



Swim and Dive takes second at State; swimmers break school records

BY JOHN BURKE AND JOE FEDER
REPORTERS

The St. Louis U. High swim and dive team closed the doors on a stellar season this past weekend with a fantastic second place title at the inaugural Missouri Class 2 State Swimming and Diving competition, their highest state finish since winning the title in 2004.

The team, with the help of several goal times set by senior captain Barclay Dale, headed into prelims on Friday with lofty personal and team expectations. Dale's calculation of the projected points that the Jr. Bills and other rival schools would score suggested that the team faced a 30-point deficit from first place, behind only Lee's Summit North.

"There were 27 opportunities. We had 27 swim. That's more than any other team had, so we knew that we needed to make the most of those opportunities," said head coach Lindsey Ehret.

At prelims, the Jr. Bills swam with great passion, achieving personal bests in almost each individual swim. They managed to break two school records: one from Dale, who broke his own record in the 100 Backstroke with a time of 50.58, and the



SLUH Swim and Dive with their second place trophy. photo | courtesy of SLUH Swim and Dive

other from junior Joe Feder in the 100 Freestyle, posting a time of 46.73.

After an exciting first session, the team found itself seeded first going into finals, with underdog Rock Bridge a mere seven points behind.

"We did enough of what we needed to do in prelims," said Ehret. "We had 17 swims for finals."

Early Saturday morning, the second part of the state competition began with the team looking to expand its narrow lead in the Diving Finals. For the first time since 2014, the Jr. Bills qualified two divers for state, the dynamic

duo of sophomore twins Gabe and Max Manalang. Despite a few minor hiccups, which included back problems and a few crashes on the diving board, the Manalang twins placed high at state, with Gabe placing 22nd, and Max advancing all the way to finals to take 12th place and add five points to the Jr. Bills' lead.

Heading into the finals, tensions were high on the SLUH bench, but the 200 Medley Relay team of seniors Barclay Dale, Joe Jellinek, Mathias Hostettler, and Nick Mattingly got the day off to a fantastic start with a second place finish and a new team

record of 1:36.70. In the next event, 200 Freestyle, the team capitalized on its early success with Feder and fellow junior Daniel Fink scoring a combined 25 points. Jellinek and sophomore Josh Brown competed in the 200 Individual Medley, adding five points to the tally, and, in the 50 Freestyle, Dale placed second, out-touching the third place finisher by one one-hundredth of a second.

Heading into the midway break, the Jr. Bills were in second place, but the back half of the meet was truly spectacular.

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Lindsey Ehret awarded Swimming Coach of the Year

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SPORTS EDITOR

Lindsey Ehret, head coach of the St. Louis U. High Swim and Dive team, known to her team as 'Miss Coach,' was awarded Swimming Coach of the Year by the Missouri Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association after the State Swim and Dive meet last Saturday.

"It means a lot, it means that the hard work has been recognized," said Ehret.

Usually the award is given to the state champion coach, but this year was an exception. The Jr. Bills finished second in Class 2 at state, improving from a 13th place finish last year, SLUH's highest state finish since 2004.

"It's a reflection of the quality of the relationships and of the program," said Athletic Director Chris Muskopf. "The other coaches should be commended on not making the award just about who wins. There was some thought that went into it, and it's great recognition in the program of individuals competing, but yet there's a strong sense of team and you don't necessarily get that everywhere; you get a scenario where student-athletes are out for themselves. But to add that sense of team and use that to provide support and

drive the program is a part of the recognition." SLUH sent 18 qualifiers to the state meet this year, a huge increase from last year's five. "It has been a process of formation," said Ehret. "Everyone at SLUH talks about every year, you have an aspect of your personality, your character that has been formed by SLUH, and so that was kind of the goal when I first came here and first started coaching: that we have to form these guys to be swimmers."

"There's no one that deserved (the award) more than her," said senior Barclay Dale. "She turned a bunch of water polo players into swimmers."

Although the team fell just short of the illustrious state title, the seniors felt accomplished with their results. The team tripled its score at state compared to last year and swam to six top-three invitational finishes, including two first place finishes.

"We didn't finish nearly where we wanted to as a team but Miss Coach's Coach of the Year award made up for it," said Dale. "I couldn't be happier for her."

"It was an honor swimming for Coach Ehret," said senior Nick Mattingly. "She taught us to be both mentally and physically tough."

"This season consumed us, more than any other year," said Ehret. "Having three years with the current seniors, we really got to know each other and they really came to understand my vision and what I was trying to do with the program."

Ehret has set the foundation for a continued tradition of swim and dive success, even with the seniors leaving, driving a message of grit and strength in all aspects of the person.

"Now that the bar has been set, the challenge for the coaches and student-athletes coming back is to keep that going," said Muskopf. "The more we become familiar (with the new format of the State meet), the more we are able to see how a long-lasting pattern can exist for us rather than just a jump to a level that we haven't had in awhile. I certainly think that's the goal of Coach Ehret and the goal of the program: to make that a sustainable accomplishment each year."

Cross country wraps up season with 10th place finish at State meet

MATTHEW QUINLAN, JUSTIN KOESTERER
CORE STAFF, STAFF

The sleeping giant was not aroused, as the St. Louis U. High varsity cross country team officially wrapped up the season last Saturday after the State cross country meet in Jefferson City.

The team placed tenth out of 16 teams, and fifth among St. Louis-area teams.

"We couldn't really put a place on where we were going to finish because we can't really control what other teams do. We were just trying to put our best foot forward, and take a shot at it," said head coach Joe Porter.

Blue Springs took the State title, with a score of 82, and their first man, senior Victor Mugeche, took first place overall with a time of 15:29.

Senior captain Paul Burka rose up and ran the final 200 meters uphill in 29 seconds, finishing with a personal record of 16:24 to take the first spot finish for SLUH and 25th overall, earning an All-State spot in the process.

"The last 200 everybody was calling out numbers of where they thought I was placewise. Some said 28th, some said 30th, but I couldn't



Reed Milnor (left), Paul Burka (center), and Patrick Hetlage (right) at the beginning of the State cross country meet. photo | Mr. James Hetlage

"I honestly didn't even know that I took the 25th spot until after I finished," said Burka.

Porter was also very happy with Burka's finish to his SLUH career.

"He was 34th with 1K left; he was in 30th almost the whole race. He really put himself in a good position, and passed three people in the last 200 to get All-State," said Porter.

Burka's All-State finish marks the 14th consecutive year the Jr. Bills have placed a runner on the All-State team, and the 20th time in the past 21 State meets.

"I was happy, obviously, at my finish. It's really bitter-sweet, though, because it was my last race at SLUH and our team didn't do very well, but I got all-state," said Burka.

Burka was followed by junior Patrick Hetlage who placed 64th with a time of 16:58. After Hetlage, sophomore Adam Mittendorf finished 74th (17:01), followed by sophomore Lucas Rackers (81st, 17:04) and junior Reed Milnor (82nd, 17:05). Sophomore Noah Scott finished 127th with a time of 17:37, and junior Chris Staley finished 133rd with a time of 17:45.

"I think we're still trying to figure out what happened," said Staley. "It might have been that we came into (State) after big wins at Districts and Sectionals and we were a little overconfident or not serious enough about it."

Despite the disappointing finish this year, the team is really looking forward to improving upon the previous successes of this season and the youth of the program.

"Obviously I'm excited for next year. Paul is the only one graduating from the varsity and we are a pretty young team, so there's a lot to hope for next year," said Porter.

Hockey Nightbeat

In the second game of the regular season, the St. Louis U. High varsity hockey team blew out the Chaminade Red Devils 8-0.

Early on, both teams looked evenly matched as both played an aggressive style. Late in the first period, senior Joe Winklemann sparked the Jr. Bills' offense with an easy goal in front of the net.

In the second and third, there was an onslaught of goals from seniors Nick Corker, Winklemann, and Trevor White, juniors Henry Wagner, Gabe Schwartz, and Justin Jacoby, and sophomore Jack Hazelton.