



Keith Falk  
Livonia Stevenson

Joe Bublitz  
Livonia Stevenson

Matt Zald  
North Farmington

Andrew Locke  
Plymouth Salem

Joe Lebovic  
North Farmington

James McPartlin  
Westland John Glenn

Ryan Meekins  
Catholic Central

Brian Mortons  
Plymouth Salem

Devin Hopper  
Farmington

## All-Observer

### Western Lakes trio dominates honors team

The Big Three in Overland — Plymouth Salem, Livonia Stevenson and North Farmington — had a dominating influence on the 1999 All-Observer swimming and living team.

All three had successful years. Salem won its seventh straight Western Lakes Activities Association title; North Farmington was undefeated in dual meets with victories over the other two, and Stevenson had the highest finish at the state meet.

In the Class A championships, the Spartans were 10th, Raiders 11th and Rocks 12th with four points separating the three.

Each team has four individuals on the All-Observer first and second teams. Salem relays earned two first-team berths; all three North Farmington relays were recognized and one Stevenson relay.

This year's all-area team has five repeat selections — Stevenson's Keith Falk and Joe Bublitz, Redford Catholic's Ryan Meekins, North Farmington's Matt Zald and Salem's Brian Mortons.

Zald, Meekins and Falk scored in two individual events each at the state meet. Salem's Andrew Locke, Westland John Glenn's James McPartlin and Bublitz scored in one place.

The 1999 All-Observer team:

#### FIRST-TEAM INDIVIDUALS

Keith Falk, 240 freestyle, Stevenson: Falk, a four-time member of the All-Observer team, finished third in the 200 freestyle (1:42.15) and sixth in the 500 freestyle (4:41.1) at the state meet. He was the WLAA champion in both events.

His leadoff time of 47.43 in the 400 freestyle relay would have put him 11th in the 100 freestyle at the state meet.

Falk's statement time in the 200 freestyle is a school record. The four-time all-star scored nine times in the state meet (six individual swims and three relays).

"Keith is one of the best swimmers ever at Stevenson High," coach Doug Buckler said. "He's a very hard worker, and he always gives his all for the team."

"Keith can swim all the events and excels at all of them. He's a leader in and out of the pool. He is very disciplined in his training and will do very well at the next level."

Joe Bublitz, 200 IM, Stevenson: Bublitz finished third in the individual medley at the state meet with a time of 1:53.82 and has a chance to post an All-American time.

He also was the Western Lakes champion in the 200 IM and finished second in the backstroke (a school record in 54.38).

Stevenson's 400 freestyle relay team also took 10th in Class A as Bublitz recorded an impressive 100 split of 46.43.

"Joe's time in the 200 IM is the fastest I've ever coached," Buckler said. "Joe is just a sophomore, but he is already one of the best swimmers in Stevenson history."

"I look for great things out of Joe the next two years. He's very coachable and is a great all-around man."

"You will see great times out of Joe before his career is over at Stevenson."

Matt Zald, 80 freestyle, N. Farmington: Zald finished fifth in the state and broke his own school record in the Class A prelims with a time of 21.54. He also set a North Farmington pool record of 21.68.

Zald was the Oakland County and Western Lakes champion in the 50; he was undefeated in dual meets. Zald also placed 15th in the 100 freestyle (1:47.64) at the state meet.

Andrew Locke, 80 freestyle, Salem: Locke had the fastest 50 freestyle time in the area, swimming 21.19 in the state-meet prelims. He placed sixth in

#### SWIMMING

the state finals and was the WLAA runner-up.

Locke, who was named MVP of the Salem team, was on the All-America 200 freestyle relay team last year. He was All-WLAA this year in the medley relay, 100 freestyle and 400 freestyle relay.

"Andrew has been one of the area's best sprinters the past four years," coach Chuck Olson said. "As a senior, he proved to be one of the best in the state."

Joe Lebovic, diving, N. Farmington: Lebovic was undefeated in dual meets with a high score of 261.75, which is also an Overland record. He placed seventh in the Oakland County meet (337.85) and the regional (366.95), the latter qualifying him for state. Lebovic was a four-time qualifier for the county meet.

James McPartlin, butterfly, Westland John Glenn: McPartlin capped an outstanding career by finishing eighth in the 100 butterfly at the state meet with an area-best time of 52.64. He was the Western Lakes champion in the butterfly (54.57).

Glenn's MVP also finished fourth in the Western Lakes in the 200 freestyle (1:50.34). McPartlin also excels in the classroom, carrying a cumulative 3.85 grade-point average.

"James has had an outstanding swimming and academic career at Glenn," coach Jim Daniel said. "He is one of the best swimmers in the school's history. Young men like James don't come into your program often. We will miss him very much."

Ryan Meekins, 100 freestyle, Redford CC: Meekins set a school record in the 100 freestyle (1:40.58), and he qualified for the state meet in the 100 and 200 freestyle.

Meekins placed sixth in the 100 freestyle (1:47.82) and 15th in the 200 freestyle (5:46.37) at state. He was second in the 50 and 100 freestyle at the Catholic League meet.

"Ryan is a very talented, dedicated kid," coach Danny Krieger said. "His work habits are incredible, and the result of his hard work earned him a variety record and two places at the state meet. We have only begun to see what Ryan is capable of doing."

Adam Mortons, 400 freestyle, Salem: Mortons is a two-time state qualifier in the 500 freestyle and had one of the area's best times at 4:56.94. He finished third in the WLAA meet.

"Brian has been one of the leaders in training his first two years at Plymouth Salem," Olson said. "Brian has been a top performer in the area and, I believe, is determined to be a top performer in the state the next two years."

Devin Hopper, backstroke, Farmington: Hopper was named the MVP of the Farmington team and was the high-point scorer for the Falcons. His best time in the backstroke was 55.81, breaking his own school record. Hopper was third in the WLAA meet and was a state qualifier.

"Devin has shown outstanding leadership qualities and is a team captain next year," Farmington coach Ross Bandy said.

Adam Farber, breaststroke, N. Farmington: Farber swam the fastest breaststroke time (1:02.68) in Overland during a dual meet with Salem. He was undefeated in duals and qualified for the county and state meets. He was second in the WLAA behind Northville's Mark Kowalski.

#### FIRST-TEAM RELAYS

200 medley, Salem: Eric Lynn, Andrew Locke, Paul Perez and Aaron Shelton were 10th in the state meet and second in the WLAA. Their state-meet time of 1:39.9 was the best in Overland and merits All-America consideration. All four swimmers have 3.0 or better grade points; Locke leads the way with a 3.6.

"These four young men always got the Salem team going in the first event with consistent high-energy perfor-

mances," Olson said.

200 freestyle, Salem: Andrew Locke, Matt Casillas, Aaron Shelton and Mike Johnson won the WLAA championship and finished fifth in the Class A finals. Their time of 1:27.28 at the state meet was the best in Overland this year.

400 freestyle, N. Farmington: Brandon Digis, Matt Zald, Jim Gabriel and Mark Wachsborg placed eighth in the state meet with a time of 3:14.23. The Raiders would've been WLAA champions but were disqualified. They also set a North Farmington pool record of 3:18.51.

#### SECOND-TEAM INDIVIDUALS

Matt Casillas, 200 freestyle, Salem: Casillas was a state qualifier in the 200 freestyle, had one of the area's best times at 1:49.10 and finished third in the WLAA. The team captain also was a member of Salem's state-qualifying 200 and 400 freestyle relay teams.

"Matt has been one of the most improved swimmers on the Salem team the past two years," Olson said. "His abilities in any stroke at any distance make him very valuable to the team success. This is why he has been important in Salem winning the WLAA all four years."

Paul Perez, 200 IM, Salem: Perez had the top Overland time after the Stevenson duo of Keith Falk and Joe Bublitz at 2:04.26. At the WLAA meet, he was third in the IM with that time, as well as second in the butterfly (55.64). Perez also was a member of Salem's all-state medley and 400 freestyle relay teams.

"Paul had an outstanding conference meet with four swims being all-conference," Olson said. "His versatility allows for so much flexibility in our lineups that the team success is easy to understand. Paul is going to be even more important the next two years."

Chris McFarland, diving, Westland John Glenn: McFarland set a school record this season with a six-dive total of 257.20 points. He also finished sixth at the regional with an 11-dive total of 377.60 en route to a 28th-place finish at the state meet. McFarland also took third at the Western Lakes meet.

"Chris has one of the toughest diving lists in the state," Glenn assistant coach Randy Ferguson said. "He improved tremendously this year and will be a top-12 contender in the state next year."

Brett Meconis, butterfly, Redford CC: Meconis proved to be one of the state's best freshmen, qualifying for the Class A meet in the butterfly. His time of 54.39 seconds was 22nd at the state meet.

"Brett is a determined swimmer," Krieger said. "As soon as his drive to work catches up with his fast swimming, he could be one of the state's best butterflyers."

Brandon Digis, 100 freestyle, N. Farmington: Digis was a state qualifier in the 100 freestyle, and his best time of 48.85 gave him second place in the conference meet. He also went to state in the 200 freestyle and was a key relay swimmer for the Raiders, too.

Justin Ketterer, 500 freestyle, Stevenson: Ketterer ranked fourth in the area in the 500 freestyle with a time of 5:04.55.

He also finished in the top six for the second consecutive year in the WLAA in the 500. This season he took fifth with a clocking of 5:11.44.

"Justin has done a fine job his first two years at Stevenson," Buckler said. "With a harder off-season training program this year, we think Justin will become a great swimmer at Stevenson."

"Justin trains very hard, he knows what it takes to become very good, and I believe he has two very good seasons left here."

Aaron Reeder, backstroke, Canton: Reeder swam his best time of 58.27 in the Class A prelims and finished 29th overall. He was fourth in the WLAA meet at 58.35.

Kevin VanTiem, breaststroke, Stevenson: VanTiem ranked third in Overland in the 100 breaststroke with a time of 1:04.97. At the WLAA meet, VanTiem

took eighth.

"Kevin was one of the hardest workers we had on our team this year," Buckler said. "He leads in the pool as well as out of the pool."

"I enjoy coaching Kevin. He is a real good person with a great team attitude. Kevin will be a great leader for our team next year, and we look forward to working with him."

#### SECOND-TEAM RELAYS

200 medley, N. Farmington: Jim Gabriel, Adam Farber, Mark Wachsborg and Matt Zald won the WLAA championship (1:40.37) and were 17th in the state meet (1:40.88). Their conference time was the second best in Overland.

200 freestyle, N. Farmington: Brandon Digis, Mark Wachsborg, Jim Gabriel and Matt Zald finished seventh in the state meet (1:28.0) and set a school record in the process. The Raiders also set a pool record with a 1:29.65 swim.

400 freestyle, Stevenson: Keith Falk, Brad Buckler, Mike Malik and Joe Bublitz won the WLAA championship (3:18.6) and finished 10th in the state meet (3:15.28).

"These guys did a great job with this relay," Buckler said. "They all swam their best times in the relay, which goes to show how much they think team over themselves."

"Mike Malik did a fine job and helped to make the whole team better. Brad Buckler swam with a lot of heart. He and Mike were top-six in two events in the league meet."

"Great time, guys — a real good job!"

#### ALL-AREA

##### 1999 ALL-OBSERVER

##### BOYS SWIM TEAM

##### INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

##### 200-yard freestyle

1. Keith Falk, senior, Livonia Stevenson

2. Matt Casillas, senior, Plymouth Salem

##### 200-yard individual medley

1. Joe Bublitz, sophomore, Liv. Stevenson

2. Paul Perez, sophomore, Ply. Salem

##### 50-yard freestyle

1. Matt Zald, senior, North Farmington

1. Andrew Locke, senior, Plymouth Salem

##### Diving

1. Joe Lebovic, senior, North Farmington

2. Chris McFarland, sophomore, W. Glenn

##### 100-yard butterfly

1. James McPartlin, senior, West. Glenn

2. Brett Meconis, freshman, Redford CC

##### 100-yard freestyle

1. Ryan Meekins, senior, Redford CC

2. Brandon Digis, junior, North Farmington

##### 500-yard freestyle

1. Brian Mortons, sophomore, Ply. Salem

2. Justin Ketterer, sophomore, Stevenson

##### 100-yard backstroke

1. Devin Hopper, junior, Farmington

2. Aaron Reeder, junior, Ply. Canton

##### 100-yard breaststroke

1. Adam Farber, sophomore, N. Farmington

2. Kevin VanTiem, junior, Liv. Stevenson

##### RELAY EVENTS

##### 200-yard medley relay

1. Plymouth Salem (freshman Eric Lynn, senior Andrew Locke, sophomore Paul Perez, sophomore Mike Johnson)

2. North Farmington (junior Jim Gabriel, sophomore Adam Farber, senior Mark Wachsborg, senior Matt Zald)

##### 200-yard freestyle relay

1. Plymouth Salem (senior Andrew Locke, senior Matt Casillas, sophomore Aaron Shelton, freshman Mike Johnson)

2. North Farmington (junior Brandon Digis, senior Mark Wachsborg, junior Jim Gabriel, senior Matt Zald)

##### 400-yard freestyle relay

1. North Farmington (junior Brandon Digis, senior Mark Wachsborg, junior Jim Gabriel, senior Matt Zald)

2. Livonia Stevenson (senior Keith Falk, junior Brad Buckler, senior Mike Malik, sophomore Joe Bublitz)

##### HONORABLE MENTION

(state qualifiers)

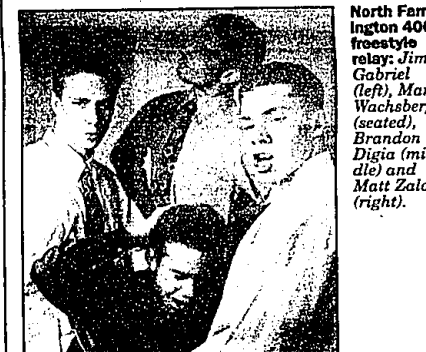
Kurtis Hornick, Plymouth Canton; Greg Bradunas, Redford Catholic Central.



Salem 200 freestyle relay: Paul Perez (left to right), Andrew Locke (seated), Eric Lynn and Aaron Shelton.



Salem 200 freestyle relay: Andrew Locke (left to right), Matt Casillas (seated), Mike Johnson, Aaron Shelton.



North Farmington 400 freestyle relay: Jim Gabriel (left), Mark Wachsborg (seated), Brandon Digis (middle) and Matt Zald (right).



North medley relay: Jim Gabriel, Mark Wachsborg (seated), Adam Farber and Matt Zald.

North 200 freestyle relay: Brandon Digis, Mark Wachsborg (seated), Jim Gabriel and Matt Zald.



Stevenson 400 freestyle relay: Brad Buckler (left to right), Joe Bublitz, Keith Falk and Mike Malik.



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