

# Edwardsville Boys Swim Team Returns Multiple Team Members, Return To Practice For Shortened Season

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EDWARDSVILLE - The 2020 season for the boys swimming team was another successful one for the Tigers, as they won the IHSA sectional meet with 235 points at Springfield Sacred Heart-Griffin, sending many of their swimmers on to the state meet in suburban Chicago.

After an extended period where Edwardsville, as the other swimming teams in the state, were kept out of the pools due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tigers are now back at practice preparing for an abbreviated season after the IHSA announced the dates for the season for all remaining sports this school year in a special Board of Directors meeting on Jan. 27. Swimming is considered a low-risk sport in COVID-19.

Like the other schools, the Tigers are very glad and grateful to be back at it, and to have some sort of a season as well.

"We're just happy that the guys are going to have some kind of a season," said Edwardsville head coach Christian Rhoten, "and it's full steam ahead until the end of the season Mar. 13."

The Tigers began practice on Jan. 25, when Region Four, which includes Madison and St. Clair Counties, were downgraded to Tier Two mitigations, and things have been going very well to get started.

"We started this past Monday when Region Four went back to Tier Two," Rhoten said, "the first day we could practice. So far, so good."

The Tigers have five returning swimmers back from their sectional championship team, and they'll form the core of the 2021 lineup. Returning are Evan Grinter, Logan Oertle, Owen Gruben, Trent Sholl and Canon Adams. A key addition will be freshman Cohen Osborn, who's described as "really good" by Rhoten, and he'll be counted on for the Tigers.

The first few practices have gone well for the Tigers, all things considered.

"They're just a little rough getting started," Rhoten said. "We've been on a long break that we're not used to, But all things considered, we've been doing fine."

With such a shortened season, and no IHSA state swimming series due to both the pandemic and the aforementioned shortened season, the plan for the Tigers boils down to a very simple task.

"There's not going to be a sectional," Rhoten said, "so with the season only going six weeks, we're just going to swim as fast as we can."

A big addition to the program this season will be the relay races, which were not competed during the girls season in the fall. The relays have been a big strength for the Tigers in the past, and the team is looking forward to them.

"Everyone loves the relays," Rhoten said with a laugh.

The bottom line is, of course, that the Tigers and the state will be able to compete this season, and for that, Rhoten feels very grateful for his swimmers.

"With everything going on, we're grateful to have a season," Rhoten said, "and we're going to go out there and swim as fast as we can every night."