

Cougars shine at MVC swim meet

Written by Jim Ecker

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CEDAR FALLS - Cedar Falls Coach Dick Marcussen has won so many Mississippi Valley Conference swimming titles during his legendary career that he's lost track.

"Twenty-five?," he guessed Saturday after winning another, trying to remember the exact number.

The Kennedy Cougars made Marcussen and the Cedar Falls girls work for this one.

Kennedy and Cedar Falls waged a see-saw battle all afternoon at Holmes Junior High School before the Tigers emerged with a slim 5 1/2-point victory, edging the Cougars 413.5 to 408 in a two-horse race.

Marcussen, 79, has won nine girls state titles since starting the program at Cedar Falls in 1967. He plans to retire from coaching after this season and has another strong club.

So does Kennedy, which won four events Saturday and nearly toppled the Tigers.

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"Coach Marcussen is not a Hall of Fame coach for nothing," said Kennedy boss John Ross. "He got the girls ready. It was a close meet. Our girls swam well. That was a lot of fast swimming."

Kassidy Lovig captured the 200 freestyle for Kennedy, Maddie Bagby claimed the 100 freestyle and Jessica Williams took the 100 backstroke. The Cougars also won the 400 freestyle relay with Lovig, Bagby, MacKinzee Macho and Lydia Yang.

The Cougars had mixed emotions after finishing a tight second in the team race.

"It's a little disappointing, but I think it was a really good meet. Everyone did really well," said Lovig, who pocketed two gold medals as a freshman.

"It's definitely hard to get second, but they're a really good team," said Bagby, saluting Cedar Falls. "Racing against them is always fun."

Cedar Falls won six of 12 events and set conference records in the 200 medley relay and 200 freestyle relay.

"It's good to know we're making people have to break records to beat us," said Ross. "We feel honored to be able to at least compete with them. Today was a good day. The kids had a good day."

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