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Northside Prep girls take home city title

Two swim team champs set new city records

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Monica Pinkus said that winning the city championship has put Northside College Preparatory High School's swim team in the limelight-and it ain't so bad.

"Usually swimming people at Northside don't get that much attention," she said, "but today everyone was like, 'Congratulations,' so it felt good."

The team won the Chicago Public School's girls varsity swimming and diving championships last weekend, taking home the trophy for the first time since 2002. This was their second city championship since the school opened its doors in 1999.

Captained by senior Emilie Franke and coached by Carlos Ceja, Ed Stranc, and Suzanne Bohus, the Mustangs' season started rough, but eventually the team found its stroke.

"We didn't start out like we would have wanted to," said Pinkus, "but towards the end, we got really close, and were really supporting each other, and we had no doubt in our minds that we were going to do it."

Courtesy BRIAN QUIGLEY

Northside College Prep's champion swim team, after last weekend's competition. First row: Sarah Ashcraft-Johnson, Lynnette Ardies, Emilie Franke, Clare Donnelly and Michelle Pusateri. Standing: Coach Carlos Ceja, Coach Suzanne Bohus, Stephanie Ullman, Kelly Buchanan, Megan Gillespie, Mary Mussman, Courtney Quigley, Monica Pinkus, Alexa Chavez, Emma Battaglia, Katie Sonnefeldt and Coach Ed Stranc.

The Mustangs took first place in eight out of 12 events at the city games, including: the 200-meter medley relay (Alexa Chavez, Mary Mussman, Courtney Quigley, Monica Pinkus); 200 free (Chavez); 200 IM (Megan Gillespie); 50 free (Pinkus); diving (Michelle Pusateri); 100 backstroke (Chavez); 100 breaststroke (Pinkus); and 400 free relay (Gillespie, Emilie Franke, Chavez, Pinkus).

Alexa Chavez and Monica Pinkus also set new city records; Alexa in the 200-meter freestyle (2:00.19) and Monica in the 100-meter breaststroke (1:07.86).

"It seems kind of surreal to think of winning it, but when we actually did it, it was totally amazing," said Chavez, a Northside Prep sophomore. "It was indescribable."

Northside's medley relay and 400-meter freestyle relay each fell just seconds short of setting their own city records.

When the final results were tallied, Northside earned 375.5 points, followed by Lane Tech, with 366 points. Whitney Young came in third, with 335 points.

"It's awesome," Pinkus, a junior at Northside Prep, told Booster. "This weekend we have sectionals and we have a few swimmers hopefully who will qualify for state."

"Last year I just missed it, so lately I've been thinking about nothing but state," she said.

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