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H.S. Sports Extra -- Prep's Pramer is again diving to the top

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By GEORGE ALBANO

Hour Staff Writer

One of the best high school divers in the entire state resides in Norwalk.

But he is not a member of the local co-op swim team.

No, instead, Tyler Pramer is a senior diver at Fairfield Prep, where both he and the Jesuits enter this week a perfect 11-0.

In fact, in Pramer's four years there, Prep has compiled a remarkable 55-0 dual-meet record, a mark that will surely be tested on Saturday when the Jesuits square off against Greenwich at the GHS pool in their annual non-league meet.

"We didn't beat Greenwich for 39 years, but since my freshman year we've beaten them every time," Pramer proudly pointed out. "This year will be closer than ever."

Pramer's perfect record will also be challenged when he competes against defending Class LL state champ Connor Brisson and runner-up Mark O'Connell, the only two divers to beat him at last year's state meet.

The Cardinals were also the only team to beat the Jesuits at both the LL meet and State Open, where Pramer finished seventh in the diving.

"Our team has finished second at the Open two times and third once," he said.

Prep captured the Class L state championship Pramer's freshman year in 2007 before moving up to LL the last three years. The Jesuits have also won the Southern Connecticut Conference crown five years running and Pramer is the defending diving champion.

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But diving is just one of his contributions to Prep's success in the pool. Pramer is also one of the better swimmers on the team with the butterfly, IM or breaststroke as his second individual event while swimming either one or both of the relays.

Not that Pramer's swimming ability should come as a surprise. He was actually a swimmer before he became a diver.

"I was strictly a swimmer when I was 7 years old at the Shorehaven Country Club," he explained. "I started diving just for fun when I was eight or nine. I would swim year-round and dive for fun in the summer from the time I was 9 to 13.

"When I was 14 I joined Next Generation Diving and started diving year-round."

Pramer comes from a family of swimmers and divers. His older brother, Ryan, also started out as a swimmer, but he, too, eventually became a diver at Prep and now at the University of Michigan where he is a junior. And their younger sister, Meredith, is currently a junior at Norwalk High School and was an All-Area swimmer this past fall.

All three were no doubt influenced by their parents, who were both on the Norwalk High swim team more than 30 years ago. Their mother, Dee Dee Daniels back then, was a swimmer on the girls team, while their father, Dave Pramer, was a diver on the boys team..

Beginning to see the connection?

"My dad was definitely my inspiration," Tyler said.

Until a few years ago, his father, a 1977 graduate, held the school record for diving at Norwalk, a mark Tyler also topped while at Prep. In fact, his winning score of 436 points at last year's SCC meet ranks third all-time in the Fairfield Prep record book.

Pramer, who earned All-America status as a junior, certainly hasn't taken any shortcuts. In addition to swim practice everyday at Prep, he hones his diving skills two nights a week at the Norwalk YMCA, and two more nights at Yale.

And all under the watchful eye of Jeanine Oburchay, his diving coach at Fairfield Prep and with Next Generation Diving.

"Tyler is one of the hardest workers we've ever had on the team," Oburchay said. "He's naturally talented and has a real strong gift for the sport. He comes in everyday ready to go to work."

Practicing at the Yale pool should also help prepare him for his collegiate career since that's where he'll be diving for the next four years. Harvard, Princeton and Cornell were also among his top choices before deciding on Yale.

"The Ivy League is perfect for my diving style," he said.

The fact those schools were recruiting him "tells you a lot about his work ethic," Oburchay points out. "He's just an all-around good kid."

And getting better all the time. As good as Pramer was last year, he feels he's even better this winter.

"I've improved my diving lift and my degree of difficulty is higher," he said. "I'm also more consistent. I'm a lot more confident on all of my dives."

"He's doing much bigger dives than he has in the past," Oburchay agreed. "He's reached a new level in his training."

Which should pay big dividends for Tyler Pramer when the postseason meets roll around.

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"I'm looking to win the SCC again, then try to knock off one or both of those Greenwich divers at the LL meet, finish top three at Open, and repeat as an All-American," he said.

Not to mention make Norwalk proud.

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