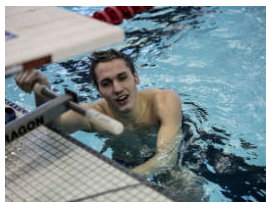


Denison meet encouraging for Granville swimmers

Dave Weidig, dweidig@newarkadvocate.com 12:13 a.m. EST February 4, 2015



(Photo: Jessica Phelps/The Advocate)

GRANVILLE – The Granville swim team didn't get to host its invitational as planned, but enjoyed still finally having a home meet in the Denison pool Saturday against Watkins Memorial, Northridge and Heath.

"It was great," senior Grant Stahl said. "You look up in the stands, and you see people from school and around town who finally get to see us swim."

The Blue Aces are tuning up for the Division II sectional Feb. 14 at Columbus Academy, and many swam in events different from their specialties.

"I'm getting in some speed work heading into the sectional," said senior Timmy Spichiger, a returning All-Ohioan in the 500 and 200 freestyles who got second in the 500 at the elite Northeast Classic and third in the 200. "I'm faster than last season, but the competition is also a lot faster than what I saw last season. I'm still hoping for top three" (in the state). I haven't PR'd yet, but it's not a big deal."

Stahl took four seconds off his fastest times in the 200 freestyle and 100 backstroke Saturday. He swims the 200 individual medley, but feels his best chance to get on the state podium is in the 100 butterfly.

"Today, I just wanted to see where everything was," he said. "It's getting toward the end, and it's really starting to show how hard we've worked. I think I'm about right where I should be."

He praised the work of Colin McDermott in the medley relay.

"He had his best time in the freestyle leg, and that was huge because we've been looking for that fourth person to step up," Stahl said. "Everyone is competing for spots in practice, and that makes it a lot more fun."

The other three swimmers from the two-time state champion girls medley relay have graduated, but senior Abby Stone still has lofty aspirations. The returning All-Ohio and All-American swimmer is targeting a state title in the 200 individual medley, where she was a close second last year.

"I enjoy doing all the strokes, and no stroke can be a weakness," she said. "A few years ago, breaststroke was my weakness, and I've really worked on it. Who would have thought I would wind up swimming the breaststroke leg on the medley relay?"

"Last year, the back half of the individual medley is where I got beat. I need to be strong at the end, not just at the beginning."

She said her main focus is equaling her time goals. "If I can get the times I want, everything else will fall into place."

While Stone swims the breaststroke leg, classmates Paige Griesse (freestyle) and Maggie McGonagle (backstroke) and freshman Sarah Martin (butterfly) make up another promising medley relay.

"I think both relays can get top eight (in the state)," Stone said. "We're close to where we were last year, which is a really good sign. A lot of people today had their best times, and we have a lot of people who can swim a lot of things."

"We have a good dynamic," McGonagle said of the medley relay. "It's a privilege to swim with them."

"I couldn't swim this summer because of health issues, and I considered not swimming. But I love it too much. I'm looking forward to the end of it, but it will be bittersweet. I'm going to Ohio University and will still probably swim on the club team."

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