

## Jan. 8 JoJo's Tavern/Fish4Scores.com Athlete of the Week

### There was no slowing Mazukewicz once she discovered pool was cool

By Rich Fisher

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**Jan. 8:** Lisa Mazukewicz is like the visitor to the salad bar, who puts a little bit of everything on her plate, but usually sticks with one thing in particular.

And if that one thing is easy to get to – as in, she doesn't have to run around the bar to get it – all the better.

It's the formula she used to discover her best sport and eventually become one of the top swimmers on the Nottingham High girls team.

"When I was younger, I tried a bunch of other sports, but I always came back to swimming," Mazukewicz said. "It was always my favorite. . . .and it didn't involve any running, so it was a great sport for me."

Fortunately for the Northstars, their talented junior was running on a full tank this past Thursday, when Nottingham won its second meet of the year in a thriller over Ewing.

The final score was 87-81, and Nottingham needed to win the final 400 free relay to clinch the victory.

After Bridget Doolittle, Sam Williams and Theresa Henry did their thing in the first three legs, Mazukewicz was in charge of bringing it home as the anchor, and she did the job as Nottingham won in a time of 5:00.57.

"It's very exciting when a meet comes down to the last relay, but it's also pretty stressful," Mazukewicz said. "It feels like the whole team is depending on the four of us in that relay. Coach Parsons almost always puts Bridget Doolittle, Theresa Henry, Sammi Williams and me into the 400 free relay, and we work hard to win that race no matter what the score of the meet is.

"When I touched the wall at the end of that relay, I just felt so proud of us."

Aside from having the winning relay swim, Mazukewicz also helped make sure the relay would mean something by winning the 100 backstroke and 200 IM, which makes her the *JoJo's Tavern/Fish4Scores Athlete of the Week* for the week ending Jan. 7.

The 100 back came two events prior to the relay.

"I knew that I had to do well in the 100 backstroke, both to gain points for the team and to improve my time for the season," Mazukewicz said. "Coach (Andrew) Parsons knew that the meet would be close, and he said that we could only win the meet if we pushed for one thing – no sixth places. Everyone on our team had to try their best in every race in order for us to have a chance at winning.

"The win against Ewing was great for our team. It has shown us that all of our hard work in meets and practice is paying off. Now that we have proven to ourselves how well our team can do, everyone will be more motivated to improve their times."

The junior has been steadily improving her times during her three years at Nottingham.

"I'm happy with my times this season," she said. "But I know I can improve before counties."

Once she settled into swimming as her sport, Mazukewicz joined the Hamilton Hurricanes of the Princeton Area Swimming and Diving Association at age 8. A year later, she moved to the Hamilton Aquatics Club and has been there ever since.

"Our coach, Sue Welsh, is absolutely incredible," Mazukewicz said. "Our team is very close. HAC is like a family."

While swimming with HAC, the Mercerville resident is able to do her best event – the 200 backstroke.

"Unfortunately, we don't do the 200 back in high school meets," she said. "I also really like the 100 back. It's a sprint so it's pretty exciting when the race is as close as it was against Ewing."

It's in the 100 back where she has made her mark as a Northstar swimmer, as she holds the school record. Now she wants to make it tougher to break.

"At counties, I'm hoping to place in the Top 6 and re-set the Nottingham record in the 100 back," she said.

And if that happens, she wouldn't mind running a little -- right to the table to pick up her medal.

