

# Bitikofer disappointed in diving nationals

Jodi Bitikofer of Dover killed her chances of a national diving championship when she hit the board in her first attempt. But she still finished 17th in the open event at the YMCA national diving tournament last weekend in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

"When you hit the board, it's basically minus one dive," Phil

Sankar, her coach from the Tuscarawas County YMCA, said. "Even the best hit the board."

Sankar said the finish, 17th out of 78 divers, disappointed Bitikofer.

"SHE THOUGHT she should win it," he said. "The winning

score was 360 points. In all her competitions this year, the lowest she's scored was 370. She won't make excuses for herself, but she was ill and she just found out her college coach had resigned — and he was one of the reasons she picked that college (Wright State)."

Bitikofer is the YMCA Central Region champion in the 1-meter springboard competition. She finished 11th nationally last year.

She is still planning on competing in the Junior Olympics pre-qualifier this summer.

HER FINAL point total in the Florida competition was not immediately available.

"She was so mad after hitting the board she didn't bother to pick up the final results," Sankar said. "But from what I've been told she wasn't really that many points away from first. Points are so close in diving that you can be far down the list and just be a few points from winning."