

# Tenaflly swimmer Aaron Baltytis races to three state titles, sets Meet of Champions record



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SEWELL — Tenaflly's Aaron Baltytis went out on top, as one of the all-time greats in Bergen County swimming.

And this time, he brought three teammates with him atop the state podium.

The Northwestern commit capped a legendary high school career on Sunday by winning three titles at the Meet of Champions, starting with one in the medley relay. Baltytis followed it up with gold in the backstroke and repeated as the butterfly champion in a meet-record 47.08.

His last moment in the black and orange was one for the ages.

"Not many in Bergen County have been able to do that," coach Matt White said. "Aaron is a superstar. He's so fun to watch. Unfortunately, I'll have to see him on TV but that's for next year."



*Photo By: Geoff Byshe*

Baltaytis was the second seed in both individual races, but turned on the jets when it mattered most. In both cases, he shaved more than two seconds off his time from Saturday's prelims.

"Honestly, I don't think I held back that much," Baltaytis said. "It was the big commute. I was really tired."

Sunday was clearly different. Baltaytis glided through the water in the butterfly, lowering his own meet record and winning by a body length.

The Tigers senior saved enough energy for a personal-best in the backstroke (47.16) during a tough battle with Mendham's Kenny Barnicle.

"Kenny and I swim very similarly," Baltaytis said. "We don't go out that fast usually. He's maybe a 200 backstroker. I'm probably more of a 100 backstroker so I knew I had to get the first 50 and just hold on the best I could while he keeps coming back."

It didn't take long for Tenaflly to make history on Sunday at Gloucester County Institute of Technology. The Tigers raced to first in the opening event to become the first Bergen boys team to win a state relay since Bergen Catholic in 2014.

Tenaflly clocked a school-record 1:31.74 with seniors Hayoung Choe (backstroke), Jason Yi (breaststroke) and Baltaytis (butterfly) competing with junior anchor Andrew Lee (freestyle).

"It was really amazing," Lee said. "We were the top seed so there was a lot of pressure on us. I think we really did a good job of delivering. Yesterday we were the top seed but we didn't have the best race. Individually there were things we knew we had to work on."

The turning point in the medley relay came in the third lap when Baltaytis dropped a career-best 20.42 split in the butterfly. It was so quick that only two swimmers in the 50 freestyle turned in a faster lap.

Baltaytis finishes his Tenaflly career with four Meet of Champions titles, including three of his own. No one in Bergen County has won that much individual state gold since Bergen Catholic's Gary Grant in 2003 (four solo, one relay).

"It's very exciting to see Aaron swim," White said. "He's always very enthusiastic about high school swimming and swimming in general and motivating others to swim fast. I know that a big event was the medley relay. They're always talking throughout the season about what we need to split."