

Make Every Lap Count!

Orchard Mesa pool's temporary closure and its effects of the GJHS swim team

Despite the Orchard Mesa pool's temporary closure, the Grand Junction High School girls' swim team continued to stick with their passions and proceed with the sport.

The Orchard Mesa pool closed after the second week of girl's swim pre-season, which is in November, due to an issue with the boiler. This temporary closure was also an issue for the GJHS swim team since the OM pool was where they practiced, and they didn't have many other options of pools to practice at.

Fluctuating between practicing at the Fruita pool and CMU pool caused confusion in terms of scheduling and made it difficult to set up practices, and even more difficult to ensure everyone could show up to practices.

Swimmers on the team weren't the only ones confused with the change, this sudden switch was troublesome for parents, too. Scheduling around work times and practice made showing up to each practice a hassle.

Not to mention Fruita and CMU have their own needs for pool time.

"Coach Denise has done her best to get the team in for swim time at the end of every week," said GJHS sophomore swimmer Whitney Stortz. "Fruita has their own team who needs the pool and CMU has extracurriculars they need the pool for."

But even with this difficulty, the team showed up when they could and did the best they could during practices, meets, and at state finals. GJHS sophomore Whitney Stortz finished in fifth place at the Colorado state finals on Feb. 9 in the 100-yard freestyle.

"People were more motivated to swim when they could," said GJHS sophomore swimmer Zoe Plumb.

After roughly two months, the Orchard Mesa pool reopened.

Before this reopening, the team had already had meets during the time they were wavering between practicing at Fruita and practicing at CMU. With the struggle of scheduling and the sudden change, the team wasn't sure how well they'd do at said meets.

But, as Plumb mentioned, the struggles that came with the changes helped the team to grow stronger; the inconveniences that were caused in this confusion only increased these girls' motivations.

But even through their hard work at both meets and throughout the season, the

swim team barely gets much recognition in the school.

"It doesn't always feel like we represent the school, but I do feel like we represent GJHS more this year than we did last year because there's more involvement and more people on the team," said Plumb. "But swim still goes under peoples' noses and is kind of ignored."

"It's like we represent the school at meets, but at school we aren't recognized for representing the school," Stortz said.

Though the swim season ended in February, there are still ways to help our swim team feel more represented.

"It would be a lot to ask for people to support us as much as they support football and basketball, but showing up to our meets in town really means a lot," stated GJHS swimmer Kyla Hart. "And even just asking how meets went if you know someone who's on the team is great."

State for girls' swim was Feb. 8-11 at Adams 12 Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center, and four girls from GJHS qualified. Sophomore Kylee Mull qualified for the 100-yard breaststroke, senior Olivia Langer and freshman Emily Hardin qualified for the 50 freestyle, senior Abby Price qualified for the 50 freestyle, 100 freestyle, 100 backstroke, and 100 backstroke, and Stortz qualified for every individual event except for the 500 freestyle.

Whitney Stortz swimming her way through state.



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the swim team