

ROSS LOOKS TO END YEAR ON HIGH NOTE



Ross' Olivia Derodes pulls away and wins the girls 200 individual medley in a meet earlier this season.

FILE PHOTO

Girls hoping to bring home state meet hardware after winning district title

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REPORTER

FREMONT - The Fremont Ross girls swim team has done a lot of winning this season.

The Lady Giants went undefeated in dual meets, won the Three Rivers Athletic Conference title and, with just eight swimmers competing, won the first district championship in the program's history.

This weekend, Ross looks to close out the season on a similar high note.

With top 10 seeds in five events at the Division I state meet, the Lady Giants head to C.T. Branin Natatorium, in Canton with the realistic hopes of bringing home more hardware.

"It's just been an incredible ride," girls swim coach Tina Moses said. "We took eight girls to district and were able to win a title, I don't know if that is something that has ever been done before. They just came together as a team and did what they had to do to get the job done. I didn't expect we could. Going into it, it was not an expectation of mine for us to win the district title."

Ross' biggest hopes lie in two of its relay teams. The 400 freestyle team of Morgan Waggoner, Meghan Moses, Olivia DeRodes and Mekennah Fitzgerald enter the state meet as the No. 3 seed. Moses, DeRodes, Anne Marie Moses and Kaity Kelly are seeded ninth in the 200 freestyle relay.

"We're really looking forward to our relays, especially our free relays,"



Fremont Ross athletic director Chad Berndt speaks during a sendoff for the state swim meet-bound athletes Wednesday afternoon.

RICH MCGOWAN/NEWS-MESSENGER

said Meghan Moses, who will continue swimming next year at Rutgers University. "We've been placed really high in the state this year and we're looking for a top three, or top one, this year. We've really been looking forward to this meet and these relays."

Meghan Moses and Waggoner also will be competing together in the 50 and 100 freestyle events. Waggoner, an Akron University commit, is seeded second in the 50 and fourth in the 100 while Moses is seventh in the 50 and 11th in the 100. This weekend will mark the final time the duo will swim for Fremont Ross.

"It's going to be bittersweet," Waggoner said. "I think we're definitely focused on swimming well but also having fun while we're swimming. We're more excited than nervous."

DeRodes will also be competing in the 200 freestyle.

Ross senior Trent Williams, who will be competing in the 50 and 100

freestyle in the boys competition, said the key to swimming successfully at the state meet is handling the pressure and controlling the adrenaline when the race begins.

"There are a lot of people who get faster at state but there are also people who fall off, they get in the pool and go slower," said Williams, seeded 10th in the 50 and 12th in the 100. "I think if I improve, which I know will, I can make the top 8."

Sophomore Andrew Evans is seeded 10th in 100 breaststroke and will compete, along with Trent Williams, Tate Williams and Hawk Smith in the 200 freestyle. The relay team will be shooting for setting a new school record, looking to top the current mark of 1:27.5, but will need to drop a full second off its best time to do so.

"It is a lot, but I feel like between us four, we can dig down deep, see the light at the end of the tunnel and get it done," Smith said.

Senior Trent Williams will swim in the consolation heats in a pair of events in the boys competition. He finished 14th in the 50 yards freestyle in 21.57 and also took 15th in the 100 freestyle in 47.2 seconds.

Andrew Evans missed the consolation round Friday night and he finished 24th in the state in the 100 breaststroke.

Williams, Evans and Hawk Smith and Tate Williams finished 21st in the 200 freestyle relay.