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[Boys swimming: Else going the distance for North Penn](#)

By **Bill Keen**

Staff Writer

He's one of those swimmers who would probably succeed in any stroke and at any distance - a natural-born competitor who spends so much time in the water, it's a wonder he hasn't grown gills.

But North Penn junior Jack Else is happiest when he competes in high school's longest race, the 500-yard freestyle.

"The first time I swam it was in my freshman year," said Else, owner of the third-fastest seeding time in the event at the District One Class AAA championships, which starts today at La Salle University. "I went to coach and asked if I could try; I did about 5 minutes, 20 seconds and just missed the district cut, so I knew I wanted to keep swimming it more and more."

Eventually he qualified for districts and finished 16th and added a 25th-place finish in the 200 free. Last season, he again made it to districts in both events - and while he only improved to 21st in the 200, his sixth-place 4:47.54 in the 500 earned him a trip to Lewisburg for the PIAA state meet at Bucknell University.

"Jack is a fun young man to coach because he just loves coming into practice," Knights coach Brian Daly said. "He has this great attitude, this great energy and is a very positive influence on everybody. He's the kind of athlete who can keep practice intense, but still keep everybody loose and having fun."

Two weeks ago on Friday the 13th, Else finished third in the 200 in a personal-best 1:46.77, and won the 500 in a Central Bucks South pool record 4:48.19 at the Suburban One League Continental Conference championships.

Now, he's ready for districts with expanded goals.

"I'd like to make states in all four of my events - the 200 and 500 and our 200 and 400 free relays," Else said. "When I started the season, I wanted to go under 4:50 in the 500 and I achieved that. In the 200, I really just wanted to go as fast as I could - something in the 1:40 range."

Winning the Continental Conference 500 did wonders for Else's confidence.

"It meant a lot because I knew there was tough (individual) competition in the Continental," he said. "I'm happy with where I am right now, because I'm back to where I was last year as far as my times go, so hopefully I can drop time at districts and go on to states."

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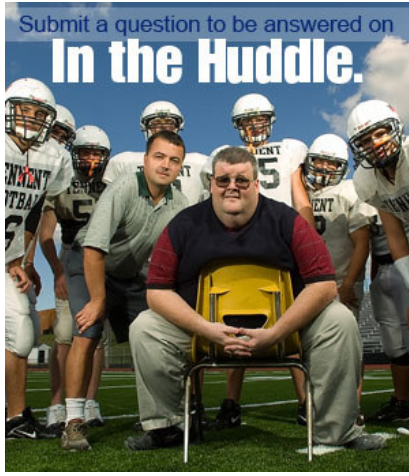
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