

## WHS Swimmers Win Eight Events At Valdese

Written by Mike Kelly

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The Watauga High boy's and girl's swimming teams won seven of eight duals on Wednesday night at Valdese. "I was pleased with the performance of both teams tonight," said WHS coach David Gragg. "Several

swimmers missed the meet due to illness or injury, and a few competed after recovering from both. I used this meet the focus on building stronger relays, so the majority of our faster swimmers swam on three relays and only one individual event. Under the scoring format we used, only one relay team scored points, but it was a sacrifice that needed to be made to help later in the season."

The WHS girls defeated East Burke (62-43), Maiden (65-40), and West Caldwell (73-28), but lost to the host school, Draughn (56-49).

The Pioneers also won four events, the 200 medley relay (Doria Kosmala, Anne Taylor, Carson Middlebrook and Juilanna Silver) in 2:07.13, the 200 free style relay (Carson Middlebrook, Maddy Allain, Kosmala and Taylor) in 1:53.81; Taylor won the 100 butterfly (1:05.91); Darby Middlebrook won the 500 free style (5:52.05).

"On the ladies' side, all six relays were in the top three," Gragg said. "We had tough races against ourselves which I liked. Anne Taylor and Darby Middlebrook once again led the way by winning their individual events. Cheyenne Hayler and Doria Kosmala had second place finishes that score well for us too. Riley Dobbins turned in strong performances in the 200 Free and 100 Breast which will help further into the season."

The WHS boys won all four of their duals. They defeated Maiden (65-36), Draughn (57-45), West Caldwell (70-17), and East Burke (58-38). And like the girls team, the boys won four events.

The Pioneers won the 200 medley relay (Forrest Brown, Josh Herman, Noah Allain, Brandon Michelsen) in 1:55.87, the 200 free style relay (Herman, Allain, Brown and Ben Watson) in 1:43.53, and Michelsen won two events, the 200 IM (2:30.04) and the 500 free style (6:10.30).

"Brandon Michelsen led the way for a depth by winning the 200 IM and 500 Free," Gragg said.

"He was joined in the scoring by Josh Herman, Noah Allain, and Forrest Brown. Ben Watson posted some good times in the longest two events of the evening. Chris Winkler and Noah Padgett gained valuable experience.

"We have some tough teams in our conference from what I am gathering. It will truly be a team effort to beat St. Stephens and South Caldwell who are currently the favorites."

The Pioneers travel to Hickory for a four-team meet with Hickory, Fred T. Foard and North Lincoln.