

Swim Team off to promising start, obstacles still to overcome

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Staff Reporters

Before the season had even started, the Swim Team had a couple problems. To begin with, swim space was already limited, as the squad is the biggest in school history. Students were restricted to swimming behind each other, single file in already cramped lanes at the Tualatin Swimming Pool.

To make things worse, the team has struggled to maintain coaches. The third new coach in three years, Jessica Hauser has taken over the helm. For the most part this year, swimmers have taken the absence of a coach as an opportunity to learn from each other.

"We don't have a diehard coach. The competitive factor has taken a plunge. Hopefully we can reapply it. The competitive drive comes from the swimmers themselves," Alexander Jonsson, senior, said.

Jonsson and Thomas Lord, seniors, have stepped up as team captains of the boys' squad, while Julie Wahlstrom and Kaitlyn Coffman, seniors, have taken over as team captains for the girls.

"I think that the team has done a great job working together in order to learn techniques to help improve our swimming times," Mary Milton, senior, said.

After a strong start to the season which included victories over Milwaukie and Oregon City, the Lions began their toughest stint of the season, as they prepared to take on both Lake Oswego schools.

First up was Lakeridge, a team that has finished at the top of the Three Rivers League for the majority of the last decade. While the team struggled to keep up with the improved Pacer

Milton said.

Prince and Sells then teamed up to compete in the 200 medley along with Jessica Broberg, freshman and Whitney Finnerty, junior. Sells returned

third place, getting the meet off to a strong start.

Kevin Sellers, sophomore, cracked the top two in the 100 freestyle for West Linn with a time of 54.6. In his next event, Sellers' swam his best race in the 100 backstroke where he picked up another second-place finish with a time of 1:06.01.

The only competitor to top him was Lakeridge's Jason Lou, the defending District champion in that event. The boys closed the meet on a strong note as Brian Laderoute, junior, took second in the 100 breaststroke with a time of 1:17.63, just a second behind the first-place finisher for the Pacers.

The Swim Team next faced the long winter break, before resuming it's season against Lake Oswego. The break made it difficult for swimmers to find time to practice, and West Linn needed it as they took on a Lake Oswego squad that had not lost a league meet in over a year, as they ran the tables in the TRL last year on their way to the league championship. The Laker team included some of the most dominant swimmers in the state. Lake Oswego may be the only team in the TRL that will top Lakeridge. The Lions were optimistic though, as they prepare for their biggest match-up of the season.

Although the Lions lost the meet, they saw some of their best results of the season. Most notably, the 400 freestyle relay team of Sells, Prince, Finnerty and Broberg, won the final event of the night for the girls.

It marked the only event West Linn would win on the evening.

Sells had a pair of second-place finishes in the 50 freestyle and the 100 backstroke.

Prince picked up where she left off before the break with a solid swim in the 500 freestyle to earn second place.

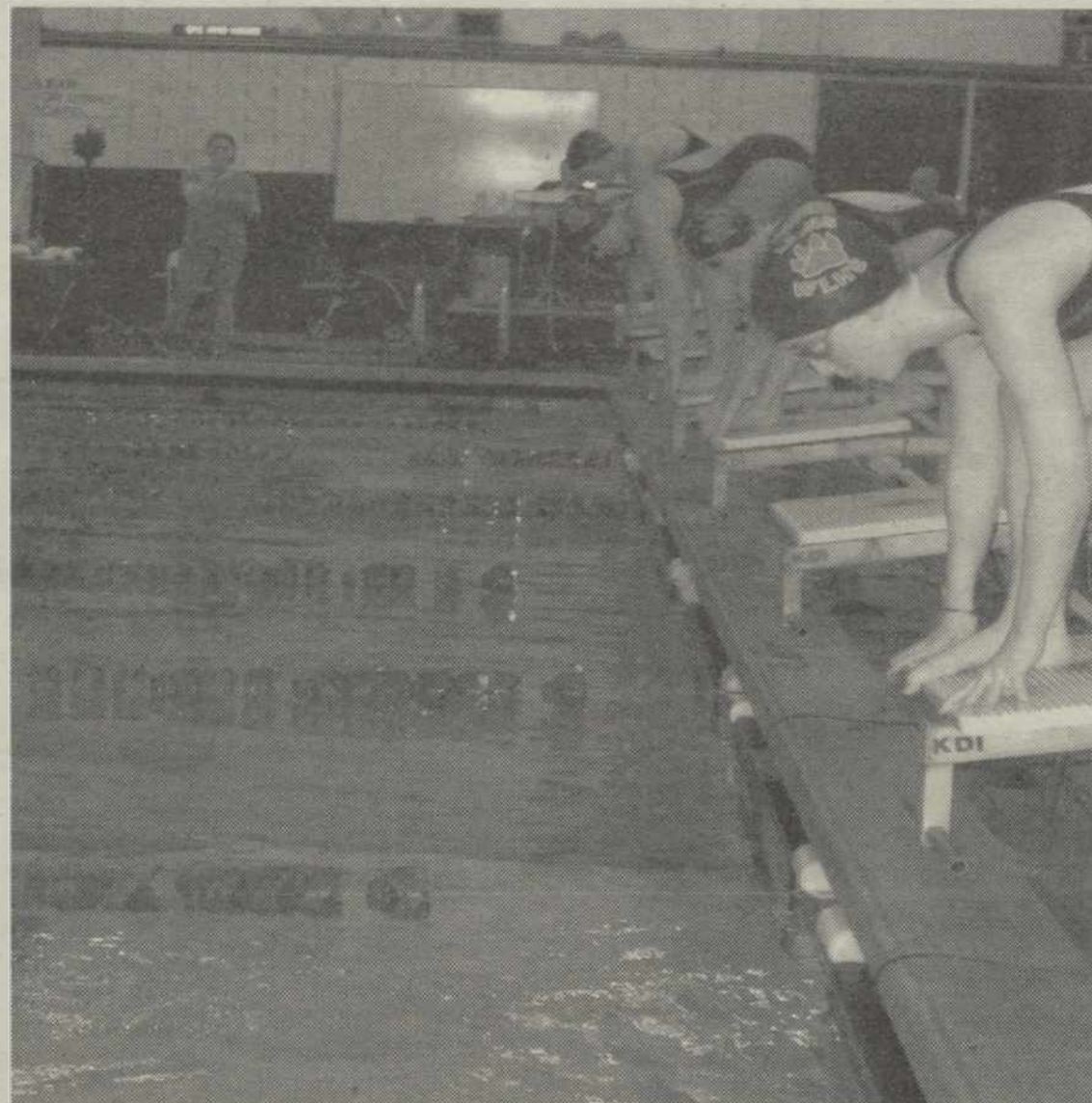
One of the better swims of the afternoon came from Rosa Bhutarak in the 200 freestyle in which she also took second place. It was Bhutarak's first time swimming in the event.

On the boys side of the competition, Jonsson earned a pair of second-place finishes for West Linn in the 200 individual medley and the 100 butterfly, showing his versatility. Also garnering two second-place finishes was Thomas Hollingsworth, sophomore, in the 50 and 100 freestyle events.

With their toughest stretch of schedule in the past, the team now focuses on some of the weaker teams in the league, as well as a non-league meet against McKay. McKay is known for producing strong swimmers who go on to have stand out performances at State.

The Lions conclude their regular season with a meet against Clackamas, which it will most likely determine third place in the TRL.

"Our team is full of strong swimmers and we are always eager to get in the pool with the best of them," Hauser said. "We love the opportunity to take on a big opponent even when we are the underdogs."



Freshman swimmers wait for the signal at the Jan. 10 Junior Varsity meet. The JV and Varsity teams have been working hard, according to coach Jessica Hauser, despite having a young team and facing tough TRL opponents.

Photo by Alexandria Namhie

squad, many strong swims and personal records highlighted the meet for the Lions.

Josie Sells, junior, posted one of her best times of the season with a 1:08.56 in the 100 meter backstroke. She took first by nearly two seconds, while Elliot Prince, freshman, came in an impressive third with a time of 1:11.14. Prince also placed first in the 500 freestyle with a winning time of 6:08.14.

"Elliot has really stepped up for our team. Even as a freshman she has already posted exceptional times,"

to compete in 50 meter freestyle. The race turned out to be the closest of the entire meet, as she fell to Lakeridge's top swimmer by just two tenths of a second.

"I do four different events, but only two different strokes. It's a big challenge but the rewards outweigh the challenges," Sells said.

The boys had an even more difficult time keeping up with Lakeridge's depth, as many individuals were forced to settle for second and third place finishes. West Linn took second and

Boys' Varsity Basketball Team manages 7-5 season start

ADAM HOLMES

Staff Reporter

The Varsity Boys' Basketball team began the season with a tough 6-4 non-league start. The team hopes to improve from pre-season play and reaching the playoffs, and more specifically, the Final Eight.

Their first game of the season, facing off against the Barlow High School Bruins, was a squeaker, with the final score 73-80.

"Barlow ran right past us even though we scored 34 points in the fourth quarter," Aaron Downs, head coach, said.

Other games included a 44-45 heartbreaker against Tualatin and a 51-70 loss to Westview.

"I feel we have gotten off to a rough start, but we are improving every week and will be ready for league,"

Bryce Baker, junior, said.

Things seemed to be looking up when the team scored its first win of the season on Dec. 11 against Sprague, 64-50 and followed it with another win against Southridge, 67-70. They then suffered defeats against South Salem and South Eugene, 55-62 and 62-65, respectively.

The team is still hanging in there, as they managed to clinch a win against Aloha 52-49, a 72-66 victory against Central Catholic, and a 57-54 win against Tigard. If the wins continue, the team might be able to beat its 17-8 track record last season.

In another non-league win, the Lions beat West Salem 61-



Guard Justin Monahan, senior, drives past a defender during the Lions' Jan. 4 non-league win against Tigard, 57-54. The win was the team's third in a row leading up to their Three Rivers League opener.

Photo by Adam Holmes

44 at home on Jan. 11.

Downs says that versatility is important for a functioning basketball team, and the team has it this year. "There's a

good vibe. They are a good team with a lot of chemistry, and a fun group," Downs said.

"I like our team chemistry,

we all enjoy each others company and play well together," Baker said.

Starters are Justin Monahan, Max Cathcart, Spencer Flores, seniors, and Bryce Baker and Ryan Barnes, juniors. Rounding out the team are Jesse Pyrch, Reed Nicholson and Taylor Reavely, seniors, Josh Oltman, junior, Jeffrey Bush and Michael Underriner, sophomores.

On Jan 8, their first league matchup of the year, the Lions pulled out a close win, 63-60 over Lakeridge. In

their next league game, they fell to Oregon City, 72-51.

Tonight, the Lions will host the Milwaukie Mustangs at 7:15.