

Brian Baggette takes strong sectional momentum to IHSA State Swim Meet

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – **Brian Baggette** had a big goal he set for himself at the start of the boys swimming season.

He reached it during last week's IHSA Boys Swimming Sectional meet at Edwardsville High's Chuck Fruit Aquatic Center.

And he did it in a big way – qualifying for this weekend's IHSA Boys Swimming Championship state meet in Evanston not only by winning the 500-yard freestyle, but also setting a personal record and by beating the IHSA's standard for non-sectional winners to reach the state meet, covering the distance in 4:42.46 (the automatic qualifying time was 4:45.95).

In the process, Baggette – a junior – became the Tigers' only qualifier for the state meet, which begins Friday and runs through Saturday at Evanston High School in suburban Chicago.

“I've been working for this all season,” Baggette said, “and I'm really happy to have done it all.”

In a race like the 500 – the longest race on the IHSA's program – it's not a matter of trying to get out and go as quickly as possible, but it's a matter of pacing one's self to

have something left for the finish, much like distance running. “It's more of a pace work; it's more like where I am with my competitors,” Baggette said.

“I usually try to keep it pretty consistent (as far as lap times go), then go all out in the last half of the race. I made sure I was with the guys from Springfield for the first half of the race, then try to blow them out of the water in the last half of the race.”

Just getting to the state meet was a huge achievement for Baggette. “I'm really happy that I made it,” Baggette said. “I think I can do well (at the state meet); I want to break 4:40 and I want to do well.”

Preliminaries begin at 3:30 p.m. Friday, with the finals in swimming getting under way at noon Saturday, with the 500 free set for near the end of the second segment of the day.



[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)