

1987 State Meet...

Ross divers lead squad into district meet at BGSU

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

Fremont Ross's male divers figure to have the best shot at qualifying for the state meet during the Northwest Ohio District Swim Meet at Bowling Green State University this weekend.

The Little Giants have three divers ranked in the state, according to an unofficial ranking system published in the Northwest Ohio Swimming Newsletter. Ryan Nuhfer, undefeated this season and a state qualifier as a junior last year, is 14th in the state while teammates B.J. Blair and Chad Root are listed in the 27th and 37th spots, respectively.

"They are ranked by their best

scores as of Feb. 13," Ross Coach Tom Thomson said, "but the degree of difficulty is not figured in that."

The girls diving at the Student Recreation Center on the BGSU campus will be at 11 a.m., Friday, with the boys diving at 11 a.m., Saturday. Natalie Albert is the lone girls diver for Ross.

The top two divers and swimmers in each event qualify for the state meet. Divers and swimmers can qualify as at-large entrants if their scores or times are better than in other district meets.

Thomson said that today's practice will determine many events his swimmers will compete in at BG.

"Both the medley and

freestyle relays look strong for both boys and girls," he said.

"There are several combinations of swimmers for each team, but I will not select them until Thursday's practice.

"I think both relays could surprise some teams," the Ross coach added. "The kids are looking strong in practice and they have a positive attitude.

They know they have to swim their best races and they will."

Some of the better chances at qualifying for the state meet are Todi Heslet and Ann Wells in the butterfly and Julie Schaaf in the 50 free.

Among the boys are freestyler Mike Mullholand and Brian Schaaf, Rob Penrod in the backstroke and freestyles, Rob

Schaaf in the breaststroke and Steve Schaaf in the freestyles and breaststroke.

Swimming events begin at 4 p.m., both Friday and Saturday. The medley relay, 200 freestyle, individual medley and 50 freestyle events will be completed Friday with the remainder of the swimming events Saturday.

TRADE
IN SALE

NUHFER IN SEMIFINALS: Ryan Nuhfer of Fremont Ross has reached the semifinals in the diving competition at the State Swimming and Diving Meet in Branin Natatorium in Canton. Nuhfer accumulated 166 points in five dives during the preliminaries Friday. He will dive again today beginning at 3:15 p.m. The leader of the diving competition is Scott Siford of Toledo St. Francis with 221.10 points. B.J. Blair of Ross missed the cut by one diver. Blair was in 17th place with 154.55 points after's yesterday's preliminaries.

Nuhfer, Blair finish 16th, 17th

CANTON — Ryan Nuhfer of Fremont Ross and teammate B.J. Blair finished 16th and 17th, respectively, in the state diving championships.

Nuhfer had 250.45 points in eight dives but failed to qualify for the finals Saturday. Blair missed the cut Friday night but his 155.10 points on five dives earned him his finish.

Nuhfer is a senior while Blair is a freshman.

Scott Siford of Toledo St. Francis, the Northwest Ohio District Meet champ, won the state title with 502.05 in 11 dives.



News-Messenger/Chris Walker

ON THE ROAD AGAIN: No, the Ross High divers don't have to hitchhike to Port Clinton, but they do have to spend an unusual amount of time on the road. Despite having to travel for practice as

well as meets, they have done very well. Pictured from left are Natalie Albert, Mike Nighswander, B.J. Blair, diving coach Bob Lozano, Ryan Nuhfer, volunteer coach Gil Root and Chad Root (kneeling).

Divers go extra mile(s) for victory

By **BOB MARKER**
Staff writer

Have board, will travel?

Not quite. Rather, it's have divers — but no board — and must travel.

That is what the quintet of Ross High School divers faces each day of practice and at every meet. The group must travel several miles to practice, forcing them into delayed meals, study time and sometimes, sleep.

For Ross divers, it's been that way for the past two years. That was when the Fremont Junior High School pool was declared unsuitable for swimming and diving competition because it did not meet Ohio High School Athletic Association regulations. The Ross swimmers still are able to practice in the pool but diving at the facility is taboo. The diving board has long since been banished.

With those handicaps, it is amazing that the Ross boys diving quartet of Ryan Nuhfer, undefeated this year; Chad Root, Mike Nighswander and B.J. Blair and the Aqua Giants only girl diver, Natalie Albert, rank as one of the strongest contingents in Northwest Ohio. It's hard to believe the group does not have a home pool. Instead the group is traveling 17 miles north to use the Port

Ross swimmers face double-duty this week

The Ross High School divers and swimmers will be in action twice this week.

The Aqua Giants travel to Sylvania Northview for meets Wednesday. Competition begins at 5 p.m.

On Saturday, Ross will be among those teams competing in the Port Clinton relays. Other area teams involved in the meet are Oak Harbor, Margareta and the host Redskins.

Clinton High School pool.

The four boys used to dive at the junior high pool. Nuhfer and Nighswander are seniors, Root a sophomore and Blair is a freshman. Albert, a sophomore, is in her first year of diving.

"After school, we have about an hour and a half before we leave," Nighswander explained the after school routine. "We can do some of our homework or eat."

"Usually, we get back around eight o'clock," Nuhfer, the school record holder and a state meet qualifier last year, said. "Then it is eat, study and get to bed."

"I usually stay at school," Albert said. "Mom brings me a snack for some energy."

"It's inconvenient," Root added. "I come home for about an hour and half and then back to Ross and then Port Clinton."

"You don't have much time for a social life," Blair pointed out, who as a freshman, commutes

from the junior high to the high school.

"Mom takes me out to Ross and Coach (Bob) Lozano brings me home because he lives close to us."

"We practice from 5:30 to 7," Lozano pointed out. "The problem is, the kids usually get a quick snack, hop in the van, get to the pool and have to work around the Port Clinton divers and swimmers."

When the quintet gets to Port Clinton at approximately 5 p.m., the group is in the water a half hour later.

"We have worried about one of our divers hitting one of their swimmers," Lozano pointed out.

To alleviate that worry, the divers act as each other's lookouts, giving the all-clear to dive. Usually, the Ross contingent gets the pool to itself from about 6:30 to seven.

"It's kind of tiring (traveling)," Nuhfer admitted, "but we work hard because it's

hard to find places for us to dive and when we have a place, we work harder."

The Port Clinton pool is the fourth place Ross divers have used. The Sandusky County YMCA, which got the old board from the junior high, the Tiffin YMCA and Oak Harbor High School have served as the Aqua Giants' home away from home.

Along with the hectic routine of the after school shuttling, is the cost of renting the facilities and transportation.

With all the problems, there seems to be little effect on the divers. This past weekend, the four boys finished in the top six in the eight-team Findlay Invitational and Albert was fifth in the 12-team girls competition.

Nuhfer is rated the top diver in the Northwest Ohio district.

He attributes his and his teammates' success to their coaches, hard work and the close scrutiny of everyone involved. Lozano, the diving coach for head swim Coach Tom Thomson, is aided by unpaid volunteer assistant Gil Root, father of Chad and a former Ross diver, who provides diving instruction and at times, helps with transportation.

All that, in the long run, adds up to surprising success which is not often found by people without a home.

