



NEWS RELEASE

CHAPARRAL SWIMMERS READY FOR 5A-II CHALLENGE

PHOENIX, AZ (Sept. 24, 2009) – Like their football brethren, girls and boys swimmers from Scottsdale’s Chaparral High face a challenge this fall after the school jumped from Class 4A Division I to Class 5A Division II.

The girls won the 4A-I championship last season ahead of Tucson Catalina Foothills and the boys finished second to Catalina Foothills. Now the main obstacles in 5A-II appear to be Phoenix Pinnacle (girls) and Tucson Rincon and Phoenix Horizon (boys). Pinnacle and Rincon are defending champs.

“Our swimmers are very dedicated and have a lot of drive to succeed,” said Laura Winslow, who coaches both teams. “We think we have a good chance in both areas.”

Leading the Chaparral girls are sophomore Leticia Lelli and senior Ashley Brewer. The boys are led by junior Tanner Roe and senior Cody Vitez.

All swim in relay events. The girls won the 200 and 400 freestyle relays and the boys won the 400 freestyle relays. Both teams finished second in the 200 medley relay.

Lelli won two events as a freshman, the 200 free and the 100 butterfly. Brewer was second in the 100 free and second in the 100 backstroke. Vitez was third in the 200 free and 500 free and Roe was fourth in both the 200 individual medley and the 500 free.

Brewer admitted she probably wouldn’t know what to do if she were not in the pool. She has been swimming since she was 5.

“I guess I was born for the water. Out of 5 kids, I guess I was the natural. I don’t think I could ever stop,” said Brewer, whose brother, Connor, is a sophomore and starts at quarterback for Chaparral’s highly regarded football team.

Ashley is out of bed by 4:30 a.m. and in the pool with her teammates shortly after 5. There also is practice after school.

“As I have gotten older, I have trained harder than I have my whole life,” she said. “I probably swim about 6 hours a day, and I’m lifting some weights and getting stronger and faster.”

Chaparral lost a few female swimmers to graduation, Brewer said, “but we still have a good team. I think we are as good or better than we were last year.”

Brewer is considering becoming an art major in college along with swimming for the school. She is looking at Texas, UCLA, SMU and USC as possibilities, and she hopes that if she does well at the next level, she will have a chance to swim for the U.S. Olympic Team.

Lelli, better known as “Tisha” to her teammates, admits she is a perfectionist.

“I keep trying to get there,” she said.

She keeps after it by working on all of her fundamentals, from breathing to balance to her turns.

“The whole stroke,” she said.

She has two older sisters, including Oriana, a senior who also swims for Chaparral. Tisha said their mother, Yolanda, put them in the water at an early age “because she was a little afraid of the water when she was younger and she didn’t want us to be like that.”

Tisha and her sisters have dual citizenship (U.S. and Canada) because their mother is Canadian. Tisha also speaks a bit of French and Italian, and the family has spent a few summers in Italy.

Coach Winslow said Roe is one of the most improved male swimmers.

“I just keep pushing myself. I want to work hard but also make it fun,” Roe said.

He was slowed by back problems at the beginning of last season, but all that appears to be in his wake.

Like the other swimmers, Roe also involved in club competition, which helps him improve.

“I want to help us win by winning all of my events or be no worse than second and have Junior National qualifying times,” he said.

Because he is a senior, Vitez wants to end his high school career on a winning note before going on to swim in college. He is strong in the classroom and likely will go to Cornell or the University of California-Santa Barbara.

“We’re looking for that title,” Vitez said. “We have a lot of solid swimmers and I think we’ll be better than a lot of people might think.”

He has worked on improving the pace of his races, but likes to be strong on the back half. He likes to be versatile and swim in as many events as possible.

“Our goal right now is to do as well as possible in our meets and work hard in practice, then start tapering down in practice so that we can be a lot faster at region and state,” Winslow said.

It is a formula that has worked before, and there appears to be no reason why it can’t again.

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