

Marlins defeat Stingrays in season's regular season final dual

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Both the Water Works Swim Club and Sunset Hills Country Club swimming teams prepared for Sunday’s Southwestern Illinois Swimming Association league meet on Tuesday evening as the Marlins came away with a 431-238 win over the Stingrays in both sides’ final dual meet of the season at the Sunset Hills pool.

Each team had a number of outstanding performances by their swimmers during the meet, and the coaches of both teams were very pleased with their performances.

“Well, I was pretty happy with a lot of it,” said Stingrays coach Dan O’Keefe. “We raced really hard, we competed very well, won a few close races, and I can see what we need to get done before SWISA.”

Many of the younger swimmers for Sunset Hills set the pace for the Stingrays.

“We had a number of outstanding swimmers,” O’Keefe said. “I was real happy with Sam Borden’s freestyle, was happy with some of our eight-and-under boys once again. Andrew Nativi and Eddie Foppe really looked strong out there. We swam them up out of their age group, and Andrew’s only six, and he won something for the eight-and-unders. With the girls, I was real happy with the way Emma Kreiger has been swimming lately, and some of our older girls, right on their times. But Maddie Milburn and Izzy O’Day had some nice looking swims.”

Marlins coach Spencer Sholl felt that his team did very well also while mixing up his lineup in preparation for the league meet.

“I thought we did really well,” Sholl said. “We had some different races for some of our swimmers; we didn’t put them in their main events. And they performed really well under those different circumstances.”

And it was another record-breaking night for the Marlins’ Cohen Osborn, setting two more team records – in the boys’ 11-12 100-yard individual medley with a time of 1:05.15 and the 50-yard freestyle in 26.42 seconds – just five days after setting three team and pool records in a meet against Paddlers Swim Club of Granite City.

“Yep. He breaks records left and right,” Sholl said. “I’m really proud of how well he does in the water, because it really reflects the amount of work he puts into it. So I’m glad to see him really do well.”

Sholl was also quick to credit other swimmers for their efforts in the pool.

“I know our 11-12 girls, they all did pretty well in all of their events,” Sholl said. “Vivian Lu, I know, did very well in her events, Jordan Schlueter had some good events, Caden Calvin had some good events tonight, Ryan Woodbury came back tonight, and he had a good event or two, and I’m very glad that some of those people that are coming back and swimming here, and it’s really getting us ready for SWISA.”

Foppe scored 15 points for the Stingrays, gaining wins in the boys 7-8 50-yard freestyle, 25-yard backstroke and 25-yard butterfly, while Nativi chipped in with eight points. Nativi finished fourth in the 25-yard backstroke and a win in the 25-yard freestyle. Other high scorers for the Stingrays’ boys included Andrew Byron with 10 in winning two events, Chase Milburn, who scored 15 points while winning three events, Henry Gruber with 13 points, and Owen Gruber and Tom Hyten, who both had 11.

On the girls’ side, some of the Stingrays’ high scorers included Rachel Johnson and Greta Deist, who each had 11 points, Edyn Cohn with seven points, and Caroline Foppe with six.

For the Marlins, among the leading scorers for the boys were Evan Grinter, Chase Milburn, Logan Mills and Osborn, who all had 15 points, Boden Rives, Matthew Lueking with 11, and Canon Adams, who scored 10. For the Water Works girls, Kyla Calvin, Grace Sponeman, Allison Naylor and Olivia Ramirez all led the way with 15 points apiece, next was Ava Whittaker and Parker LeVassuer, both with 13. Karis Chen, Savannah Grinter, Schlueter and Lu each had 11 points for the Marlins, while Isabella Grinter and Alyssa Grant both had 10.

Both the Marlins and Stingrays finish up the season with the SWISA championship meet on Sunday at SummersPort in Godfrey, and both coaches are looking ahead to the competition.

“Well, we’re looking forward to it,” O’Keefe said. “We’ll get a little bit of rest this week, I think that will help a lot of them a lot, and put together the best team we can.”

As far as goals for the SWISA meet, O’Keefe is confident that the Stingrays will do very well.

“Well, I think we can walk away with some high points,” O’Keefe said. “Individually, I think we can walk away with some high points. Teamwise, we’ll have to go over and see how many people we have; that’s always a big thing with these. But I expect them to swim as hard as they can, and compete as best they can.”

Sholl feels that the Marlins are ready to go for the big meet as well.

“We’re as ready as we can be,” Sholl said. “We’ve put in the time, we’ve put in the work. I think our swimmers are ready to give it their all.”

And Sholl’s goals for his team are much the same.

“I want to see kids go out, I want to see good, clean races, as fast as we can,” Sholl said, “and wherever that puts us is where it puts us. I’m just very pleased with tonight, and I’m very pleased with my swimmers.”



[Brent Feeney also contributed to this story.](#)