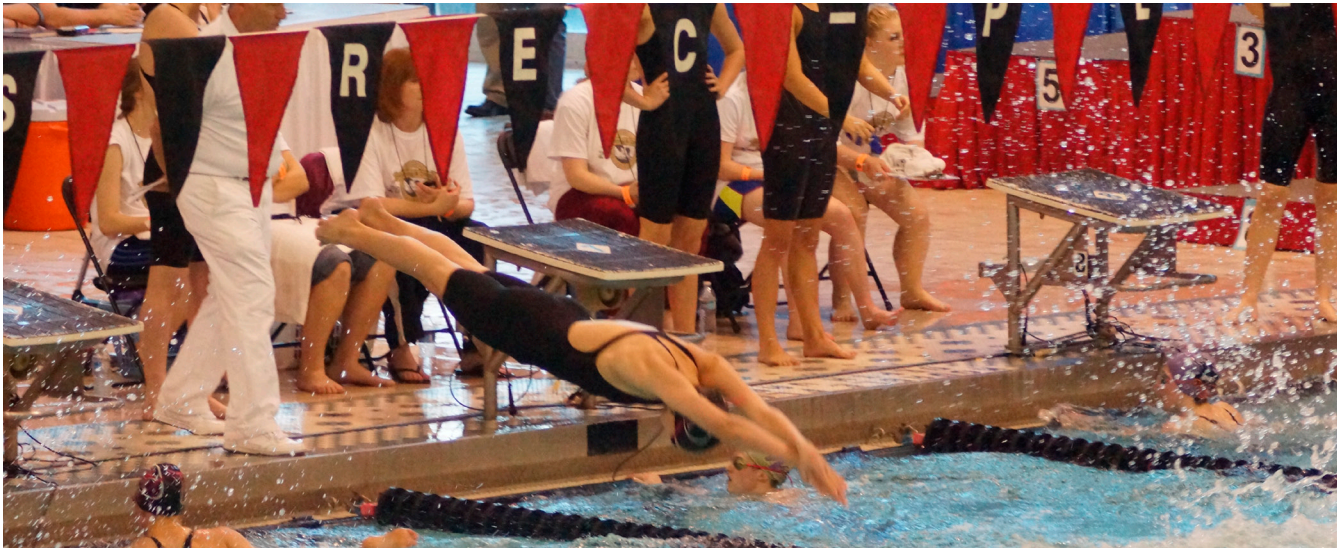


DIVING IN THE POOL, Bridget Sheridan, sophomore, takes her turn in the 400-yard freestyle relay during the state meet, Feb. 16. Bridget prepared for the meet both mentally and physically. "Swimming in state was exciting, but also really nerve-racking," Bridget said. "To prepare physically, I ate healthy, got lots of rest, and stretched a lot for my races. Mentally, I set goals for myself, listened to loud music and said a quick prayer."



SINK OR SWIM

Loss of Teammate Alters Dynamic of Seniors' Seasons

ONE YEAR AGO, SIX JUNIOR girls arrived at Meramec Pool and began blowing up balloons and writing the seniors of the girls' swim and dive team all over posters for senior night. The six girls couldn't help but discuss plans for their own senior night that was only a year away.

But it wouldn't be exactly as they planned. Instead of six seniors being recognized, there would only be five.

Adrienne Meckes passed away mid-summer. After being an active member of the swim team for three years, those close to her prepared with how to deal with her absence.

For Maryanne Kiley, Elizabeth Klippel and Rachel Kokenyesi, seniors, it was also the loss of a best friend that they had been swimming alongside for three years.

"Going into the season, I was extremely nervous because we did everything together," Maryanne said. "I was really hesitant to what it would be like without her. The anticipation ended up being so much worse than the actual thing though."

For Rachel, walking through the

heavy, humid doors at Meramec felt odd the first day of practice.

"I kept expecting her to run up to me with that smile on her face," Rachel said. "She would always ask me how she looked in her suit and weird stuff like that. I missed it."

According to Elizabeth, Meramec was more than just the pool the girls practiced in. It was a sacred place that held many memories of the girls since freshman year.

"Swimming was where I got close to Adrienne," Elizabeth said. "I knew it wouldn't be the same without her there and that things would change. But I also knew almost everything that had to do with swimming would trigger a memory of Adrienne. I was scared of that at first, but then it comforted me."

As a way to cope, the girls exchanged memories and stories of Adrienne at swim practice.

"Before practice every day, we would shower with our suits on because we thought if we washed our hair that it would help prevent chlorine from ruining our hair," Maryanne said. "We made the showers resemble a water park by turning them all on and running

"It was an emotional season, and it was hard not finishing off what we started with her."

- Maryanne Kiley, senior

from shower to shower. Practice started at 3:30 sharp, but 3:40 would roll on around, and we would still be down there, so Ms. Frese would yell at us."

Even though Adrienne made the girls share many laughs, when senior night came around, the girls grieved together when there were only five seniors being recognized instead of six.

"Even though there were only five seniors, I kept thinking in my head that there was six," Elizabeth said. "And there just aren't six anymore. It made me so sad because we spent three years together, and all athletes look forward to having your own senior night to be recognized. She should've been there, and she wasn't, and that was hard."

Right before Maryanne's main event, the 100 fly, the meet was called off due to lightning and poor weather conditions.

"I never want to swim my 100 fly, and the meet was called off literally right before I was about to get back in and warm up," Maryanne said. "It's almost like Adrienne was helping me out after seeing me so sad without her."

Maryanne, Elizabeth, Rachel and the two other senior swimmers, Meghan Rintoul and Mary Kate Hoerr, took a senior picture at the end of being recognized. After the meet, Rachel couldn't help but stare at the photo.

"That's when it hit me," Rachel said. "She wasn't in the senior picture. There were only five girls."

The fourth year of swimming started and ended differently than the previous three.

"There were meets where I would cry in between every event and meets where I would be laughing so hard with Elizabeth, Rachel and the rest of the team," Maryanne said. "It was an emotional season, and it was hard not finishing off what we started with her. But if I was ever sad, I could turn to [Elizabeth] and I wouldn't be afraid to start crying. They knew what to do and how to take care of me, and I'm thankful I got to end my season with them by my side."

story by Katherine Pope design by Alyssa Pope photos by Maggie Kiley and Dan Weyerich

from the #birdnest Swim Talk



Jamie Fitzpatrick (@jfitz_1)
"So sad I won't be swimming in my favorite pool again till next year #meramec #airquality #beautiful" 2/19/13



Margaret Fries (@Mfreeze124)
"Love my girls so much. 'To the relays" 2/17/13



Bridget Sheridan (@briggssheridan)
"ST8 FINALZ YO LEZ GO." 2/16/13



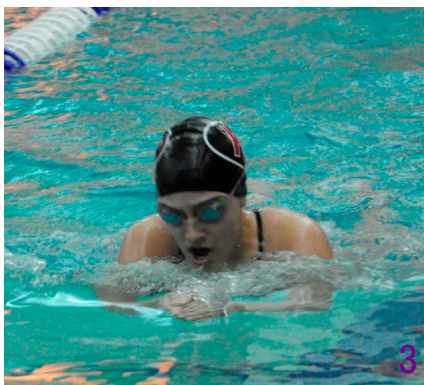
Elizabeth Klippel (@great_klips)
"Nothin like taking off a knee skin #swimming #state #lol" 2/16/13



Meghan Rintoul (@ltsMeghanR)
"7th place in state, not bad! Go Wood!! #state." 2/16/13

172 Girls' Swim & Dive

State Qualifiers	Event	Times
Maryanne Kiley	100 yard butterfly	1:02.19
Jamie Fitzpatrick	200 yard freestyle	1:53.73
Bridget Sheridan	100 yard backstroke	1:01.02
Margaret Fries	500 yard freestyle	5:22.42
Rachel Kokenyesi	100 yard backstroke	58.36
Jacqueline Miller	100 yard backstroke	1:04.06



1 EMBRACING A FELLOW SENIOR, Rachel Kokenyesi, senior, celebrates with her fellow swimmers during her senior night, Jan. 29. Rachel has been swimming for Kirkwood along with other another select swim team. "A lot of my good friends are from my select team," Rachel said. "Most people think if you're on a select team that you have to be crazy obsessed with your sport, but honestly I do it to get better and to stay with my friends."

2 HUGGING A TEAMMATE, Meghan Rintoul, senior, smiles during senior night. Meghan was on the swim team since freshman year and found it hard to leave. "My final year was one of the hardest and best. We came together as a team the most this year. It's so surreal to be the one on the senior end. It went by so fast it feels like it just started, but I wouldn't trade this season for anything," Meghan said.

3 MID STROKE, JANE MANWARRING, JUNIOR, swims the 200 Individual Medley during the Conference Final on Feb. 8. Jane was an alternate in state, which means that if a girl was not able to swim in state, she could take her place. "It was my third time as an alternate at state. It inspires me to try and get better times so I can swim at the next time. At the same time, it is still fun to go and cheer on my teammates," Jane said.

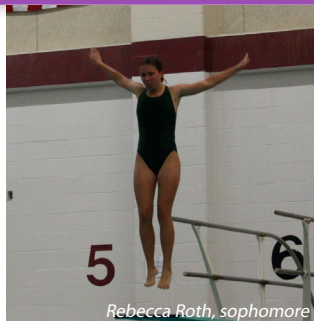
from the pool Leadership Qualities

» "A good leader should be responsible, assume a place of leadership have a good personality, be friendly, caring, and respectful. [Leaders] should also put themselves before others."
- Rebecca Roth, sophomore

"I would want someone who would be accepting towards everyone, someone who would be understanding and someone who would stick to a schedule and rules."
- Ashley Guirl, junior

"They have to have leadership skills and be friendly with all of the team members and kind of outgoing if they want to fill a big role like being the captain of a team."
- Shannon McCarthy, freshman

"They need to have leadership skills and be approachable, work well with others and also need to be nice."
- Christina Camarato, freshman



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information

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