

Drake, Chung make big splash at Jeff

Written by Tom Fruehling

Sunday, 15 September 2013 21:17

Maybe it was a cloud of chlorine from the near-by Stoney Point YMCA that settled in their blood at an early age and turned Kelsey Drake and Jaylee Chung into swimming phenoms.

The two 15-year-old Jefferson High School freshmen live next door to each other and grew up together just a ways away from the Y. And in the first three weeks of their first high school swim season, they've already made their mark in the pool.

Multiple winners in every meet so far, each has been on only one losing relay team. Chung finished second in one individual race in the season opener. Drake has yet to be beaten.

And last week, Drake set the pool and school record in the 100 yard butterfly, breaking the old marks by more than two seconds. Her time of 57.14 is best in the state this season.

And while the butterfly is her strongest stroke, both she and Chung are adept at all of them. They're top freestylers, too, and excel in the individual medley.

That presents a pleasant conundrum for sixth-year J-Hawk Coach Ryan York, himself a record-holding 1995 Jefferson graduate.

"They're both very talented in multiple events," York says. "We're mixing it around to try and figure out by the end of the season how it works out best."

Racking up team points is a priority, but he also wants to give his young swimmers a chance to shine individually in the big postseason meets.

Drake, Chung make big splash at Jeff

Written by Tom Fruehling

Sunday, 15 September 2013 21:17

“As good as they are, both of them are eager to learn,” according to their coach. “They’re always looking for ways to get better. When it comes to coaching, they’re like sponges.”

And while their early success has been noteworthy, it’s not a surprise. The pair arrived with superb credentials.

Beginning at a young age with the YMCA Stingrays, Chung has been tops in her age class in a number of events in regional competition. The second youngest of Janice and David Chung’s eight children, her older brother Josh was also a Jeff swimmer.

Drake, too, learned to swim at the Stoney Point YMCA. Boating is a favorite family activity, and parents Jenny and Dan wanted to be sure she was comfortable in the water.

“I started early, liked it and never quit,” she explains.

She’s been involved in the Cedar Rapids Aquatics Association (CRAA) since she was 6 years old and is ranked in the top 10 nationally in USA Swimming ratings. Her older siblings Kean and Kailey were also J-Hawk swimmers.

Living next door, Drake and Chung have been the best of friends their whole lives. But until this year, they’d never gone to school together or been on the same swim team.

Drake went to Coolidge Elementary and then Taft and has always competed in AAU swimming. Chung was home-schooled before attending Roosevelt Middle School and has focused on YMCA competition.

“We did swim against each other in city swim meets,” Chung points out.

Drake, Chung make big splash at Jeff

Written by Tom Fruehling

Sunday, 15 September 2013 21:17

Now they ride the school bus together to Jefferson and on most days train in the same lane of the Jeff pool.

“It's a lot of fun,” Drake says. “And it's really great to be part of a team together. It's like a family.”