
*Julie Smith has learned to juggle her
roles as a cross-country star at West Forsyth
and assistant swim coach at YMCA*

Wave Runner

Double duty hasn't slowed her quest to become 4-time all-state runner

By Dan Kibler Fri, Nov, 10, 1995
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Julie Smith of West Forsyth has a chance to become the second cross-country runner in North Carolina history to make the all-state team four straight years.

There's little doubt that she's the only cross-country runner in the state who is doubling as a swimming coach.

Smith will lead a strong Titan team in the 4-A state cross-country meet at Charlotte's McAlpine Park on Saturday at 11 a.m. — about the same time that the swimmers she helps coach on the Winston-Salem YMCA team are taking part in the High Point Fall Invitational at High Point College.

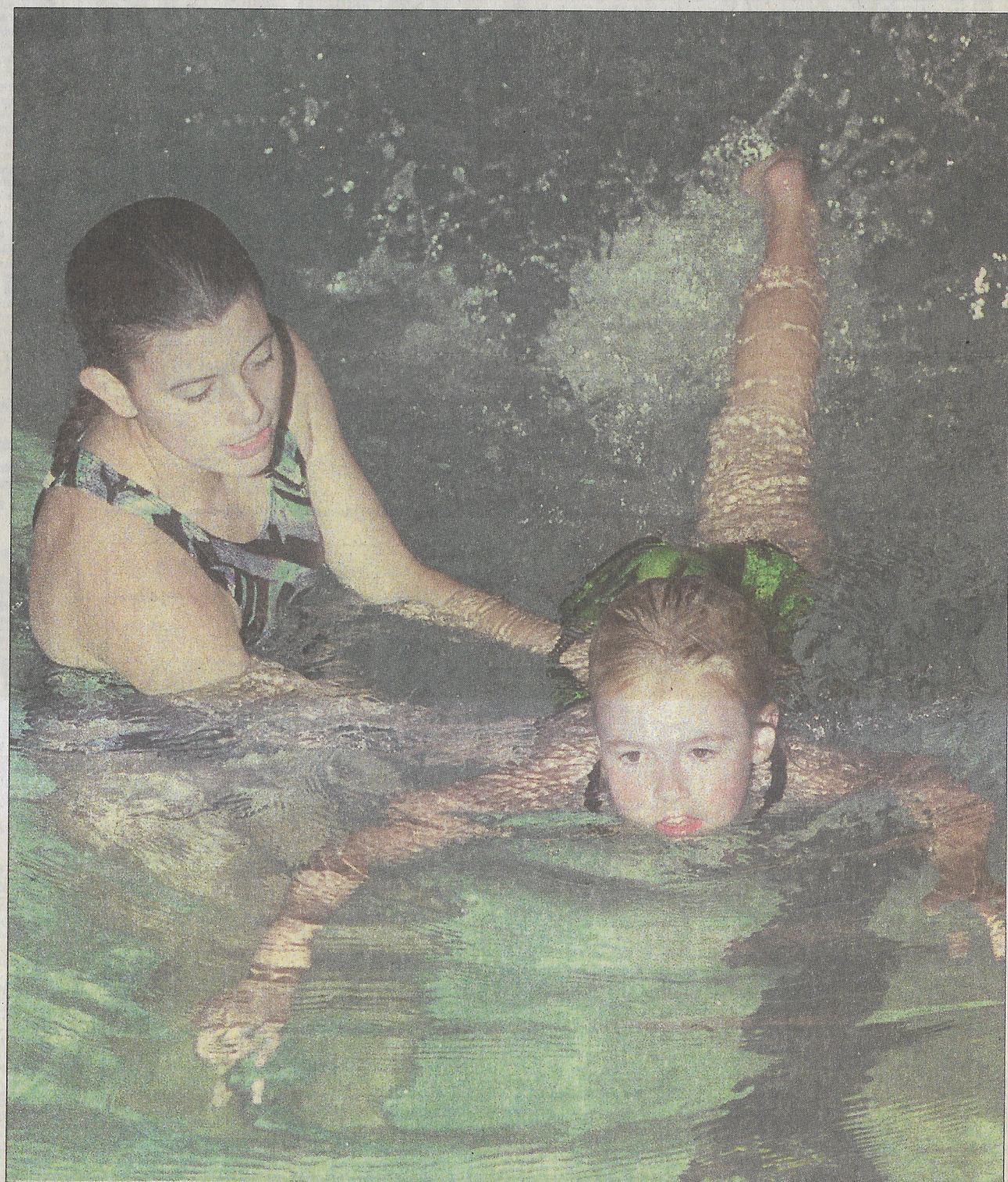
"She's got a great chance (to win); I expect her to finish in the top three for sure," said Lynn Hottinger, who coaches Smith at West Forsyth.

"She's amazing," said Ryan Michel, the swimming coach at the West Forsyth YMCA, who asked Smith to become his assistant coach after seeing her work with a summer-league club team this year.

"It was a total surprise when he asked me," Smith said. "I'd never thought about doing that during the school year. . . . At first, I wasn't sure I could do both. Now, I like (coaching) a lot."

THE DOUBLE DUTY hasn't hurt her performance in track shoes or in a Speedo. Entering Saturday's state meet, she is undefeated this season in high-school meets, having won individual titles in the Central Piedmont 4-A championship, the City/County meet and the regional meet last Friday — in a record time of 20:50 for 3.1 miles.

She finished second in the state meet as a freshman, fifth as a sophomore and seventh as a junior; the top seven finishers make the all-state team. Only one



JULIE SMITH

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girl, Mia Richardson of McMichael High, was all-state four times, and she competed in the 3-A from 1988-91.

Next week, Smith will join the West Forsyth swim team, where she swam on a relay team that won the regional title last season.

The move will certainly help her schedule, since West practices daily at the West Forsyth YMCA pool in Clemmons, finishing up at about the same time YMCA swimmers arrive.

For the past two months, Smith has been attending classes, working out with the cross-country team for 90 minutes after school, then driving to the YMCA to help Michel with his "Blue" and "Gold" groups — younger age-

group swimmers with limited competitive experience.

That was just the job Michel had in mind for Smith when he learned that Alan Pfau, his assistant last year, was moving to Raleigh to attend graduate school at N.C. State.

"Usually, you don't want a coach as young as Julie, but she was an assistant coach at Brookwood (swim club) last summer, and I was impressed with the way she worked, especially with the younger kids," Michel said. "I went to her and offered her the job. She was the only person I approached about it.

"She's a good role model for the kids; I checked out her academics, and she's active at her church. She swam for the Y when she was younger (from fifth grade through eighth grade), and she's real good in the 100 (individual medley). Plus, I've got a lot of Brookwood swimmers here that already know her."

Hottinger has had no complaints about Smith's divided loyalties. "We asked her before she took the job if it would interfere with practice, and she assured us that it wouldn't," Hottinger said. "There has been very little conflict. She is such a disciplined person; if there are times when she leaves a little early, we know she'll do the work. . . . We don't worry about her skipping out on us."

Michel doesn't worry, either. Smith usually misses one day a week for cross-country meets, but most of the time, she arranges her workouts around her coaching duties — and vice versa.

"I met Ryan during summer league, and he needed an assistant, but I didn't think I'd be able to do it because of the time, between school and cross-country practice," Smith said. "But we talked about it, and he was really flexible about my hours. I come over when I get done with cross-country, and I stay as late as I need to."