

2011 DIVISION I STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS



KEVIN SHIELDS/NEWS- MESSENGER

The eight members of the Fremont Ross swim team who qualified to the Division I state meet in Canton were given a send-off by parents and teammates before boarding the bus Wednesday. Those eight members, left to right, are senior Alex Hoffman, junior Keith Wasserman, senior Luke Wilhelm and senior Eric Yuhas. Kneeling left to right are sophomore Laura Duncan, freshman Megan Hawk, senior Taylor Waggoner and senior Sammi Miller.

Ross senior leads team as it heads to state swim meet

BY KEVIN SHIELDS
Sports writer

FREMONT — Phil Moran doesn't believe there's ever been another Fremont Ross swimmer who has won four events at the Division I district swim meet.

But the Little Giants' swim coach does know of one who has — Ross senior Taylor Waggoner.

Waggoner, who has qualified to the state swim meet all four years at Ross, captured individual district titles in the 100 butterfly and 200 freestyle Saturday at Bowling Green State University. She was also a part of two relays that captured district crowns, including the 400 free relay, which broke the school record with a time of 3:36.69.

"I was in complete shock," Waggoner said. "And it still hasn't sunk in that I won every single event. I went in thinking it would be cool to win everything, but to actually do it was incredible."

Waggoner was one of eight Little Giants who were surrounded by a sea of purple and white Wednesday as their teammates and families sent them off to the state swim meet.

It's an event that Art Bucci, Fremont City Schools athletic director, called the "annual trip to Canton."

Ross has had a long-standing tradition of strong swimming and diving. It started back when Bucci was the coach and has continued to grow stronger under the guidance of Moran. This season marks the fourth in a row that eight or more swimmers have qualified to go to the C.T. Branin Natatorium. Moran had 11 qualify in 2008.

And it's not getting any easier. "This past Saturday was the fastest district meet we've had in a long time," Moran said. "And this is the fastest state meet we've ever had to get in. It's just getting so difficult."

"You have to swim pretty close to a junior national cut time just to get into our state meet."

Even a school-record breaking swim by sophomore Laura Duncan in the 100 breaststroke (1:07.40), barely qualified her in the 22nd time slot of the 24 qualifying spots.

Duncan, Waggoner, Sammi Miller and Megan Hawk are the third seed in the 200 free relay at 1:37.36 and the 15th seed in the 400 free relay.

Miller, a senior, is the 23rd seed in the 50 free at 24.44.

Waggoner earned a fifth-seed in the 100 butterfly, which she won in a school-record time of 56.68, breaking her old mark set as a freshman.

"I'm not sure we've ever had a swimmer win an event at districts four years in a row," Moran said. "In our district, that's a very hard thing to do."

Waggoner was also part of the girls' 200 free relay that won the district meet for the fourth straight time. She is seeded 15th for the 200 free after a swimming a time

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of 1:54.74.

"I'm really excited about where we're seeded, especially for our relay," Waggoner said. "I just hope that we can all keep it up and have good prelims. Then once we make finals, we just have fun."

On the boys side, the Little Giants also qualified four swimmers. Senior Alex Hoffman, will compete in the three events, while junior Keith Wasserman, senior Luke Wilhelm and senior Eric Yuhas will join him on the 200 free relay.

Hoffman earned a district title in the 100 butterfly, swimming a time of 52.41. He is the 22nd seed in the 200 free at 1:44.35.

"It's a great accomplishment for me to make it individually," said Hoffman, who qualified in the 100 butterfly and was on two qualifying relays as a junior. "I'm

really proud of what I've done and hopefully I can improve one more time."

Ross's 200 free relay lost a key member after last season with the graduation of Dexter Foos (currently swimming at Eastern Michigan University). But with the addition of Yuhas this season, the group hasn't lost much of its punch.

"With losing Dexter that was a huge time that we had to replace," Hoffman said. "But we had guys fight for that one spot. It was a real free-for-all. And it was well earned by Eric."

The 200 free relay is the 22nd seed for the state meet at 1:29.16.

Prelims for the girls and boys Division I swimming competition start Friday at 9 a.m. Finals take place Saturday at 4 p.m.

"We've had a lot of success in recent years at getting kids on the podium," Moran said. "We definitely want to continue that."

SWIMMING AND DIVING ■ STATE MEET



Fremont Ross's Sammi Miller, second from left, prepares to take off in the 200-yard freestyle relay at the state swim meet Friday at C.T. Branin Natatorium in Canton. Miller

Ross's Waggoner headed to finals today

BY CHRIS COON

Special to The News-Messenger

CANTON — Ross senior Taylor Waggoner was the only state finals qualifier for Fremont Ross, advancing her to the next round of states in the 100-yard butterfly with a time of 57.33 in the Division I preliminaries at C.T. Branin Natatorium on Friday.

Waggoner finished fifth. The top eight advance to the finals.

"The kids swam well," said Fremont Ross head coach Phil Moran. "It's a state meet. It was a fast meet and they knew that going in, if we held our times we moved up big because the majority of the teams here go slower, due to the fact they did everything to get here."

Waggoner also competed in the 200-yard freestyle, placing 24th with a time of 1:58.04, while also helping the girls 200-yard freestyle relay team of Laura Duncan, Sammi Miller and Megan Hawk place ninth with a time of 1:38.66. Waggoner recorded a personal time of 24.03.



Fremont Ross's Taylor Waggoner talks after the 200-yard freestyle at the Division I state swim meet Friday. Waggoner placed 24th in the 200 freestyle but her fifth-place finish in the 100-yard butterfly qualified her for finals today.

"I'm happy overall, especially with my fly and 200 relay, but I think we did well even though our times were slower," Waggoner said. "I think everyone coming into this meet was pretty relaxed. I'll probably be little nervous for tomorrow but

I'll be fine."

Miller, a junior, swam in the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 24.67, placing 22nd.

Duncan, a sophomore, was the other individual representative for Fremont Ross, competing in the 100-yard breast-

stroke with a time of 1:07.86, placing her 19th out of 24.

The boys were led by senior Alex Hoffman, who competed in both the 100-yard butterfly and the 200-yard freestyle, recording times of 52.78 and 1:44.02, while finishing 14th and 15th respectively.

Ross also had a 200-yard freestyle relay team, consisting of Eric Yuhás, Luke Wilhelm, Keith Wasserman and Hoffman, competing in the preliminaries. They finished 24th with a time of 1:30.08.

"Both the relays did really well," Moran said. "You never know with relays, it's just a crap shoot. Like I said though I'm pleased, and I'm sure we have some disappointed kids, but I'm not."

Waggoner will compete in the 100-yard butterfly finals at 5 p.m. today.

"We're looking forward to tomorrow," said Moran. "This is a typical year for us with the weather and everything else, so why should tomorrow be any different?"

WALLACE BALL/SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-MESSANGER

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STATE SWIMMING

Fremont's Waggoner fifth in state

BY CHRIS COON

News-Messenger correspondent

CANTON — Fremont Ross senior Taylor Waggoner placed fifth with a time of 57.08 in the 100-yard butterfly in the Division I state finals Saturday at C.T. Branin Natatorium.

"I'm happy with my event," said Waggoner. "It's been my goal to be on the podium since my freshman year and I finally got it."

Ross coach Phil Moran was ebullient.

"Taylor's fly was awesome," he said. "She had a top five finish, which is something to be real happy about."



Waggoner

Ross's Alex Hoffman swam in the 100-yard butterfly in the state consolation round, along with the girls 200-yard freestyle relay team of Waggoner, Laura Duncan, Sammi Miller and Megan Hawk. The relay team finished 10th.

"The kids swam great," said Moran. "We swam faster today and I can't really ask for much more than that."

Hoffman who finished 15th with a time of 52.76.

"This was my last race," said Hoffman. "I've been training hard all year and now I know I'm All-Ohio, so I'm happy and I can't beat that."

Hoffman is somewhat new to the sport of swimming, starting the sport when he was in the eighth grade.

"Alex had a great event," said Moran. "He made All-Ohio in two events and to come in his senior year and do all that, well you can't ask for anything more."

Winning the girls and boys Division I state championship respectively were Upper Arlington and Cincinnati St. Xavier.

This is St. Xavier's 32nd state championship and their third straight.