

Lions win 200 free relay; 8th at state

Written by Tom Fruehling

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MARSHALLTOWN – They’ve got no pool of their own and not much tradition.

And the Linn-Mar Lions girls swimmers don’t get much respect either, at least according to team leader Emilie Berg.

“We’re always considered the underdogs,” she said. “I don’t know why.”

Why, indeed, after Berg and fellow sprinters Lizzie Adams, Lauren Dalecky and Alex Dunn staked claim to the 200-yard freestyle relay title at the high school state championship meet Saturday afternoon at the Marshalltown YMCA.

It helped boost the Lions to eighth place in the final team standings behind runaway winner Ames.

Their 1:38.60 mark was a half-second better than their meet-leading qualifying time and just .05 seconds faster than second place West Des Moines Valley.

The Linn-Mar girls didn’t know they’d won the championship until official times were posted, since they swam a different heat than Valley.

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"We had the best time going into this," Berg said. "We wanted to make sure we held onto that spot."

She also placed third in the 100 breaststroke, her strongest event.

And, with Nicole Larsen in the foursome instead of Adams, the Lions took sixth in the 200 medley relay.

"This was my first time getting to the podium" said Berg, a senior. "To get there three times and win a state championship is just awesome."

Linn-Mar Coach Chad Derlein, in his 10th year at the school over two different stints, said Saturday's performance was the team's best ever.

"And everybody dropped their times today," he said "I'm so proud of these girls. I couldn't ask for anything more.

"We might be underdogs, but I think today we proved ourselves."

The fact that Linn-Mar has no school pool and holds practice at Coe College has helped morale, Berg said.

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[Final results](#)