

Wagner dominates regional diving meet

Written by Jim Ecker

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Linn-Mar senior Sam Wagner is getting healthier, she's getting tougher and she's getting better.

Just in time.

Wagner dominated the IGHS AU regional diving meet at Kennedy High School Thursday night with a season-high 409.20 points and led a 1-2-3 sweep by the Lions.

Linn-Mar senior Adelia Clark placed second with 348.35 points and Linn-Mar freshman Alyssa Deuso finished third with 333.50 points. The 1-2-3 finish gave the Lions 53 points in the team standings heading into the regional swimming events at Kennedy Saturday.

"Fabulous," said Linn-Mar diving coach Meghan Sievertsen, summing up the clean sweep.

Wagner has battled a sore back all season, but she tacked more than 20 points onto her season-best performance with a series of polished dives that impressed the judges.



"It was a good meet," Wagner said. "It was definitely my best score of the season, so I'm happy with it."

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Wagner brought a heating pad to the meet, but couldn't find an electrical outlet and had to dive without applying heat to her lower back. It didn't seem to matter.

Wagner's previous best this season in 11-dive competition was 388.35 points at the Mississippi Valley Conference Super Meet, so she added 20.85 markers to that total.

Her score of 409.20 ranks seventh in the state based on posted totals on the [IGHSAU website](#).

Even so, Wagner is headed in the right direction with the state meet looming in Marshalltown next Friday.

Wagner placed 11th at the state meet as a freshman in 2008, slipped to 14th as a sophomore in 2009 and climbed to ninth last year as a junior. Now she's aiming for the top, but knows it will be tough.

"It would be really great to win. That's definitely my goal," she said.



Wagner has been getting physical therapy and massage treatments for her sore back, which is a lingering ailment from her years as a gymnast. Sievertsen said Wagner is learning to push through the pain when she's on the diving board.

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"You can only do so much to get it to go away," Sievertsen said. "She was definitely more mentally tough tonight, so that definitely helped. Now we have a week to improve just a little bit more and we'll be all set for next Friday."

Ames High School freshman Maggie James (460.60 points) and Ames senior Sarah Kemp (439.10) rank 1-2 in the state in diving, so Wagner might have to improve quite a bit to catch them at state if the Little Cyclones nail their dives. Wagner scored 418 points in a meet last year as a junior.

"On any given day anything can happen," Sievertsen remarked. "It all just depends on who can dive the most consistent 11 dives. It definitely should be exciting."

Wagner is looking forward to competing in the state meet for the fourth straight time.

"I'm really competitive, so I like the state meet, because it's the best divers in the state," she said. "It's good competition and it's fun."

Jaci Bell of Fairfield placed fourth Thursday and qualified for the state meet. There will be 30 divers in Marshalltown next Friday.

REGIONAL MEET

At Kennedy

Team scores (through 1 event) - 1. Linn-Mar 53, 2. Kennedy 37, 3. Jefferson 22, 4. Fairfield 15, 5. Bettendorf 7.

Diving

1. Sam Wagner, Linn-Mar 409.20
2. Adelia Clark, Linn-Mar 348.35
3. Alyssa Deuso, Linn-Mar 333.50
4. Jaci Bell, Fairfield 320.45
5. Tori Spaulding, Kennedy 297.30
6. Mo Groe, Jefferson 282.65

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7. Jocelyn Nelson, Kennedy 265.25
8. Carolyn Simon, Kennedy 263.00
9. Justine Wieser, Jefferson 242.25
10. Lauren Day, Bettendorf 193.70