



Photo by Deb Jacques

Sophomore Maria Bargardi and the Mercy swim team earned a monumental victory when the Marlins defeated Ann Arbor Pioneer Oct. 17. The Pioneers, the defending Division 1 champs, were riding a eight-year win streak in dual meets.

## Truly dominant Victory highlights Farmington Mercy swim team's strengths

By Mike Moore  
C & G Sports Writer

FARMINGTON HILLS — They are the defending Division 2 state champs, so a win on a typical night in a simple dual meet isn't usually a big deal for the girls on the Farmington Hills Mercy swim team.

This wasn't a typical night, though, and this was anything but a typical win.

This win sounded the alarm — a declaration that the best team in Division 2 last year may be even better this year.

The alarm sounded Oct. 17 when Mercy made a trip to Ann Arbor for a meet against a Pioneer team that was in the midst of an eight-year winning streak in dual meets and the defending Division 1 state champions.

And when the final race had concluded, Mercy was celebrating a 111-75 victory.

"There's a great deal of pride to be taken from a win like that," coach Shannon Dunworth said last week. "You put someone like Pioneer on the schedule for a simple reason, to measure yourself, win or lose.

"But the thing we took from that night wasn't necessarily a win, it was more about how

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well we swam, how much the girls came together. Our depth was really showcased.”

It’s that depth that’s propelled Mercy all season. It has carried the team to wins in every dual meet and every invitational it entered.

It’s also what set the Marlins apart from the Pioneers Oct. 17.

“In events like this, against teams that good, it’s not really the first-place finishes that are so important,” Dunworth explained.

“In events like this, the fourth- and fifth-place battles are the ones that are so essential. That’s where we shine. We may not have as many individual stars or standouts, but as a group, these girls are pretty impressive.”

Mercy has already claimed the Oakland Country meet, and while there is still time before the state finals Nov. 21-22, goals for the rest of the season remain simple.

“This may sound weird, but our goals start every day in practice,” Dunworth said. “The great thing about having a team as deep as we do is how competitive our practices are.”

“We have girls leave unhappy because of how they performed, and truthfully, that only makes us better because they come back ready to go and ready to fight the next day.”

So what about defending that state title?

“We have a team capable of doing so,” Dunworth added. “It’s cliché, I know, but we have to take things one day at a time. But if we do that and prepare as we should, it could be a good run for us.”

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