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Nees one of three NP divers headed to states

By KEV HUNTER

Staff Writer

TOWAMENCIN — North Penn's Zac Nees is going back to states, with some company.

"We were just talking to the swim coach (Brian Daly), and I said now I need a van to go to states and not just a car," diving coach Sue McDonald said.

McDonald's boys came through Saturday night, as North Penn took three of the top five spots in the District One Class AAA Diving Championships at Rick Carroll Natatorium.

Nees, a junior, won silver with a score of 478.05, due in part to his strong reverse two and a half dive. Nees finished just behind gold medalist Brian Gemberling of Neshaminy, who scored a 481.05.

The Knights also had sophomore Frankie Murray win the bronze with a 427.75 and sophomore Michael Kohler take fifth with a 388.65.

Three NP boys divers will head to states, along with two members from the North Penn girls team - Julia Tate won the district title and Laurie McLaughlin won the bronze earlier in the day.

"We were aiming for it," Nees said of getting three Knights to Bucknell. "We didn't know if we could get it, but that was our original goal."

Nees had a back-and-forth battle with Gemberling, and that battle will continue on March 13.

"I'm just looking to do my best," Nees said. "I don't really know where I'm gonna place because I don't know about any of the other districts. I'm just looking to dive."

Along with Nees' performance, which McDonald called "amazing," the Knights got a gutsy performance from Kohler.

Earlier in the season, the sophomore was diagnosed with vertigo, a balance disorder, and he was limited to four dives.

"He fought his way back, became very determined," McDonald said. "There were days when he'd come in here and do two dives the whole day.

And then something just clicked. You can tell lots of times he's still very wobbly when he gets up there, but something inside him keeps him going - that toughness."

And Murray was solid throughout.

"With most of my boys, the middle round is usually their best round," McDonald said. "They hung in there. And Frankie was in third the whole day. I always tell them to just be consistent, because consistency will keep you in there, keeps you in the hunt."

McDonald's been coaching the North Penn divers for a decade, and she said this is the first time the Knights are sending a trio to the state championships.

"Mr. Daly just said 'I'm gonna have to call the hotel, we're gonna need more rooms,'" McDonald said.

District One

Class AAA

Boys Diving Championships

at Rick Carroll Natatorium

(top eight go to states)

1. Brian Gemberling (Neshaminy) 481.05; 2. Zac Nees (North Penn) 478.05; 3. Frankie Murray (North Penn) 427.75; 4. Nolan Kingsley (Conestoga) 394.15; 5. Michael Kohler (North Penn) 388.65; 6. Chris Murphy (Ridley) 380.45; 7. Michael Frank (CB South) 370.30; 8. T.J. Schenkel (Council Rock South) 366.75.

Class AA

(top two go to states)

1. Joe Esposito (Holy Ghost) 343; 2. Pat McPeak (Upper Moreland) 334.95.



GEOFF PATTON/THE REPORTER

Frankie Murray of North Penn competes in the District 1 Boys Championship Diving Championships on Saturday.

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