

2003 District...

Hogan gets district title, state berth

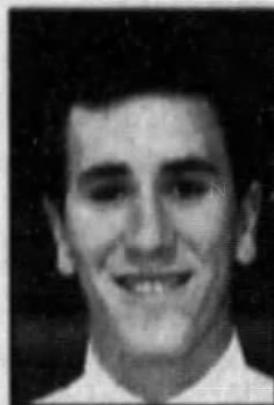
Ross girls still waiting for fate

News-Messenger reports

BOWLING GREEN — For the first time in 18 years, the Fremont Ross boys swim team has a district champion.

Senior co-captain Elliot Hogan won the 100-yard breaststroke at the Northwest Ohio District Meet on Saturday afternoon at Bowling Green State University and qualified for the state meet Saturday in Canton.

Hogan was seeded third in the event with a sectional time of one minute, 5.06 seconds. His district time of



HOGAN

1:00.62 not only shattered his sectional time, but beat his own school record of 1:02:10, which he set at the district as a sophomore.

"On Friday, I swam a 50-yard breaststroke in the 200 medley relay, and my split

See O'CONNOR, B2

O'Connor bound for 3rd state meet

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time was 27.13 (seconds)," said Hogan. "I'd never gone that fast before in my life, so that was encouraging."

"I've been working on my butterfly. I can swim 25 yards if a race is close, and, when I do, I change my stroke, going shorter and quicker rather than long and strong. He can see it's right away. I know I do it but you're afraid, and I'm afraid. My coach is telling me to just go for it, to be more aggressive. So all week I've been telling myself, 'Stay calm with your stroke! I never looked where anyone else was at, but I did!'"

"When I turned around and saw my time, I knew I wasn't waiting for a phone call. I was going to states. A couple of guys I know from the Sandusky team were right there on the beach. They were cheering for me. I was so happy. I was so happy if a race is close, and, when I do, I change my stroke, going shorter and quicker rather than long and strong. He can see it's right away. I know I do it but you're afraid, and I'm afraid. My coach is telling me to just go for it, to be more aggressive. So all week I've been telling myself, 'Stay calm with your stroke! I never looked where anyone else was at, but I did!'"

Ross head coach Phil Moran was all smiles. This is the ninth straight year he has placed swimmers in the state

championships.

"I knew Elliot wanted to make states really bad, but even I didn't know how bad," he said. "At the 50-yard split, when he had a 28.19 and was ahead, I started whooping, which I do all the time. I was so happy for him. He was so happy. Second place was a 1:01.44, so Elliot won by a second, and, at that level, a second is a lifetime."

Swimmers from 10 schools participated in a breaststroke race falling apart like this one did. A guy from Bowling Green (Jeff Nelson) swam a 1:01.71 in the second heat. His seed time was a 1:03, so he pretty much set the mark early. I saw a 1:01.71 in the first heat, and, in the second heat, a guy in the third heat did 1:02 and 1:03. Two guys in the final heat with me ended up like 14th and 15th. I've been doing this since I was 6, and I can't even remember that happening," Moran said.

Hogan's 20 points from his first-place finish and seven from his 10th-place finish in the 50 freestyle put him in the Fremont team's top 10. Ross finished 10th. The Fremont Giants finished up 10th overall, compared to ninth last year when they had more qualifiers and a bigger team.

Ross' next-best boys finish came from sophomore Jake Iacobucci, who won the 100 freestyle with a personal-best time of 50.17 seconds.

Iacobucci's three-second drop in the 200 freestyle put him 11th in the race. Ross' next-best finish came from Paul Ricard of Bowling Green, who was a 13-year-old district record in the 200 freestyle with a 1:41.38.

"When a swimmer picks his or her events for sectionals, they pick the ones they think they're picking," Moran said. "This year, all the big guns went for the 200."

Seniors Brandon Spicer and co-captain Noah Grayson ended their high school careers with all personal-best times. Spicer's 50.11 in the 100 butterfly for the first time with a 59.65.

"It took four years to get here, and this is the last time I'm going to do it," said Spicer.

Grayson took nearly six seconds off his seed time for a personal best in the 200 individual medley at 2:12.71 and peeled 17 seconds off his seed time of 3:06.86 in the 500 freestyle relay.

"Now that's a taper that worked," Grayson said. "I'm not going to finish out."

On the girls' side, top times included junior Greg VanDyne's 50.10 in the 50 freestyle and 1:09.37 in the 100 breaststroke. Hogan's 22.6 as the opening leg in the 200 medley relay and Alan Gamble's 53.6 as the opening leg in the boys' 200 medley relay.

Hogan, Grayson, Iacobucci and Greg VanDyne swam their best 200 freestyle relay of the year, dropping five seconds to 1:23.77. Close and Ross were 10th. Spicer, Hogan, Grayson and Iacobucci 16th in the 400 medley relay following a three-second drop for a 1:47.09.

Tied to St. Francis with 21 qualifying swimmers in 38 events was the district's third-place team. Ross Green was second with nine boys and 235 points, and Sandusky Perkins was third with 11 boys and 187 points.

If not for the snow, we'd know...

Show in the Southwest District kept about 10 Division I girls teams from competing as scheduled. A make-up meet was set for Sunday.

The meet was delayed due to district results, 2 p.m. Sunday, came and went, and there was no phone call for the Ross girls to let them know they were on the air.

So the girls went to the mall. Six o'clock came and nothing. Nine o'clock, 10 o'clock, nothing.

The phone call finally came: There is no official word until Tuesday.

However, this much is known, according to O'CONNOR:

"I'm not sure if I'm going to be in it. In the last many years, senior captain Brittany O'Connor will be returning to state for the 100 backstroke."

And there may be more.

O'Connor, who was 10 seconds off her season-best time for a second-place finish in 59.37 in an event that saw Notre Dame's Susan Johnson shatter the district record of 58.10 with a final time of 57.97.

"She was second, I was third in the state in the backstroke, with results we gathered from friends in three of the districts," Moran said. "With only 10 teams left to swim, she's a sure bet. I wish I could have been there for her 100-yard freestyle."

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