

Drake, Lions shatter 3 MVC records

Written by Jim Ecker

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It's too bad they don't have a decathlon for high school swimmers.

If anyone could win 10 events at one meet, it would be Linn-Mar sophomore Kelsey Drake.

Freestyle, butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke. Sprints, middle distances, long distances. It wouldn't matter.

Drake, Drake, Drake, Drake.

"It would be her," Linn-Mar Coach Chad Derlein confirmed Saturday. "It doesn't matter, she can swim it. Whatever event.

"She's probably the most versatile swimmer I know."

Drake starred at the Mississippi Valley Conference meet at Kennedy Saturday. She broke meet records in the 200 individual medley and 100 butterfly, then had a sizzling anchor on the 400 freestyle relay to help

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Jenn Jenks, Lizzie Adams and Stephanie Jenks shatter another record.

High school swimmers are limited to four events at one meet. The closest Drake ever came to a "decathlon" in swimming was at the 12-and-under state meet a few years back, when she recalls winning nine events.

Drake enjoys all four strokes, although the butterfly is her favorite. "I could swim butterfly and never got bored with it, I love it so much," she remarked.

Drake is ranked first in the state in the 100 fly and 200 IM, she's second in the 500 free and 100 breast, she's ranked fourth in the 200 free, fifth in the 50 free, fifth in the 100 free and sixth in the 100 back. Linn-Mar is ranked first in the 400 free relay, third in the 200 free relay and fifth in the 200 medley relay.

Drake developed her versatility in the pool over the course of time.

"I was a breaststroker when I was younger and then I became a butterflyer," she explained. "I guess I just had all those skills, so I just put it together.

"It really helps with my fly and my freestyle, because it gives me more endurance. It's also a lot more fun, I think, to do that because I get bored swimming one stroke all the time."

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Except for the butterfly. She could swim the butterfly all day.

Drake snapped the MVC record in the 200 IM in 2:07.35, breaking the conference meet record of 2:07.90 that had been around since 1996. She topped the MVC standard in the 100 butterfly in 56.16, breaking her old record of 57.19 set last year.

The Lions were clocked in 3:38.95 in the 400 relay, breaking the old mark of 3:39.05 set by Cedar Falls in 1997.

Drake dove into the water for the anchor leg of the 400 relay about a body length behind Cedar Falls star Brittany Moffatt, but she caught Moffatt and won the race by more than a second.

"I wanted to win really bad," said Drake, who flew through the water in that final race. "We really wanted to get that record, so I just went out there and gave it my all. And we did it."

Drake and her teammates were fast Saturday, but they've actually been faster at other times this season. Drake has gone faster in the 200 IM and 100 fly and the Lions have gone faster in the 400 free relay, but you can only set conference records at the conference meet.

"It was an 'average' conference meet for us," said Derlein, who has come to expect fast times from his athletes.

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Drake's swim team, led by captain Drake, shattered three MVC records in the 200-yard relay, 100-yard freestyle, and 50-yard freestyle. Drake, a senior, led the team to victory in the 200-yard relay with a time of 1:05.4, breaking the previous record of 1:06.0 set by the 2013 team. Drake also broke the 100-yard freestyle record with a time of 1:05.4, and the 50-yard freestyle record with a time of 0:25.0. The team's success was a result of their hard work and dedication throughout the season.