

# Yoshida helping guide Fairfield

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For the third year in a row, Michelle Yoshida is busy playing tour guide.

And she doesn't mind it one bit.

The Fairfield senior is in Hawaii with her Stags' teammates training for two weeks before the final month of the swimming season, which culminates with the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Championships, Feb. 16-18 in Buffalo, N.Y.

While most college students are heading back to school for classes, Yoshida began Tuesday with a 2-hour swimming practice, followed by a fun swim out to the Mokulus in Kailua.

It's not a bad way to spend the first two weeks of 2012.

"This is our third consecutive year here and I love showing (my teammates) around," Yoshida said. "Some of these people, it's the first flight ever for them, so to come to Hawaii is like a dream come true."

## THEY CAN THANK

Yoshida's decision to attend Fairfield, a small school in Connecticut, as a big reason the team comes here annually.

After a record-breaking freshman season in which Yoshida won three conference titles and set 14 program records, coach Bill Farley set up the trip to Hawaii, which has continued ever since.



## Michelle Yoshida

>> **School:** Fairfield (Conn.)

>> **Class:** Senior

>> **High school:** Punahou (2008)

>> **Accolades:** Captured 15 gold medals and one silver at the Hawaii high school state championships. Two-time USA Swimming Scholastic All-American. First triple champion in the MAAC in school history. Holds MAAC record in the 100 backstroke (55.62). Holds 20 of 38 possible school records.

school state championships, nearly going undefeated in four seasons.

She was inducted into the Hawaii High School Athletic Association's Hall of Honor in 2008 before heading to the East Coast to begin the most successful swimming career ever at Fairfield.

"I always knew that Fairfield had a good, developing team, and (coach Farley) always would tell me that he knew of my potential and how I could do really well here," Yoshida said. "I knew I could be a part of an improving team and have been able to improve my times every year so I'm happy with that."

In the midst of her senior season, Yoshida has set 20 of 38 possible school records.

She is Fairfield's first triple champion at the MAAC championships, winning the 50, 100, and 200 freestyle events as a freshman.

She pulled off the trifecta again as a sophomore and won her third 100 free title

55.62 seconds.

"The most important thing to me is getting the best times and dropping times," Yoshida said.

This season, she's continued her success in individual events and likely will add to her totals at the conference meet next month.

What comes after remains to be seen as Yoshida says the MAAC championships are her only focus at this time.

"I haven't really thought about it as far as trying to qualify for (Olympic) trials and stuff," Yoshida said. "If it looks good, I'll keep training but who knows, we'll see if it's easier to keep training or if swimming is over."

It would mark the end of a career that began in the fourth grade.

"I've always been a water baby," Yoshida said. "It's been a long time, especially in college when you're expected to train throughout the summer when you're not at school."

The team returns to Connecticut on Sunday and