

HIGH SCHOOL SWIMMING



ADRIAN KRAUS

Pittsford's Lindsay Stone swims to victory in the 200-yard freestyle during the Section V Class A championships earlier this month. Stone is the top seed in the 200 and 500 freestyles at this weekend's state meet in Ithaca.

Swimmers get ready for states

Pittsford's Stone, Smith among contenders

RYAN MILLER STAFF WRITER

Pittsford swimmer Lindsay Stone has already visualized her races in the state championships.

It's easy to imagine Stone adding to her state title medals at Ithaca College.

Stone and a deluge of Section V swimmers will compete in the preliminaries on Friday.

The sophomore is the defending champion in the 500-yard freestyle and her Panthers quartet set a state record in winning the 200 freestyle relay a year ago.

And she's more dangerous this year. Stone attended USA Swimming's National Select Camp last month, training with 64 of the nation's best swimmers at the United States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Stone said she learned a bunch of tricks at the camp, which selects the fastest two male and female athletes in each event. That doesn't bode well for her competition at states.

"We learned the importance of visualizing your race, from the blocks to each lap, and that will carry over into the race," Stone said. "Nutrition was a big topic. How to be there mentally and physically. It was a great experience. I loved it."

Stone has the top times in the state in the 200 and 500 freestyles this year. Her teammate Katie Smith holds No. 1 seeds in the 50 and 100 freestyles.

Smith broke the state record in the 50 freestyle at the 2013 preliminaries, anchored the winning the 200 freestyle relay and finished as runner-up in the 50 freestyle and 100 freestyle. It was the second straight year she took second in the 50 freestyle.

"Last year was great getting the record at prelims but I didn't do as well in the finals," Smith said. "I'm hoping this year to break my own record and win it this time."

Fairport's Suhan Mestha is also hoping to win one this time. Mestha, a senior, makes her fourth trip to states and had three top-10 finishes last year.

She is on the Red Raiders 200 medley relay team that captured the Section V Class A title on Nov. 8 and holds the top state seed.

"I've improved at states each year and it's kind of leading me into this year," Mestha said. "That would be a great way to end my high school swimming career. I'm super excited."

Pittsford will have 14 of Section V's 78 swimmers at



ADRIAN KRAUS

Pittsford's Katie Drake swims in the 500 yard freestyle during the Section V Class A Swimming Championships.

the state meet.

Section V has six swimmers in the top 20 in the 100 freestyle and holds five of the highest 20 spots in the 50 freestyle, 200 freestyle relay and diving. Seven of the 12 events are led by local swimmers or teams. No other Section has more than one.

The scoring projections give Section V a tenuous 11-point advantage over Section I. The two sections have combined to win 11 of the last 13 titles since 2001.

"It's going to be a really close competition," Honeyoye Falls-Lima coach Norm Schueckler said. "That's going to help motivate our girls. It's traditionally come down to our relays. Section V puts together a nice group of relays."

That includes the Panthers 200 and 400 freestyle relay teams featuring Stone and Smith.

"I feel like I know what to expect and what the competition is looking like after going through it before," Stone said. "I have a better feel for the meet going in as the first seed."

Friday's preliminaries have been pushed back to a 1:15 p.m. start time due to a snowstorm causing travel problems for the Buffalo-area schools.

The championships begin at 10:15 a.m. on Saturday.

RCMILLER@DemocratandChronicle.com