

Marlins end season with 5th-place finish in state meet

By DAN O'MEARA
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Farmington Hills Mercy just missed its goal of finishing in fourth place, but the Marlins still had a good performance Saturday in the Class A girls swimming and diving championships.

Mercy settled for fifth place with 85 points, just four behind Grosse Pointe North (92) and nine trailing Zeeland (97). There was a 30-point drop to sixth-place Northville.

Ann Arbor Pioneer ran away with the team title as expected with 257 points at Oakland University, and Grand Haven was a solid second with 139.

"We had some fast, fast times," Mercy coach Jim Downs said. "We had 19 swims and 16 were best times. You can't ask for too much more than that."

"One of the non-best times was from a kid who was tapered the week before, and she was only a 10th slower."

The Marlins did well in the relays, setting a school record (1:37.45) in the 200 freestyle with a third-place finish by Elisabeth Garlow, Katie Benedict, Kristin Loridas and Caitlin Kelly. The Marlins set the old

SWIMMING

record of 1:38.1 last year.

Loridas, Katie Naglick, Benedict and Kelly also were third in the 400 freestyle (3:34.71), and Eloise Page, Garlow, Naglick and Kelly were fifth in the medley relay (1:49.30).

"That's where we put our power," Downs said. "We were disappointed by some other things, because the times were so fast (overall)."

Mercy had a nice surprise from Garlow, Downs added. She was sixth in the breaststroke (1:06.98) and 10th in the individual medley (2:16.22).

"She was seeded 15th in the breaststroke and took sixth," Downs said, "and she moved up from 11th to 10th in the IM. She wasn't seeded in the top 12 in the IM. She went from 2:14 to 2:10 and came down four full seconds."

The Marlins also had a pair of ninth-place finishes by Naglick in the butterfly (59.54) and Loridas in the 500 freestyle (5:12.77). Loridas dropped three seconds and moved up three places in her event.

Benedict and Kelly swam their

best times in the 100 freestyle but still finished out of the scoring. Kelly was 14th (63.39) and Benedict, who was sixth last year, was 18th (53.75).

"The speed in the 100 freestyle was just phenomenal," Downs said.

The Marlins hope to remain one of the state's top teams next year. Of the 10 swimmers and one diver they took to state, they lost two seniors: Benedict and Loridas.

"The thing that's hard to do now is to stay in the top six," Downs said. "If we can stay in the top six, that's an accomplishment."

"It's just hard to do that with so many good swimmers out there all over the place. A lot depends how well these kids improve next year and the kind of help we get from freshmen coming in."

"There should be eight people going next time if everyone stays the same and more improve. If we pick up four or five solid freshmen, that would be the answer."

MERCERLEAN SCORES AT STATE: North Farmington senior Lindsay McElean scored in two individual events and helped the Raiders score in two relays.

She was fifth in the backstroke (59.28) and ninth in the IM (2:09.98).

"I think she was a little disappointed she didn't do better in the IM, but I think she had a pretty good swim," North coach Pat Duthie said. "I think she should be pleased with all she has accomplished in four years at North Farmington."

"She had real solid performances for us. She's versatile and she should be a terrific swimmer at the college level if

she decides to pursue that, because there are a lot of things she does that will be further enhanced with the longer distances."

"And she really loves the sport. Last year, when she was hurt, she managed to battle back to qualify to go to the state meet. She just wanted to be there. She's a real quality person."

McElean, Kristen Wolff, Valencia Smith and Emily Howard were 11th in the medley relay (1:54.13), and Howard,

Sarah Paske, Melissa Navas and McElean finished 12th in the 400 freestyle (3:41.78).

"There's always good tough competition at state, so we were pleased we did as well as we did," Duthie said. "You always hope for more, but I was pretty pleased with what the kids did."

"We had a terrific season all the way through. There were a lot of things the kids set out to accomplish and they did."

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GIRLS BEST SWIM TIMES

200-YARD MEDLEY RELAY

Farmington Hills Mercy 1:49.30
Livonia 1:52.21
North Farmington 1:52.90
Plymouth Salem 2:00.19
Farmington 2:00.77

300-YARD FREESTYLE

Andover Hills 1:50.42
Katie Benedict (Mercy) 1:56.08
Kristin Loridas (Mercy) 1:57.79
Lindsay McElean (N. Farmington) 1:59.08
Katie Naglick (Mercy) 2:00.37
Jessica Liu (Livonia) 2:01.07
Sarah Paske (N. Farmington) 2:01.07
Eloise Page (Mercy) 2:01.67
Monica Givens (Livonia) 2:04.03

300-YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

Lake Geneva 2:04.03
Lindsay McElean (N. Farmington) 2:09.11
Andover Hills 2:10.34
Elizabeth Garlow (Mercy) 2:10.90
Amanda Mancini (Livonia) 2:10.92
Kristin Loridas (Mercy) 2:10.98
Caitlin Kelly (Mercy) 2:11.08
Kristin Loridas (Mercy) 2:11.08
Eloise Page (Mercy) 2:18.55
Doree Page (Mercy) 2:18.55

400-YARD FREESTYLE

Monica Givens (Livonia) 2:13.33
Caitlin Kelly (Mercy) 2:14.64
Katie Benedict (Mercy) 2:14.64
Andover Hills 2:15.89
Kristin Loridas (Mercy) 2:17.08
Elizabeth Garlow (Mercy) 2:17.08
Amanda Mancini (Livonia) 2:18.54
Doree Page (Mercy) 2:18.55
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