

1944 State meet...

Weakened Ross Swimming Team Will Defend Title

Coach John Titsworth Takes Nine-Man Squad To Columbus Thursday; Has No Entry For Back Stroke And Only One In Diving, 200 Free Style

A Ross high swimming team that is but a shadow of the powerful aggregations that have represented this city in the past, will leave for Columbus Thursday afternoon to open defense of its state scholastic swimming crown, Coach John Titsworth announced today.

Weakened by graduation, service calls and illness, the Little Giant team will be composed of but nine swimmers and the school will have no entry at all in the backstroke and only one in the 200-yard free style and one in the diving, Titsworth said.

Only two members of the squad that copped the crown for the third straight time last year are on this year's team. Dick Pence will try for the breast stroke title again while Cal Bristley, who swam on the free style relay team that finished fourth will go into action again.

Losses Are Heavy

Chief losses to the Ross squad are Slick Hess, the 200-yard free style champion; Jim Martin and Del Rakes, who finished one-two in the diving, and Bill Wise and Hess who swam on the victorious medley relay team. On top of that, Bob Rosenbush who was being groomed as a back stroke contender, is ill of pneumonia.

With the Ross team materially weakened, the state meet looms as a toss-up except for a darkhorse entry from a school that doesn't even have a swimming team—Findlay. The Findlay strokers, first team to defeat the Little Giants in dual competition in two years, swims under the Y. M. C. A. banner but Coach Red Smith is expected to enter the full squad in Columbus.

Last year, with but two individual entries and one relay team, Findlay finished fourth. This year with entries in every event, they should do much better. Smith has the same boys back who scored points in the 1943 fixture plus a number of other strong contenders.

Announces Team

Lakewood, second last year, does not seem too powerful and the same is true of Canton McKinley which finished third.

More schools than ever before are expected to be represented in Columbus, either by teams or individuals, and the points may be widely scattered. Stickney of Cincinnati Western Hills, 50-yard free style champion, will compete again while Bill Knight of Massillon looms as the favorite in the back stroke.

Coach Titsworth announced

that his entries would be Jack Courtney and Allen Fisher in the 50-yard free; Dick Pence and Dan Lease in the 100-yard breast stroke; Cal Bristley in the 200-yard free; Fisher and Jack Sheldon in 100-yard free; Don Richards, diving; Warren Smith, Pence and Bill Wendler, 150-yard medley relay and Sheldon, Courtney, Bristley and Wendler in the 200-yard free style relay.

Eliminating heats will be held, where necessary, Friday and the Ross mentor was hoping he wouldn't lose too many contenders before the big swim gets underway.

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FINISH FOURTH AS FINDLAY Y TAKES TITLE

Medley Relay Team Wins But Pence Is Close Finish Victim

Dick Pence, defending state champion in the 100-yard breast stroke, was too certain that he had his specialty in the bag in the Ohio State natatorium Saturday and as a result Fremont Ross high, Ohio swimming titlists for the past three years, wound up in fourth spot.

Pence was touched out at the very finish by Carl Putrino of Cleveland East Tech, and the two points difference between first and second dropped the Little Giants from second place to the fourth notch. Pence had Putrino beat, but was slow in touching the finish line in an almost dead-heat finish.

Victory in this race wouldn't have enabled the Rossmen to retain their title and given Coach John Titzworth a dunking in the pool, however, as the Findlay Y team, swimming under the high school banner for the final time, piled up 23 points to become the new champion.

Trailing the Trojans were Lakewood and Canton McKinley, tied for second with 17 points, one more than the Little Giants were able to amass as the medley relay team of Warren Smith, Pence and Bill Wendler won that event with plenty to spare. Those points, and Pence's second, were the only ones that the weakened Fremont team could account for.

Kuntz Record Broken

The meet ran pretty much true to form. Findlay piled up its winning margin in the free style events although they were able to win but one, the 200-yard free style relay. Bob MacGregor, Bob Hillery, Ken Burns and Bud Jordahl, who won the race last year, successfully defended their title.

One new record was set with Ralph Knight, the Massillon backstroke ace, bettering the time for that event set by Junior Kuntz of Fremont, back in 1941. His winning time was 1:03. Three defending champions were entered but only one, Roy Stickney of Cincinnati Walnut Hills, was able to come through, winning the 50-yard free style. Hillery of Findlay, suffered the same fate as Pence, losing the 100-yard back stroke to Knight, who was the star of the swim.

The two big thrills of the titular meet were Putrino's victory over Pence and the battle for second place in the medley relay. The timers caught Cincinnati Xavier, Akron Buchtel and Lakewood in the identical time—1:33.4—but the judges awarded second place to Lakewood, giving them the deadlock for runner-up spot in the meet.

Lakewood's luck held after the meet as well. It pulled down the runner-up trophy from Canton on the flip of a coin.

Coaches Are Irked

While Findlay won the meet they will be unable to defend their championship next year unless school officials there change their attitude toward swimming as an interscholastic sport. The Trojans' victory didn't set well with the other competing coaches and they unanimously voted that, in the future, no team swimming under any banner except that of an accredited high school would be allowed to compete.

Although the Findlay team was composed entirely of high school students and engaged a number of other high school teams in dual meets through the season, they were officially known as the Y. M. C. A. squad.

Coach John Titzworth said after the meet that he was satisfied with the efforts expended by the Little Giants, admitting that he had not expected his team to win.

Following Fremont in fourth were the following schools: Cincinnati Walnut Hills, 14; Cleveland East Tech, 13; Massillon, 12; Akron Buchtel, 11; Columbus Aquinas, 7; Cincinnati Xavier, 7; Sandusky, 6; Maumee, 4; Columbus East, 3; Shaker Heights, 3; Cleveland Shaw, 2, and Cleveland Heights, 1.