

HH's Thomas excels in Continental boys' meet

By Bill Keen Staff writer | Posted: Sunday, February 17, 2013 12:00 am

WARRINGTON — Hatboro-Horsham's Michael Thomas is a torpedo with legs.

Watching him dominate the individual medley and the backstroke at Friday's Suburban One League Continental Conference boys swimming championships at Central Bucks South, you had to keep reminding yourself he is only a sophomore.

The Hatters' standout set pool records in both of his specialties — 1 minute, 56.55 seconds in the IM and 52.02 in the backstroke — and, for good measure, swam the third leg on the Hatters' 200-yard freestyle relay that also established a new mark, 1:28.89 in a narrow victory over North Penn.

Team-wise, the meet was no contest, as the Knights destroyed the field with 538.5 points. Senior Jack Morris was a twin winner in the 200 free and the butterfly, but even he had to take a backseat to Thomas' dominating performances.

"I didn't expect the record (in the IM) because I didn't know what the record was before the start, so I just swam fast," said Thomas, whose favorite event is the backstroke.

"I started practicing it hard this year, and I noticed it was making me drop time, so I just kept doing it. I just want to go faster and keep improving my time."

Morris led a 1-2-3 North Penn sweep in the 200 free, but having Souderton's Triston Loux next to him in the fly helped him push himself at the end of a week that included a huge dual-meet win on Tuesday.

"Coming off our big win over Emmaus, that was really more of my focus than this meet, so I'm really happy with my times today," Morris said. "Having (Triston) right there is a great way to pace myself, and that was a really great race."

Like Thomas, Morris was part of a record-setting relay; fittingly, the Knights destroyed the old mark in the 400 free relay by more than five seconds.

"Everybody wanted to win (the 400) because (the Hatters) beat us in the 200 free relay, and we wanted some payback," the senior said. "Our adrenaline was going there, definitely."

North Penn's 1-2-3 finish in the 200 free wasn't the only event in which it pulled off that result. Jonathan Krail, Kyle Supko and Mike Kern also did it in the 500, with Krail setting a pool record.

"I just wanted to attack the race the whole time and hoped that by the end, I still had something left to get out of the pool," Krail said. "I jumped in, swam my race, hoped for the best time and I got it. After I got out, I couldn't sit still."

Two season-long rivals pushed each other to exciting finishes. Pennridge's David Zurmuhl won the 50 in 21.58, to a 21.95 for Souderton's Kevin Musterait. Zurmuhl said he has never been adversely affected by the pressure some swimmers feel in the 50.

"My coach (Ryan Griffiths) tells me that I have a 'Type A' personality, but I don't know if that has anything to do with it," the senior said. "I just crave the speed."