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[Carey carries GI swimming](#)

By Ryan Nagelhout [Niagara Gazette](#)

GRAND ISLAND — Something happens to Seth Carey when he hits the pool.

Take a mild-mannered, smiling blonde swimmer and just add water. Something fierce grows pretty fast in the Grand Island senior.

“Don’t be mistaken about his competitiveness,” Grand Island swimming coach Joe Menter said. “He’s light-hearted, but when it comes time to race he’s going to fight to the very end for that win.”

Carey has done plenty of fighting in the Vikings pool over the years. His 2:10.66 in the 200-meter individual medley leads the Niagara Frontier League this season. The senior sprinter has qualified for five different events in the Section VI tournament next month.

Carey’s best events are the 50- and 100-meter freestyle races. The senior said the explosive nature of the races put him at his best.

“I like to sprint. I’ve always liked to get in and out of the race quickly,” Carey said. “It’s been my thing since I was little so, I don’t know, I guess I was made a sprinter.”

Carey started swimming with the Grand Island Piranhas club team in eighth grade. He started on varsity the next season and has improved ever since.

For Menter, the second-year Vikings coach, Carey has been a constant force in the water.

“Seth brings a lot to the team. His leadership this year has really bloomed,” Menter said. “He’s really grown into it. In the water, we count on him to pretty much go in any event we need him to.”

Menter said his work ethic sets the tone for the Vikings in practice, where it seems Carey’s focus can narrow in a hurry.

“He’s very competitive and he’s got a good balance of being able to do that in the water and being able to turn that switch on when he needs to,” Menter said. “When he’s not in competition, he can still turn that switch on in practice to do what he needs to do to get him to the level he needs to be at.”

Grand Island hosts undefeated, league-leading Niagara-Wheatfield at 5 p.m. today. After

a winless 2011 campaign, the Vikings are 3-10 this season. Carey is happy with the progress his teammates have shown this year.

“I’m swimming good, but the team is doing really good. They’re a lot better,” Carey said. “We went 0-14 last year and everyone has improved this year, we’ve gotten so much better. It’s been fun.”

The Vikings are still last in the league this year, but being optimistic is key for Carey.

“I try to stay positive,” he said. “If you’re swimming negative your times won’t be good. So stay positive, don’t get sick and then do your best. That’s how I view it.”

Carey made the state meet in the 100 free last year, finishing 40th. He hopes to return to states this year to improve on that finish, as well as make a push in the 50 free as well.

“With his work ethic and his competitive drive,” Menter said, “he should be able to do it.”

Keeping the Falcons from a second straight perfect season may be an even tougher task, but as always, Carey is optimistic.

“We just have to get everyone going,” he said. “Get everyone to try to do a season’s best time and see what happens.”