

# **Tigers Win IHSA Swim Sectional: Edwardsville's 200-Yard Medley Relay Team Qualifies For State Meet**

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville High girls swimming team saw its 200-yard medley relay team qualify for next week's state meet, while Triad had its 200-yard freestyle relay team and Rylee Sitton qualify for the state meet in the 100-yard breaststroke as the Tigers won the IHSA sectional meet Saturday afternoon at the Chuck Fruit Aquatic Center.

The Tigers won the meet with 230 points, far outdistancing O'Fallon, who came in second with 121 points, while Chatham Glenwood came in third with 113.5 points, Springfield Sacred Heart-Griffin Catholic was fourth with 90.5 points, fifth place went to Springfield High with 77 points, Petersburg Porta was sixth with 28 points, in seventh place was Springfield Lutheran with 16 points, Springfield Southeast was eighth with eight points, Jacksonville Routt Catholic was ninth with four points and Jacksonville rounded out the top ten with three points.

The Tigers had some ups and downs during the meet, but all came together as a team to win the title.

"I feel pretty good," said Edwardsville head coach Christian Rhoten. "They really did a great job today through some ups and downs, and they came together as a team and really performed well."

The 200-yard medley relay team of Pera Onal, Ally Jansen, Lia Kampwerth and Karis Chen won the race and were the only qualifiers for the state meet next week, and Rhoten was very happy for them.

"Well, we knew that our medley relay was our strongest relay going into the meet," Rhoten said, "and it was a tough race, but they came through and were able to pull it out."

The other swimmers also swam great races despite not being able to qualify, and their efforts were rewarded with the championship.

"It was a runaway win," Coach Rhoten said. "We won the meet by a lot, so that's awesome to see."

Edwardsville has put together a streak of sectional titles in a row, and it's a source of pride for the team.

"Oh, no, it's definitely something that we want to keep going," Rhoten said. "I mean, we strive for it every year. There were a lot of sectional meets that we didn't win by that

much; it was a lot closer in previous years. So, we just want to keep on winning sectionals, and then, as our team gets a little bit older, qualify some more people for state as we go."

One of the highlights of the meet for the Tigers was the performance of Henley in the 500-yard freestyle, who cut her time in the race by 10 seconds to 5:37.88 in finishing third in the race.

"Which was her best time the last time she swam it," Rhoten said. "She just really come through as a senior this year. Not only did she do great in the 500, she did great in the 200 (freestyle), and she went at least two seconds faster in the relay that she's ever been. So she's just been a great part of the team, a great senior to have. She always has a great attitude, works really hard, gets good grades, so you really can't ask for much more."

The relay team that qualified has a mix of younger and older swimmers, and Rhoten it's a big thing for the program to have that mix in the team.





"Absolutely," Rhoten said. "The state meet is a whole another animal. If anyone's ever been, it's a crazy swim meet. So the fact that Karis gets to go up as a freshman for the first time for kind of experience what it's like. This will be Maddy Milburn's first time up at state as well, Ava (Whittaker) has been up in relays before. And then, Ally (Janson) getting to go and experience it as a senior is awesome."

Although Alton wasn't able to qualify any swimmers for the state meet, the Redbirds performed exceptionally well, with many top six finishers, and it bodes well for the team down the road.

"Oh, I'm very pleased with the results," Alton head coach Nancy Miller said. "We had several best times, we've had several placings in the top six, and everyone did just an outstanding job in doing their best race."

It was the Redbirds' goal to do as well as they could and finish in the top six in each race.

"Yeah, absolutely," Miller said. "And even more so, I would encourage the girls to think in their own lane, stay in their own lane and to really think about what I have to do my best performance. So it's not just about racing other people, it's to do the best performance racing yourself."

The strategy worked, as many of the Redbirds' swimmers has some of their best performances and swam very well indeed.



"Right," Miller said. "So Ceci Parker and Claire Paule have really been the shining stars for our team today, plus our 200 (freestyle) relay, those two girls, plus Riley Clancy and Addison Kenney just got fourth place in the 200 free relay. So I'm very, very happy about that."

The interview was conducted with three races left in the meet, and Miller was very excited about the upcoming races and the outcome for her team.

"Oh, very excited," Miller said. "I can't wait until that last relay. We've got the breaststroke now, so Ceci's seeded third, so it should be exciting."





The Edwardsville team of Onal, Janson, Kampwerth and Chen won the 200-yard medley relay at 1:52.88, with Triad's team of Amanda Beuth, Rylee Sitton, Ellie Sitton and Mia Poe second at 1:54.77, Collinsville's team of Sophie Van Middendorp, Addie Bicanic, Kylee Strong-Chasteen and Kayelyn Berger was 10th at 2:11.58 and the Granite City team of Alivia Vaughn, Emily Sykes, Peyton Hatfield and Alivia Upshaw was 12th at 2:17.84. Emma Best of Rochester won the 200-yard freestyle with a time of 2:00.66, with Beuth coming in third at 2:03.63, Milburn fourth at 2:06.09, Mason was sixth at 2:08.14 and Poe was ninth at 2:18.42. Trenton Wesclin's Chloe Brede qualified in the first of two events with a win in the 200-yard individual medley, coming in at 2:06.14, with Rylee Sitton second at 2:18.34 and Onal was third at 2:21.50.

Nashville's Hazel Konkel won her first event in the 50-yard freestyle, qualifying for state with a time of 24.71 seconds, with Triad's Maddy Schmidt second at 25.74 seconds, Strong-Chasteen third at 25.52 seconds, Ellie Sitton was fourth at 25.68 seconds, Whittaker came in fifth at 25.81 seconds, Parker came in sixth at 25.97 seconds and Milburn was ninth at 26.30 seconds. The one-meter springboard diving event, held earlier in the day, was won by Abigail Bouravnev of Springfield Lutheran with 376.35 points, with Falyn Long of Springfield second with 361.80 points and Ella Matthews of Sacred Heart-Griffin third with 340.20 points. The top three divers qualified for state.

Brede won her second event of the day in the 100-yard butterfly, coming home at 57.18 seconds, with Whittaker second at 1:00.30, Ellie Sitton tying for fourth with Sacred Heart-Griffin's Annie Mizeur with identical times of 1:04.23 and Edwardsville's Emily Moody was seventh at 1:04.58. Konkel took her second race of the day in the 100-yard freestyle, qualifying for state at 53.91 seconds, with Janson second at 55.53 seconds, Schmidt was third at 55.99 seconds, Strong-Chasteen was sixth at 57.89 seconds and Edwardsville's Taylor Wilkerson was seventh at 58.12 seconds. Belleville East's Ruby Nussbaum qualified for the first of her two events with a win in the 500-yard freestyle at 5:16.32, with Mason coming in third, Kampwerth was fourth at 5:41.06 and Paule was eighth at 5:50.41.

The Knights won the 200-yard freestyle relay, with Schmidt, Beuth, Ellie and Rylee Sitton qualifying with a time of 1:41.61, with the Tigers' team of Kampwerth, Whittaker, Janson and Milburn coming in second at 1:43.63 and Alton's team of Parker, Clancy, Kenney and Paule were fourth at 1:50.81. Nussbaum qualified for her second event with a win in the 100-yard backstroke, coming in at 59.63 seconds, with Beuth second at 1:01.77, Janson was third at 1:02.12, Paule came in seventh at 1:07.73 and Poe was 10th with a time of 1:10.85.

Rylee Sitton qualified as an individual in the 100-yard breaststroke, winning the race at 1:08.37, with Chen coming in third at 1:12.64, Onal was fifth at 1:13.22 and Parker came in seventh at 1:13.51. In the final race, the 400-yard freestyle relay, Chatham

Glenwood's team of Kaleigh Bobb, Maja Dey, Erin Turk and Ashleigh Maender won with a time of 3:50.71, with Edwardsville's team of Wilkerson, Kampwerth, Mason and Onal were third at 3:51.70, Alton's team of Paule, Clancy, Kenney and Parker were fifth at 4:11.04, the Granite team of Upshaw, Hatfield, Carlee Wright and Sykes were eighth at 4:37.32 and Collinsville's team of Kenna Fischer, Journey Sampson, Kate Harris and Livia Montgomery was 10th at 5:47.21.

The state qualifiers will compete next Friday and Saturday at a new site, the FMC Natatorium in Westmont with the preliminaries going next Friday. Miller was thankful for being able to coach her team and have the meet without many of the restrictions that were in place in last year's sectional, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I'm just am really grateful to have the girls here with me today," Miller said, "and just so glad that we got to do this meet this year without the restrictions we had last year, so yeah, almost back to normal."

As Rhoten looked back on the season, there's a lot to be proud of, and plenty of memories, especially on the road trips.

"I think a lot of memories were made on our travels," Rhoten said. "We traveled a lot this season, more than we ever have before, and we were in the car a lot together. So, a lot of memories were made, long drives to Chicago and Normal and Springfield and Champaign. Really, just the relationships you build. I think that's the point."





