

# SPORTS

## TD makes a statement at IMC district swim meet

### Program has its most athletes qualify for state since 2010

■ **Ray Rodriguez**  
The Dalles Chronicle

The Dalles swim team has dealt with injuries and illnesses, and have had to split their practice time between two community facilities, but somehow they made it all work this winter season.

Through it all, they never made any excuses.

They just worked and worked, and in the process made school history.

Lydia DiGennaro qualified for state in the 50- and 100-yard freestyle, Kendall Webber also made it to state in the 500-yard freestyle, and both the boys and girls 200-yard freestyle relay squads picked up wild card berths at Saturday's Intermountain Conference District Championships in Madras.

This is the first time TD has had a state qualifier since Natalie Varland and the girls 200-yard freestyle relay team earned their spots back in 2017, and the most athletes to make a state trip since 2010, when there were eight total swimmers because both boys and girls relay groups qualified.

"We are very proud of our swimmers," TD head coach Derek Shortt said. "They are helping to take our program to the next level. This is the biggest group we have taken to state in a very long time. I don't know the last time we sent a group of boys, but we are just excited to see their hard work pay off."

The Riverhawks took 23 swimmers on the road to battle it out against league foes Hood River Valley,

Pendleton, Redmond and Ridgeview, and they posted season-highs in point totals as the girls placed third overall (210 points) and the boys secured fourth place (132).

DiGennaro, a freshman, edged out her Hood River competitor with a district-record final mark of 25.71 in the 50-yard freestyle and smoked the 100-yard freestyle field and set a new IMC mark in 56.53.

"My performance, honestly, really shocked myself," DiGennaro said. "I didn't think I had the chance to win the 100-yard freestyle because it was my first time swimming in that event since this past summer, but then when the music started playing as we were walking out, I realized that I had unstoppable motivation and determination to win, and then I knew I could do it."

Earlier in the meet, Webber, a second-year swimmer, had a major heartbreak in the 200-yard freestyle, where she miscounted her laps and posted a 2:14.19 to secure third place, missing out on first place and a possible district record by 1.52 seconds.

Although devastated by her misstep, Webber rallied. She notched a winning effort in her 500-yard freestyle with a time of 6:00.00, a 7.27 romp over her next competitor, Pendleton's Kynndra Nelson (6:07.27)

"I had one really rough race on Saturday, and then I got one win, and both times the best feeling was looking up at the deck and seeing my team cheer for me," Webber said. "We have built a strong bond this season that has made it the best yet. I am very excited to go on to state."

The girls 200-yard freestyle relay race was a fight to the finish with less than a second

separating Hood River Valley, the Dalles and Pendleton.

Kendall Webber, Kennedy Abbas, Bree Webber and Lydia DiGennaro nearly added another big victory to their record, but were narrowly defeated by HRV (1:48.97), taking runner-up honors in 1:49.72, and Pendleton clinched third place at 1:49.73, which gave them state wild card spots.

For Bree Webber, a senior, she makes a long-awaited return to state after joining Hannah Weeks, Molly Nelson and Varland in the 200-yard freestyle relay, also as a wild card.

"Getting a chance to go back to state in my senior year is an amazing opportunity," Bree Webber said. "The Dalles has not sent a swimmer to state since I went in the same relay as a freshman, and to be able to go with my sister, and the freshmen girls I have come to love dearly, it is so exciting. I can't wait to go out with a bang and show everyone where our hard work has gotten us."

While the boys had several solid times in multiple events, the 200-yard relay group comprised of Bryce Harris, Xander Kirby, Michael Cole, and Will Evans put up a 1:38.72, which placed them third behind HRV (1:31.11) and Pendleton (1:36.54).

"I was so excited to find out that my relay team is going to state," Kirby said. "We have all worked really hard and we make a great team. It's the best way to end the season."

The OSAA OnPoint Community Credit Union 5A Swimming State Championships take place at the Tualatin Hills Aquatic Center in Beaverton and begin at 9 a.m. Friday, with 12 swimmers in the preliminaries. The top 6 advance to Saturday's final round.



The Dalles girls swim team scored two individual state berths at Saturday's Intermountain Conference Meet, and then added a 200-yard freestyle relay wild card after a second-place finish behind Hood River Valley. In the photo are, from left to right, Lydia DiGennaro, Bree Webber, Kennedy Abbas and Kendall Webber. In addition to the relay clincher, DiGennaro claimed district titles in the 50- and 100-yard freestyle, and Kendall Webber put up a district championship effort in the 500-yard freestyle. Didi Abbas/Contributed photo



The Riverhawk boys posted season-highs in point totals, as the boys secured fifth place. In the photo are, from left to right, Xander Kirby, Michael Cole, Bryce Harris and Will Evans. The 200-yard relay group put up a 1:38.72, which placed them third behind HRV (1:31.11) and Pendleton (1:36.54). That time gave TD a wild card berth at state, where preliminaries begin Friday at the Tualatin Hills Aquatic Center in Beaverton. Amy Webber/Contributed photo

While the times TD put up in Madras were impressive, DiGennaro said that the state qualifiers will have to push themselves even harder if they want some higher placings at state.

She is not worried about the motivation, however, as coach Shortt and his assistants Pat Shortt and Nate Timmons will be conducting

some rigorous workouts ahead of this weekend.

Both coaches have been to state before, as Timmons swam on the 200-yard medley relay in 2009, and in 2010 Derek Shortt was a key member of the 200-yard freestyle relay.

They will impart knowledge of what to expect down to their swimming standouts.

"The coaches have just been amazing this season," DiGennaro said. "Derek, Timmons and Pat just have as much energy as all of the swimmers and they are so proud of how our season has gone."

"I know they are going to be expecting a big step up from the group, and our performances."

## The Dalles cheerleaders pick up second place at state

### Team scores season-high 161.5 points, finishing 5.2 points behind 6A Westview

■ **Ray Rodriguez**  
The Dalles Chronicle

PORTLAND - Every year, there are high expectations put on The Dalles cheer squad.

The cheer members and coaches spend nine months together and put in hundreds of hours of work in preparation for a two-minute and 30-second state routine.

The Dalles was second in two categories, and tied for first in overall routine with one deduction and totaled 161.50 points to lock in a second-place outcome, 5.2 points behind Westview (166.70), at the OSAA OnPoint Community Credit Union small coed cheer championships Saturday at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland.

"There was a lot of emotion from me and the kids," TD head coach Kelsey Sugg-Wallace said. "I think it was just the emotions of feeling like they gave their best, and sometimes it's a hard lesson to learn when your best isn't good enough. But, I had to tell them all to keep their heads up and be proud of what they put on that mat today because they did everything I asked them to do and more."

Historically speaking, The Dalles dance, and now cheer, has been one of the more successful programs, with 12 state championships.

Over the past five seasons in two different divisions, under Sugg-Wallace, the Riverhawks have four seconds and a sixth to their credit, which shows that there is a consistent level to attain and an expectation to meet or exceed every time they perform.

"I am really proud of our team," senior captain Giselle Schwartz said. "We literally left everything we could on the mat. There is not one thing in our routine that we could have done better, so no matter the outcome, we are proud of ourselves because

we all know that we did the very best possible. This entire season, we never performed better than we did today, so it definitely wasn't a wasted season."

Teams were judged on building skills, tumbling and jumps and overall routine to get their point totals.

Westview put up 59.50 points in building skills, had a 57.20 in tumbling and jumps, and scored 52 in overall routine.

The Dalles tallied 56.30 in building skills, 57.20 in tumbling and jumps and finished tied for first in overall routine with 52 points, so it came down to small details.

"We had a clean routine and it hit," Sugg-Wallace said. "We upped our tumbling difficulty, which was the highest it had been all year. We tied with Westview in our overall score and the only thing that we were missing was our stunt difficulty."

Crescent Valley (152.90), Beaverton (140.40), Redmond (136.50), Summit (135.00), Roseburg (124.60), Milwaukie (123.80), Hood River Valley (121.50) and North Bend (120.90) were the next eight in the team standings.

Of the top-10 finishers, six were from the 5A classification, and Westview, Beaverton, Summit and Roseburg are all 6A programs.

"It doesn't seem like we are getting better because we keep getting second place, but we have moved from 5A to small coed, which now means that we compete against more than double the teams," Schwartz said. "Compared to the best 5A teams, we are still outscoring them, so that just shows how much we have grown. From now and in the future, this program is only going to get better."

The Dalles had a mix of youth and experience on the roster, led by seniors Alexa Baldy, Schwartz, Sophia Pullen, Stephanie Flores and Karla Hernandez.

Schwartz and Hernandez were voted as team captains and there were a lot of leadership responsibilities placed on their shoulders, as they worked diligently in bringing together Amy Hernandez,



The Dalles cheer squad scored 161.50 points to secure second place in the small coed division, 5.2 points behind state champion 6A Westview (166.70), at the OSAA OnPoint Community Credit Union State Cheer Championships in Portland. In the photo are, from left to right, Amy Hernandez, Leslie Morales, Ellie Cardosi, Caleb Parsons, Gabbe Haskins, Emily Adams, and Meggan Erland (assistant coach). In the middle row are, Alli Miles (assistant coach), Kelsey Sugg-Wallace (head coach), Ari Acevedo, Mikiyle Brantner, Meli Avila, Giselle Ortega, Brooke Abrams, and Jessica Rodda (assistant coach). In the front row are, from left, Sophia Pullen, Stephanie Flores, Giselle Schwartz, Karla Hernandez, and Alexa Baldy. Ray Rodriguez photo

Leslie Morales, Ellie Cardosi, Caleb Parsons, Gabbe Haskins, Emily Adams, Ari Acevedo, Mikiyle Brantner, Meli Avila, Giselle Ortega, and Brooke Abrams.

"When I was voted captain by my teammates, I was surprised because early on in the season, nobody really knew me," Hernandez said. "I mean, the returners did, but there were so many freshmen and they still stuck by me, so it showed that my leadership skills were showing on other people. It's a really good feeling to be one of the leaders on the team, and when you see them get to a higher level, it is rewarding for all of us."

In three competitions, the Riverhawks averaged 158.2 points per event and claimed two seconds and a first, but they had a 5.2-point average increase in those three routines and wrapped up the year with a season-high 161.50 points Saturday in Portland.

"It was basically all of us working together," Flores said. "There's been times where we have really bad practices, but I try my best to keep it to myself and try to

lift others up by saying, 'ok, we've got this and we know we can hit this and it was just a bad night, let's just keep doing what we have always been doing. We can hit this.' It is just working together. As long as we believe in ourselves that we can hit these stunts and work together as a team, we can get really far."

Sugg-Wallace wants her team to treat cheer like a job, so being on time, being ready and staying focused are the important elements expected to follow.

More than half the people on this team have part-time jobs, take honors or have AP classes, so a lot to put into the sport and their daily lives, so reward is in knowing the tough times build up to the good times.

"Honestly, the biggest part of this is time management," Hernandez said. "Every single thing in your life takes a little bit of time and dedication. I just feel like cheer itself has been a really big stress relief for me. If I am really frustrated one day, I will go to practice and do whatever I can to make myself feel better. That's what this program

has done for me. It has really been my safe space and my happy spot, where I can just be free."

Now that her high school cheer career is over, Schwartz said that she wants her teammates to have faith in knowing that the hours of practice they put into their craft will pay off one day.

"It is bittersweet because this is my fourth and final year as a varsity member,

and so it's sad, but I am really proud of myself for sticking with this for four years," Schwartz said. "We put a lot into this and there is an infinite amount of pressure put on us, so getting so much out of it and the amount of first places we've won at competitions in general and how high we are scoring, I am so proud of myself and the team and I can't wait to see what the future holds."

### Dr. Cullen's Student of the week

#### Rose Miller for English:

Rose Miller is an outstanding student. She is here early every day, has outstanding quality of work, is reliable, and thoughtful in her writing. She has moved from English 9A into Honors English 9B and is doing fantastic!



Rose Miller, TDHS

### Congratulations



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