

WIAA DIV. 2 STATE GIRLS SWIMMING AND DIVING MEET

Shared goal achieved

Grafton seniors Michel and Uttke win state championships

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WAUKESHA — Somewhere along the way, Grafton seniors Libby Michel and Maranda Uttke came up with a shared goal of winning a state championship medal to wrap up their time competing as high school athletes.

Their opportunity to accomplish the lofty goal came Friday at the WIAA Div. 2 state championship meet and the Black Hawks' duo did exactly what they set out to do, with Uttke taking first in diving and Michel winning the 200-yard individual medley during a meet held at Waukesha South High School.

"It was really exciting to see both of us accomplish our goals together," Michel said. "When I found out Maranda won diving, it really motivated me to win my 200 IM as well. We really pushed each other in that sense, and it really paid off."

Uttke had her opportunity first, competing earlier in the day.

Qualifying for the state diving meet was nothing new for her, but she admitted that having been in the competition before did not necessarily make things any easier even though she had earned a state medal in each of her three previous appearances at the final meet of the season.

"It's still the same nerves," she confirmed, even though she already had placed sixth as a freshman and third the past two years.

In fact, there was a different type of pressure on Uttke this time around, as she was perceived to be the favorite going into the meet. The two divers that finished ahead of her last year had graduated and she arrived at Waukesha South with the top score in sectional competition.

"I was really nervous because there was a ton of pressure on me," she admitted. "The beginning of my meet was a little rusty, I will say that, but I got (in a better) mindset, I tried to come out of it (a rusty start) and do something great."

After the preliminary round, Uttke was in fourth place with 193.75 points, trailing Madison



Submitted photo

Members of the Grafton girls swimming and diving team pose for a photo before leaving school to compete at the state meet. From left are Sophie Schumaker, Kylee Grimm, Halle Grimm, Lola Michel, Maranda Uttke and Libby Michel.

Miracle of the University School of Milwaukee/Brown Deer co-op, who led with a score of 212.65. Whitnall sophomore Rianna Dobbie moved into the lead after the semifinals, with a total of 314.60, followed closely by Miracle (308.80) and Uttke (306.75). Uttke made her charge to the top of the podium over her final three dives, finishing with a winning score of 431.80. Whitnall senior Kiera Wilson finished in second with 415.00 and Miracle claimed third with 412.35.

"It felt amazing," Uttke said about her victory. "I was in third place before the last three dives and when I went over and they told me I was in first place it was a

really good feeling."

Uttke added that there were mixed emotions as she stood on the top step of the podium.

"It really hasn't (sunk in yet). I know it will soon. Right now, I'm just really, really proud of myself for how I've done," she said. "It feels really great to wear this first place medal."

"It's so surreal that my high school season is over and I ended it on a really good note," Uttke added. "I'm very proud of myself."

She was also proud of her improvement through the years.

"I definitely improved over the years and I could see that," Uttke said.

She became just the second diver in program history to win a state championship. Ali Bunting was the first to take gold, accomplishing the feat in 2000.

After doing her part, she could relax and watch Michel take her shot at a state championship.

"I was waiting for that moment when diving is done and I can just relax and all my nerves are gone," Uttke said. "She's going to do amazing. I know it."

The swimming portion of the meet commenced about 90 minutes after Uttke was awarded her medal and it started on an ominous tone for Grafton. The Black Hawks competed in the opening event of the session, the

200 medley relay. Unfortunately for the entry of Libby and Lola Michel and Halle and Kylee Grimm, the team was disqualified after posting a time of 1 minute, 52.66 seconds, which would have been good for seventh place.

Michel got her shot at the individual medley a few events later and made the most of it. Her time of 2:04.00 was comfortably ahead of the 2:05.52 turned in by runner up Izzy Bloom, a sophomore from Edgewood.

"It felt incredible to win the 200 IM. It was such a great feeling to accomplish my greatest goal for this season," she said. "Being

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HOCKEY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEKEND

Using hockey for the greater good

Friday and Saturday event to feature five games to raise awareness for mental health

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MEQUON — Using hockey to do something for the greater good is the ultimate goal of an event planned for Friday and Saturday at the Ozaukee Ice Center, as the Concordia University Wisconsin hockey program and Homestead boys team will participate in a series of games to raise awareness about the importance of mental health and raise money for the CK Choose Kindness Foundation.

"The CK Choose Kindness Foundation was created to honor Cam Kranich, a former 2019 HHS student and hockey player who passed away in 2019," the Kranich family said in a statement. "The CKCK foundation awards annual scholarship grants to students who embrace 'choosing kindness,' by making positive impacts in other people's lives. Additionally, the foundation's objectives are to create positive community awareness around mental health as mental health impacts everybody, to minimize any associated stigma by letting people know that 'It's OK to not feel OK,' and to contribute to organizations with infrastructures and



Photo by Josh Dinkelman, Concordia University Wisconsin Assistant Director of Athletics Communications

Bank Five Nine donated \$1,200 to the CK Choose Kindness Foundation ahead of the Hockey Community Mental Health Awareness Weekend, in which Concordia University Wisconsin and Homestead will compete in a series of five games Friday and Saturday at the Ozaukee Ice Center. Pictured, from left, are Erin Perez, Ozaukee Community Therapies; Dr. Rob Barnhill, CUW Director of Athletics; Kris Barger, Bank Five Nine; Cindy and John Kranich, CK Choose Kindness Foundation; and Tony Navarre, Homestead High School boys hockey head coach.

programs focusing on mental health (like NAMI and AFSP)."

Homestead boys hockey head coach Tony Navarre said it was important for the program to support the foundation.

"We've had an awareness in sports now about the importance of mental health," he said. "It's one of those things that's very, very close to our hearts, so through the CK Choose Kindness

Foundation and working with Concordia and Bank Five Nine and Ozaukee Community Therapies, it's a weekend of some really good hockey and raising awareness about mental health.

"There's going to be some booths set up so that people can have some information about (the importance of) mental health and support services and really just trying to raise awareness," he added. "It's

a really important thing and I think that partnering with Concordia and those other organizations, I think it's just really important for people to have access and know that there's support out there."

According to CUW Director of Athletics Dr. Rob Barnhill, the Falcons were looking to get involved in an event that started with

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