University School Wins Home Opener

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DAVIE---The future looks bright for University School. Despite being young and inexperienced, the Suns swimming and diving team successfully opened their dual meet season on Wednesday with victories over Coral Springs Charter and South Florida HEAT at the University School Aquatics Center.


It was the high school debut of Emily Kopas, a freshman and Allison Kopas, a sixth grader, one of the youngest swimmers in the meet. Both train with the South Florida Aquatic Club at the Coral Springs Aquatic Complex.

“It was a very positive meet for us,” said University School first-year head coach Alex Pussieldi. “You can see it is a very young group of parents and swimmers. Each day they are getting more and more involved. Right now, winning or not I don’t think is the most important thing. “I think the most important thing right now is the appreciation for the sport and building up a good base because this will turn into a very good program in the future and very competitive program in the future. “We are aware that is going to take time. We are not rushing anything. I think we are going in the right direction.”

Emily Kopas, a day after a tough dryland training session, won the 200-yard freestyle (2:00.72) and 100-yard backstroke (1:04.46). She was the Suns only double winner in individual events. Bedley, Knaby and Robinson were all individual winners. Pussieldi had his swimmers compete in off events and experimented with relays to enable him to get to know his swimmers. “There is no reason for our swimmers to swim in their normal events,” Pussieldi said. “We are not really a powerhouse team yet. Since we are still in development I need to know more about the kids. I am going to be doing a lot of experiments.”

The Suns are gearing up for two big invitational meets, the inaugural Suns High School Invitational at NSU on Sept. 25 and Woodson Invitational at Pine Crest on Oct. at Pine Crest. “There we will use the kids in their main events,” Pussieldi said. “But all dual meets we prefer to spread them out.” Pussieldi said he was pleasantly surprised at the level of talent in the dual meet. “It’s good for these good swimmers to compete, they were all excited to come to the meet and see the facility,” Pussieldi said. “It was impressive to have two FHSAA swim officials at the beginning of the season, too. Everything was nice.”

Pussieldi and Sally Hansell, Director of Swimming and Diving and assistant swim coach, have high hopes for the future. “We have different levels for achievements and goals,” Pussieldi said. “We have some individual goals for swimmers like Kopas and Robinson to make the state meet. Other ones we look at for regional’s. “I think I will be happy with anything. Like I said before, this season is going to be the foundation for the next few years. We did well at the middle school level last year and won the championship. In four years I think we will have the high school team ready. It will take time but I am patient. I think we will get there.”

“I think high school swimming is very important for the club swimmers,” Pussieldi said. “It is the time of the year when they are recognized by the media, by their buddies and schoolmates. High school season in Florida is a very special moment for them.”