

By Bryan Sullivan

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Girls Swimming: Pittsford's balance keeps them atop Class A

The Panthers sprint and distance swimmers excel in Friday's Section 5 Class A championship meet to win their 12 straight team title. Pittsford freshman Lindsay Stone is named Performer of the Meet.

On the biggest stage of the season, the Pittsford girls swimming team proved why after 12 years they are still Section 5's top programs.

The Panthers blew away the field at the Section 5 Class A championship meet on Friday at the Webster Aquatic Center scoring 524 points, 215.5 clear of second-place Victor. Pittsford won seven of the 11 events contested and Panther freshman Lindsay Stone was named Performer of the Meet.

Pittsford has won 12 straight Section 5 championships and thanks to a crop of talented underclassmen like Stone, their reign probably won't end any time soon. The Panthers will lead a strong Section 5 contingent into the state meet in two weeks at Ithaca College.

"This is what we have been preparing for all year and the girls really worked hard," said Marty Keating, Pittsford head coach. "I think they got everything they deserved. They really worked hard. We still have more in the tank and we should go faster (at the state meet)."

Section 5's top swimmers produced an exciting meet where three records fell, including the 200 free relay where the Panthers recorded the top time in the state (1:35.58). Stone, Stephanie Andrews, Emma Corby, and Katie Smith's showing earned them All-American honors.

Stone, Andrews and Smith teamed with eighth grader Becca Evans to outdistance the field and win the 400 free relay (3:30.34), a meet record time.

"The relays have done surprisingly well," Stone said. "It's nice to see us come together as a team and get some records. As (Smith) was coming to the wall we didn't think it would be soon ours, but when we broke the state record time we were so excited. It is unbelievable."

Stone was the clear favorite in the 500 free, breaking the meet record (4:55.09) in Wednesday's prelims. She couldn't break the record for the second time in three days, but her finals time (4:59.05) beat the field by over 10 seconds.

Stone posted Pittsford's first victory of the meet winning the 200 free (1:52.42).

"It's really nice and rewarding to see all of the hard work pay off," Stone said. "It's a lot of months of just vigorous work. It's nice to get some best times and get some wins."

While Stone was dominating the distance events, Smith was staking her claim as the top sprinter in Section 5. The sophomore held off Rush-Henrietta senior Megan Burns to win the 50 free (23.52) and 100 free (51.22).

Smith broke the meet record in the 100 free on Friday, to go along with the 50 free record she earned last season.

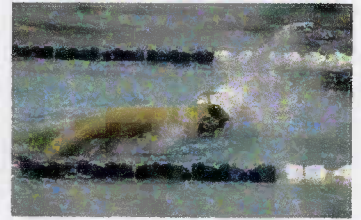
"Everyone has been working hard year-round, and every day in practice we work really hard," Smith said. "To see everyone give their all is really great because everyone deserves this. I am happy and proud of our team."

The Blue Devils enjoyed plenty of memorable moments in their first year in Class A, led by sophomore Natalie Zaravella. Zaravella teamed with Madison Chapin, Abby Fenn and Jessica Halladay to win the 200 medley relay (1:50.63).

Zaravella came back two races later to take first in the 200 individual medley (2:07.80). After tying for the top spot in prelims with Webster junior Kristina Posnick in the 100 breast, Zaravella went home with first place (1:06.97) alone on Friday.

Panthers sophomore Sophie Riley (100 back) and Spencerport senior Meghan Tyler (100 fly) also scored individual victories.

"I didn't really see either victory coming because I have been a little bit sick, so I really was pleased," Zaravella said. "The really great competition pushed me to go forward. I think this meet showed how tough we are."



PHOTO/ BRYAN SULLIVAN/MESSENGER POST MEDIA

Pittsford's Lindsay Stone took first place in the 500 freestyle swimming a 4:59.05 at the Section 5 Class A championship meet on Friday at the Webster Aquatic Center.