Girls swim team takes fifth in Topeka; Brueggen earns more state times



TOPEKA – The Osawatomie-Paola-Louisburg team took its nine swimmers to the Topeka High Invitational last Wednesday to compete against some of the bigger schools in the area.

The Miami County team left with a strong finish as it took fifth overall with 166 points out of 10 teams. Lawrence Free State won with 611 and Washburn Rural was second at 423.

Throw in the fact freshman Sabra Brueggen qualified for state in two more events, and it was a successful outing for the group.

“We are incredibly proud of our girls for posting such a great meet with amazing teamwork and individual efforts,” coach Mary Argeropoulos said. “With 9 swimmers it was quite a feat to represent so well. Each of the other teams had at least twice as many swimmers. It takes careful planning and spreading out the workload amongst the entire team.

“Swimmers have to really be willing to ‘take one for the team’ and perhaps swim events that they wouldn’t normally pick to swim in order to earn the most team points possible. Each relay has to step up as well and score well to be competitive. This team is executing everything we are asking of them and more.”

Brueggen finished second in the 500-yard freestyle and qualified for state in the event in 5 minutes and 47.13 seconds. The Louisburg freshman also finished third in the 200 individual medley in a state qualifying time of 2:23.28.

She has now qualified for state in four events after competing in just her third meet.

“It is a privilege to be able to watch an athlete of her caliber in your program,” Argeropoulos said. “We appreciate her fun attitude and joy she brings to the group. She asked to swim the 500 this week and graciously agreed to swim the individual medley to score points for the team.

“We are proud of her pushing out of her comfort zone in the distance events and are so pleased that she set a new personal record in the 500. She will continue to post qualifying times and we look forward to personal time improvements across the board for Sabra.”

Brueggen, along with Ashley Branine, Dana Mattison and Janie Harth took fourth in the 200 freestyle relay, with a time of 1:58.98, which was close to a state consideration time.

Mattison earned eighth-place finishes in the 200 freestyle and recorded a personal-best time in the 500 freestyle in 6:48.57.

Branine took ninth in the 100 freestyle in 1:08.45 and finished 14th out of 109 swimmers in the 50 freestyle in 30.02. Harth was right behind Branine in 15th in 30.73.

Paola’s Addie Stuebner also had a pair of top 10 finishes as she was seventh in both the 100 butterfly and 100 backstroke.

The 400 relay team of Stuebner, Emma Boehm, Cadence Weichert and Bri Shippy took ninth, while the medley relay of Boehm, Emma Johnson, Stuebner and Weichert finished 10th overall.

The Osawatomie-Paola-Louisburg team is back in action today as it competes at 4 p.m. at Blue Valley Northwest.