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BCS swimmer finds ways to stay busy

By MIKE HENRY

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BRADENTON -- Bradenton dentist Dave Maddy knows people are going to think he and his wife, Barbara, are pushing their daughter, Trisha, to the brink of exhaustion.

In addition to earning all A's since third grade, the Bradenton Christian freshman plays the oboe in the school orchestra and is helping organize a Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter at the school.

She travels south six days a week to practice with the acclaimed Sarasota Sharks swim team at the Selby Aquatic Center, and arrives at the Bradenton Country Club pool at 5:45 a.m. twice a week to amass yardage, strength and stamina.

Trisha, 14, has traveled with her father and other members of Bradenton Christian Reformed Church on six medical missions to Peru and Kenya, most recently visiting and ministering to villagers in the Amazon rainforest and Lima, Peru, in August.

"We did puppet shows and crafts and played soccer games with the kids," said Trisha, who is always moved by the missionary experience. "I see the things I have that they don't have, and it allows me to appreciate more what I have and get to know my savior, Jesus Christ, better."

By now, a cynic might ask: What does she do in her spare time?

How about forming a one-person swim team, which will compete in Saturday's Class 1A-District 8 meet at North Shore Pool in St. Petersburg? Trisha will take on all comers in the 200-yard freestyle and the 100 backstroke.

"We don't push her. I've never made her swim - this is all herself," said Dave Maddy, who coaches the lone Panther for Bradenton Christian and drives Trisha to Sharks practice after school and on Saturday mornings. "She wants to swim, and it is an honor to support your child in something they truly love."

"In my opinion, her top accomplishment is that she is still doing it. She wakes up at 5:15 a.m. on Tuesday and doesn't get home until 9 at night. It's grueling, and she really has no time for anything else," he said.

Trisha - whose 11-year-old brother Drew, a Bradenton Christian sixth-grader, also swims with the Sharks - has shown steady improvement throughout the high school season. In the 100 backstroke at last week's Bay Conference Championship, she placed fifth with a time of 1:15.29, her personal best, and was sixth in the 200 freestyle.

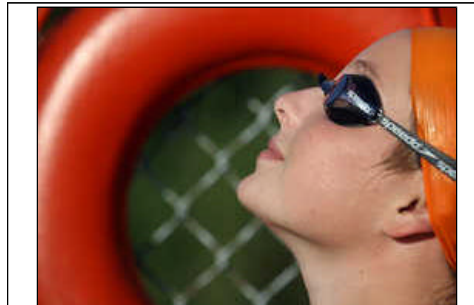
Earlier in the week, she finished fourth at the Manatee County Championship in both the 100 backstroke and 200 freestyle, swimming the latter in 2:17.43.

Trisha doesn't have to think long when asked about her goals.

"Doing my best and praising God the whole time," she said, applying her objectives to each of her walks in life. "You get better by doing your best, and doing your best involves doing what you're supposed to do."

Trisha often hangs out during meets with members of the Sarasota High team, many of whom compete for the Sharks. Sarasota High coach Sherwood Watts - Maddy's age-group coach with the Sharks for three years - says she brings a tireless spirit to the pool and a work ethic that foretells future success.

"It's not hard for her to meld into the group because she knows some of our swimmers, and she is a remarkable young lady from a remarkable family," Watts said. "She is very dedicated, and as a result she is getting stronger and more fit. She is also getting smarter and understands how to race and how to pace."



TIFFANY TOMPKINS-CONDIE

Trisha Maddy, 14, is a Bradenton Christian freshman and the only swimmer on her school's swim team.--PHOTO BY TIFFANY TOMPKINS-CONDIE/ttompkins@bradenton.com



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"I think as she gets older, she will continue to get better and better. She likes the middle-distance freestyle events because that is where hard work can shine, and as she matures she will continue to blossom."

Trisha hopes she can influence other Bradenton Christian students to join the swim team next season. For now, though, Dave Maddy admits the current arrangement provides a major benefit for him and his wife.

"We love it, because we spend time together and have conversations driving her to practices and meets," he said. "As a consequence, I think she still likes me."

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