

# Glenbrook South off to promising start in pool

By **Heather Rule**  
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All the scheduled swimming relays were complete, but one more was needed to break the tie between the Glenbrook South and New Trier boys teams at the Deerfield Relays. It came down to an unconventional 8x25 relay — eight swimmers sprinting for 25 yards each.

Glenbrook South senior Jackson Wells, who is from Glenview, was his team's final swimmer and touched the wall ahead of the New Trier swimmer, securing the first-place plaque on Dec. 2. The other teams cheered for either school during the final race, according to Wells.

"It got pretty exciting," Wells said. "The moment I got up on the block, I knew I got it. I just dove in, I swam and then when I got that touch, it was just such a surreal feeling. It was really awesome."

The Titans also set four meet records and three school records. It certainly was a strong start to the season for a team on a quest to remain a top-10 program in the state.

"It was kind of a random, fun event that both teams got real excited about," Titans coach Keith MacDonald said of the final race.

Glenbrook South followed that with a 129-54 victory over Glenbrook North on Dec. 9 in Glenview. It was the Titans' first dual meet of the season. They also won the Spartan Sprint Classic the next day, and their 200-yard medley relay set a meet record of 1 minute, 37.43 seconds.

Last year, the Titans went 6-1 in dual meets (4-1 Central Suburban South), won three invitationals, took second in the conference championship, won the sectional and finished 10th at the state championships. The team included six all-state performances and eight all-conference swimmers.

This year, they have a few returners — including one of the state's top swimmers, senior Sam Iida — and the senior class hopes to remain a top-10 team, according to MacDonald, who added that the Titans have had a pretty consistent run the past decade.

To improve, the Titans have individualized practice routines. They split up into two groups with sprinters focusing on techniques and distance swimmers focusing on distance. They push each other and try to make each other better, Wells said.

"For the most part, the kids take a lot of ownership and enjoy the process of trying to get better," MacDonald said.

MacDonald will often ask his swimmers: Are they "all in"? The senior class so far this year has really been all in, MacDonald said.

Wells said that can mean club swimming in the offseason or a swimmer changing his diet during the season.

"You have to be committed to what you're doing," said Wells, who plans to swim at the Division III level next year. "You can't just be someone who just shows up, swims and leaves. You have to be really invested in this sport."

The Titans have the obvious goal of getting as many swimmers as possible back to the state meet. What will it take to make that happen? It's simple.

"Well, it sort of sounds like it's been said before, but by hard work, really," Wells said. "It's all about that level of commitment you put in the water as well."

*Heather Rule is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.*

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