

# UP & COMERS

## AGE GROUP SWIMMER OF THE MONTH

BY SHOSHANNA RUTEMILLER

### Alana Berlin

**A**lana Berlin of the Schroeder YMCA in Brown Deer, Wis., didn't let the COVID-19 pandemic bring her down. In fact, she came out of the pandemic even more focused and determined than ever before.

The 13-year-old has been posting incredibly fast times since returning to racing in August. Her most notable swim was a blazing fast 54.53 100 yard backstroke that she swam at a dual meet, placing her in the top 100 all-time best 100 back swims for 13-14 year olds. Berlin also has swum three quick 50-100-200 freestyle times (23.38r, 53.11, 1:55.69).

"Alana is a very elite athlete," says Coach Chandler Lewis. "She is a sponge when it comes to learning, and she's always finding new ways to grow as an athlete. Coming out of quarantine, we noticed her love for swimming has grown, and it has helped her swim with confidence both in and out of practice. I believe she will continue to find success as she matures as an athlete."

Outside of the pool, Berlin loves to learn. She spends her free time reading and enjoys studying math in school. To keep busy this past summer, she helped out a few days a week in the shipping department at her parents' work. ❖



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#### WHAT IS THE BEST THING YOU DO IN SWIMMING?

*My favorite part of any stroke is the underwater kick. I like the feeling of moving under the water. When you catch the current just right, you feel like you can go forever!*

#### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TOUGHEST WORKOUTS/SETS YOU'VE DONE?

*So far I've had two coaches. Both Coach Phil (Davies) and Coach Chandler (Lewis) have challenged me at every practice. The hardest set I can think of was probably a "best average set" consisting of all-out 7x100s from the block.*

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT SWIMMING?

*The best part of swimming is the TEAM SPIRIT. At Schroeder, we all work together and support each other. This is mostly demonstrated in the relays. Once I got to swim the fly leg of a relay against my sister, Adel. That was FUN! There are actually several families who have multiple siblings swimming together, which*

*makes the cheering even more intense—that's pretty cool!*

#### WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS YEAR?

*In the pool this season, I am looking forward to improving my 200 IM. I like this race because it challenges you in all four strokes. Out of the pool, I am looking forward to graduating middle school and moving on to high school!*

#### WHO IS SOMEONE YOU LOOK UP TO IN SWIMMING... AND WHY?

*I admire Beata Nelson. Like myself, she is from Wisconsin! She is amazing at back, fly and her underwaters.*

#### WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE HOBBIES?

*Reading, listening to music, making bracelets, hanging with friends and family...and, of course, swimming!*