

Sports

North Penn boys dominate at district swim tournament

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By DENNY DYROFF
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PHILADELPHIA — It's time to dust off the Round Table. The Knights have come back.

After a two-decade long streak of winning District 1 titles, North Penn's boys swim team went through a three-year stretch without winning a district championship.

At Saturday's District 1 Class AAA Swimming at LaSalle University's Kirk Natatorium, the Knights served notice that they are back. North Penn regained control by finishing with 265 points – well ahead of runner-up Upper Dublin (219) and third-place West Chester Henderson (186).

"This was great," said North Penn coach Brian Daly. "At the beginning of the year, the seniors in particular stated the goal of bringing the (championship) trophy back to North Penn. A lot of kids have said this before but this year they followed through.

"They have great team chemistry. All of our guys focused on personal improvement. We had to focus on getting as many guys to the (medal) podium as we could. It was a total team effort from start to finish. Every swim was a lifetime best."

One of the Knights' leaders was Patrick Dunigan, who won the bronze medal in the 500-yard freestyle with a clocking of 4:43.15.

"I was very happy with my race," said Dunigan. "It was a personal best. I dropped nine seconds. I was seeded third. So, I knew if I paced myself, I'd be in there. My splits were pretty consistent."

Other scorers for North Penn Saturday were Jason Deana (fifth, 100 free), Jacob Sisko (ninth, 100 backstroke), Tomas Gimenez (fifth, 100 breaststroke), and the bronze medal 400 freestyle relay team of Peter Kolokithias, Matt Ortlieb, Sisko and Deana.

Plymouth Whitmarsh's Alex Chialastri picked up the silver medal in the 100 freestyle with a time of 46.13. He was second to West Chester Henderson's Andrew Kusic, the "Outstanding Swimmer of the Meet" winner who set a record with a time of 44.45.

"I went out in 22.0 and felt good in the first 50," said Chialastri, the Times Herald's 2009-2010 Boys Swimming Athlete of the Year. "Then, I tightened up in the second half because I was trying to keep up with Kusic. I dropped a half-second off my best time so that was good. This time was about what I expected."

The Colonials' Kyle Lukens returned home with the fifth-place medal in the 100 backstroke with a time of 51.50. He also teamed with Chialastri, Pat Kennedy and Brian Jedniak on the Colonials' 400 free relay that placed fifth at 3:13.00.

"That was a good time for me in the 100 back," said Lukens. "This meet was just really fast. My coaches told me to work my underwater and that's what I did. Our relay did great too. We broke the school record by two seconds."

Upper Dublin's Ashton Leyens won the bronze medal in the 100 free with a tie of 46.66 and his teammate Bobby Bantley got the seventh-place medal in 100 backstroke at 51.74.

"That was a pretty good race," said Leyens. "It's about what I was hoping for. And, it's taking me to states so I'll take it. I think my last turn was pretty good. It was effortless and strong."

The Cardinals also snagged the silver medal in the 400 freestyle relay when Zach Brech, Eric Jensen, Bantley and Leyens combined for a time of 3:08.90.

In other Class AAA results, Louie Seefeld placed eighth in the 100 breast at 1:00.56 and Spring-Ford's Aaron Cancro finished eighth in the 100 backstroke with a time of 52.84.

In the Class AA Championships, Upper Merion's Jason Lameroux won the bronze medal in the 500 free at 4:58.50.

"It was a good race — a personal best," said Lameroux. "I dropped eight seconds off my season best and seven off my personal best. I think my taper worked well for me. I was rested and ready to go."

Upper Merion's Peter Soll placed fifth in the 100 breast at 1:04.76 while Nick Eppinger took sixth in the 100 free at 50.20 and seventh in the 100 back at 57.74. The Vikings' 400 free relay (Kyl;e Greene, Zak Elarbi, Kevin Soong and Soll) finished sixth at 3:36.33.

Brian Palme is the "Great Motivator." When it's time for the Upper Dublin High coach to get his girls swim team ready for a big meet, he shifts into another gear. Then, after their injection with their doses of "Palme Positivity", the UD girls shift into another gear.

At Saturday's District 1 Girls Class AAA Swimming at LaSalle University's Kirk Natatorium, the Cardinals took it to a whole new level when they won the school's first-ever Class AAA title. The last time the Cards won the district title was in 1994 in Class AAA.

"These girls have been believing in what we've tried to do all year," said Palme. "We told them at the first team meeting at the start of the season — on paper, you can be a great team but you can't be a great team until you make it real. This weekend, they stepped it up and made it real — and they had fun. That's what it's all about."

Upper Dublin finished first with 239 points followed by Downingtown West (207), Council Rock North (206) and North Penn (202).

The Cardinals capped off their title-winning meet with a silver medal in the 400-yard freestyle relay. The team of Lindsey Schmidt, Sam Wheatley, Erin Regan and Carolyn Meier posted a time of 3:31.00 — faster than the old record of 3:31.11 set by Souderton in 2009 but not faster than the 3:30,.06 posted by Rock North in Saturday's final heat.

Upper Dublin's other points on Saturday were delivered by Alex Wheatley (third, 100 backstroke), Regan (eighth, 500 freestyle), Meier (fifth, 100 freestyle), Sam Wheatley (15th, 500 freestyle), Emily Houser (13th, 100 backstroke) and Emeline Leyens (eighth, 100 breaststroke).

The top area finisher in the Class AAA meet Saturday was Methacton's Blaire Kinsey who placed second in the 500 freestyle with a time of 4:58.38.

Wissahickon's Liz McKenna snared the fifth-place medal in the 100 backstroke with a clocking of 59.66.

North Penn finished third in the 400 free relay when the team of Tara Rogers, Brooke Else, Eve Kosten and Jan Ikeda clocked a 3:33.23. Top individual finishers for the Maidens were Tara Rogers (fourth, 100 freestyle) and Brooke Else (11th, 100 freestyle).

In the Girls Class AA meet, Pope John Paul II's Jamie Kane lived up to her number one seeding in the 100 breaststroke when she touched first with a time of 1:05.74.

Upper Merion was led by Taylor Mateja (second, 100 backstroke), Courtenay Willcox (third, 500 free) and Taylor Jacobs (seventh, 100 free).

"My race in backstroke felt amazing," said Mateja.

