

Delta divers add depth to program

MAKING A SPLASH: A new coach has instilled confidence, higher scores for Eagle trio.

By **ROSS PRIEST**
The Star Press

In the past, Delta's boys' swim sectional hopes have been strictly on the broad shoulders of — well, its swimmers.

Juniors Jeff Atkinson, Jake Miller and Drew Smith plan to change any further misconceptions and return the term diving to Delta's vocabulary.

"The guys have started thinking of themselves as divers — not guys who just dived for the team," Delta coach Tim Brannock said.

None of the trio had gone over the 200-mark before the season began — with Miller's personal-best 197.45 the top score among the threesome.

But with the hiring of assistant coach Nick Gayes, the Eagles' diving portion of the team has become the "deepest diving team in the state," Gayes said.

Gayes, a former diver for Lawrence North High School and now a student at Ball State, has guided the threesome to a distinction no other swimming team in the state has — three divers with scores of 200 or better, according to www.indianaswim.com.

"I knew when I interviewed him that he knew what he was doing," Brannock said of Gayes's hiring.

Brannock, a 22-year swimming coach and former diving coach during his first 9 years at Delta, handed the reins over to the Ball State junior.

Even with Brannock's strong recommendation, the members of the diving team weren't sure about their new coach, the team's third in as many years.

"We didn't like him, to be honest," Atkinson said. "We really didn't give him a chance at the start of the season."

Gayes implemented dry-land practice sessions, something unheard of by the returning divers. The out-of-the-pool regime consisted of jumping exercises on mats, long stretching exercises, stair-climbing and even video analysis of dives.

"It was very, very difficult to get started with his system," said Miller, who began the winter sport late because of Delta's long football postseason. "Once I learned how to work with him, I began to trust his style and trust in him."

With that trust came improved scores. In one week, Miller and Smith experienced large increases in their diving scores. Miller's marks went from a 209 to 229, while Smith jumped 43 points from his previous best of 171.65.

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Boys' swimming sectionals

Today and Saturday
At Hamilton Southeastern, Delta, Burris, Central, Southside, Yorktown.
At Jay County, Jay County, Blackford.
At Richmond: New Castle



ON THE FLY: Yorktown's Kyle Ruth comes up for a breath during the 100-yard butterfly at Thursday's boys' swim sectional at Hamilton Southeastern. Kurt Hostetler / The Star Press

Delta, Yorktown make splash in sectional prelims

SWIMMING SECTIONAL:
The Tigers' Kyle Ruth beat his rival and set a record in the 50 freestyle.

By **ROSS PRIEST**
The Star Press

FISHERS — First things, first. Yorktown's Kyle Ruth wanted to make sure he qualified for Saturday's championship heat at the Hamilton Southeastern sectional.

But secondly, the sophomore had his eyes focused on Delta's Patrick Bird.

Twice this season, Bird has edged Ruth in the 50-yard freestyle. Not on Thursday.

Ruth's green-tinted, Y-shaped mohawk cut through the waves like the dorsal fin of a dolphin in a pool-record performance 21.79 seconds. The personal-best mark not only was a pool record but it erased the sectional mark of 22.32 set by Bird last season.

"I really wanted it ... I went

after it," Ruth said. "I'm not even tapered yet, so it's going to be a tight race on Saturday."

Ruth followed with a 53.70 in the 100 butterfly for the third seed as Yorktown placed eight individuals and all three relays in the championship heat of the Hamilton Southeastern sectional Thursday.

Despite Ruth stealing the spotlight from Bird, Delta stayed in trophy contention with its usual deep depth.

"Everyone that swam tonight gets to come back and swim on Saturday," Delta coach Tim Brannock said. "And we're not done yet."

Delta will have 12 representatives in the championship heats, while host and favorite Hamilton Southeastern will have 14. The Eagles will have 23 individuals in the eight individual events on Saturday, along with its three divers and three relays.

But it was Ruth's pool record performance that shocked the crowd.

His mark would have been an automatic qualifying time for the state meet with one exception — Ruth will have to do it again on Saturday for it to count.

Delta set the tone on the meet's first event. The Eagles' 200 medley relay of Bird, Ryan Bowman, Jagen Arnold and Robert Sebura topped its season-best with a 1:40.11 and will be the top seed in the final.

Todd Wallace is the only Eagle individual with the top seed for the championship heat. Wallace trimmed 1.82 seconds off his season best of 51.86 in the 100 free and edged Pendleton Heights's Michael Dewitt by .04.

Ritchie Caudill of Burris continued his mastery of the 100-yard breaststroke and 200 individual medley. Caudill finished in a personal-best 2:03.75 in the IM, nearly 2 seconds faster than the second-place seed, Robert Sebura of Delta. The junior hopes to be the first Burris swimmer in the state finals in more than 25 years.

Bird gets record, but Delta still 2nd

THE STAR PRESS STAFF REPORT

The officials at the Hamilton Southeastern sectional didn't have time to change the 50-yard freestyle record on the west side of the pool.

Two days after Yorktown's Kyle Ruth set the pool and sectional mark with a 21.79 in the preliminaries, Delta's Patrick Bird reclaimed the record in the championship heat.

The Penn State-bound senior ripped through the pool in pool — and sectional — record time of 21.69, as well as a Delta record.

The 50 freestyle victory was one of three Delta victories, as the Eagles placed second to host Hamilton Southeastern 334-275.

"We had some things not go the way we would have liked," Delta coach Tim Brannock said. "But we came away with an awful lot of good things."

Delta had two individuals and the 200 medley and 400 relay teams advance to Friday's state preliminaries.

For the third time this season, Bird edged Ruth in head-to-head competition as Ruth placed second in a state-qualifying mark of 21.80.

It was a three-way horse race in the 100 butterfly as Bird and Ruth tied to stay with Hamilton Southeastern's Matt McDonald.

McDonald touched the wall first but Bird's time of 51.67, and Ruth's 52.70 were under the state-qualifying standard of 53.68.

"That's what happens when you swim with an All-American," said Brannock, referring to McDonald, who will swim at Stanford next season.

Halfway through the 100-yard freestyle, Delta's Todd Wallace was in fifth, but the senior caught up to the leaders and passed Brandon Metzner of Yorktown for a first-place finish. Wallace's time of 49.95 edged Metzner

"We had some things not go the way we would have liked. But we came away with an awful lot of good things."

Delta coach Tim Brannock



John Frye / The Star Press

SWIMMER: Delta's Robert Sebura swims the breast stroke during the 200-yard medley relay Saturday at Hamilton Southeastern.

by 0.40.

Delta's Ryan Bowman helped the Eagles put their tag on the pool and sectional marks. The senior anchored the 400 freestyle relay with teammates Wallace, Jagen Arnold and Bird to a sectional mark of 3:15.18.

"Ryan anchoring that relay was huge," Brannock said. "That was a great way to finish the meet."

Ritchie Caudill wrote his name in local history books, as the junior will be the first Burris swimmer to advance to the state finals in more than 25 years. Caudill captured the 100 breaststroke in 1:01.07.

Even with a second-place finish, Yorktown's 200 freestyle relay of Ruth, Eric Mattingly, Metzner and Charlie Sursa grabbed an automatic qualifying time with a 1:29.86.

Jay County sectional

Once again, the Patriots wore the bridesmaid's dress in their boys' swimming sectional as Norwell edged the hosts 284-246.

Caleb Bye was the only local swimmer to advance as the sophomore qualified for Tuesday's diving regional with the top score of 438.70. Bye topped Andrew Buuck of Norwell by 34 points in the 11-dive competition.

Jay County had two individual second-place finishes and took second in two relays for its best finishes.

Caleb Dann touched the wall in 2:07.20 in the 200-yard individual medley, and Kyle Weaver finished the 100 butterfly in 56.84.

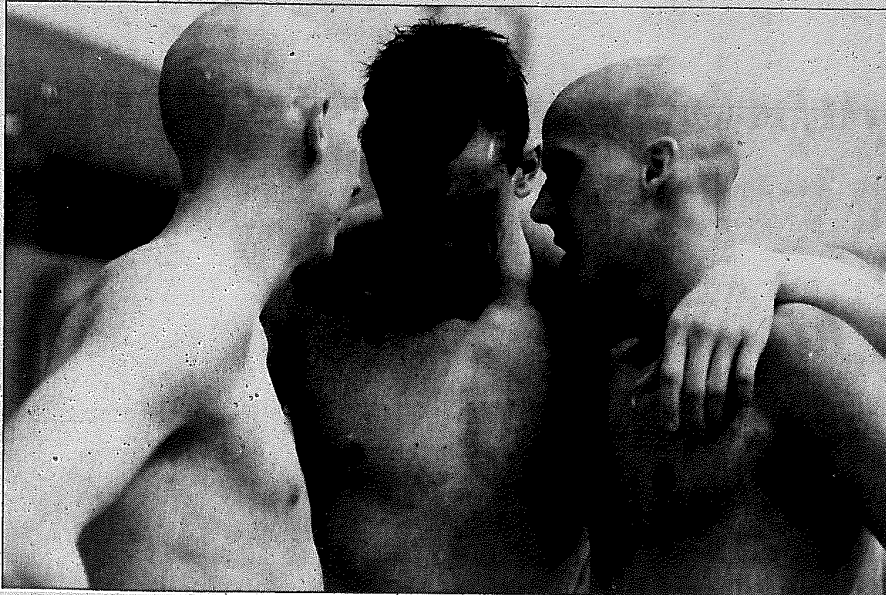
Dann and Weaver combined with John Lee and Matt Glentzer in the 300 relay, and with Derek Arnold and Ryne Fulton in the 200 medley.

Prep results

Boys' swimming Hamilton Southeastern sectional

All Fishers Ind
Top local finishers

200 medley relay — 1. Delta (Ryan Bowman, Patrick Bird, Robert Sebura, Jagen Arnold) 1:40.11; 5. Central (Scott Buckingham, Samuel Murray, Marcus Dial, Adam Alexander) 1:50.42; 8. Yorktown (Matt Roberts, Trent Lockhart, Branson Shirk, Chris Hammons) 1:50.55; 9. South (Justin Kennedy, Terry Bicknell, Paul Loebe, Robbie Duncan) 2:06.33; 200 free — 2. Bowman (Del) 1:49.81; 3. Todd Wallace (Del) 1:50.49; 5. Brian Scherrer (Cen), Charlie Sursa (Yor) 1:51.25; 9. Brandon Metzner (Cen) 1:53.48; 10. Aaron Adams (Sou) 1:56.82; 11. Michael Constant (Del) 1:58.54; 200 IM — 1. Ritchie Caudill (Bur) 2:03.75; 2. Sebura (Del) 2:05.26; 4. Eric Mattingly (Yor) 2:08.21; 6. Brandon Crawford (Del) 2:09.87; 8. Roberts (Yor) 2:12.10; 10. Manjun Pinto (South) 2:12.98; 50 free — 1. Kyle Ruth (Yor) 21.79; 2. Bird (Del) 21.91; 5. Jagen Arnold (Del) 22.69; 8. Bret Dawson (Del) 29.68; 9. Sam Murray (Cen) 23.86; 100 butterfly — 2. Bird (Del) 52.92; 3. Ruth (Yor) 53.70; 7. Wade Fisher (Del) 59.02; 9. Murray (Cen) 59.87; 10. Tom Kowalski (Bur) 1:00.26; 11. Dial (Cen) 1:00.56; 12. Drake Koger (Del) 1:00.65; 100 free — 1. Wallace (Del) 50.04; 3. Metzner (Yor) 50.82; 5. Crawford (Del) 51.01; 8. Bret Dawson (Del) 52.49; 500 free — 3. Bowman (Del) 5:01.11; 4. Sursa (Yor) 5:10.66; 5. Scherrer (Cen) 5:13.47; 7. Constant (Del) 5:23.72; 8. Matt Thomas (Del) 5:25.21; 9. Aaron Adams (South) 5:26.16; 12. Jason Allardt (Yor) 5:39.89; 200 free relay — 1. Yorktown (Ruth, Metzner, Mattingly, Sursa) 3:31.40; 2. Delta (Sebura, Wallace, Arnold, Dawson) 1:32.04; 6. Central (Dial, Murray, Alexander, Scherrer) 1:37.45; 7. South (Jeremy Sexton, Robbie Duncan, Randy Justice, Adams) 1:38.32; 100 backstroke — 4. Roberts (Yor) 58.23; 6. Mattingly (Yor) 59.59; 9. Thomas (Del) 1:02.84; 11. Andrew Dawson (Del) 1:03.91; 12. Ryan Juntunen (Del) 1:04.14; 100 breaststroke — 1. Caudill (Bur) 1:02.66; 2. Sebura (Del) 1:03.59; 5. Koger (Del) 1:05.51; 9. Shirk (Yor) 1:09.38; 11. Josh Hughes (Del) 1:10.02; 400 relay — 2. Yorktown (Ruth, Roberts, Mattingly, Sursa) 3:26.82; 3. Delta (Wallace, Bird, Arnold, Bowman) 3:26.99; 7. South (Adams, Justice, Pinto, Sexton) 3:45.29; 8. Central (Alex Golden, Scott Jackson, Buckingham, Scherrer) 3:49.88.



Erin Andert / The Star Press

TOUGH ENDING: Delta swimmers Ryan Bowman (left) and Patrick Bird (right) console their 400 freestyle relay teammate Todd Wallace after learning that the relay team was disqualified during Saturday's IHSAA boys' swimming state finals at the Indiana University Natatorium in Indianapolis.

Delta swimmers' joy cut short by DQ

By ROSS PRIEST
The Star Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Sheer exhilaration can turn to disbelief instantly.

Huddled near the finish line, a trio of Delta seniors urged teammate Jagen Arnold to touch the wall of the Indiana University Natatorium in the final event of the boys' swimming state finals.

Arnold lunged for the padding for a fourth-place finish, but for Patrick Bird, Ryan Bowman and Todd Wallace, the ecstasy was brief. Seconds later, Indiana High School Athletic Association officials disqualified the 400-yard freestyle relay for leaving the block too soon during the third exchange.

The infraction erased the Eagles' time of 3:13.22 and knocked Delta out of the top 10 in the team standings.

Even after an explanation by

IHSAA officials on the disqualification, the bitter pill was difficult to swallow.

"Two confident officials made the same call," Delta coach Tim Brannock said. "I don't agree with it, but we have to accept it. This doesn't take away from the fact our kids came out and swam some great races."

Despite the disqualification, the Eagles finished 15th overall, while Yorktown tied for 40th and Jay County was 46th in the 50-team field.

What was to serve as matter of respect for "the little school in the middle of cornfields," was just that.

"We had such a great year," Wallace said. "I really wanted to swim at the state finals, but I didn't want it to end this way."

Individual performances by Bird and Bowman set the early tone for the Eagles.

Bird took sixth place in the 50

freestyle and 100 butterfly for Delta's top finishes. The senior escaped a possible re-start after finching in the block of the 50 free. Bird touched in 21.69 and tied with Eric Prugh of North Central.

"Paddy did a heck of a job recovering from his start," said Brannock of Bird's suspicious '50 start. "He could have very well been called for a false start."

In the second event of the meet, Bowman served noticed that he should have been in the championship heat. The senior ripped through the crystal-clear blue with a season best 1:41.46 in the consolation heat.

Bowman's season-best mark would have placed fourth in championship heat between Plainfield's Chris Flanton's time of 1:40.08 and Carmel's Pete Passagno's mark of 1:41.78.

"I knew I should be in the championship heat," Bowman

said. "At the beginning of the season, I thought I could place in the top 3."

Bowman's 200 finish carried over in the 500 freestyle, as the senior held off Huntington North's Jesse Cleaver for another ninth-place finish.

While Delta continued to rack up points, Saturday's finish for Yorktown was the first time a boys' team had scored at the state meet in over 20 years, according to coach Jay Agnew.

The 200 freestyle relay of Kyle Ruth, Eric Mattingly, Brandon Metzner and Charlie Sursa placed 14th in 1:30.11, while Ruth finished the 50 free in 22.01 for 14th as well.

"We've come a long way from the start of the season," Agnew said. "This will be a good experience for our kids."

Jay County's Caleb Bye also finished 14th with a 11-dive performance of 369.30.

Delta fares well in swim prelims

THE STAR PRESS STAFF REPORT

INDIANAPOLIS — East Central Indiana advanced three individuals and two relay teams from Friday night's IHSAA state swimming finals.

Delta had a strong night. Patrick Bird qualified for the finals in two individual events and helped the Eagle 400 free relay team into the finals. Bird was fifth in the 50 free and sixth in the 100 butterfly, and Bird, Ryan Bowman, Todd Wallace and Jagen Arnold were fifth in the relay.

Those were the only swimmers to qualify for today's championship finals. Bowman qualified for the consolation finals in the 200 free and 500 free. Delta's 200 medley relay advanced and Yorktown's Kyle Ruth was 10th in the 50 free.

Jay County's Caleb Bye will also compete in today's diving finals.

Boys' swimming State finals

1: Carmel 274½, 2: North Central 194½, 3: Ft. Wayne Concordia 173, 4: Hamilton Southeastern 146, 5: Columbus North 118, 6: Plainfield 117, 7: Chesterton 101, 8: Center Grove 98½, Penn 90, 10: Munster 68, 15: Delta 45½, 40: Yorktown 9, 46: Jay County 3.

At Indianapolis

Top local finishers

200 medley relay — 16: Delta (Seburn, Hughes, Fisher, Dawson) 1:47.11, 200 freestyle — 9: Ryan Bowman (Delta) 1:41.46, 50 freestyle — 6: Patrick Bird (Delta) 21.69, 14: Kyle Ruth (Yorktown) 22.01, Diving — 14: Caleb Bye (Jay County) 369.30, 100 butterfly — 6: Bird (Del) 51.66, 500 freestyle — 9: Bowman (Del) 4:41.66, 200 freestyle relay — 14: Yorktown (Ruth, Eric Mattingly, Brandon Metzner, Charlie Sursa) 1:30.11, 400 freestyle relay — DQ: Delta (Bird, Bowman, Todd Wallace, Jagen Arnold)