

New Linn-Mar pool set for Nov. 1

Written by Mike Condon

Tuesday, 20 August 2013 21:19 - Last Updated Wednesday, 21 August 2013 22:28



The Linn-Mar girls swimming team got inside the school's new aquatics facility for a preseason photo that's being used on the annual schedule poster.

Unfortunately for the 47-member team, that is likely all it will get to do there this season.

"I was at an event with our board members just the other day and the goal is to have the pool open on Nov. 1," said Linn-Mar Coach Chad Derlein. "That would be just a week before the state meet is scheduled, so it
sn't look like we will get to swim there this season." doe

It was hoped the facility would be open by Oct. 1 so the girls could swim the back half of their schedule in the pool, but weather delays early in the spring pushed the project back.

Linn-Mar Assistant Superintendent Rick Ironside told the Metro Sports Report in April that the project was running about a month behind. His hope was that if the weather improved, the ground could be made up.

However, heavy rains through much of May and early June made that impossible.

"That's just how construction goes sometimes," Derlein said. "We just have to roll with the punches. I'm most disappointed for the seniors. My goal is that they will at least get to practice at least one day in there to say they had the opportunity."

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Understandably, the seniors on the team weren't happy when they heard about the Nov. 1 opening date.

"They are a little upset about not being able to swim a meet there this season," Derlein said, "but they know it is for the good of the program as a whole. They don't like it, but they understand it."

So for one more season, the Lions will practice and host dual meets at Coe College.

"We are practicing right after school for now," Derlein said. "Once Coe's season begins in October, we will have our practices in the evenings."

In anticipation of having the new facility open late in the year, Linn-Mar's schedule was set up to have three of the last four dual meets at home.

"We set our schedule up that way on purpose," Derlein said. "We were not scheduled to host a district meet this year and the boys won't be either in case there are any kinks that have to be worked out with the facility."

The high school season for boys swimming is during the winter.

Derlein said the 2014 schedule will include an invitational meet to be held the last Saturday of September in addition to the regular dual meet schedule.

The Lions finished 15th at last year's state meet and return a number of state qualifiers.

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"We are excited about our prospects for this season," Derlein said. "I think we can have a very good season."