



40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION of  
UNIVERSITY CITY HIGH SCHOOL  
1971-72 + 2011-12

## Girl Wins Right to Swim in Varsity Events

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The Board of Education decided yesterday that boys and girls should be able to compete together on high school varsity swim teams.

The decision cleared the way for Heidi Beth Kaplan, 16, of 21<sup>st</sup> and Delancey sts., to swim for the University City High School team when it meets the John Bartram High School team on Friday at Memorial Hall.

Heidi, the only girl on the team, has been allowed to practice with boys on the squad, but has been barred from meets by an unwritten rule.

“She’ll swim,” her coach, David Kelter, said this morning, “If I can use her without endangering a forfeit, she’ll swim in the meet.”

Heidi will probably swim in two of the 10 events at the meet—the 220-yard freestyle and one leg of the 400-yard freestyle relay.

Kelter was excited about the board’s decision. “It’s fine by me,” he said, “As long as it doesn’t affect the girls athletic program adversely.”

Some coaches expressed concern that the decision would lead to a dissolution of the girls’ program by merging it with the boys’ in all but contact sports.

But a school board spokesman said the decision was limited to swim teams. The decision was that if any girl in high school is good enough for the varsity swim team, [...] compete on that [...] district spokesman said.

“The decision does not apply to other sports,” he said.

The school district’s policy was challenged on Heidi’s behalf by her sister, Mrs. Sharon Wallis, a lawyer. She filed a complaint last Thursday in U. S. District Court here contending the physical education program in the city schools discriminates against girls.

As far as Mrs. Wallis is concerned, the suit still stands. “The only thing that was settled is that Heidi can swim,” Mrs. Wallis said this morning. “The case really involves school district policy.”

### **No Contact Sports**

The suit is aimed at permitting girls to participate on teams with boys except in contact sports or where there are no girls’ teams.

Heidi was thrilled by the decision.

“I can’t believe it,” she said with schoolgirl glee. “It’s great, even if I win or lose. I never raced anyone. If I don’t win, it wouldn’t be so horrible.”

The excitement of the upcoming match was building for Coach Kelter, too. This is only the second year that University City High School has competed in the swim league, and last year’s schedule was wiped out by the teachers’ strike.

“I never dreamed University City swim team members would be drawing spectators,” he said, “but I’ve got a feeling there’s going to be plenty there on Friday.”

### **Bartram Coach Likes It**

Bartram Coach Frank Conway praised the decision.

“It’s great,” Conway said of the decision. “If a kid has talent, why should anyone hold him down.

“I have no reservations about a girl competing in any sport,” said Conway, who is also Bartram’s football coach.

He said he would use Heidi on his team if she attended Bartram. “I don’t blame him (Coach Kelter). I’d use her, too.”

### **‘She’ll... Kill Us’**

“What kind of a threat does Heidi represent?” he was asked.

“I think she’ll probably kill us.”

But he’s looking forward to the meet. “It will be fun,” he said.

The decision to permit Heidi to swim reminded Conway of a case two years ago.

“There was a girl here who wanted to swim, but I was told I definitely could not use her. She could beat anybody at any stroke at any distance. Unfortunately, her sister was not a lawyer.”

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By MARCI SHATZMAN and H. JAMES LAVERTY

*Of The Bulletin Staff*

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