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Granville girls swimmers not backing down from challenge

Kurt Snyder, Reporter 12:02 a.m. EST December 7, 2016



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(Photo: Michael Lehmkuhle/The Advocate)

GRANVILLE - The Blue Aces' girls swimming team has maintained its dominance despite a volatile coaching situation.

Senior Carolyn Mestemaker is on her fourth coaching staff in as many seasons, but she is eager for her final season to begin.

"I am very excited to start high school meets again because it is my senior year, and I am hoping it is going to be one of my best years even though the girls still are (Division I) after last year," Mestemaker said. "So far, I like the new coaches. It's always exciting with new coaches, but it also can be kind of scary."

Hillary Stahl, who has been coaching for Pau Hana under Teresa Fightmaster, and Heath graduate Tyler Paulsen now are leading the Granville program. For the girls, the new coaches do not have to change much.

"It's really great that almost half of our kids swim with (Fightmaster), so they will practice with them most of the week and we only require them to come to one or two practices with us," Paulsen said. "Most of the kids know how to swim, know the strokes, so we can just give them good workouts to do, which is nice. Hillary works more with the kids that you can give them a workout and critique them as they go."

The Blue Aces powered their way to the Licking County League title a season ago, and the only thing that slowed their momentum in the postseason was a move to Division I. Sarah Martin, now a junior, did qualify for the state meet in the 100 and 200 freestyle races. Juniors Alexa Specht and Sydney Bednarski and sophomores Kellie Lonzo and Brennah White also are returning district qualifiers, and Grace Havens and Brooke and Emily Kauchak are experienced seniors.

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"After (a recent practice) where we did six 500s, I think Tyler and Hillary are definitely going to prepare us for Division I meets," Mestemaker said. "I made it to districts last year. I am hoping I can make it one step further this year."

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