

SWIMMING-DIVING

Swimming: These are the top swimmers to watch this season in Bucks/Montco

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Bucks County Courier Times

Published 6:00 p.m. ET Dec. 12, 2022 | Updated 8:18 p.m. ET Dec. 12, 2022

As the temps continue to drop, and the sun sets earlier and earlier, nothing sounds better than hibernating at home on the couch. Unless, of course, you have a swim meet. These dedicated swimmers and divers spend their winter in the pool, regardless of the temperatures outside the gym doors.

Here are some of top swimmers and divers to watch this season in the Suburban One League and the Philadelphia Catholic League.

20 Boys Swimmers to Watch:

Richard Scholer, junior, Central Bucks South: Scholer placed in the top 25 for the 100 breaststroke and 200 individual medley at the District One championships. He just missed qualifying for states in the breaststroke, and will look to make the leap this season.

Connor Mangan, junior, Central Bucks West: Mangan had a breakout year as a sophomore. He took first place in the 200 freestyle at the SOL Colonial Division championships, and 14th in the District One championships in that race. He was even better in the 500 free, placing 12th in districts.

Blaise Hofmann, sophomore, Central Bucks West: As a freshman, Hofmann won the 100 backstroke in the SOL Colonial championships and followed up with an impressive eighth-place finish at the District One championships. He also posted a top-20 time in the 100 freestyle.

David Ji, senior, Hatboro-Horsham: Ji took third place in the 100 breaststroke at districts and followed up by taking third at states in the event, and comes into the season ranked 65th nationally. Ji was also a state qualifier in the 200 medley relay, 400 freestyle relay and 200 IM. He has committed to Dartmouth.

Luke Parada, senior, Pennsbury: Parada was a medalist in the PIAA state diving championships with a fifth-place showing. He was the only finisher in the top-five who wasn't a senior and will look to move up on the podium this season.

Max Butkiewicz, senior, Neshaminy: Butkiewicz holds Neshaminy's school record in the 100 backstroke. Last season, he finished fifth in districts and qualified for states in the event. He was also part of last season's 200 medley relay that finished eighth at districts.

Connor McClurkin, senior, Neshaminy: McClurkin had an impressive showing at last year's PIAA state championships. He placed ninth in the 100 breaststroke and 15th in the 200 IM and has the potential to take home a medal this season. McClurkin holds the third-fastest time in the breaststroke in team history. He also competes in the 200 medley relay and 400 free relay.

Aidan Faikish, senior, North Penn: Faikish was a part of the Knights' second-place 400 freestyle relay team and the sixth-place 200 freestyle relay team at the PIAA Class 3A championships last season. On his own, he raced to a sixth-place finish in the 200 IM and took 15th in the 500 free.

Joshua Einolf, junior, Quakertown: A district qualifier in the 200 IM last season, Einolf is also giving diving a try for the first time this season.

Mason Potts, junior, North Penn: Potts had a busy weekend at last season's PIAA championships. He was the first leg of the Knights' 200 freestyle relay team that took sixth place, finished eighth in the 200 freestyle and 12th in the 100 fly. In districts, he was second in the 200 free and third in the fly.

Zachary LeMay, senior, Central Bucks East: LeMay cracked the top 8 in three events at the PIAA state championships. His 200 freestyle relay team placed fifth and set a school record, while his 400 freestyle relay team ended up sixth. LeMay took seventh in the 200 IM, capping off an undefeated regular season in the event. He has committed to Division I William & Mary.

Marcus Papanikolaou, junior, Central Bucks East: What a sophomore season it was for Marcus Papanikolaou last year. Papanikolaou defended his District One 50 freestyle title after winning the event as a freshman, shaving .02 seconds off last year's time. In the 100 freestyle, Papanikolaou traded in silver for gold, winning the event at districts after finishing second the previous season. Papanikolaou was just as good in the

state championships. He took second in both the 50 and 100 freestyle, and will be a championship contender again this season.

Robbie Ferlick, senior, Souderton: Thirteen was Robbie Ferlick's lucky number last season. In the PIAA state championships, Ferlick finished 13th in both the 50 freestyle and the 100 free. A two-time state qualifier in both events, Ferlick should make it a third time this season. He also swims the leadoff leg on the 200 freestyle relay, which took seventh place in the district finals, and the fifth-place 400 freestyle relay. Ferlick is on track to break the Souderton pool record in the 50 free.

Chris Carroll, junior William Tennent: Carroll was one of the top competitors for the Panthers' small squad last season. He posted good times in the 200 freestyle and 500 free and has spent the offseason working on his distance capabilities.

Sean Whitehurst, senior, Pennridge: Whitehurst has been a powerhouse in the 100 butterfly since his freshman season. Last year he finished seventh in the SOL Colonial championships in the event and will be looking to advance to districts this season, as well as competing in the 50 fly and sprint relays.

Gabe Cowart, sophomore, La Salle: As a freshman, Cowart fit right in with the Explorers' renowned championship squad. He finished 10th in the 200 freestyle at the PIAA state championships, and 15th in the 500 free.

Aidan Schnapf, senior, La Salle: Schnapf had an excellent showing at states, finishing sixth in the 100 backstroke. He will look to contend for the championship this season.

Alex Sleptsov, senior, La Salle: As a junior, Sleptsov finished 14th in the 200 IM at the PIAA state championships.

Noah Lubinski, senior, La Salle: He took 15th place in the 100 backstroke at states and 16th in the 100 butterfly, and will be looking for more in his senior season. Lubinski also led La Salle's 200 medley relay to a fourth-place finish.

Kian Hecht, sophomore, Pennsbury: Hecht had an impressive freshman campaign. He finished 25th in the 200 freestyle at districts, and 26th in the 500 freestyle.

Max Tishin, senior, Neshaminy: Tishin was a district qualifier in two events last year — the 50 freestyle and 100 freestyle, and will be looking to move up this season.

Timothy Hong, freshman, Pennridge: Even before competing in his high school

meet, Hong made a strong impression on his coaches. Hone specializes in the 100 breaststroke and 200 IM, and is a versatile swimmer who can compete in other events when needed, and will be a vital component on relays. After just missing the cut for districts last season, the Rams will be looking for Hong to help put the 200 medley and freestyle relays over the top.

Here are some other freshmen to watch after the preseason:

Archbishop Wood girls: Molly McKendry, Peyton McQuade

CB West boys: Jimin Chung, Nate Liang

Hatboro-Horsham girls: Megan Luddecke, Eloise Mothersbaugh, Joey Deck, Sammy Wigginton

Penridge boys: Ethan Whitehurst

Pennsbury boys: Bergen Wilhelm

Pennsbury girls: Katerina Tarasov, Sara Savkur

Quakertown girls: Rebecca Cunnane

Souderton boys: Nathan Kleppinger, Lincoln Annise

20 Girls Swimmers to Watch:

Annie Jia, sophomore, Hatboro-Horsham: You'd be hard-pressed to find a better freshman season than the one Jia turned in last year. In her first state meet, Jia not only won the 100 butterfly but also set a record. Her time of 52.04 broke the previous PIAA Class 3A record of 52.99 set in 2009. She ranks fourth in the nation in the event. But that wasn't all for Jia. Her 200 medley relay and 400 freestyle relay teams both won gold in states, and she also took home a silver medal in the 100 free, where she is ranked 27th nationally. In districts, her first-place time of 53.12 in the 100 butterfly was also a record-setter, crushing the previous time of 54.03 set in 2016.

Jess Burns, junior, Souderton: Burns had a championship-caliber season in the 100 breaststroke as a sophomore. She took third place in districts and an impressive fifth in the state championships after finishing 10th as freshman. She is a part of the 200 freestyle relay that finished ninth in states, and the 400 free relay that helped Souderton finish 22nd in the team finals.

Kathy Jia, senior, Hatboro-Horsham: Jia has earned a state qualification all three years, and last season she took home four medals. Jia won the 100 breaststroke, the 200

medley relay and the 200 freestyle relay, and was second in the 200 IM. She is ranked 48th nationally in the 200 IM and 57th in the breaststroke. She has committed to swim for Division 1 school Dartmouth.

Madeline Faikish, sophomore, North Penn: In her freshman season, Faikish took sixth in the 200 freestyle at districts, and seventh in the 500 free. In both events, she was the only freshman to place in the top 18. Her performance at the state championships was even more impressive. Faikish finished eighth in the 200 free, 15th in the 500 free, and eighth in the 200 freestyle relay.

Sarah Parker, sophomore, Hatboro-Horsham: Parker's freshman campaign was truly remarkable. At the PIAA state championships, Parker finished fourth in the 50 freestyle, and is ranked 78th nationally in the event. She also took home three gold medals on her relay events, winning the 200 medley, 200 freestyle and 400 freestyle relays.

Alyssa Bean, junior, Archbishop Wood: Bean is a two-time first-team All-Catholic selection and helped lead a small Vikings squad to second place in the PCL and third in the District 12 championships last season. In the PCL finals, Bean won the 100 butterfly and was second in the 100 backstroke. At districts, Bean took first place in the 100 freestyle and 200 freestyle and was a state qualifier for both events, as well the 200- and 400 freestyle relays.

Riley Reteneller, senior, Central Bucks South: Reteneller's junior campaign was outstanding. She earned a ninth-place finish and state qualification in the 200 freestyle and was 12th in the 500 freestyle at the District One championships. She'll be looking to add a state qualification for the 500 free this season.

Emmy Erikson, sophomore, Hatboro-Horsham: As a freshman, Erikson was a key contributor to the Hatters' state championship team. She placed ninth in the 100 breaststroke at districts, earning a state qualification. She was also a district qualifier in the 200 IM. At states, she took home gold as part of the 200 medley relay.

Erin Goodling, senior, Central Bucks South: Goodling took ninth place in the 100 breaststroke at last year's District One championships and followed that with an 11th-place finish at states. She was also a district qualifier in the 200 IM.

Maddie Majewski, sophomore, Central Bucks West: Majewski made quite an impression during her freshman season. She qualified for districts in the 100 butterfly,

finishing 28th, and has already shown herself to be a leader on the team.

Mackenzie Cicco, senior, Pennsbury: Cicco was more than solid in the 200 freestyle last season. She won the event at the SOL Patriot championships and took 12th place in districts. She was a district qualifier in the 100 butterfly.

Savannah Chee-Wah, senior, Neshaminy: Chee-Wah was a district qualifier in the 50 freestyle, where she finished 18th, and the 100 butterfly (27th). She also competes in the 200 medley relay.

Emily Cicco, sophomore, Pennsbury: As a freshman, Cicco turned in some spectacular performances. In the SOL Patriot finals, she finished second in the 200 freestyle, behind only sister Mackenzie, and second in the 100 butterfly. In districts, she took 23rd in the 500 freestyle and was 31st in the 200 free.

Avery Taylor, senior, Souderton: Taylor took eighth place in the District One Diving championships last year, and finished 16th in the state championships.

Lilly Bauz, senior, Quakertown: Bauz had a fine junior season in the 50 freestyle. She won the event in the SOL Liberty finals, and finished 19th in districts. She was also a district qualifier in the 100 butterfly, where she placed 20th. The Panthers will also look to Bauz to lead the 200 medley and 200 freestyle teams to a district bid.

Kara Woods, sophomore, Quakertown: Woods had an impressive freshman campaign, qualifying for districts in the 500 freestyle and 100 backstroke, where she placed 15th. In the SOL Liberty finals, Woods took third in both events. She also competes in the 200 medley and 200 freestyle relays.

Courtney Rudder, junior, William Tennent: Rudden had a great showing at the SOL Freedom Division championships, taking second place in the 50 freestyle and third in the 100 freestyle. According to her coaches, Rudder is constantly looking for ways to improve her stroke technique.

Kiera Allison, senior, North Penn: Allison took fourth place in last season's PIAA 3A Diving championships.

