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SPORTS

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PREPS EXTRA

CLASS 2A BOYS' SWIMMING

Edina takes title after a long wait

Peter Larson led the Hornets, earning four golds in all.

By HEATHER RULE
Special to the Star Tribune

Edina senior Peter Larson didn't set any records Saturday like he did in the preliminaries. He simply went 4-for-4 in his races at the Class 2A boys' swimming and diving state meet.

His efforts, along with his team's deep roster, helped Edina win its first boys' swimming and diving state title since it completed a three-peat in 2008-10.

"We've been waiting for that for a long time," Larson said. "As a team, we're all really pumped about it."

Edina won events — all freestyle races — and scored points in all but two events to earn 208 total points Saturday at Jean K. Freeman Aquatic Center at the University of Minnesota. Chaska finished second with 201 points, and Hopkins placed third with 176 points.

Larson won the 50 freestyle (2:06.66), 100 freestyle (4:37.7), swam the first leg of the winning 200 freestyle relay (1:23.67) with Charlie Webb, Matt Dow and Andrew Gray and anchored the first-place 400 freestyle relay (5:25.76) with Greg Gabler, Baker and Keegan Duffy.

In addition to the relay, Gray, a senior, also won the 200 freestyle (2:50.69) first leg race with Prior Lake senior Sean Dwyer (1:27.87). Gray took second in the 100 butterfly (48.95), behind Lakeville North senior Andrew Zepf (48.49).

Edina had the most entries going into the meet, and



Edina swimmers and coaches cheered during the 400 freestyle relay Saturday at the Jean K. Freeman Aquatic Center. The Hornets won the last event of the meet.



Andrew Zepf of Lakeville North competed in the 100 butterfly. He won the event in 48.49 seconds.

coach Scott Johnson talked about the full team effort. "What they're capable of a lot of times is beyond what we think," Johnson said. "They're so excited when they think and they did that again tonight."

Zheng breaks record
St. Louis Park sophomore Hayden Zheng followed up a state title in last year's breaststroke by breaking a state record that was only hours old.

Zheng won in 55.86, surprising even himself with the time. "I knew it'd be close," Zheng said. "But I didn't know it would come at that margin. It felt like a good swim, but it didn't feel like a 55.8 swim."

He broke a state record his friend Andrew Karpenko broke in the Class 1A meet in the afternoon. Zheng also won the 200 individual medley (1:48.25) after finishing

third last year and 10th the year before.

Et cetera
Rochester Mayo junior Jacob Wilda, a sophomore of Gov. Tim Walz, swam a 6:25 split on the third leg of the 400 freestyle relay to help the Spartans finish ninth overall (131.22).

In Class 2A diving, Stillwater junior Josiah Pick won the gold medal with a 389.35 score.

CLASS 1A BOYS' SWIMMING

Breck/Blake swamps other teams

The Bearstangs won a third consecutive title.

By HEATHER RULE
Special to the Star Tribune

Breck/Blake started off the Class 1A boys' swimming and diving finals with a record-setting victory in the 200-yard medley relay (1 minute, 21.36 seconds), breaking its own time from the preliminaries (52:43). It was the most fun swim for senior Spencer Pruitt with the record already in hand.

"We were just really psyched to go for it again," Pruitt said. "We destroyed it."

Breck/Blake rolled from there to win its third consecutive team title Saturday at the

University of Minnesota's Jean K. Freeman Aquatic Center.

The private school co-ops nicknamed the Bearstangs, won with 423 points, well ahead of second-place Northfield (188). Breck/Blake scored points in every swimming event, with three individual victories and a sweep of the three relays.

Senior Ian Anderson was the standout in the 100 backstroke (49.05) and took second in the 50 freestyle. He and his twin brother, Thayne, Brown and Pruitt combined to

win the 400 freestyle relay (5:06.46).

"In the finals, we missed the 400 free record by a little bit," Anderson Breck/Blake said. "It's really a great way to end my high school career."

The meet part for Michelle Carlson, co-coach of the Bearstangs, was seeing the swimmers race well and go fast, she said. "Because that's what they worked so hard for. The 'W' at the end, that's the icing on the cake."

He breaks own record
Mitchelha Academy junior Andrew Karpenko called it the best meet of his life. He followed up two record-setting performances in the prelims

with another pair of records in the finals.

He won back-to-back titles in the 200 individual medley for the Class 1A record (1:48.05). And he just made it under his state record in the 200 breaststroke (5:44.03).

He knew coming in that he was capable of setting state records.

"Having gotten them in the prelims, it really did make today so much easier," Karpenko said. "I was just able to go out, have fun and swim as fast as I could."

Wisnora takes third
Jack Herzog, a junior from Wisnora, won the 50 freestyle (21.02), improving

on his third-place finish from last year. He also defended his title in the 200 freestyle (4:53.8). He said he was happy with his times.

"I really put a lot of work into starts and turns," Herzog said. "That's been the main focus."

Traverse City senior Grant Wolter won the 100 butterfly (50.44). The junior also took third in the 200 IM.

Wolter and Herzog each swam on the 200 and 400 freestyle relay teams, which placed second behind the Bearstangs.

Fritz wins diving title
Park Rapids senior Spencer Fritz won the diving title with 395.30 points.

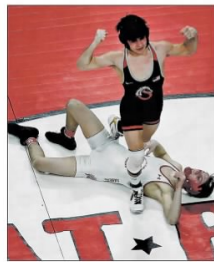
RECORDS SET

All-time
100 yard breaststroke: Hayden Zheng, St. Louis Park, 53.86. Previous: 54.43 by Andrew Karpenko, Mitchelha Academy, 2019 Class 1A finals.

Class 1A
200 and medley relay: Breck/Blake (Anderson Breck/Blake, James Pao, Spencer Pruitt, Dylan Brown), 1:21.26. Previous: 1:32.43 by Breck/Blake, 2019 preliminaries.

200 yard individual medley: Andrew Karpenko, Mitchelha Academy, 1:48.05. Previous: 1:48.02 by Karpenko, 2019 preliminaries.

100 yard breaststroke: Karpenko 54.41. Previous: 54.46 by Karpenko, 2018 preliminaries.



Stilwester's Roid Ballastyrne wore no pain on his face after pinning Tyler Jones of Shakopee in a 120-pound team bout.

Owning three-peat means disowning pain

Injured. Stillwester star will neither sit out nor settle.

By TIM PAULSEN
Special to the Star Tribune

For a moment, celebrating an important victory, Roid Ballastyrne forgot.

The Stillwater sophomore, already a two-time state individual champion, was emotional after earning a hard-fought pin at 126 pounds in his Class 1A team championship match on Thursday. After defeating Eden Prairie's Bryce Dager, 10-0 in the 120-pound individual semifinals Saturday morning, Ballastyrne won his third state championship by pinning Ryan Scherber of Buffalo in 29 seconds.

Getting that far, he said, was much tougher than anything he'd experienced to date. "When I woke up this morning, I was pretty rough,"

Ballastyrne said after his semifinal victory. "My ankle had swelled up more. I just needed to do something to get the blood pumping to it."

For Ballastyrne, the entire tournament has been about pain management. He's not about to let an injury or two derail his dream of joining a select group of high school state champions.

"I really want to be a four-time," he said of his goal to become the seventh wrestler in state history to win five state titles. "I'm not going to let anyone stop me or attempt to stop me."

His Stillwater coaches broached the subject of having Ballastyrne sit out the team portion of the tournament. He said, no. Firmly.

"Anyone who knows me knows not even to bring that up," he said. "Why would I do

that to my team?"

The three-day tournament has been filled with hypothermia and ice, rest and rubdowns. "Pain? I just try to laugh at it," Ballastyrne said. "Deal with it, one way or another."

To Ballastyrne, it's all about hard work. It's not supposed to be easy.

"My dad owns a concrete company. I grew up around hard work and dealing with pain. I think I've got a tough little boy."

It's his dad's pain more than his mental preparation. The way he sees it, he's got too much to lose to let pain stand in his way. Besides, there's always Sunday. He'll have plenty of time to rest when Saturday is over.

"A match is just six minutes," he said. "If you can't push through six minutes, I don't know what to tell you."