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PREPS

STATE TOURNAMENTS

BOYS SWIMMING AND DIVING

Blake/Breck swims off the charts

CLASS 1A Bearstangs win nine events, finishing with the highest score in state meet history.

By HEATHER RULL
Special to the Star Tribune

Breck/Blake didn't simply win another boys' swimming and diving team championship. The Bearstangs were nearly perfect.

They won nine of 12 events for 495.5 points, the most for any championship team, and took home their sixth consecutive Class 1A title Saturday at the Jean K. Freeman Aquatic Center on the University of Minnesota campus. Acedria finished second with 203 points, St. Thomas Academy third with 172.

"We knew we had a shot at a lot of records," Breck/Blake coach Michelle Carlson said. "That's the actual dominance of the meet is beyond what we got in the relays and individual events."

The 200 medley relay was a five-man effort for Breck/Blake. Senior Charlie Crosby went undefeated in races this season, winning the 50 freestyle and 100 backstroke at state for the third straight year.

Crosby called Breck/Blake probably "the best high school team Minnesota has ever had. And it was just a blessing to be a part of that."

Breck/Blake senior James Pan successfully defended his titles in the 200 individual medley and 100 breaststroke. He and Crosby also swam on two winning relays.

Breck/Blake finished the meet with another record, 3 minutes, 2.09 seconds in the 400 freestyle relay, about 11 seconds faster than second place and just missing the state record of 3:02.59.

The Bearstangs' 495.5 points beat the previous mark of 466.5 set by St. Thomas Academy in 2001.

Six consecutive team boys' swimming and diving state



SHANE L. GROSS - Star Tribune

James Pan of Breck/Blake celebrated after seeing his winning time posted for the 200 individual medley Saturday.

Awash in records
Breck/Blake set and broke records Saturday in the Class 1A state swimming championships.

TEAM	Most points by a team, Class 1A meet
Breck/Blake	495.5 2022
St. Thomas Acad.	466 2001
St. Thomas Acad.	430 2016
Breck/Blake	423 2019
Breck/Blake	418.5 2021

Class 1A titles since 1999	St. Thomas Academy
Breck/Blake	14
Fergus Falls	8
Sauk Rapids/Keosauqua	1

RACES

200 medley relay: Breck/Blake 1:29.22. Charlie Crosby, Charlie Egeland, James Pan, Daniel Gabriel. Previous: 1:31.29 by Breck/Blake, 2019.

200 freestyle: Charlie Egeland, Breck/Blake, 1:58.00. Previous: 1:59.79 by Warren Seaton, St. Thomas Academy, 2016.

500 freestyle: Nico Lottinck, Simley, 4:38.30. Previous: 4:55.58 by Warren Seaton, St. Thomas Academy, 2016.

400 freestyle relay: Breck/Blake 3:02.09. Charlie Crosby, Jack Schurz-Ried, Henry Webb, James Pan. Previous: 3:05.61 by Minnetonka, 2020.

400 freestyle relay, first leg: Charlie Crosby, Breck/Blake, 44.10.

50 freestyle: Charlie Crosby, Breck/Blake, 1:15.57. Previous: 1:17.73 by Crosby, 2022 prelims.

titles in one shy of the record seven in a row won by Breck/Blake from 2015 to '20.

Simley senior Nico Lottinck was the only swimmer to break a record in the Class 1A meet not from the Breck/Blake team. He swam a 4:34.46 in the 500 freestyle, successfully defending his title and breaking the Class 1A record.

Diver makes it three
Scotter Storm Opdahl made his three-year Class 1A diving debut Saturday, winning by one point at 407.5 over Monticello member Dabesh Tubert.

Opdahl's teammates Jimmy Noel and Tade Sliver took third and fourth place.

Milestone comes with Edina title

CLASS 2A The four-peat matches Minnetonka dominance from the '90s.

By HEATHER RULL
Special to the Star Tribune

The Edina boys' swim team celebrated its fourth consecutive title by taking turns with a sharpie, making checkmarks on the back of their T-shirts over the "check/marks."

"This has been a motto for Edina's as long as I can remember since I was a freshman," Edina senior Kai Tull said. "Obviously this is one of our biggest goals ever."

That goal included Edina sweeping all three relays and Tall winning the 200-yard individual medley on the way to a Class 2A team title Saturday at the University of Minnesota.

Edina scored points in all 11 swimming events for 283 total points. Eden Prairie finished second with 200 points, and Minnetonka took third with 174 points.

Edina won the first Class 2A school to win four straight team titles since Minnetonka did it in the single-class state meet from 1990 to '93.

"We hadn't won an individual or relay event since 2007," Edina coach Scott Johnson said. "But this year it's very special because we're only the second big team school to ever win all three relays. Minnetonka did it in 1992."

Tull won the 200 IM in 1 minute, 46.6 seconds and took second in the 300 breaststroke.

Freshman diver wins
Rosemount freshman Lucas Garcia trailed heading into his final dive, but his score was just enough to put him in the lead and then win the Class 2A diving state title with a 407.5 score.

The new recruit beat St. Paul Highland Park senior Thane Zales (400.0), who led headed into the finals.

WRESTLING CLASS 2A AND CLASS 1A

KoMets' Berge wins fifth title, 11th for family

By NATE GOTTLIEB
Special to the Star Tribune

Kasson-Mantorville's Bennett Berge scored nine takedowns and a near fall to defeat Simley's Soren Herzog by technical fall Saturday in the wrestling state championships at Xcel Energy Center and win his fifth Class 2A title, this one at 195 pounds.

He even used a new move.

For one of his takedowns, Berge used the Winn Dixie, a move in which a wrestler uses one leg to hold down their opponent. "I've never done that in my life," he said. "I mean, I've done it in practice but never once in a match. I couldn't hold back my smile after that."

Berge, who will wrestle at South Dakota State next season, won his first title, at 138, in 2018. He has since won championships at 160, 170 and 182.

By winning another title Saturday, Berge became the fifth wrestler in Minnesota history to win at least five.

This year's title was the 11th combined between Berge and his older brothers, Eric and Brady, both of whom have been Division I college wrestlers. Eric and the Berge's father, Kevin, are assistant coaches on the Kasson-Mantorville staff.

Like his family, Bennett Berge also said he expects to be part of the Kasson-Mantorville team for years to come.

"I'm welcomed back any time I want to be," he said. "That's how it is when you go to this program."



JEFF LAWLER - SportsIllustrated.com

Kasson-Mantorville's Bennett Berge, on top, defeated Simley's Soren Herzog on a technical fall in the Class 2A 195-pound final.

Two titles for Simley
After winning a fourth straight team title Thursday, two Simley wrestlers won individual titles on Saturday.

At 220, junior Gavin Felton, who has committed to Minnesota, pinned Pine City/Hancock-Fairway's Justin Matson in the first period to win his second straight title. At 113, junior Brandon Mowari won his first title with a 4-0 victory. "It feels good," Mowari said. "Obviously I'm excited, but I know I worked for it."

Matson, who was competing in his fourth state tournament, said he aimed to show "how big of a gap there is between me and the rest of the state of Minnesota."

"I think I did a good job of doing it," he said.

He said he's proud of how Simley performed as a team at state, adding that the perennial powerhouse Spartans feed off of the occasional boost from the crowd.

Byron senior file gap
Byron senior Maxwell Peterson won the Class 2A 108-pound championship as

an eighth-grader. Being born into a well-known wrestling family, it was assumed that was the first of what would be many more state titles.

Five years later, after three straight runner-up finishes, Peterson finally got that second title. The undefeated 145-pounder managed to score just three points, but that proved more than enough to beat New Prague's Colton Bernholdt (4-0).

"I felt a little bit smug, but all of the best work I've put in," Peterson said. "It was some good opponents and nerves, but I learned to control them and just wrestle."

When the time ran out, Peterson let loose three years of emotional disappointment with a one-handed roundoff followed by a back flip.

"Throughout the whole year, I felt competing. I felt I could take anyone down," he said. "That was just everything exploding."

A third championship
At 160 pounds, Jackson County Central senior Peyton Handevick had a match-winning takedown in the first period to defeat Tate Herms of Medford 7-0 and win his third Class 1A title.

Handevick, who will wrestle for Augustana next season, also had takedowns in the second and third periods.

"I was just trying to control the whole match, always working toward my stuff, being smart and just doing what I'm best at," he said.

Handevick, a four-time state participant, won at 145 in 2020 and 152 last year. This year's title is the best one yet, he said.

"First, everything. I've worked up my whole life for it to be here," he said. "It's just amazing."

Handevick was one of three Jackson County Central wrestlers to win individual championships on Saturday. At 113, sophomore Nolan Ambrose won his second title, and senior Kie Anderson won at 120.

Jackson County Central also won the team title Thursday.

"I'm just so proud of everyone," Handevick said.