

Drake, Jenks claim MVC swim titles

Written by Jim Ecker

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IOWA CITY - According to family lore, Kelsey Drake first got into a pool when she was still a baby.

"I don't remember it, but my mom says I was 6 months old," Drake said Saturday at the Mississippi Valley Conference swim meet. "I think it was mostly my mom got in the water and held me there and let me feel the water, more than anything."

That early start has paid off for the Jefferson freshman.

Drake won two MVC titles Saturday and shattered the oldest meet record on the books with an impressive showing at the Mercer Park Aquatic Center in Iowa City.

Drake captured the 100 yard butterfly in 57.19 seconds, breaking the meet record of 58.53 that had stood since 1988, and she also claimed the 200 individual medley in 2:11.13.

It was a good day for Metro freshmen as Jennifer Jenks of Linn-Mar won the 100 yard freestyle in 53.45 seconds, nipping Molly Lembezeder of Dubuque Senior by one-hundredth of a second with a blistering finish.

Cedar Falls nipped Iowa City West for the team title, 396 to 388.5. Kennedy finished a strong third in the standings and Linn-Mar was fourth.

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Drake began taking swimming lessons when she was 3 years old. She's a mermaid in the water now, but it wasn't always that way.

"I remember not liking getting in the pool for the first few lessons, because I had a guy instructor and I was afraid of him," she said, laughing. "Yes, I'm over that now. I think they switched instructors, so I had a girl one. I think when I was like 5-ish I got over that.

"But other than that, I think I really liked it. I can't remember a time, really, other than that, of not wanting to get into the water."

Drake has established herself as one of the top swimmers in Iowa this year as just a ninth grader, with a shot at winning the 100 fly and 200 IM at the state meet in Marshalltown Nov. 9.

Drake won the 100 fly by more than three seconds en route to the record. She ranks second in the state in the 100 fly with a personal best of 57.05 seconds, so Saturday's showing of 57.19 was just a tick behind that.



"It was fun," she said. "I knew I could get the record, so I went after it. I was happy with my time. I wish I would have gone a little faster and gotten a 56, but I'm still happy with it."

The 100 butterfly is a grueling race that burns the arms and shoulders, but it's her favorite race. She excels at all the strokes, as shown in the individual medley when she swims the

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backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle in the same event, but loves the fly and has for a long time.

"I'd say probably because I was good at it. And I like to do it," she said. "In practice, I don't like doing freestyle. I'd rather do fly. So I do a lot more fly than free in practice.

"I used to be a breaststroker more than a flyer, but then I became a flyer. I think it's more because I like it and I feel good doing it."

Drake has minor shoulder problems and says the freestyle is harder on her body than the butterfly. "I think that's why I'm a better flyer, because it doesn't hurt as much."

She also enjoys the 200 IM, because of the different strokes.

"The IM is probably one of my favorite events, because I get bored doing one stroke for the whole race," she said. "So I always think the 200 IM is really fun, because you get to do a little bit of everthing."

Even though she's just a freshman, Drake has begun contacting colleges with an eye on her future in swimming. "It's not too early," she affirmed.

Jennifer Jenks enjoyed a good day for Linn-Mar in the pool. She placed second in the 200 freestyle in a tight race with Brittany Moffatt of Cedar Falls, losing by just 28-hundredths of a second, and helped the Lions place fourth in the 200 freestyle relay and fifth in the 400 freestyle relay.

Jenks posted a mild upset when she nipped Lembezeder in the 100 freestyle. Jenks is ranked fifth in the state in the 100 free and Lembezeder is ranked third, but the freshman beat the senior to the pad this time.

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Lembezeder had the lead by a body length after 50 yards, but Jenks turned it on from there. "I felt like my first 50 was like 200 pace until I got in my groove," said Jenks. "I felt like I better get moving."

Jenks and Lembezeder swam in adjacent lanes and Jenks knew she was trailing after 50 yards. "I was aware, but I didn't give up. It's not over until it's over," she said.

Jenks enjoyed winning a conference title as a freshman. "It sounds pretty good to me," she said happily.

The Kennedy Cougars did not win any races, but they piled up points with their depth and had nine top-6 finishes. Sam Jacobsen, Brooke Timmerman, Michele Wasta and Kirsten Siebenga placed second in the 200 medley relay for Kennedy's top showing.

Jacobsen placed second in the 200 medley relay, third in the 200 freestyle relay, fourth in the 100 backstroke and fourth in the 400 freestyle relay. Timmerman was second in the 200 medley relay, third in the 200 freestyle relay, fifth in the 100 breaststroke and sixth in the 200 IM.

Hannah Botkin took third in the 50 freestyle, third in the 200 freestyle relay, fourth in the 400 freestyle relay and fifth in the 100 freestyle for the Cougars. Siebenga was second in the 200 medley relay, third in the 200 freestyle relay and fifth in the 50 freestyle.

Stephanie Jenks helped Linn-Mar score points Saturday. She was second in the 500 freestyle, third in the 200 freestyle, fifth in the 200 medley relay and fifth in the 400 freestyle relay. Samantha Fitzgerald was fourth in the 100 butterfly, fourth in the 200 freestyle relay, fifth in the 200 medley relay and sixth in the 100 breaststroke for the Lions.

Kelly Wingerson and Hailey Harms claimed a pair of top-6 finishes for Linn-Mar.

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The Washington Warriors finished sixth in the 200 medley relay with Kaitlyn Nemickas, Olivia Altmeier, Logan Eckhardt and Jackie Allen.

Jefferson finished eighth in the team standings and Washington was 11th.

MVC SWIM MEET

Team Standings

1. Cedar Falls 396, 2. Iowa City West 388.5, 3. Kennedy 316.5, 4. Linn-Mar 259, 5. Dubuque Senior 248, 6. Iowa City High 155.5, 7. Wahlert 115.5, 8. Jefferson 100, 9. Waterloo West 96, 10. Hempstead 82, 11. Washington 54, 12. Waterloo East 22.

200 Medley relay

1. Cedar Falls 1:53.96
2. Kennedy (Jacobsen, Timmerman, Wasta, Siebenga) 1:55.14
3. Iowa City West 1:55.78
4. Iowa City High 1:56.38
5. Linn-Mar (S.Jenks, Broghammer, Fitzgerald, Gardner) 2:01.73
6. Washington (Nemickas, Altmeier, Eckhardt, Allen) 2:02.91

200 Freestyle

1. Brittany Moffatt (CF) 1:55.02
2. Jennifer Jenks (LM) 1:55.30
3. Stephanie Jenks (LM) 2:01.30
4. Jasmine Roghair (ICW) 2:01.96
5. Jenna Willer (DS) 2:02.57
6. Paris Sissel (ICH) 2:04.27

200 IM

1. Kelsey Drake (CRJ) 2:11.13
2. Catherine Sell (CF) 2:13.85
3. Erica Hsu (ICW) 2:14.03
4. Sarah Ritchie (ICW) 2:18.96

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5. Meghan Hackett (CF) 2:19.91
6. Brooke Timmerman (CRK) 2:20.33

50 Freestyle

1. Molly Lembezeder (DS) 24.62
2. Martee Grainger (CF) 25.79
3. Hannah Botkin (CRK) 25.85
4. Natalie Shimp (CF) 25.90
- 5t. Kirsten Siebenga (CRK) 25.99
- 5t. Olivia Knowles (DS) 25.99

100 Butterfly

1. Kelsey Drake (CRJ) 57.19
2. Meghan Hackett (CF) 1:00.66
3. Lilian Zhu (ICW) 1:01.28
4. Samantha Fitzgerald (LM) 1:03.43
5. Kailie Valentine (CF) 1:03.58
6. Sarah Ritchie (ICW) 1:04.52

100 Freestyle

1. Jennifer Jenks (LM) 53.45
2. Molly Lembezeder (DS) 53.46
3. Martee Grainger (CF) 56.36
4. Erica Hsu (ICW) 56.88
5. Hannah Botkin (CRK) 57.00
6. Jasmine Roghair (ICW) 57.06

500 Freestyle

1. Brittany Moffatt (CF) 5:09.74
2. Stephanie Jenks (LM) 5:23.12
3. Natalie Shoultz (ICW) 5:28.44
4. Jade Jacobs (CF) 5:29.02
5. Alice Tsui (DS) 5:39.21
6. Sophie Shoultz (ICW) 5:39.47

200 Freestyle Relay

1. Cedar Falls 1:40.73
2. Dubuque Senior 1:41.08
3. Kennedy (Botkin, Jacobsen, Siebenga, Timmerman) 1:42.40
4. Linn-Mar (J.Jenks, Wingerson, Harms, Fitzgerald) 1:42.50
5. Iowa City West 1:44.50
6. Wahlert 1:47.60

100 Backstroke

1. Lilian Zhu (ICW) 1:00.59
2. Shelby Cline (CF) 1:02.57

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3. Alayna McCafferty (ICH) 1:03.90
4. Sam Jacobsen (CRK) 1:03.97
5. Paris Sissel (ICH) 1:04.05
6. Jade Jacobs (CF) 1:04.38

100 Breaststroke

1. Lizzie Brown (ICH) 1:06.55
2. Olivia Knowles (DS) 1:10.15
3. Catherine Sell (CF) 1:11.27
4. Natalie Shimp (CF) 1:11.50
5. Brooke Timmerman (CRK) 1:11.52
6. Samantha Fitzgerald (LM) 1:11.92

400 Freestyle Relay

1. Cedar Falls 3:39.60
2. Dubuque Senior 3:43.02
3. Iowa City West 3:45.93
4. Kennedy (Botkin, Jacobsen, Bagby, Yang) 3:46.75
5. Linn-Mar (S.Jenks, Wingerson, Harms, J.Jenks) 3:46.96
6. Wahlert 3:54.17

Athletes of the Year

Mississippi Division - Molly Lembezeder, Dubuque Senior
Valley Division - Carlie Noel, Wahlert

Coaches of the Year

Mississippi Division - Ryan York, Jefferson
Valley Division - Chad Derlein, Linn-Mar