

## Jan. 26 Girls Swimming



*Whether it was the shortest or longest freestyle race today, Sofi Walter came up with a pair of third-place finishes for Hamilton West (Photo by Dennis Symons Jr./purchase photos at [www.dennissymons.com](http://www.dennissymons.com)).*

### **A trio of newcomers has been key to Spartans success this season**

**By Rich Fisher**

**Fish4Scores.com**

**Jan. 26:** As Steinert puts the wraps on an outstanding 7-3 regular season, much of the credit obviously goes to senior studettes Sara DeAngelo and Lauren Cruz.

But there has also been an infusion of young talent to spark the Spartans and their contributions were apparent in today's 130-40 win at Nottingham in the regular-season finale.

Freshman Tess Dalton won twice in the 200 free (2:30.37) and 500 free (5:10.27). Classmate Hailey Thayer was a three-time winner in the 200 free relay (2:02.35), 400 free relay (4:38.06) and 100 back (1:19.76), and took third in the 50 free. Sophomore first-year competitive swimmer Maggie Herbert was on the 200 and 400 FR and took second in the 50 and 100 free.

Their accomplishments have been steady and heavy throughout the year, in both results and providing competition for upperclassmen.

"They immediately start seeing these new girls doing these fast times and they want to have a piece of the action," coach Jacquelyn Nami said. "And the newer girls start dropping their times because they see what the other girls are capable of. It's wonderful."

Thayer has been with Hamilton Aquatics Club since age 10 and has competed in sprints and backstroke this year.

"She's been doing a fabulous job," Nami said. "She's dropping her times, both her events are going very well. She has a very positive attitude, she's upbeat, and she's having a good time. It's been

working out very well for her.”

Thayer has enjoyed the change in mindset from club to high school, in which team scores become important.

“It was really exciting this year,” she said. “I like the team atmosphere, they’re all really supportive and they cheer you on for everything. You feel at home here. It’s nice.”

As for what she is looking for at next week’s MCT meet, Thayer said “I just want to drop as much time as I can.”

Dalton is another club swimmer and a rare breed in that she enjoys swimming long distances.

“Tess has been really dropping her times more in her distance events,” Nami said. “She’s been a very strong competitor for us all season even though she’s just a freshman.”

She hopes to continue carving seconds off her time at counties.

“I want to swim the 500, I love distance events and I really want to drop more time in that,” she said. “Over the past few weeks I’ve been slowly dropping time.”

As for Herbert, it will be her first major championship meet, since this is the first year she ever swam competitively. She decided to do it after losing her grandfather, who was a big swim fan when his son Michael coached.

“My grandpa passed and he always loved swimming, I thought I’d follow up and try it out and see how it is,” Herbert said. “He wasn’t a swimmer but he always came to my dad’s meets and was always there.”

Despite her newness, Herbert has done more than just take up space.

“She’s just a natural sprinter,” Nami said. “It’s working out very well. Her 50 and 100 times are amazing. They’re faster than girls who have been swimming for years.

“It’s effortless for her. She said she feels like she’s in the ocean surfing.”

Herbert is a soccer player by trade, and enjoys the internal competition a person gets from swimming.

“In swimming it’s also a team sport but you just feel more inclined to yourself, rather than other people,” she said. “Which is good, because it fires you up.”

Cruz and DeAngelo did a good job getting fired up for counties as each won four times today.

DeAngelo won the 100 fly (1:16.23) and 100 breast (1:24.44) and Cruz claimed the 50 and 100 freestyles (29.51; 1:05.51). Both swam the 200 and 400 free relays.

Also winning was the 200 medley relay team of Taylor Kwok, Ciera Jones, Jess Cocroft and Makenzie Schlosser (2:26.72).

Kwok and Schlosser continued to chip in important points. Kwok took second in the 200 free and third in the 100 free, while Schlosser was third in the 100 fly.

Other seconds came from Carley Conti (200 IM, 100 back), Cocroft (100 fly), Sarah Sacco (500 free) and Jones (100 breast). Finishing third were Heather Gandy (200 free) and Kailie Sacco (100 back).

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Nottingham, celebrating its Senior Day at its home pool, got one first place on the day from junior Lisa Mazukewicz (2:48.53). Sam Williams took third in the 100 free and Theresa Henry was third in the 100 breast.

**Wagners and Walter gives Hornets nice efforts in loss to WWP**

Hamilton West fell to powerful West Windsor-Plainsboro North, 120-50, but some strong efforts from the W gals.

Abi Wagner took third place in the 100 and 200 freestyles, while Cassidy Wagner chipped in with a third in the 100 backstroke. Sofi Walter had a second in the 50 freestyle, then multiplied her distance by 10 and took third in the 500 free.

Girls who weren't in the W Club also helped out, as Stephanie Sparano was second in the 100 back and Maddie Uram took second in the 100 breast.