

Grafton pool talent rises to top in NSC challenge

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Nennig, teammates set three records as Hawks grab 3rd at conference meet

Mark Minz was an especially happy swimming coach last Saturday at Whitefish Bay High School.

After seeing his Grafton boys' team turn in three record-setting performances on the way to third place in a talent-laden North Shore Conference meet, it's easy to see why.



"I was very pleased. The guys rose to the occasion and performed very well," said Minz, whose squad scored 317 points to edge fourth-place Whitefish Bay (308) in the seven-team standings.

"It was an excellent meet for us."

As expected, powerhouse Cedarburg cruised to the team title, piling up 537 points. Homestead was a distance second with 325 points.

Rounding out the standings were fifth-place Nicolet (302 points), Port Washington (122) and Milwaukee Lutheran (113).

Grafton's strong showing was again propelled by senior Al Nennig, who continued to shatter records and underscore his place as one of the state's top swimmers.

Nennig set team, conference and pool records while winning the 200-yard individual medley (1 minute, 56.16 seconds) and 100 breaststroke (57.84). Both times broke his own team records and lowered pool marks that had stood since the early 1980s.

Nennig also swam on the first-place 200 freestyle relay, combining with Bailey Bodart, Ben Gosselin and Brad Kempka for a pool-record time of 1:30.95.

"Al annihilated the old pool records," Minz said. "He came into the meet just wanting to swim as fast as he could, and if the records were going to fall, they would."

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The Black Hawks got a second-place finish from the 200 medley team of Justen Hilgart, Nennig, Kieran Paddock and Gosselin (1:43.79); thirds by Zach Greenwood in diving (345.6 points) and Kempka in the 100 freestyle (50.25); a fourth from Gosselin in the 200 freestyle (1:54.92); and fifths by Kempka in the 50 freestyle (23.35), Gosselin in the 100 freestyle (51.34) and the 400 freestyle team of Paddock, Bodart, Tyler Kish and Kempka (3:33.07).

Grafton also got a sixth from Killian Mielotz in diving (329.35 points) and sevenths from Bodart in the 50 freestyle (23.77) and Paddock in the individual medley (2:15.22).

"The divers got us off to a nice start Thursday, and we were able to continue it Saturday," Minz said.

Port's best finish came from senior Alex Mehre, who took second in the 100 butterfly (56.94).

The Pirates' other top-10 individual finishes were an eighth by J.B. Nosko in the 500 freestyle (5:32.46) and 10th by Callum Toal in the breaststroke (1:12.77).

In relay races, Port got sixths from the 200 medley team of Nosko, Mehre, Toal and Nelson Benning (1:53.56) and the 400 freestyle team of Mehre, Nosko, Toal and Benning (3:44.12), and a seventh from the 200 freestyle team of Diego Anderson, Daniel Gardner, Christian La Cosse and Will Schanen (1:48.23).

"I think we did very well, especially since the majority of our guys weren't tapered for the conference meet," said Port coach Melissa Hoogester, who noted that her swimmers are more focused on this week's WIAA Division 2 sectional meet.

On Saturday, the Pirates will join Grafton at the Plymouth Sectional, where swimming starts at 2 p.m. Diving competition will be held at 6:30 p.m. Friday at Nicolet.

The winners of each event will qualify for next week's state meet in Madison along with the next 12 best sectional finishes throughout the state.

Minz expects good things from his team, which last year had five individual performances and two relays qualify for state. Nennig led the way in Madison with a first in the 50 freestyle and second in the 100 breaststroke.

"We have our sights set on winning some hardware in Plymouth," Minz said.

The sectional field will also include Beaver Dam, Berlin/Green Lake, Brown Deer/University School, Chilton/Brillion/Valders, Kiel, Milwaukee Lutheran, Plymouth, St. John's Military Academy/University Lake, Two Rivers and Wayland Academy.

Image Information: GRAFTON SENIOR AI Nennig set conference, pool and team records with

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his first-place times in the 200-yard individual medley and 100 breaststroke at the North Shore Conference boys' swimming and diving meet in Whitefish Bay. Photo by Bill Schanen IV