:22.61.

50 free: 1-Lange (Oak Harbor) 24.39 (new school record); 11-Melissa Jenkins (Oak Harbor) 25.75; 15-Amber Noggle (Oak Harbor) 25.91; 32-Beth Geiger (Port Clinton) 27.62.

100 free: 1-O'Connor (FR) 51.99 (school record); 17-Noggle (Oak Harbor) 56.97.

200 free relay: 2-Oak Harbor (Van Horn, Jenkins, Noggle, Lange) 1:40.02 (new school record); 5-Fremont Ross (O'Connor, Jenny Schaaf, Abbott, Hoelzle) 1:42.99.

100 fly: 3-Van Horn (OH) 58.48 (new school record); 10-Lajti (OH) 1:02.74.

100 back: 1-Van Horn (OH) 58.80 (breaks district record of 58.95 set Keri Odom in 1986; breaks Van Horn's school record of 59.97); 7-Lajti (Oak Harbor) 1:01.55; 8-Tabbert (OH) 1:02.63.

500 free: 20-Darr (OH) 5:44.24.

100 breast: 1-Lange (OH) 1:03.69 (breaks own district record of 1:05.91 set in 1996; breaks pool record of 1:03.70 set by Josie McCulloch of Bowling Green State University in 1994); 9-Warner (FR) 1:11.05.

400 free relay: 7-Oak Harbor (Noggle, Jenkins, Lajti, Tabbert) 3:48.04; 12-Fremont Ross (Schaaf, Farrell, Warner, O'Connor) 3:53.73.