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Swimming Notebook
Gonzaga Makes a Splash At Meet in Philadelphia

By [Paul Tenorio](#)
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, February 4, 2009; Page E07

Following two dual-meet losses this season to its two biggest rivals, DeMatha and Georgetown Prep, Gonzaga was in search of a win that would make a statement in the kickoff to its championship-meet season.

And last weekend at the National Catholic High School Championships, held at Villanova University near Philadelphia, the Eagles responded by turning in a strong all-around performance, finishing second behind Loyola Blakefield (Md.) and 18 points ahead of third-place Georgetown Prep.

"We needed to send the message that we're ready for" the Washington Metropolitan Prep School Swim & Dive League Championships, Gonzaga senior Pat Sullivan said. "Prep definitely has that message now and I think DeMatha got that from the times, so it'll be a good meet next weekend."

The Eagles' 200-yard freestyle relay set school and meet records with a time of 1 minute 25.35 seconds, while Sullivan turned in an outstanding individual effort for Gonzaga, winning the 50 freestyle in a school-record 21.14 seconds.

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The senior also broke another school record in the 100 freestyle, though he finished second behind Seton junior Jameson Hill.

Hill broke a 21-year-old National Catholics record in the 200 freestyle with a time of 1:39.53 in preliminaries, and then followed that performance with a 1:39.94 in the final to win the event. Hill also finished first in the 100 freestyle with a time of 45.76.

Georgetown Prep senior Brady Fox, who will swim for Virginia, also won both of his individual events, the 100-yard backstroke (50.30) and 100

butterfly (49.72).

On the girls' side, Good Counsel repeated as National Catholics champions, scoring 405 points, ahead of Holy Cross (357) and O'Connell (290).

Leading the way for the Falcons was Blair Webb, who won the 50- and 100-yard freestyles with times of 24.80 and 53.31, respectively.

O'Connell's Kayla O'Malley and Holy Cross's Jessica Donahue also won two individual

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events at the meet. . . .

Holton-Arms turned in a resounding victory at the Independent School League championships Saturday, finishing with 299 points, 111 more than second-place Madeira. The win showcased the depth of a team that won just three individual events at the meet and whose highest scorer, Jackie Tully, had the third-highest point total -- the only Panthers swimmer to finish in the top five.

Churchill Girls, Boys Excel

After finishing third at the Washington Metropolitan Interscholastic Swimming & Diving Championships last season, Churchill Coach Rodney Van Tassell said he heard rumors that his girls' team would get an influx of young talent in the upcoming freshman class.

But after cruising through the dual season undefeated, including a win over perennial favorite Walter Johnson on Jan. 24, Van Tassell said the young swimmers have far exceeded any expectations placed upon them as they have been critical in pushing Churchill into the picture as challengers in the major championship meets this year.

Natalya Ares and Shannon Ridge are two of the freshmen who have helped supplement a strong core of returners for the Bulldogs, whose boys' team also is undefeated in duals this season.

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