

Drake helps Lions have special relay

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 27 September 2014 21:50 - Last Updated Saturday, 27 September 2014 22:10



Kelsey Drake is a powerful force in a swimming pool in her individual events, but she's getting a special thrill as a member of Linn-Mar's impressive 400 freestyle relay.

The Lions own the best time in the state in the 400 relay and they proved it again Saturday in their own invitational at the Linn-Mar Aquatic Center.

Linn-Mar blazed to victory in the freestyle relay in 3 minutes, 38.16 seconds with Jenn Jenks, Lizzie Adams, Stephanie Jenks and Drake slicing through the fast waters with an impressive performance. It nearly equaled their state-best mark of 3:38.08 and was plenty good enough for a comfortable win against strong competition.

"It's a lot of fun having all four of us on a relay," said Drake. "We just wanted to go out there and win it, and we did."

Drake, a two-time silver medalist at the 2013 state meet, transferred to Linn-Mar this year and has helped the Lions rise to No.2 in the state power rankings.

The Cedar Falls Tigers, who rank No.3 in the state, trimmed Linn-Mar for the team championship Saturday, 555-522, in a six-team field that included some phenomenal swimmers from Albert Lea, Minn.

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Drake is anxious to see what the Lions can accomplish in the 400 relay at the state meet later this fall.

"I think we have a very good chance of winning it," she said. "Our whole dream is to bring home a couple of golds from the relays and some state records, and I think it's a very good possibility."

Drake transferred to Linn-Mar this year because she thought it would help her prepare for the Olympic Trials that are on the horizon. She left behind some good friends and teammates at Jefferson, but thinks training with the other top swimmers at Linn-Mar will help her career.

"It's so much fun," she said. "All of us push each other to get better in practice."

"We all give each other words of encouragement before we go. And we all just want to go out there and put up a fast time."

Drake put up a fast time while claiming the 100 butterfly Saturday in 56.33 seconds, but she had to settle for second place in the 200 IM and the 200 medley relay.

Alyssa Deuso won the diving competition for Linn-Mar. Jenn Jenks placed second in the 50 free and 100 free, Stephanie Jenks finished second in the 500 free, Adams claimed a runner-up showing in the 100 back and Mikaela Lengwin placed second in diving behind Deuso.

Albert Lea won six of 12 events. Linn-Mar and Cedar Falls both won three events.

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Linn-Mar Coach Chad Derlein thinks the Lions have the ingredients for a high finish in the team standings at the state meet.

"My goal, my hope, is top-5 for sure," he said. "Anything above that would be good. I think we have the talent on our team to be top-3, top-2. If we win state, that's even better.

"We'll see how it plays out," said Derlein. "I'm going to be happy with top-5."

Linn-Mar finished fifth at the state meet in 1998, the best showing in school history.

TEAM STANDINGS

1. Cedar Falls 555, 2. Linn-Mar 522, 3. Albert Lea 433, 4. Dowling 260, 5. Dubuque Senior 208.5, 6. Wahlert 204.5.

WINNERS

Diving - Alyssa Deuso, Linn-Mar, 456.70

200 medley relay - Albert Lea 1:49.65

200 free - Brittany Moffatt, Cedar Falls, 1:58.13

200 IM - Lindsey Horejsi, Albert Lea, 2:04.84

50 free - Anna Andersen, Albert Lea, 24.01

100 fly - Kelsey Drake, Linn-Mar, 56.33

100 free - Anna Andersen, Albert Lea, 52.23

500 free - Brittany Moffatt, Cedar Falls, 5:17.06

200 free relay - Albert Lea 1:40.36

100 back - Sammi Hall, Cedar Falls, 1:02.09

100 breast - Lindsey Horejsi, Albert Lea, 1:00.21

400 free relay - Linn-Mar (Jenn Jenks, Lizzie Adams, Stephanie Jenks, Kelsey Drake) 3:38.16

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LINN-MAR PLACEWINNERS

Top 3

2nd - Mikaela Lengwin, diving, 395.55

2nd (tie) - 200 medley relay (Lizzie Adams, Paige Broghammer, Kelsey Drake, Jenn Jenks)
1:52.04

2nd - Kelsey Drake, 200 IM, 2:05.11

2nd - Jenn Jenks, 50 free, 24.55

2nd - Jenn Jenks, 100 free, 53.09

2nd - Stephanie Jenks, 500 free, 5:29.55

2nd - Lizzie Adams, 100 back, 1:02.36

3rd - Stephanie Jenks, 200 free, 2:01.98

3rd - Georgia Sanderson, diving, 378.50