

Warmed up, **Layton Anderson** [9] swims the breaststroke to prepare for his 200 individual medley. The swim team had 30 minutes for every swim meet to warm-up before the races. Warm-up tended to reach into 1600-2000 yards with majority being focused on a freestyle swim. photo by anna korn



Eyes on the clock, **Anna Korn** [10] searches for her place and time after her race at the District swim meet. Korn placed 2nd in 500 freestyle and 200 individual medley to qualify for the Regional swim meet. Although being successful on the swim team, Korn had to return to Germany after the conclusion of the school year. "I will miss the atmosphere the most," Korn said. "Because you know that you have the whole team standing behind you no matter how good or bad you perform." photo by c. palmer

Overjoyed, the White Oak Boy's Swim Team holds the 2nd place district plaque after the meet. In swimming class divisions for competition is 1A-5A and 6A. White Oak competed against 5A schools such as Longview, Pine Tree and Texas High at the district meet. In team points, the Boy's Team outscored Longview High School and Pine Tree High School. photo by c. palmer



About to bolt, **Zach Maly** [9] takes his mark for the 200 free relay. Before every relay, the White Oak boy's team would squat down and yell "Whoosh!" whenever the start-off buzzer sounded. "I felt nervous on our 200 relay," Maly said. Because I felt that it was all on me to put our team into a position that would later allow us to possibly win the race". photo by anna korn



Top places, **Jarred Lowman** [11] and **Layton Anderson** [9] smile with their medals at the district swim meet. Lowman placed 1st in the 200 Individual Medley and Anderson 2nd, qualifying them Regional Swim meet. To qualify for the Regional Swim Meet, competitors needed to place top six to advance. photo by anna korn



# Can't be **BLOCKED**

Swim team breaks records, makes history

story by j. lowman

**T**hey didn't have a facility at the school, a MoJoe Section or seniors on their team, but they had each other and the determination to make it to state. The White Oak High School Swim Team made history this year by traveling to the state swim meet in Austin, forming a relay and having both a men and women's team in one year.

"Traveling to Longview caused tension because we were training right after a team we were to compete against," **Zach Maly** [9] said. "Having no seniors made us feel like we were underdogs and that we wouldn't have as much of a chance against the teams with seniors. It was awesome to overcome the obstacles when it really mattered to defeat Texarkana."

This year, the school accepted **Anna Korn** [10], a foreign exchange student from Germany, as a part of the Roughneck family. Korn qualified for regionals where she placed third in the 500 freestyle and 200 individual medley. Although she did not qualify for state, she still went to support the boys team as a manager and photographer.

"Every time one of us swam, Anna was always on the side cheering us on, yelling as loud as she could," **Layton Anderson** [9] said. "She went through every gruesome practice with us and stuck by our side all the way through state and I wouldn't have wanted anyone else."

On the road to state, the boys team competed at district and regionals to accumulate a wealth of medals. Cumulatively, they took home 12 gold, 11 silver, and four bronze medals from two

swim meets. "At district, the medal count was extraordinary," **Jarred Lowman** [11] said. "We were able to beat Longview High School's boys' team and acquire the second place boys' team overall. Regionals placing was just as exciting and we placed third overall in the boys team, however, the whole boys' team was able to advance to state because of the relay."

At state, the competition was stiff. Individually, **Michael Maly** [11] competed in the 500 freestyle and 200 freestyle while Anderson competed in the 200 individual medley. Michael Maly, Anderson, Zach Maly and Lowman competed in the 4 by 100 freestyle relay.

"At state we were ecstatic," Maly said. "Each swim we boosted each other's confidence and yelled to get home [for the race]. We were a family and wanted each other to do their best."

The season was considered a success with the trip to Austin, the medal count, and the friendship made with Korn throughout their journey. According to the team, they will greatly miss Korn and promised her that they will do good next year even though they will be lacking her helpful encouragement.

"I think my teammates needed me more emotionally than to actually do stuff for them because we are all so close and every time somebody was missing it just felt weird," Korn said. "Having countless and really painful practices together just builds so much respect for each other and that's something I'm going to miss a lot."

## AQUA MEN

Swim team makes first-ever state appearance



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