

Owen Gruben Enjoys Successful SWISA Meet, Serves As Role Model For Younger Swimmers

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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GODFREY - Sunset Hills Country Club swimmer Owen Gruben enjoyed a successful Southwestern Illinois Swimming Association Meet recently at Summers Port Swim

Club in Godfrey, finishing second in the boys 15-18 50-yard freestyle and third in the 50-yard butterfly, and also was a part of two relay teams as the Stingrays finished fifth in the meet.

During an interview conducted during the meet, Gruben felt that he was swimming well, finishing in the top three of two of his individual races, and finishing about where he thought he might.

"I'm doing OK," Gruben said after one of his races. "I got second in two of my individual races, which is where about I expected to be. It's alright, I'm doing fine."

Gruben had set some modest goals going into the meet, mainly for best times while competing against many of his Edwardsville High School teammates.

"All of my goals here were really going for times coming into it," Gruben said. "Most people I know here that are going to beat me are all close friends from my high school team with me. And so, it's really just good competition to go against, trying to get a faster time, go for lower cuts."

As with everyone, Gruben is very grateful and happy to have the chance to swim once again after losing the 2020 season, both in high school and SWISA, to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's been kind of great," Gruben said. "It still feels like it's been a really short season, but that's just how this year's been. I'm just glad to be out here, though."

The junior-to-be at Edwardsville High hasn't really set any goals for his final two years with the Stingrays, but is glad to lend the younger swimmers on the team a hand and set an example of how to do things in and out of the pool.

"Sunset's one of those teams that it's kind of hard to make, because of the numbers," Gruben said. "I really just want to inspire more kids that are younger, help the team grow a little bit in my last two years."

Gruber is looking to be a role model for the younger swimmers, as they watch him put in his work in practice every day.

"I don't know if it's working with them, per se," Gruben said. "Just more like they see me working sometimes. But it's nice to let them get something to look at."

Gruben is happy overall with how he performed this year, and he also knows there's plenty of room for improvement.

"It was OK," Gruben said. "It's not like where I needed to be for, like, qualifying times or anything, which is like a benchmark. It tells me where I am, this is what I need to do. It's like talking about my style, myself, overall technique, not just getting faster."