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BOYS SWIMMING: NP rolls to another title

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TOWAMENCIN — Without its multiple record holder, Jason Deana, in the lineup Friday night, the North Penn boys swim team got spectacular swims from several others and rolled to another conference championship.

The Knights racked up 559 points, overcoming a great effort by rival Souderton Area (340), to lock up the Suburban One League Continental Conference title at a packed Rick Carroll Natatorium.

“We came in here knowing Jason got hurt about a week and a half ago, and our seniors have been telling everybody to step up,” senior Pat Dunigan said. “Our team is not just Jason. There’s other people on this team that can step up and bring it, and we brought it tonight.”

Deana, who is out with an injury but should be back for districts, got to watch his teammates set personal bests and team bests as the Knights’ swimmers started the postseason in impressive fashion.

Dunigan set a pool record in the 500-yard freestyle, racing to a first-place time of 4 minutes, 41.94 seconds, replacing the previous record of 4:43.19, set by North Penn’s Dan Dingman in 2008. Dunigan also won the 200 IM in 1:56.51.

“Earlier in the week we swam Emmaus and we lost, and that really ticked me off, along with all the other seniors,” Dunigan said. “We knew it was a good meet, but we don’t like to lose. I don’t like to lose. I went 4:45 with a great swimmer (from Emmaus) pushing me the whole way, and it was just us two the whole way, pushing. (Coach Brian) Daly said after the meet, ‘Dingman’s record a second and a half faster. If you want it, go get it.’ It added fuel to the fire. I wanted it.”

The Knights, amazingly, also won all three relays against great competition from the rest of the conference.

“Our seniors were great,” Daly said. “Kevin and Pat Dunigan both did a great job, dropping a lot of time and just setting the tone for the team in terms of what we wanted to accomplish.”

The young guys followed. North Penn freshman Thanas Kountroubis finished second in the 200 free, and another freshman, teammate Liam Kelly, notched three district cuts, in fact shattering the district-qualifying marks.

“I like seeing those younger guys stepping up and starting to fill in some of the holes,” Daly said.

With how smoothly things went for the Knights on Friday night, one would have never guessed they didn’t have their home pool to swim in this past week. In order to repair the bulkhead, the Knights’ home pool had to be drained, which meant North Penn needed somewhere else to practice. It was actually North Penn’s arch rival, Souderton, which was able to help out.

“The coaches and administration at Souderton were very generous and sportsmanlike in helping us out and kind of kept us on track,” Daly said of the Indians, who re-adjusted their schedule to allow NP to get some practice time in at the Souderton pool. “To see that sportsmanship, particularly at this time of the year, that’s the big reason we were able to be as successful as we were tonight. The folks at Souderton helped us out. (Big Red coach Todd Bauer) has always been great. For him to go out of his way and make sure that the team down the street - a team that he wants to beat very badly - has what they need heading into the postseason, it’s an amazing display of sportsmanship, and really what the sport is all about.”

Big Red had a sophomore, Triston Loux, win silver in the 100 butterfly, and the Indians’ 200 medley and 200 free relays also earned second-place finishes.

The Knights got wins from Jack Morris (200 free) and Tomas Gimenez (100 breast) in a balanced effort, and the kind of effort they needed to overcome the absence of one of their senior standouts.

“Jason had injured his foot, and he should be getting in next week and building things back up to districts,” Daly said. “He is certainly chomping at the bit to get back in and get going. But it forced some of those younger kids and the rest of the team to step up. Jason’s a great athlete, but we are more than just Jason Deana, and we have to be if we’re gonna succeed at the level we would like to. I look forward to seeing Jason with a wet head again pretty soon.”

North Penn’s 400 free relay capped off the night by going 3:18.57, edging second-place Hatboro-Horsham (3:19.87), and the Knights could then celebrate, receiving the championship trophy at pool side.

“Awesome start,” Dunigan said of the postseason. “The team, all around, was perfect.”

Suburban One League
Continental Conference Championships

at North Penn’s Rick Carroll Natatorium

Team Scoring: North Penn 559; Souderton Area 340; Hatboro-Horsham 317; CB East 264; CB South 243; CB West 151; Pennridge 128; Quakertown 7.

200 medley relay: North Penn (Brandon Anders, Tomas Gimenez, Jack Morris, Spencer Collopy), 1:37.91; 200 free: Jack Morris (NP) 1:44.75; 200 IM: Pat Dunigan (NP) 1:56.51; 50 free: David Zurmuhl (Penn) 21.52; 100 fly: Mike Chen (CB West) 52.61; 200 free relay: North Penn (Spencer Collopy, Tomas Gimenez, Brandon Anders, Jack Morris), 1:28.69; 100 free: Riley Weber (CBE) 47.20; 500 free: Pat Dunigan (NP) 4:41.94; 100 back: David Zurmuhl (Penn) 54.61; 100 breast: Tomas Gimenez (NP) 59.48; 400 free relay: North Penn (Kevin Dunigan, Jonathan Krail, Thanas Kountroubis, Pat Dunigan), 3:18.57.

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