

## Jason Deana

By Bill Keen Staff writer | Posted: Friday, May 4, 2012 12:45 pm

TOWAMENCIN — As he touched the wall, North Penn's Jason Deana couldn't believe he was the PIAA Class AAA state champion in the 100-yard freestyle.

The Intelligencer's 2012 Boys Swimmer of the Year is not just good, he could be scary good like last year against Emmaus, when his unbelievable anchor leg won the 400 free relay and the meet.

Deana was also extremely lucky after suffering a severe cut on his foot at practice on Feb. 6. The squeamish may want to skip this next part.

"I was pushing off the side of the bulkhead and right as I did, I felt — it wasn't a huge pain, but it felt like more than just a cut," Deana said. "I could see what I thought was the bone in my pinky toe.

"Right then, I (knew) I'm wasn't going to be in the pool for a while."

Told it would be at least two weeks until he could resume training for districts March 1-2, he was pain free for the first time when he stood on the blocks at La Salle. Conditioning was another matter.

"I wanted to see how I was and if I could make it to states," Deana said. "The 100 free was where I really felt the lack of training, because I was really fatigued."

He finished second in the 50 and third in the 100, but with two weeks to get back in shape for states, luck was again on his side.

Deana was genuinely thrilled with his silver at Bucknell in the 50 and was seeded second for the 100 free finals behind Greater Latrobe's Lucas Bureau, after breaking the school record in the prelims the next day.

Just before the final, Central Bucks East's Riley Weber, his four-year rival for area sprint free supremacy, pushed Deana's confidence over the top.

"Riley was saying how excited he was and how, after four years, it was all coming down to the last big race," Deana said. "It was the boost I needed."

Weber won the bronze, Bureau the silver and, in 45.17 seconds, Deana won the gold.

"The last 15 yards, I didn't breathe (and), at the wall, I looked up and thought I saw a '1' next to my name," Deana said. "I kept staring at it because I couldn't believe it.

"It was a shock, a good shock, but I've never felt anything like that before."

Considering the fear that haunted him for five weeks, it's easy to see why he was a little numb.

It's also easy to see why he is The Intelligencer's 2012 Boys Swimmer of the Year.