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Hannah Maher of Decorah swims the butterfly leg of the 200-yard individual medley Saturday at the state high school girls' swimming meet in Marshalltown. She finished third.

Decorah shakes off DQ to end strong

By K.J. Pilcher
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MARSHALLTOWN — A bad beginning turned into a pretty good day for the Decorah Vikings.

Despite being disqualified in the opening event, Decorah rebounded for five medals and placed seventh with 122 1/2 points at the state swimming meet Saturday in the Marshalltown YMCA.

"It was a great meet for these girls," Decorah Coach Steph Huber said. "They were just fast and had a lot of best times."

Decorah appeared to win the 200 medley relay, but the final swimmer left the block early and the Vikings were stripped of their place and points. A disappointing result, but Huber said the girls rallied admirably.

"All those girls really bounced back well," Huber said. "They all had to swim again and they were able to get back up on the

blocks."

Relay members saw the infraction immediately, hoping the officials had overlooked it but anticipating the decision.

"I saw it and right away I was bummed," Allison Orvis said. "I knew I needed to get over that to do well in my next two individual events."

Orvis then provided the boost the Vikings needed, cutting more than two seconds off her time in the 200 freestyle to place sixth after qualifying in the second heat. Also qualifying in the second heat of the 500 freestyle, Orvis shaved almost nine seconds to place fifth in 5:12.99.

"We kind of changed our strategy a little bit and instead of going all out right away, kind of went strong and smooth," Huber said. "Boy, did it work for us."

Decorah's Hannah Ma-

her, a junior, has placed in the top 3 in all six individual events, including thirds in this year's 200 IM and the 100 breaststroke.

She closed strong, especially in the 200 IM. She was seventh after the second stroke (backstroke), moving up with the second-fastest breaststroke split and fastest freestyle.

"I kind of know my strengths and weaknesses," said Maher, who came in at 2:07.81. "I knew I'd have to come back in my best stroke and my freestyle. I guess it's almost what I'm known for. It was a lot of fun."

Maher kept pace in the fast field of the 100 breaststroke, touching the wall in 1:04.95. She surged late to post the state's fifth-fastest time.

"It's ultimately just what you've went through," Maher said. "All the hard practices you've had and having the endurance to be able



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Abbey Wharton of Cedar Rapids Jefferson swims the backstroke leg in the 200-yard individual medley Saturday in the state meet at Marshalltown.

to finish and the mental toughness to know that I'm still in the race."

The race was won by West Des Moines Valley's Imelda Wistey in a state record 1:03.75.

Iowa City High's Beth

Yeanson became 8-for-8 for individual medals, placing fourth in the 100 fly (57.71) and third in the 100 back (59.15).

"I wish I would have gone a little faster, because last weekend those times were a bit better," Yeanson said. "Overall I'm happy."

Iowa City West placed eighth with 106 points and three medalists — Sarah Weihe (third in 200 free) and Grace Murray and Kathleen Bowman, who were fourth and sixth in the 500 free.

Mason City won the team title.

Cedar Rapids Kennedy's Carmen McCoy, Ashley Harris, Lexi Scharmer and Kylee VanAhsen teamed to get sixth in the 200 medley relay. Cedar Rapids Washington's Sami Puk was fifth in the 100 back and Cedar Rapids Jefferson's Abbey Wahrton was sixth in the 100 breaststroke.