

# OU tankers look for quality to dunk depth

By C.J. Risak  
staff writer

The preliminaries are over. Oakland University's men's swim team cleared its last barrier — if one can refer to the Great Lakes Conference meet as such, considering OU has won every GLIAC swim title — last weekend at Grand Valley State, capturing firsts in 16 of 18 events.

How convincing was the victory? And how good is OU? "Ten of our top swimmers didn't compete (in the GLIAC meet)," said Pioneer coach Pete Hovland. "They had already qualified for the NCAA meet in their events, so we left them home to train."

On Sunday, Hovland and 19 Pioneers depart for the State University of New York at Buffalo. They take with them high hopes of capturing the school's second NCAA Division II championship.

Hovland called defending champ California-Bakersfield the favorite, but he likes OU's chances — for several reasons.

"I think, at this point, Bakersfield is best," he said. "We have more quality swimmers, but not the depth. Bakersfield's 12-through-18 swimmers should score more points than ours."

HOW MANY more is the question. Or, put another way, can the Pioneers' quality supply a big enough cushion?

There are other factors that could have an impact. "The things we do have going for us are, first, it's in Buffalo, which is only four hours away. We'll have lots of people there

cheering for us. Plus, we don't have to get adjusted to a time change, travel and climate."

All three could have an adverse affect on Bakersfield. But the defending champs are still strong; they won easily last year, scoring 478 points to OU's 248.

But this is a different Pioneer team. The quality Hovland spoke of starts with senior Mark VanderMey, a two-time NCAA II champion in the 100-yard breaststroke. VanderMey also finished second twice in the 200 breast at the NCAA II meet, and was second in the 200 individual medley last season.

VanderMey is a heavy favorite in both breast events this time, and has a good shot at a third individual title in the 200 IM.

He leads a strong contingent in the breast events, with sophomore Jim Surwiecek (from Redford Catholic Central and Farmington Hills), who has the second fastest time nationally in the 100 this season, and Junior Rob Carman (from Troy Athens). Both could finish in the top six in the 200.

AND YET, the breaststroke events aren't OU's best, according to Hovland. Butterfly could be Juniors Mike Naton and Eric Dresbach could place in the top three in both the 100 and 200 fly, freshman Mike Tumej (from North Farmington) has a shot at the top six in both.

Junior Mark McDowell's 50.5 clocking in the 100 puts him among the nation's best, and freshman John Kovach (from CC and Garden City) could score in the 200.

"We are strong there," admitted Hovland. "We've got to do some

damage." In the backstroke, freshman Hilton Woods, senior Rich Swoboda (a transfer from California Polytechnic at San Luis Obispo), senior Doug Cleland and freshman David Nack all have a chance to score points in the 100. Woods and Swoboda are the top two in the nation.

Swoboda, the defending NCAA II champion in the 200 and runner-up in the 100, Nack — who has the fastest time in the 200 in the nation this year — and Kovach anchor hopes in the 200. Much may depend on Swoboda's health; he was out all of January with mononucleosis, but regained enough strength to qualify in three events at the GLIAC meet.

THE IM EVENTS will go good, with VanderMey, Dresbach, Nack, Cleland and Naton all top-six possibilities. VanderMey and Dresbach could both finish in the top three. Swoboda, who placed second in the 400 IM a season ago, senior Jeff Cooper and Nack again could crack the

top six in the 400 IM. So far, OU's chances seem outstanding. However...

"It is our weakest event," said Hovland of the freestyle. "And it's Bakersfield's strongest. That's why I'm giving them the edge."

Woods is OU's main man. He has a strong chance to win the 50, and should place in the top three in the 100. Junior Dave Rogowski should also finish in the top six in the 50 and top 12 in the 200 in the nation this year, with senior Steve Ramsey and sophomore Scott Seeley adding depth in the 50, 100 and 200.

Distance free is where OU is weakest. Junior Erik Strom, Tumej and Cooper need to finish in the top 12 in the 500 and 1,650 if the Pioneers are to keep Bakersfield from running away with it.

THE 500 FREE could be the key event, Hovland said. "It's the first event of the first day, and Bakersfield is strong there. We don't want to let them get on a roll. The first three events of the first day could

make the difference." OU does have an edge over Bakersfield in diving. Junior Mark Knapp could finish in the top 12 on the one-meter board, and senior Mark Duff — eighth on the three-meter last season — should score on both boards this time.

"If we can just hold our own in the free events," said Hovland. Inexperience in several key events could hurt the Pioneers; Hovland must count on a freshman, Woods, as his key freestyler.

Still, it shapes up as a two-team fight for the title. Cal State-Northridge, Clarion and Cal State-Chico will fight it out for the next three spots.

OU CHAMPIONS at the GLIAC meet started with VanderMey, who won the maximum of 24 titles in his four-year career and earned GLIAC most valuable performer honors. His individual victories came in the 100 breast (58.21), the 200 breast

(2:03.77) and the 400 IM (4:11.05). Woods won three times, too: the 50 free (21.13), the 100 free (46.73) and the 100 back (53.17). McDowell won both the 100 (52.36) and 200 (1:55.39) fly. Duff captured both the one-meter (449.65 points) and three-meter (537.10 points) boards. Seeley was first in the 200 free (1:43.62). Nack won the 200 free (2:00.28) and John Monroe took the 200 IM (2:00.18).

The Pioneers won all three relays: the 800 free (6:59.62), the 400 free (3:06.36) and the 400 medley (3:27.09).

The only other winner was Grand Valley's Rich Kramer (from Birmingham Seabrook), who was first in both the 500 (4:38.80) and 1,650 (16:15.57) free.

OU finished with 691 points. Ferris State was next with 385, followed by Wayne State (313), Grand Valley (193) and Michigan Tech (159).



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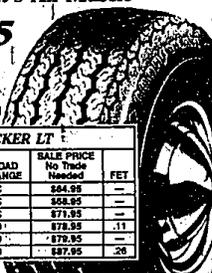
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