

Swimkins to host free synchro event

The Swimkins swim team will host a free introductory to synchronized swimming event from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Dec. 1 at Transit Middle School, 8730 Transit Road. The event is for girls ages 7 to 11. If you can't attend but are still interested, call Debbie at 837-6641 or Maria at 688-5274. For more information, visit www.swimkins.org.

Matthews wins third state diving title

by **PATRICK J. NAGY**
Reporter

For the final time of her high school career, Casey Matthews is the queen of New York State 1-meter diving.

The Williamsville North senior won her third New York State diving title in four years at last weekend's New York State Championships at the Eisenhower Park Aquatic Center in Hempstead, Long Island. Matthews broke her own 11-dive state meet record of 515.40 with 538.15.

"It was really important because it was my senior year," said Matthews. "I wanted to treat it like any other meet. I dive well under pressure so that helped. Having fun at this meet was important for me."

North coach Doug Cassidy said Matthews led after the third round of preliminaries held on Friday. Matthews had a 43.8 point (393-349.20) lead over Jenny Chiang of Fairport (Section V) after preliminaries.

Matthews would need the big point total cushion as Chiang slowly chipped away at the lead



Casey Matthews won her third New York State 1-meter diving title in four years at last weekend's New York State Championships in Long Island. *File photo*

in Saturday's final, going up by 46 points heading into Matthews' final dive, an inward 1.5 pike. To add to the drama, Matthews drew the second to last spot to perform (39th out of 40).

Undeterred, Matthews scored 63 points on her last dive to win by 18 points.

"When I set (extend both arms while standing at the end of the board), I blocked everything out and focused on what I needed to do," said Matthews. "I knew in the back of my head that I had to score 46 points. It was my best optional dive so I knew I could do it for more than that."

"I could read her face," added Cassidy. "She didn't look nervous or scared, just focused."

Matthews won state titles in her freshman and junior year. Her lowest place finish at states was fifth in seventh grade. She took third as an eighth-grader and second as a sophomore.

"The first dive she ever took for us six years ago, I told her I was going to be there to watch her win three or four state titles," said Cassidy.

"I definitely reached a lot of my

goals this year," added Matthews. "I felt I had a good season."

Matthews also won the section's sportsmanship award.

"Casey has been a model for our team," said Cassidy. "Whenever anyone mentions swimming or diving at North, everyone thinks of Casey Matthews."

Matthews will be attending Purdue University next fall.

Two other schools in the Town of Amherst sent swimmers to the state meet.

Williamsville East sent senior Janelle Munroe (13th in 100 butterfly, 59.37; 42nd in 100 backstroke), sophomore Bailey Woodling (15th in 100 freestyle, personal best time of 54.23; 30th in 50 freestyle) and Munroe, Woodling, junior Kristen Ostanski, senior Tori Mayer and junior Britany O'Dea in the 200 medley relay (21st, 1:54.82).

"It was definitely a good finish to a good season," said East coach Mike Doefler.

Sweet Home was represented by Paige Gutowski (seventh in 100 breast, 1:07.34; 12th in 200 individual medley, 2:11.56).

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Benefit for Hirsch slated for Saturday

The Jacquie Hirsch For "A.L.L." Foundation Benefit will be held from 2 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 24 at St. Leo the Great School, 903 Sweet Home Road (Sweet Home and Maple Roads).

Hirsch, a Williamsville North High School graduate, was diagnosed in late September with Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia, the most common form of leukemia in children and the most common kind of childhood cancer. The 22-year-old and her family is on a national search to find a match to find a bone marrow transplant.

The National Marrow Donor Program will be in attendance on Saturday to test potential donors for Hirsch and others who need life saving transplants. This consists of four swabs of the inside of your cheek cells with a cotton swab.

A spaghetti dinner, basket raffle, silent auction, bake sale, sale items, 50/50 raffles and other entertainment will also be held.

The proceeds will go directly to Hirsch's uninsured medical expenses associated with curing her from ALL.

If you are not able to make the event, visit www.marrow.org, the National Bone Marrow Donor Program of Upstate New York. There, you can find out where the next and closest bone marrow benefit is taking place.

Jacquie is the daughter of Sharon and Torey Hirsch of Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center. She has competed in the US Junior Olympic Gymnastics program and was a gymnast at North. She also dove at North and at Geneseo State College, where she is two months short of competing her student teaching.

Masters becomes finalist

Amherst senior Sarah Masters qualified for and competed in the New York State Public High School Athletic Association State Swimming and Diving Championships held this past weekend at the Eisenhower Park Aquatic Center in Hempstead, Long Island.

Masters qualified for the state meet at the ECIC diving meet two weeks ago. Masters made the cut in the preliminaries to qualify for the finals and ended up with an

18th place finish with a total of 370 points.

The top 20 divers make the finals.



Sarah Masters

"We are so excited for Sarah, this is a great finish to her high school diving career," said coach Kim Skomra, who along with coach Deb Sullivan traveled with the sectional swimmers and divers.

"This is something that she will never forget," stated Sullivan.

Masters plans to continue her diving career in college.

North field hockey earns first state title

by **PATRICK J. NAGY**
Reporter

All season, the goal of the Williamsville North field hockey team was to win a New York State Class A title. The Lady Spartans can now say the mission has been accomplished.

North (23-0) capped off a perfect season by defeating Section I's Lakeland, the defending Class A state champions, 2-1, on Sunday at Cicero-North Syracuse High School to win its first state title in field hockey.

North lost 2-0 to Lakeland in the 2003 Class A state final.

"It still hasn't sunk in yet," said North coach Kris Lapaglia. "The games at the state level take a lot out of you. For the kids to handle the pressure and get the job done is a great feeling."

Lapaglia said many of her players have faced members of Lakeland during Olympic Development Programs.

North had a 2-0 lead until 1.5 minutes left in the game when Jill Bozek scored on a scramble in front of goalie Nicole Lewis. Lewis only finished with three saves but they were all important.

"They had a corner opportunity where she extended her leg going for a shot to the far corner on the inside post," said Lapaglia. "She got her foot on it and deflected it off

the end line."

Junior forward Emily O'Gorman scored nine minutes into the first half on a deflection by senior midfielder Chantae Miller. Senior midfielder Leslie Ahern, from Miller and freshman attacker Allie Ahern, scored on a corner 10 minutes into the second half.

"We definitely knew it was going to be physical," said Lapaglia. "They play comparable to how we play. It was definitely a chess match."

To advance to their second state title final appearance, North defeated Ward Melville of Section XI, 3-0. The first 9:47 of the first half was played on Friday night but a lake effect snowstorm postponed the rest of the game until Saturday afternoon.

North completely dominated Ward Melville in the part of the game played on Friday.

"One of the players' fathers took a picture of the field (with snow on it)," said Lapaglia. "There were only footprints in Ward Melville's defensive zone at that point."

When the game resumed so did North's domination. Miller scored at 15:04 of the first half from Allie Ahern on a corner. Allie Ahern scored a minute into the second half from a hard shot from the 35-yard line by sophomore defender Holly Flanigan. Flanigan got possession of the ball after a shot from Miller hit the post and the rebound bounced to her.

"Holly hit it so hard and fast that all Allie had to do was put her stick down and deflect it in," said Lapaglia.

Ten minutes later, Miller made it 3-0 on an assist from Allie Ahern.

Lewis made two saves.

"You always worry when there is a delay how a team will respond," said Lapaglia. "To their credit, they stayed focused."

Lapaglia lauded the play of Miller.

"She took herself out of the midfield zone, stood by the sideline and did a good job of picking the ball off or stopping their long hits through the middle," said Lapaglia.

Miller, Lewis and senior defender Adriana Meholick were named to the all-state tournament team. Flanigan earned the sportsmanship award.

Miller finished the season with 41 goals and 31 assists. The senior closes out her six-year career with 148 goals and 134 assists. She will graduate in January to start taking classes at Michigan State University, where she has received a full scholarship to play field hockey.

"The greatest lesson she could have given the team is to teach the younger players how to win and what is expected out of a North field hockey player," said Lapaglia. "The younger kids have embraced her."

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