The Featured Tiger

From Local Pools To State Finals

By staff writer: Kae Bee

A small, barely noticeable movement on the block. Blink and you'd never see it. Senior Hailey Deming has watched the video, and she can't see it. But it was enough to get her disqualified from the sectionals her junior year.

She felt unease wash over her when she slipped into the unfamiliar pool at Lakeville High School that morning. The waters felt cold and thick: an unlikely and odd combination.

Deming had a bad feeling as she began her warm ups. The 50 free is a technical race. One single wrong movement means five seconds added to your time. And Deming knew she did well. As she popped her head out of the water, she saw an official walk up to her coach. She knew at that moment that the official was there for her or her teammate.

She took a breath and got out of the water. Her coach called out her name. She had been disqualified for movement on the block. Her qualifying race turned to horror, when there was movement on the block. Deming could feel tears building up in her eyes. She wasn't going to state her junior year.

"It was awful, it was horrible," Deming said. "I went and sat in the corner, crying."

Senior Hailey Deming at the Rochester Aquatics Center. *Photo Submitted*

This disqualification affected her performance in the subsequent races. She spent the rest of the day isolating herself. Her coach made the decision to pull her out of the 200 free relay. So close yet so far away from her goals, Deming felt defeated.

She has the video of that race in her camera roll and sometimes looks back to it.

"The only thing that kept me going was that this is my junior year," said Deming. "I still have another year."

Starting her swimming career at a young age, she found her passion for swimming the backstroke at the Tigers Sharks Club at the YMCA. She swam backstroke throughout her middle school years. In high school, she became more of a distant swimmer. Deming still does backstroke in the medley races when she is freestyling. Her coaches played a big role in her swimming journey.

"My coach Anna [Anderson] pushed me, motivated me and kept me in the mindset that this is going to happen, and it can happen because I'm able," said Deming who came back her senior year determined to leave the past behind her and get to state.

She began dropping time. She broke 26 seconds in the 50 free. She dropped two seconds in the 100 free. Two more in the 50 free. She cut four seconds in total.

"This season Hailey was seeded second in the 50 Free," said swim coach Angel Welch. "We knew she could qualify for state, but races like the 50 can be wild and unpredictable. It's an event where every fraction of a second counts. But when Hailey showed up for section finals, she put her fears aside, rose to the occasion, and swam with the determination of someone destined for state."

Deming didn't leave it to destiny. As Deming was getting ready to dive into the water during the 50 freestyle at sectionals, she didn't know what was going to happen to her, but she knew two things: one, she worked hard and whatever happened she had done her best and two, she wasn't moving a muscle. She dove into the water and left her opponents behind. She broke the water and realized she had just done it. She was going to state.

"It was super cool to reach a goal that I had been working towards my entire swim career," said Deming. "Probably one of the most rewarding experiences I've had."

She punched her ticket to the Class A

Senior Hailey Deming at the University of Minnesota for the state championship. *Photo Submitted*

State swimming and diving meet in the 50-yard freestyle with a second place finish and a time of 25.3 seconds.

"This achievement highlights Deming's dedication and hard work throughout the season," said Activities Director Dave Langerud. "The Albert Lea community is thrilled to cheer her on as she competes on the state's biggest stage."

Deming had her team behind her throughout the whole journey, supporting her. And most importantly she had herself. Deming is not only involved in swimming, but also track and field, National Honor Society, Link Crew and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She was nominated as queen on the Homecoming Court.

"As our team captain, Hailey leads with courage and inspires resilience in those around her," said Welch. "She works tirelessly, shows kindness to everyone, and never fails to make us laugh. I've coached Hailey since she was 12, and she has always been a beacon of light on our team!"

Deming doesn't know the results of her race at state. She chose to leave it unknown. Despite not knowing the outcome of her final race as a Tiger, she is grateful for the amazing opportunity and glad she left her high school swimming career on a high note.

This is not the end of her swimming career though. Deming will be attending the University of St. Thomas to study biochemistry and swim as a Tommie.

The Spotlight Feature

Serving In The Classroom and Beyond

By staff writer: Carley Ladlie

Stephanie Schneider and her mom Linda Applegate. *Photo Submitted*

Stephanie Schneider's classroom is a sight to be seen, filled with photos of her family and fun-loving students that she has the pleasure of teaching all the way through their high school careers. What you may not suspect when you see her though is that when she started her professional life, teaching wasn't even on her radar—she was all business.

"I graduated college in '97 from University of Minnesota Southwest State," explained Schneider. "I had a business degree and wanted my loans paid off."

So, she joined the army.

"The military wasn't even on my scope until probably my junior year," said Schneider. It helped pay for college but there was another reason: "I had talked to a recruiter. I played softball with them in the summer and he kind of talked me into it. I was all about adventure."

Before she left for basic training there were a few things she needed to do. One of them was to graduate; the other to get married.

"I got married my junior year, right before my Senior year, because I knew that being married would be able to get my husband out with me to wherever I was stationed," said Schneider.

After she graduated, with her business degree in hand, she was sent off to basic training at Fort Jackson in South Carolina.

"I loved all the stuff we did," said Schneider. "I was very active; I was in sports all my life and I grew up target shooting with my family."

However, there were drawbacks.

"I was also a lot older than people," Schneider said. "I graduated from college and most everyone I was with was right out of high school. There's a lot of maturity differences when you're a 22-year-old versus an 18-year-old."

There was another step for Schneider after basic training; "I went down to Fort Gordon, Georgia, and did my computer training."

She became a computer specialist, or a 74 Bravo, in communications. She ended up stationed at the Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

"I worked in the computer room and so I did a number of different jobs," said Schneider. "We did a lot of report running. Eventually, I moved into where I did all the approvals for any of the technology built or bought on base."

There were some entertaining parts of the job.

"We got to monitor [...] where anybody on base, including doctors, anybody, if they were on inappropriate sites. It would flag them, and we could shut them down," Schneider said. "So that was kind of the fun part. I mean, people being on stuff they should not be is not fun. But I mean catching them [is]."

She left the army after two years for family reasons.

"I ended up getting pregnant, and our next stop on our rotation was to Korea," said Schneider. "I could either go there, with a newborn son staying behind with my husband for a year, or I could take my family over there for two years. I didn't really want to do either option and so I chose to get out."

Her family decided to go back home and also where her parents lived—Albert Lea, Minnesota. Coming back here was never their plan, but DC was not a place they could raise their children. "Where my husband taught, it cost more for those kids to go to kindergarten than I paid for a year of college," Schneider explained.

After they moved back Schneider decided to use her business degree.

"I started working for Americana National Bank," Schneider said. "I was there for five years. I started off as a teller, and then I moved to lending."

After those five years she spent another five at ABG Alliance Benefit Group.

"I was an account manager," said Schneider. "I dealt with 401k plans for companies."

After that she worked for AmeriNat for another five years. She started there she started off in Investor Accounting and Reporting and then moved to an Accounting Clerk position.

"By the time I left, there were 10+ bank accounts I was reconciling," said Schneider.

After being in the business world for 18 years, she decided that there needed to be a change in her life and looked to teaching because of her family background.

"My mom was an options teacher at Southwest. My husband is an elementary teacher. My brother is a math teacher out in Colorado. So, it was just one of those things that I just felt might be my calling," she said.

With all her education in business, you might be asking yourself why she chose not to teach Economics or math. For that Schneider has two reasons; "My brother is a math teacher [...] and I listened to everything he went through," she explained. "He had to pass a lot of stuff and that was a little more math than I wanted."

The other reason was her mother, Linda Applegate, who worked in special education for 18 years.

"It was just that satisfaction that she had that [she] did something," said Schneider. "It may not be for every student, but there were some that were impacted."

Stephanie Schneider's journey from the military to special education teacher is one for the books. She is a role model to her students and the people around her, and though her life may not have gone as her younger self planned, she shows us every day that you will end up where you're needed most.

Stephanie Schneider with her husband John, son Zachery and daughter Schneider. *Photo Submitted*

Sport Updates

"I think all the friends you make and all the teamwork you do," said Paradise Graves (11). *Photo By Josephine Petersen*

"The thing I am most excited about when I start playing college hockey is getting to play at a high level of competiton with great coaching and great facilities," said Mika Cichosz (12). *Photo By Chaise Harmdierks*

"You get to do the games and cheer at games. It's fun and you could also get a scholarship for it," said Staysha Christensen (10). *Photo By Evelyn Koepke*

"When I started out, I was on the younger side and seeing the captains be super great people and inspiring us, I wanted to share that with my team and show them how to be better swimmers," said Gunnar Hardison (12). *Photo By Evelyn Koepke*

"All my teammates are great guys. I think being with them is really helpful not just for hockey, but for school too," said Sam Stay (12). *Photo By Evelyn Koepke*

"It's a whole family [the basketball program], you'll have fun" said Hailee Godeke (11). *Photo By Evelyn Koepke*

"You're not winning every game but don't stop trying," said Desmond Smith (11). *Photo By Evelyn Koepke*