

Salem's Orris finishes 2nd in pair of final races

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

The Class A swim championships were a bittersweet experience for Plymouth Salem standout Ron Orris.

At the state finals Saturday in East Lansing, Orris left no doubt he is one of the best high school swimmers in Michigan.

But the painful other side is he can't claim to be the best. At least not yet.

Orris barely missed winning a state championship in Michigan State University's McCaffrey Natatorium. He was denied that honor by the smallest of margins in not one but two events.

"Getting touched out twice is not a good feeling," Orris said. "There are always things you could have done to go faster. Nobody is perfect."

"It doesn't do any good to talk about it. I just know what I have to do next year."

IF BEING No. 2 in the state in two events was the bad news, the good news is Orris will get another shot at being No. 1. He's only a junior. That goal will be high on the priority list.

"Oh, yeah," Orris said. "I'm ready for next year. I want it now."

Orris taking second in two events and the 400-yard freestyle relay team of Mike Hill, Fred Seidelman, Rick Stetshe and Orris finishing third helped propel the Rocks to seventh place in the 48-team field.

"I'm really happy," Salem coach Chuck Olson said. "Anytime you're in the top 10 in the state that's pretty darn good."

Livonia Churchill, led by senior Mark Papierski, was 20th in the team standings, and Bedford Catholic Central, paced by sophomore Troy Shumate, 21st. Papierski made the championship heat in two events, and Shumate won a pair of consolation races.

Orris was runner-up to double-winner Alec Mull of Lansing Eastern in the 200 freestyle, getting nosed out by .12 seconds. Mull swam 1:40.32 and Orris 1:40.44. Mull later defeated Novi star Jon Cohen by .19 seconds in the 500 freestyle.

In the butterfly, East Lansing's David Klaviter edged Orris by an even closer margin. Klaviter went 51.20, Orris 51.27.

"THEY WERE great times," Orris said. "I'm happy with (the results) and disappointed all the same."

"I can't complain. I got the times I wanted and qualified for the senior nationals. That was one of my goals."

swimming

Olson has no doubts Orris will accept the challenge he is presented with in the wake of Saturday's outcome.

"Mull was the swimmer of the meet, and I think Orris was that close to being that swimmer," he said. "He'll have to work a little harder, and if anybody needs to work harder I think Ron Orris is the swimmer to do that."

"His times were all improved. He swam well and that's all you can expect to do."

In the freestyle relay, the Rocks had the best seed time and improved that by more than two seconds in the prelims on Friday.

In an ironic finish, Salem dropped another second off that time in the final, swimming 3:14.32, but the Rocks still ended up third behind state champion East Kentwood and Bloomfield Hills Andover. By the time Orris entered the water on the anchor leg, the Falcons had more than half-a-length lead.

"WE WENT faster today and dropped a spot," Olson said. "We did the times. I thought we did everything we could. We had a rough start in the medley relay, but everything after that went real well. Fourteen is not too shabby in the free relay."

In the individual medley, Papierski, who finished fifth, was among the leaders in the backstroke portion — his best of the four strokes — but Cohen pulled away from the rest of the field over the final two.

While the Novi swimmer streaked to a 1:51.95 time, Papierski, who had a career best 1:58.85, was within 1.30 of second-place Jon Moore of Okemos and .54 behind fourth-place Klaviter.

Amazingly, Papierski was fifth in the event in the West Lakes Activities Association meet and finished the same at state.

"We didn't taper him for that meet," Churchill coach Lawrence Hein said. "We geared everything for this meet. Mark is the kind of person who gets keyed up with all the competition that's here."

"The indicator of performance is not your place. He was fourth (in the state) last year and fifth this year, but his time was faster."

Papierski later capped his career at Churchill with a sixth-place finish in the backstroke. His time was 55.24.

"HE WAS IN the top six in both events," Hein said. "You can't ask for anymore than that. All in all (the IM) was a good race, considering the people who were in that race with him and he lowered his time."

Shumate won the 200 and 500 freestyle consolation heats with relative ease. In fact, his final times would have placed him in the championship race, but it doesn't work that way. Swimmers have to qualify for either heat during prelims.

In the 200, Shumate swam 1:43.71, giving him about a 1/4-second advantage over Paul Murray of Ann Arbor Pioneer. In the 500, it was much more lopsided as Shumate cruised to a 4:40.55 time, finishing far ahead of Andover's Mark D'Errico (4:46.03).

"I just felt a lot better than I did in the prelims," he said, adding he was feeling ill on Friday. "I had a kick today. That was basically my race."

Shumate, who made the junior national cut in the 500, has two more chances to be in the championship heat and maybe win a state title, but that was little consolation Saturday.

"I was hoping to be in there this year," he said. "I was seeded fifth in the 500 and third in the 200."

"I get a little more pumped up for the finals than the consolations. I know I could have gone under 4:40, because I always swim better against competition."

HILL, A SENIOR, aided Salem's cause by taking ninth place in the 100 freestyle. The consolation heat was halted after the swimmers had gone almost one length, and Hill was nearly strangled by the nylon rope that is dropped to signify a restart. He survived that and the delay to swim 48.62.

"He's somewhat overlooked because of Ron, but he handles it very maturely," Olson said. "He had a football injury a couple years ago and worked real hard to come back from that. He's a tough competitor."

In addition, Plymouth Canton's medley relay team of Scott Swartzwelder, Jeff Homan, Bryce Anderson and Mitch Timberlake scored with a 12th-place finish (1:43.10), and Catholic Central's freestyle quartet of Shumate, Mike Hoeflein, Jim Kovach and Alan Asfari netted 11th place (3:19.36).



RANDY BOHART/staff photographer

Catholic Central sophomore Troy Shumate captured seventh place in the 200- and 500-yard freestyles at the Class A meet in East Lansing Saturday.

The Shamrock star blew away the competition in both consolation heats.

Stingrays coach remains optimistic going into finals

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The team's contingent of 15-16 girls includes many names that are familiar to area swim fans: Kerry Duran, Becky Wignist, Nicole Drake, Gwen Rowlands, Kara Goetz, Liz DeMatia, Katie Knipper and Karen Neyer. Doran, a student at North Farmington, won the 200 and 400 IM titles in long-course swimming last summer.

Another important swimmer for the Stingrays will be Linda Goldstein (13-14). The West Bloomfield freshman won the Class A title in the 500 freestyle last December and was second in the 200 freestyle. She will swim in six events and could be the high-point swimmer in that bracket.

Carl Kozicki, who won two butterfly events, and James Leslie, the backstroke winner, were scoring leaders in the 11-12 meet. Tom Swanniger, Keith Lee and Devon Fekete help make the Stingrays strong in 13-14 boys, and Eric Newton, David Notarius, Danny Knipper, Scott Mayotte and Mike Hoeflein are the ones to watch at the 15-16 level.

The Stingrays have no 17-18 boys and only three girls in that age group. But they have a quality girls trio that consists of Alissa Gowing, Christie Duthie and Cindy Grush.

"I'D SAY OUR chances are good, but BBA has a good

team and is well coached," Leonhardt said. "It's going to be a real good meet and, hopefully, when it's all over the Stingrays will maintain their title."

Atlanta, which hasn't won the state championship since the start of the decade, has a pair of excellent swimmers in Laura Fischer (17-18) and Dana Bernstein (15-16).

Fischer won the high school title in the 50 and 100 freestyles while swimming for Birmingham Groves, and Bernstein, a teammate at Groves, is the defending club champ in the 200 butterfly. She also swims freestyle.

Much of BBA's hopes in the 13-14 competition rest with Liz Huckabay, Jill Connors, Kim Willson, Amy Jarchow, Raffi Karapetian, Eric Matuszak and Kevin Hafner.

The team's top 15-16 boys are Sam Kim and Don Perella, both of whom helped Bloomfield Hills Andover to a fourth-place finish in the Class A high school meet last Saturday. Mike Dobrovic and Doug Waffan.

In addition, to the Stingrays and BBA, the Oakland Live Yers and the Royal Oak Penguins are considered top contenders in the 50-plus-team meet. Ann Louis Francis and Christie Wicke, both in 15-16 girls, are excellent swimmers for the Live Yers, and the Penguins are led by Jason Gessert and Mike Zintek, both in 17-18 boys.

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