

## [5A Continental girls swim: Gymnast leaves mats to make splash](#)



Castle View sophomore Kaitlin Costello took to diving less than a year ago after sustaining multiple injuries in gymnastics. Now, the Sabercats diver has become the school's first athlete to qualify for the Class 5A state championship meet in her event. Photo by Benn Farrell

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By [Benn Farrell](#)

Kaitlin Costello was a Level 9 gymnast before she decided to leave the sport. After multiple injuries, the sophomore at Castle View High School decided to put her plan of switching sports into action.

Costello's strongest events in the gym were the vault and the floor. Two events which call for a high amount of aerial awareness. It's this awareness that allowed Costello to make the switch to the Sabercats' girls swim team as a diver.

Although she had done a few random stunts off the diving board on her own when she was previously at the pool, the Cats sophomore didn't have any formal dive training until April of 2011, during her club swim season. Diving was always Costello's back-up plan. "I've always said if I give up gymnastics, I'd become a diver," she said.

The time to switch came after Costello sustained four injuries in gymnastics, which put her in recovery for eight months. Those injuries included a strained back muscle, an injured bone in her arm, a broken ankle and a pulled hip flexer. When doctors examined the injured flexer, they found Costello also had a hernia, but it did not require surgery.

Needless to say, there was a lot of rest involved over those eight months of recovery. Being the athlete Costello is, however, she continued to condition the uninjured areas of

her body the best she could. Slowly she worked back into different events which required the recovering areas, until she was able to full-on challenge herself again.

Her road to recovery led her to dive for the Sabercats eventually, and in her first season of preps diving, Costello has made school history as its first diver to qualify for the Class 5A state championship meet.

Costello made her first of two required qualifying dives at Castle View's home meet Dec. 9 at the Castle Rock Recreation Center where the Cats played host to Douglas County and Legend. Her second qualifying venture was Jan. 3 in Highlands Ranch in a three-way meet against View, Mountain Vista and ThunderRidge.

Despite her immediate success in diving, Costello does miss her time in the gym. "I miss my teammates the most," she said. "They were like family. And I also miss the environment. However, that also transfers to diving. You just have to get used to being on a new team."

Costello was confident she would make a good diver coming into the season, especially after training with her club team. However, one aspect of diving which is not a part of gymnastics did provide a challenge for the sophomore.

"Going in head first was something I had to get used to," Costello said. "But it was surprisingly not that difficult at all."

Although the Sabercat doesn't have any real superstitions when she steps up to the diving board, she does make sure she "mocks" her dives before performing each one. It is her preparation ritual now.

Diving isn't the only place Costello can be seen. She also swims a leg of both the 200-yard freestyle relay and 400 free relay for the Sabercats.

"It's all upper body strength," she said. "[Gymnastics training] helps me pull hard on the strips."

Outside of the water, the sophomore enjoys reading, television and time with friends when she can find it.

Cats' eyes on the times

As of Castle View's dual meet against Ponderosa Jan. 6 at Castle Rock Recreation Center, the Sabercats have not qualified any of their swimmers to the 5A state waters. However, many are on the cusp to nab the times they need in their respective events at the Continental A-League meet.