

# **Mills, Gruben Are Double Winners, Relay Teams Sweep Events As Edwardsville Wins Southern Illinois Championships Swimming Meet**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
February 14 2020 10:50 AM











EDWARDSVILLE - Logan Mills and Owen Gruben won two events each, and Edwardsville relay teams swept their races as the Tigers won the Southern Illinois Championships swimming meet Thursday evening at the Chuck Fruit Aquatic Center.

The Tigers scored 307 points to take first place, with Granite City in second with 220 points, Belleville Althoff Catholic in third at 105.5, Collinsville fourth with 62 and Triad coming in fifth with 22.5 points.

It was the final meet of the regular season for the schools as they head into the IHSA sectionals next week, and in the case of Edwardsville, there wasn't any specific strategy involved, but the performances were very good on all levels. And for some of the swimmers, it was one last opportunity to make the team for the sectionals as well.

"It depends on which kind of athletes you're talking about," said Tigers head coach Christian Rhoten. "I let them pick their events at this meet, so some of them picked their best events, some of them picked events they don't get swim a lot, so that kind of depends who we're talking about. But for some of them, it's definitely a last kind of chance to prove that they should be on the sectional lineup, which we'll put out tomorrow. So we had some contested races that we were kind of waiting until this meet to see who would get that spot."

Rhoten gave a shout out to some of his younger swimmers who had impressive times.

"There were a lot of lifetime-best times today from most of the guys," Rhoten said, "which is really cool, because we didn't rest at all for this meet. Even the guys who weren't potentially in the sectionals, there was no rest at all, so I think they were just excited that it was the last meet, and come out and swim fast."

Jaxson Elie, Bryson Maedge, and diver Tyler Scheibal were singled out by Rhoten for praise, along with Trent Sholl and Max Brandmeyer.

"Jaxson Elie, he's a senior, he swam the 50 freestyle, and he swam a little bit back when he was really young," Rhoten said, "but this is his first time back in the pool since he was a little kid. So he started with us his senior year, and he was able to go 24.6 (seconds), and 54.6 in the 100-yard freestyle. Those times are right up there with our top-tier guys, so that was really impressive to see. Bryson Maedge, he's another one who's a senior; he had never swam competitively before, so he started fresh 12 weeks ago, but just learning how to swim competitively. So he's come a long way, and it's cool to see him really advance his technique and his speed.

"Tyler Scheibal in diving, he's come a long way this year," Rhoten continued, "he's been practicing really hard, and then him and Henry Gruben will be our two divers at the sectional meet. And then, finally, the last two events that stood to me were the 500 (freestyle), between Trent Sholl and Max Brandmeyer. Both of them were able to drop quite a bit of time, so it's fun whenever they can get into a race with each other, and go fast like that."

Mills won the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 22.85 seconds, while Mathiew Doyle came in second at 23.67 seconds in an event that the Tigers swept the first nine spots, then Mills came back to win the 100-yard freestyle at 56.26 seconds, with Noah Range in second at 54.39 seconds, Elie third with his 54.60 seconds time, and Ian Olson of Triad in fourth with a time of 58.03 seconds.

Owen Gruben won the 200-yard individual medley with a time of 2:16.70, with Collinsville's Colin Kirksey coming in second at 2:16.93 and the Tigers' Canon Adams third with a time of 2:16.99, then Gruben won the 100-yard backstroke at 1:02.91, with Preston LeVasseur the runner-up at 1:03.55 and Granite City's Dawson James third at 1:07.77.

The relay teams won their races, starting with the 200-yard medley relay team of Doyle, McLain Oertle, Mills and Evan Grinter winning the race with a time of 1:44.12, the 200-



yard freestyle team of Mills, Owen Gruben, Grinter and Oertle taking the event at 1:35.95, and the 400-yard freestyle team of Owen Gruben, Range, Canon Adams and Andrew Billhartz winning with a time of 3:55.07.

The 500-yard freestyle saw another Edwardsville sweep, as Sholl won the race at 5:35.53, with Brandmeyer second at 5:36.58 and Jacob Grandone third with a time of 5:54.65. In other events, Althoff's Chase Hayes won the 200-yard freestyle with a time of 2:04.91, and Granite's Noah Cain took the 100-yard butterfly at 58.21 seconds.

The Tigers and the other teams now will start to prepare for next week's Springfield Sacred Heart-Griffin sectional next Saturday at Eisenhower Pool in Springfield, a venue that's known to the Edwardsville swimmers, and Rhoten will have his team ready to go for the meet.

"What we tell the swimmers is 'you can't do any more work,'" Rhoten said, "you can't get better once you start to rest.' So all the work has already been done, now it's just a matter of resting the body, and we'll taper off in yardage up to the start of the sectional meet, which is on the 22nd. So they'll start feeling a lot better in the water, more fresh and they'll have a lot more energy, so that usually leads to faster times."

Rhoten thinks it's going to be a tough sectional, with Chatham Glenwood in the meet. Glenwood is one of the best teams in the Springfield area, and Rhoten thinks it'll be a good, close meet.

"It's going to be very, very close between us and Chatham," Rhoten said. "They have a really good team, and last year, we're in the Champaign sectional, so we didn't get to face them in the sectional last year, but they'll be there on the 22nd, and every single race is going to be very, very important to get the points for the team championship in that one."







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