

# WINTER SPORTS PREVIEW

by Kevin Dunleavy and Brian McNally

# Swimming

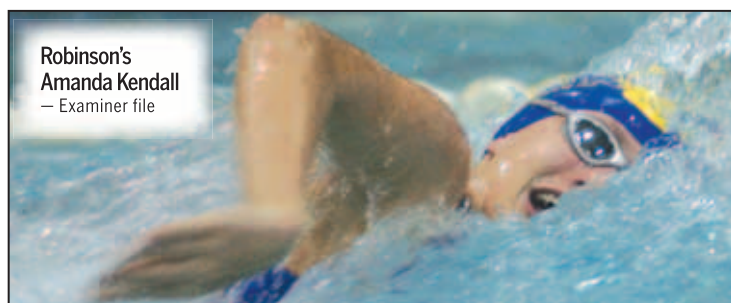
## 5 teams to watch

### Good Counsel girls

The Falcons' 11 straight Metros girls titles is one of the most dominant runs in Washington area high school sports. With the graduation of *Examiner* Swimmer of the Year **Colleen Haase** and first-team choice Megan Waters, contenders have reason to believe they can end the streak. O'Connell's 107-77 victory over Good Counsel early this month is an indication that the reign is in jeopardy. Still, there is depth left over for rookie coach **Billy Howard** in seniors **Katie Kiang**, **Venessa Reyes**, **Arielle Harding** and **Katie Murray**. They join sophomore **Kaitlin Mills** and freshmen **Karen Gragnani** and **Lauren Fowler**.

### Georgetown Prep

**Matt Mongelli**, a 1993 Prep grad, has a tough act to follow. He takes over for **Kirby Weldon**, who had his most successful season in 17, going undefeated, winning his seventh straight Interstate Athletic Conference title, fourth straight Metros crown, and first National Catholic Schools Championship. Expect a seamless transition, however, as Mongelli served 11 years under Weldon. Junior **Brady Fox** is back to supply star power but of the Little Hoyas' top eight scorers from the Metros, three have graduated and two others have transferred. Seniors **J.P. Perez**, **Adam Spencer** and **John-Howard Sidman** will



Robinson's  
Amanda Kendall  
— Examiner file

play bigger roles.

### Fairfax girls

The Rebels came close to a Group AAA state championship last season. They try and take the final step behind junior **Elyn Baumgardner** and senior **Emily Ferguson**. Baumgardner won an individual state championship in the 100 breast. Ferguson was second in the 200 free at the Northern Region meet and fourth at the state meet in the 200 free. She and Baumgardner anchor an experienced group of relay swimmers who will keep Fairfax in the hunt for region and state title crowns. The Rebels won the Northern Region championship last year with 278.5 points, just edging state champ Yorktown.

### Robinson boys

The Rams have now won five consecutive Group AAA state team championships. They do have to replace several key contributors, however, including *All-Examiner* pick

**Zach Holmes** (Virginia Tech), who won state titles in the 50 and 100 free. Rams have easily won the first three meets of the year, including Concorde District meets vs. Centreville (237-71) and Westfield (202-111). **Derek Bui** — the defending state champion in the 100 breast — **Matt Krebs**, fourth in 200 IM at states and key member of 400 free relay, and **Tim Wingert**, state runner-up to Holmes in 100 free, all return.

### Jefferson boys

The Colonials are led by senior **Jonathan Christensen**, who was second in the 200-meter IM at the Group AAA state meet and recorded an automatic All-American time (2:06.85). He was also runner-up in the 100 breast at states. Junior **Wade Gong** (backstroke, IM) and sophomore **Matt Callahan** (50 and 100 free) will also contribute on a team that hopes to challenge Robinson, in the Northern Region. The Colonials are off to a 2-1 start after a season-opening loss to Liberty District rival Langley, 157-148. In with a group of contenders that include Oakton, Lake Braddock and Langley.

## 5 swimmers to watch

### Ashley Danner (Lake Braddock)

A pair of runner-up swims at the Group AAA state meet last winter in the 100-meter breast — an event where Danner is an All-American — and the 100 free. She won the Northern Region title in the 100 free and was region runner-up in the 100 breast. Will swim at George Mason. Bruins try and build on last season's fourth-place showing at the region meet.

### Amanda Kendall (Robinson)

Junior returns after winning a pair of individual Group AAA state championships in the 50 free and the 100 free. Kendall won both events as a freshman, too, and was a key cog in Robinson's 100 free relay team, which won Northern Region and state championships. Helped Rams defeat defending state champ Yorktown in a non-district meet last week 213-95.

### Eric Friedland (Walter Johnson)

The Texas-bound senior won Metros titles in the 100 breast (56.40) and 200 IM (1:51.94), coming within .40 of the meet record in both events. At the Montgomery County championships, Friedland won the 100 breast and dom-

inated the 200 IM (1:54.14), winning by five seconds. Friedland also anchored the county champion 4x400 relay squad. He joins seniors **Robby Dicker** and **Ben Cimons**, junior **Andrew Budner** and sophomore **Kevin Spak** for the defending county boys champions.

### Sean Stewart (Wootton)

The Maryland-bound Stewart won the 500 free (4:33.15) at the Metros by five seconds, overcoming swimmers who finished 1-2-3-4 in the event in 2006. Stewart also won the 200 and 500 free at the Montgomery County championships and anchored Wootton's winning 200 free relay team. Stewart also finished third in the 200 at the Metros, with an All-America qualifying time. Stewart leads Patriots along with senior **Stephen Sakaris**, junior **Chris Emr** and freshman **Thomas Finn**.

### Cara Chuang (Poolesville)

After her record-breaking freshman year at magnet school Richard Montgomery, Chuang has returned to her home school, Poolesville, and leads a small but talented team that includes junior **Devan Maneely** and freshmen **Elizabeth Pepper**. In back-to-back weekends last season, Chuang set Montgomery County (56.33) and Metros (55.62) meet records in the 100 back. Also helped RM set a Metros record in the 200 free relay (3:29.67) and won the county 200 IM title.

## 5 dates to remember

### Jan. 12 — Richard Montgomery vs. Whitman

After winning one meet last season, the Whitman boys (3-0) have been bolstered by seniors **Mark Meyer** and **Nicholas Sung** and sophomores **Serge Gould** and **Anton Janezich**. Leading the girls (3-0) are senior **Jillian Catoe**, ju-

nior **Rebecca Newman** and sophomores **Danielle Schulkin** and **Jenna Mahaffie**.

### Jan. 22 — DeMatha vs. Gonzaga

The top two teams in the WCAC battle. Always deep DeMatha is improved as seniors **Aidan Considine** and **Alex Smith**, the Stags' top two scorers at the Metros, are back. Juniors **Brendan Whipkey** and **Doug Mackenzie** lead the Purple Eagles.

DeMatha handed Georgetown Prep its first loss in two years earlier this month.

### Feb. 1 — Independent School League Championships

Can Holton-Arms win its fifth consecutive ISL title? The Panthers graduated three of their top four swimmers, but there is plenty of depth with seniors **Christina Bailey**, **Annie O'Shea**, **Chelsea Bryan** and **Reagan Thomp-**

son returning. Individuals to watch include Maret freshman **Anna Pietrantonio**, Flint Hill junior **Jenna Jacoby** and Sidwell Friends senior **Jennifer Wilson**.

### Feb. 2 — Northern Region meet

Little seems to go as predicted at the always-entertaining Northern Region meet — especially on the girls' side. Fairfax went from third in the Concorde District last season to region champions the following week. The event is

held at Oak Marr Recreation Center.

### Feb. 8 — VHSL Group AAA state meet

After being held in less than ideal conditions at Bayside Recreation Center in Virginia Beach last winter, the Virginia state tournament returns to George Mason University. Northern Region boys and girls teams have combined to win 19 team titles since the event began in 1997.



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