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Speedy Morris

By Kev Hunter

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North Penn Jack Morris competes in a 200 freestyle event against Pennridge during their meet at North Penn High School on Thursday January 3, 2013. Photo by Mark C Psoras\The Reporter

It was the swimming equivalent of a baseball player calling his shot.

Jack Morris just had that feeling he was gonna hit a home run on Friday.

“I knew that he was gonna have a good day when he poked his head up during warm-ups and said he was gonna go 51.37 in his butterfly, and he actually did exactly what he said he was gonna do,” North Penn coach Jeff Faikish said. “You know when they’re on, they’re on. And it’s awesome.”

Morris’ winning time in the butterfly was only part of a stellar performance that helped lift the Knights to a 106-80 victory over rival Souderton Area on Friday. Consistently a four-event winner for the Knights in their 6-1 start, including a perfect 4-0 record in conference meets, Morris has been a big part of the Knights’ success this year and is beginning to show signs that he could be in for a memorable postseason.

“This was definitely a breakthrough meet for me,” said Morris just shortly after the post-meet handshake with the Indians. “The butterfly and the 50 (free split) were nice surprises.”

Morris’ leadoff leg in the 200 free relay helped propel the Knights to a winning time of 1:29.56 and his leadoff leg in the 400 free relay helped the Knights set yet another pool record on the day, as the foursome of Morris, Spencer Collopy, Liam Kelly and Thanas Kountroubis took first in 3:17.68.

Morris, a tri-captain along with Colin Kelly and Brandon Anders, has helped provide some leadership on that talented but young 400 free foursome. Kelly and Kountroubis, just sophomores, have excelled in their spots.

“They’re in roles they’ve never been in before,” Morris said, “so it’s up to us to kind of help them through it.”

Morris’ main event, the 200 free, yielded another first-place finish on Friday, as he touched in 1:44.77, staying consistent with where he’s been for most of the winter.

It was a demanding week at practice for the Knights as they prepared for their first-place showdown with Souderton, and the team benefitted from it, both mentally and physically.

“This week, we hit them pretty good at practice,” Faikish said. “(Friday) was an example of kids coming in and having their mind in the right place. And when your mind’s in the right place, it doesn’t matter how your body feels. You can perform if your mind is up to it. And I think my team responded real well to the challenge of Souderton (Friday) and had some great races.”

The impressive win should provide some pretty good momentum as the team heads into the final stretch of the regular season, beginning with a home meet against Quakertown on Tuesday.

“It does,” Faikish said. “We’re still going at it hard, we still have a couple weeks until leagues, but it makes me feel better and I’m sure some of the kids feel better after some of the swims they saw here (Friday).”

Morris was doing a little research before Friday’s meet and then was pretty excited to see the progress he had made in the fly and 100 free.

“I’ve been keeping track of everybody in the state,” he said. “Certain guys were ahead of me, so it’s nice to put myself back in there where everybody else is, in the upper echelon in the state. It’s a nice confidence boost.”

Morris was sporting the bleach-blonde hairstyle that the Knights go with this time of year before shaving it all off for districts and states. Another North Penn tradition, success in the postseason, could be coming Morris’ way, if Friday is any indication.

“He had a phenomenal day,” Faikish said.

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