

HS Swim Team revived for 2012-13

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

After a year's reprieve from girls' swimming as an option for Holyoke High School, a team has been revived for 2012-13.

Led by volunteer coach Luke Thomas, the team includes 12 swimmers—nine from Holyoke, two from Haxtun and one from Julesburg.

Team members include seniors Cierra Prella of Holyoke, LaKyla Moore of Julesburg and Katlin Davis of Haxtun; juniors Ashley Humphreys, Malena McWilliams, Brittney Prottzman and Meg Strauss, all of Holyoke; sophomores Jentry Andersen and Anastasia Conklin of Holyoke and Jayden Durbin of Haxtun; and freshmen Dani Brandt and Lori McWilliams of Holyoke.

The girls will swim for the Holyoke green and gold, competing in 4A, the smallest division offered in girls' swimming.

Kicking off the season this Saturday, Dec. 1, HHS will compete in the Valley Invite. The conference meet is set for Feb. 1-2 and state championships are Feb. 8-9.

Fifteen years ago, HHS sported its first high school girls' swimming team, under the leadership of volunteer coach Adria Colver.

The Dragons had several successful swim seasons.

But after a few years, it became apparent that it would be advantageous for HHS to co-op with Sterling for the girls' swimming program. Colver continued to work with the local girls at practice in Holyoke, but they were now swimming as Sterling Tigers.

Colver was dedicated not only to the HHS program for 14 years, but also to the summer swim league for numerous seasons.

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One year ago, Sterling dropped its girls' swimming program, which forced HHS to re-evaluate. After thorough consideration of all options last year, the decision was made for HHS to take one year off.

With 10 being the magic number for required participants in order for Holyoke to approve the program with a volunteer coach this year, the goal was set.

Veteran swimmers from the summer swim program set out to recruit, and interest was sparked to the level that a team was formed.

Coach Thomas, a social studies teacher at Holyoke JR/SR High, is pleased the girls have this opportunity to compete in swimming.

He swam summer and winter club leagues in Colorado Springs from age 6-18, with butterfly and backstroke being his strong strokes.

Thomas helped coach young swimmers when he was in high school, but was never able to compete on a high school team, as his school didn't have one.

Because of his love for the sport and his own disappointment at being unable to swim on a high school team, he was a natural fit for the volunteer coaching position.

He said the girls are excited they're an official Holyoke team, and he's thrilled to be part of that. "It's unknown territory, but it's going to be fun," added Thomas.

Parent volunteers who help supervise swim practices are Debbie Brandt and Brenda Krueger.

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