

# Class A showing: CC swims to 4th place at state finals

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Chuck Olson, the longtime Plymouth Salem boys swim coach, had several decisions to make going into last weekend's Class A final at the University of Michigan's Dan Canham pool.

But he wouldn't make them without first discussing it with the swimmers involved.

"Everybody has to understand what we're doing and why we're doing it," Olson explained.

Last year, the Salem coach and

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his best swimmers opted to lead up on the relays, forgoing individual glory.

It worked: the Rocks were first in the 200-yard and 400-yard freestyle relays and fourth in the 200 medley relay, finishes that propelled them to a third in the team standings.

This year, after Olson discussed it with his better swimmers — seniors Eric Lynn and Mike John-

son, and junior Ben Dzialo. His decision was to lead the 200 free and 200 medley relays and allow them to swim two individual events each.

While the overall results might have been less gratifying, it was nonetheless a superior performance for the Rocks, who finished fifth, and for Lynn, who won a state championship in the 200 individual medley.

And yet, the strategy Olson employed for Salem a year ago worked again, this time for Red-

ford-Detroit Catholic Central.

"We did what they did last year," said CC coach Jeff Baker, referring to his leading up his relays. "I didn't know if we'd have the individual strength."

The Shamrocks finished one place and 3.6 points ahead of Salem.

Ann Arbor Pioneer was first in the team standings with 225 followed by Rochester Adams (156), Birmingham Brother Rice (104), CC (95) and Salem (91.6).

CC's 400 free relay team placed

second to Pioneer — which won all three relays en route to the crown. Meanwhile, the Shamrocks were fifth in both the 200 medley and 200 free relays.

Still, the greatest brometer in measuring success at state meet is the clock, and by that standard CC, Salem and Plymouth Canton all had superb meets.

The Shamrocks had two swimmers finish in the top seven in the 100 butterfly. Bryant Steele was third (50.73) and Brett Meconis was seventh (51.01).

Others individuals to score for CC were Nick Markou, seventh in the 500 free (4:45.55), and Felt-rath, ninth in the 100 back (53.55). Canton also got points from Le, who placed 11th in the 100 free (48.50).

"From top to bottom, we exceeded our expectations," said Baker, in his third year as CC's coach. "It was a fantastic state meet. We hit our taper and the kids all swam well."

Did the performance surprise him?

"Competitively, no," Baker replied. "But their times were surprising, even to me."

But it was their relays that earned them a fourth-place finish: Kevin Ryan, Nick Markou, Steele and Meconis, second in the 400 free (3:10.53); Ryan, Rob Cyrek, Steele and Meconis, fifth in the 200 free (1:26.71); and Zach Felt-rath, Mike Kruszewski, Steele and Meconis, tied for fifth in the 200 medley relay (1:36.81).

As for Salem, Olson said, "Not much went wrong, but it's tough to go up there and have everything work out."

Lynn's performance, by far the best by an Observerland swimmer, was certainly outstanding. Seeded second going into the 200 IM, Lynn beat Birmingham Brother Rice's Andrew Ciesielski, the top seed, winning in 1:52.67.

Lynn then splashed to a second-place finish in the 100 backstroke (51.23), behind only Holland's Chris DeJong, considered one of the top backstrokers in the nation.

Lynn also anchored Salem's 200 free relay team of Johnson, Matt Vivian and Dzialo, which finished third (1:26.32). He swam that final just prior to the 100 back final.

"He knew he'd have to anchor it," said Olson. "That's the way we practiced it."

If there was a minor disappointment for the Rocks, it was their 200 medley relay team of Lynn, Dzialo, Matt Showalter and Johnson, which placed seventh (1:37.89) and failed to qualify for the championship heat.

Other scores for Salem included Johnson, a tie for fourth in the 50 free (21.60) and a 10th in the 100 free (47.96), and Dzialo, a sixth in the 100 fly (51.40) and an 11th in the 200 free (1:46.03).

Canton, behind senior Matt Wisniewski, finished 12th with 35 points.

Wisniewski was fifth in the 200 free (1:44.73) and sixth in the 100 free (47.82), and he was part of the Chiefs' seventh-place 400 free relay team, with Joe Le, Ryan Ahern and Brad Nilson.

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included a \$500 college scholarship.

Despite the disappointment of the team competition, Keesling came back Saturday with a strong performance in the individual finals and later wept upon hearing she had won the Senior Gymnast award, Dwyer added.

"She went after it her senior year," he said. "She knew it was her last year, and she gave it 110 percent; so I'm real proud of her."

Keesling was fourth on floor (9.3), ninth on vault (9.3) and 10th on bars (9.125) and beam (9.15). Her all-around total was 36.875.

Tri-Farmington sophomore Sarah Houchins placed fifth in the Division I all-around with a 36.925 score. She was second on beam (9.5) and sixth on bars (9.15) and floor (9.275).

"I hope she realizes she can be the top all-arounder in the state," Dwyer said. "Look at how close she came this year. The girl is loaded with talent, and I think she's getting a sense of what it takes to succeed."

"I think she can compete with any gymnast out there. She has to put in her time in the gym, and I think she's willing to do that."

Junior Clara Seymour just missed earning a top-10 finish in several Division I events. That shouldn't detract from a fine season in which she had the highest all-around average in the Western Lakes Activities Association, Dwyer said.

"You're not defined by one meet," he added.

Sophomore Lindsay Smith was the only Tri-Farmington gymnast to place in Division II, earning fifth place on beam with a 9.075 score. Senior Kristin Ulowicz was 11th in the all-around and just missed earning a medal, too.

"(Smith) was one of the most improved gymnasts this year," Dwyer said, adding Smith also showed a lot of leadership qualities. "We're looking for her to have a good year next year and the following year."