

Edwardsville High School boys swim team shows great promise for rest of season

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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville's boys swim team is showing promise after two top-notch performances in recent weekend meets.

This past Saturday, the boys placed sixth out of 11 teams in the 12th annual Springfield Sacred Heart-Griffin Veritas Milestone Meet at Eisenhower Pool.

“The meet went well for the team,” **Tigers coach Christian Rhoten** said. “We were able to travel up to Eisenhower and go against a lot of teams we haven't seen before. The ‘Milestone’ set up of this meet made it a bit challenging as it wasn't what we were used to but the guys had a great time and swam well.”

Edwardsville recorded 275 points, to winner O’Fallon with 532 points, followed by Peoria Notre Dame with 515 and Springfield Sacred Heart-Griffin.

Edwardsville’s Porter LeVasseur, Brian Baggette and Tyler Morris did not take part in the varsity meet.

One of the top performances for the Tigers was by Matt Mendez, who was seventh in the 200-yard freestyle in 2:13.3 and was sixth in the 100-yard freestyle with a time of 58.19.

The Tigers’ Kenneth Stryker placed 10th in the 200 freestyle (2:18.90) and was 14th in the 100 freestyle.

Robert Brown was fourth in the 100-yard backstroke in a time of 1:10.71. He placed 13th in the 100 butterfly (1:14.38).

Zac Ballossini was 14th in the 200-yard individual medley in 2:45.39. Noah May was 10th in the 200-yard relay with Brown, Peterson and Ballossini. The 400-yard relay of Alex Naeger, Stryker, Brown and Matt Mendez was sixth with a time of 4:08.88.

Freshman May, who has great potential for the future, placed 13th in the 50-yard freestyle in 26.61 and 12th in the 100-yard breaststroke in 1:16.09.

On Jan. 9, the Tigers won the freshman-sophomore division of the annual Iron Invite at Normal Community High School. The Tigers placed seventh in the varsity division out of eight teams with 143 points. Normal West won the team title with 356 points, followed by Normal Community with 314 points.

Rhoten said the Iron Invite was a good meet all around.

“I was looking at the results from last year and our team is heavy on freshmen and sophomores, including some of our best guys,” Tigers coach Christian Rhoten said. “It made sense to stack our lineup in the freshman-sophomore events and we were able to come away with the win.

“We didn’t win this meet last year, so to win the fresh-soph title is exciting. It’s another trophy for the trophy case. Last year this was not a good meet for us, but this time everyone was revved up and ready to go.”

Tyler Morris was a varsity standout in the Iron Invite, capturing first in the 50-yard free with a blazing time of 22.74 and fourth in the 400-yard race with a time of 51.45.

The only individual champion for EHS in the varsity division was junior Tyler Morris, who won the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 22.74.

The Tigers’ placed fifth in the 200-yard relay with a team of Brian Baggette, Michael Johnson, Morris and Carter Todd in a time of 1:38.24.

The Tigers scored 323 points in the freshman-sophomore meet to top United Township (290) for that championship.

May showed he has a bright future in the varsity ranks by winning the 200 IM (2:14.22) and 100 butterfly (1:00.25). Porter LeVasseur won two events in the freshman-sophomore meet, taking the 100 free (51:13) and the 100 back (56.98); and teammate Graham Peterson won the 500 free (5:18.61).

Coach Rhoten expects solid things for his varsity team the rest of the season and believes Morris will be a workhorse.

Rhoten said Morris has a shot to get down in the low 21-second range in the 50 free, which is pretty spectacular for a high school athlete.

“He is a big guy and has tons of potential,” Rhoten said. “If he keeps working hard, he has unlimited potential. ”

Baggette should also be a team leader both individually and a key member of the 200 free and 200 medley relay during the season. Baggette is proficient in every stroke from freestyle, breast, butterfly to backstroke, so he is a versatile addition.

“We have a really solid crew this year,” Coach Rhoten said, beaming with pride of his squad. “We are definitely deeper and have bodies to fill the events. Winning the events is good but the second-, third-, and fourth-place people are just as important.”

The Tigers host O’Fallon at noon on Saturday in a dual meet.