

Mark Campbell
ChurchillDan Belanger
FarmingtonPaul Magoulick
Redford CCJason Fowler
CantonRodolfo Palma
SalemJoe Ervin
SalemJon Carlson
ChurchillKevin Rainke
Redford CCRandy Cobb
Franklin

Swimming in quality

Observer's best rise to the challenge

BY C.J. RISAK
STAFF WRITER

There was a reason Plymouth-Salem was rated the Observer's best boys swim team since the start of the season. One might argue talent — and certainly make a case for it. But the truth is, singular talent supposedly reaches its peak at the state swim finals. Salem did not score a point in individual events at state.

What made the Rocks the best was its depth of talent. Their individuals may not have been the best, but they still had more good swimmers than anyone.

The proof was in the relays. Salem outscored all other Observer teams at the state by placing all three of its relays in the top 10.

That's why all three Rock relays were selected to the all-Observer first team.

Individually, one could not ignore the accomplishments of Livonia Churchill freestylers Jon Carlson and Mark Campbell at state. And Redford Catholic Central's Paul Magoulick stood out after scoring in two events.

Then there's Livonia Franklin's Randy Cobb and Plymouth-Canton's Jason Fowler, both claiming seventh-place finishes.

All considered, it added up to a strong season for Observerland squads. And a strong all-Observerland team, led by coach-of-the-year Ken Stark of Livonia Churchill.

Stark guided the Chargers to a 5-0 slate and a first-place finish in the Western Lakes Activities Association's Western Division, then coached season-best performances at state meet from qualifiers Carlson and Campbell.

FIRST TEAM

Plymouth-Salem, 200-yard medley relay: John McLanaghan, Andy Dettling, Mark Detting and Dave Bracht. Third at the Western Lakes Activities Association meet in 1:41.29 — then relayed back to knock 120 seconds off that time to finish ninth at the state meet (1:40.0). "The medley relay was a solid event for Salem all season," said coach Chuck Olson. "We used many different combinations of swimmers, with these four proving to be one of the best in the state."

Mark Campbell, Livonia Churchill, 200-yard freestyle: A junior, Campbell didn't just peak at season's end — he was strong throughout. But his top-notch stroke, he was at his best when it counted most.

Carlson finished eighth at state meet in the 200 free in 1:44.17. He was second to teammate Jon Carlson at the Western Lakes Activities Association meet in the 200, and he was the 100 free at league best time — 48.69. "Mark has a lot of talent," said coach Ken Stark. "He's a hard worker and really focuses on his end-of-the-year goals. He was very proud of his achievements (this season), but we're looking forward to next year."

Dan Belanger, Farmington, 200-yard individual medley: Belanger, a junior, was at his best at season's end. He won the 200 IM at the WLA meet with a best time performance (2:02.22), then beat that at state meet with a preliminary time of 2:01.37 — which would have placed 12th had he qualified for the final.

"Dan has been one of the most coachable athletes I have ever been involved with," said Farmington coach Rose Bledy. "He looks to be one of the most well-balanced swimmers ever to be coached by me."

Those feelings are shared — Belanger

has already been voted team captain for next season.

Paul Magoulick, Redford Catholic Central, 50-yard freestyle: Magoulick certainly ranks as one of the area's premier swimmers. The Navy-bound senior was a double winner at the Catholic League meet in the 50 (22.04) and 100 (49.06) free, and was a two-event scorer at state, placing sixth in the 50 (22.01) and 11th in the 100 (48.46). "I thought he had a real good season," said CC coach Jon Teal. "He learned a lot about swimming this season, what made his stroke go best as far as technique is concerned. He'll do real well at Navy."

Jason Fowler, Plymouth-Canton, diving: It's not often a diver is selected as a team captain. Fowler — a senior — was, and not just for his diving. He often swam relays for the Chargers.

But it was in diving that he excelled. Fowler never lost in a dual meet this season. He had the best six-dive score in the state by placing first. His best for the season was 278.75 points.

At the WLA finals, he broke the school, pool and league marks in 11-dive score, finishing first with 502.15 points. He ended up fourth at regionals and seventh at state, scoring 398.40 points.

Rodolfo Palma, Plymouth-Salem, 100-yard butterfly: A senior, Palma waited until after the WLA finals to earn an individual spot at the state meet. He qualified at a specially-sanctioned meet at Salem the week after league finals, going 55.10.

Palma finished with an outstanding season, capping it with a first-place swim in the 100 by at the WLA meet. He also had strong performances in the 100 breaststroke and 200 IM.

A team co-captain, Palma was part of three consecutive league championship squads. An "outstanding student athlete, great worker and teammate," according to Olson, Palma was the 1995 coach's award winner.

Joe Ervin, Plymouth-Salem, 100-yard freestyle: Ervin reached the state meet by qualifying in the 50-yard and 100-yard free and in the 200-yard and 400-yard free relays.

A senior co-captain, Ervin's best times were 22.17 in the 50 and 48.11 in the 100.

"He was one of the best four-year participants for Plymouth-Salem," said Olson. "He'd do any event, whatever the team needs."

Ervin also was a coach's award winner.

Jon Carlson, Livonia Churchill, 500-yard freestyle: Carlson enjoyed the best state meet of any Observerland swimmer. The senior placed sixth in the 200-yard free (1:43.64) and finished eighth in the 500 free (8:44.31).

His only losses at those distances did not come until both the 200 and 500 at the WLA finals, which is hardly surprising. He was among the top three in both at each of the last three league meets. He holds Churchill records in the 100, 200 and 500.

"Jon was one of the most dedicated and hardest workers ever to swim for me," said Stark. "He set his goals high at the beginning of the season and worked hard to achieve those goals."

Plymouth-Salem, 200-yard freestyle relay: Joe Ervin, Eric Seidelman, John McLanaghan and Dave Bracht made this one of the state's most prized relays. They finished first at the WLA meet in 1:30.52, then trimmed nearly three seconds off that time to collect a third place at state meet.

"The 200 free relay was Salem's strongest event for 1995," said Olson. "They were underestimated during the dual-meet season."

Kevin Rainke, Redford Catholic Central, 100-yard backstroke: Rainke is a junior, a sophomore, second, he accomplished all this while missing a month with a pulled knee ligament.

"He had a great season," said Teal. "He's a great swimmer with tons of po-

tenial. I'm looking forward to having him two more years."

Randy Cobb, Livonia Franklin, 100-yard breaststroke: Cobb, a senior, had a few bumps in the road during his season, but it certainly finished well when he won the consolation final at the state meet in 1:02.03.

Cobb was unbeaten in dual meets this season in the 100 breast, but North Farmington's Phil Zald edged him at the WLA finals. Still, Cobb bounced back with his best swim of the season — and a Franklin team record — at state.

"His intensity at practice and his winning performances during meets spurred the remaining team members to challenge themselves and attain numerous personal bests," said Franklin coach Jean Pritchard.

Plymouth-Salem, 400-yard freestyle relay: This was the third Salem relay to make significant drops when it counted most — at the state finals. Joe Ervin, Tim Buchanan, Eric Seidelman and Dave Bracht were second at the WLA finals in 3:20.27.

Then at the state meet, the Rocks were clocked at 3:15.31 — nearly five seconds better and good for a ninth-place finish.

"The 400 free relay proved many times during the 1995 season that the Salem freestylers could finish any meet strong with many different combinations," said Olson.

SECOND TEAM

Uwea Stevenson, 200-yard medley relay: Brian Butrico, Ted Burmeister, Chris Teeters and Jeff Buckler had perhaps the fastest team in the area. Problem was, at state meet they were disqualified for a jump start — after a lengthy debate.

Certainly this team was among the state's top-10. The set of Spartans qualified second at the WLA meet to North Farmington, then beat the Raiders in the final to claim the league crown in 1:40.91. It is the second straight season as all-Observer for these Spartans.

Eric Seidelman, Plymouth-Salem, 200-yard freestyle: After an outstanding season in which he qualified for state in the 50, 100 and 200 free and in the 200-yard and 400-yard free relays, Seidelman, a senior, came up just short of making the top-12 at state in the 200 free (1:37). Even though he 1:48.26 was two seconds faster than his previous best. His efforts earned him MVP honors for Salem this season. "Eric had an outstanding career at Salem," said Olson.

Rob Grant, Livonia Churchill, 200-yard individual medley: Grant, a junior, set his goals prior to the season — finish in the top two at the league meet, win the IM and qualify for state. He did both, taking second at league and placing 10th at the state finals in 2:22.59.

Grant reached the state meet by improving his 200 IM time after just missing state qualifying last year. "I'm very proud of him. He did this time. I can't wait to see how he does next year."

Dave Bracht, Plymouth-Salem, 80-yard freestyle: A senior, Bracht missed qualifying for the top-12 at state by less than one tenth of a second. He was 1:04 in 22.10. He did collect the WLA crown in the 80, winning in 22.43. He has also been part of Salem's 200 free relay, which was third this year and won the state title last year.

"Dave is another fine student athlete for Salem," said Olson, noting his 3.5 grade-point average. "He's one of the best freestyle sprinters in the area and state."

Jeff Thomas, Farmington, diving: The best news for Farmington fans is that Thomas has two more seasons ahead of him. Considering he finished fifth at the WLA meet (385.40 points) and qualified for regionals, his future points will be high in the 100-yard free. Jeff has wonched very hard and has achieved every goal set by me this season," said Bledy.

Drew Socha, North Farmington, 100-yard butterfly: For the past couple of years, Socha, a senior, has been among the top swimmers in the area in the 200 individual medley and in the 100 by. He finished first at the WLA finals in the 200 (2:02.81). He's best time in the event was 2:02.16.

In the 100 by, Socha placed third at the WLA meet in a season's best time of 59.78.

Scott Brown, Farmington, 100-yard freestyle: Brown's final season at Farmington he's a senior — was his best. He turned in a career-best time in the 100 free (49.11), an event he finished third in (49.58) at the WLA meet. Brown was also second in the WLA in the 100 backstroke (1:17.71).

"Scott was the best leader and team player that Farmington High School has ever had coached by Rose Bledy," said Bledy.

1995 ALL-OBSERVER BOYS SWIM TEAM

First team individuals

200 free: Mark Campbell (Churchill)
200 IM: Dan Belanger (Farmington)
80 free: Paul Magoulick (Redford CC)
100 free: Joe Ervin (Salem)
100 free: Jon Carlson (Churchill)
800 free: Jon Carlson (Churchill)
100 back: Kevin Rainke (Redford CC)
100 breast: Randy Cobb (Franklin)

Relays

200 medley: Salem (Jon McLanaghan, Andy Dettling, Mark Detting, Dave Bracht)
200 freestyle: Salem (Joe Ervin, Eric Seidelman, John McLanaghan, Dave Bracht)
400 freestyle: Salem (Joe Ervin, Tim Buchanan, Eric Seidelman, Dave Bracht)

Second team individuals

200 free: Eric Seidelman (Salem)
200 IM: Rob Grant (Churchill)
80 free: Dave Bracht (Salem)
100 free: Jeff Thomas (Farmington)
100 free: Drew Socha (N. Farmington)
100 free: Scott Brown (Farmington)
800 free: Tim Buchanan (Salem)
100 back: John McLanaghan (Salem)
100 breast: Phil Zald (N. Farmington)

Relays

200 medley: Stevenson (Dan Dutton, Ted Burmeister, Chris Teeters, Jeff Buckler)
200 freestyle: N. Farmington (Jason Speers, Drew Socha, Phil Zald, Charlie Jacobs)
400 freestyle: Farmington (Dan Belanger, Steve Scania, Scott Brown, John Hawkins)

Coach of the year

Ken Stark (Churchill)

Honorable mention: Sotomowski (Redford CC), Chad Crosby (Stevenson), Andy Wong (Stevenson), the Morgan (Salem), Jason Baker (John Glenn), Matt Ferguson (Wayne Memorial), Brian Green (Redford CC), Jason Goring (Canton), Jason McLanaghan (Canton), Jason Naepe (Canton), Scott Mauder (Canton), Greg Tracy (Redford CC).

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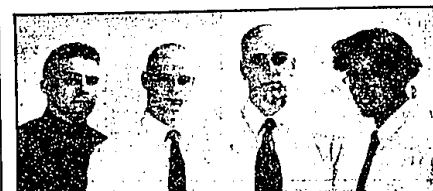
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200 medley relay (from left): Salem's Andy Dettling, John McLanaghan, Dave Bracht, Mark Detting.



200 free relay (from left): Salem's Dave Bracht, Eric Seidelman, John McLanaghan, Joe Ervin.



400 free relay (from left): Salem's Eric Seidelman, Dave Bracht, Tim Buchanan, Joe Ervin.



200 medley relay (from left): Stevenson's Ted Burmeister, Jeff Buckler, Brian Butrico, Chris Teeters.



200 free relay (from left): North Farmington's Drew Socha, Charlie Jacobs, Phil Zald, Jason Speers.



400 free relay (from left): Farmington's Scott Brown, John Hawkins, Steve Scania, Dan Belanger.

Eric Seidelman
SalemRob Grant
ChurchillDave Bracht
SalemJeff Thomas
FarmingtonDrew Socha
N. FarmingtonScott Brown
FarmingtonTim Buchanan
SalemJohn McLanaghan
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