

Thorson's gold helps Warriors claim silver

Written by Tom Fruehling

Saturday, 14 February 2015 20:55 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 February 2015 21:05



MARSHALLTOWN -- For the second year in a row, the Iowa City West boys swimming team proved silly that age-old fable about the Tortoise and the Hare.

By easily splashing their way to back-to-back state championships (and winning seven of 11 events as expected), the Trojans proved that the swift most always do win the race.

But the Washington Warriors, a surprising runner-up last year, showed once again that a steady race does indeed count for something.

Their one win came in a phenomenal performance by senior Jared Thorson in the 100 butterfly. With superior depth, however, they again claimed second place rather comfortably in what was projected to be a dogfight among at least three teams chasing after the Iowa City torpedoes.

West finished with 189 points to Washington's 140. West Des Moines Valley was next at 119.5 and Dubuque Senior came in fourth with 98.

"I am just very, very proud of these kids," said Washington Coach Chris Cruise. "To finish runner-up to a great West team two years in a row is something to be very proud of. They worked extremely hard all year, and it paid dividends."

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The Warriors lost 12 seniors from last year's squad.

"When you lose that many kids, you have a lot of holes to fill," Cruise pointed out. "We had some top swimmers coming back, and they did very, very well. And we had others who really stepped up and filled in those holes.

"Those kids made a huge difference. We just had a great, great meet today."

None shone brighter than Thorson, a varsity stalwart for four years in both the butterfly and the freestyle relays. He came in second in the butterfly last year but was the No. 1 seed this time around.

He got a tremendous jump off the blocks Saturday and was ahead by almost a length at the first turn.

"I looked under water to my left and to my right," he recounted. "I know you're not supposed to do that.

"But when I saw that two guys were behind me, all I could think of was giving everything I had to the finish. I was so hyped."

He won the race going away in what was his best-ever (and school-record) time of 50.56.

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"I'm so happy," he said as if about to cry from joy. "It's the best feeling ever. And I couldn't be more proud of our team. This is the best day of my life."

Warrior junior Nick Saulnier and sophomore Cameron Kelley also came through with big races.

Saulnier was second in the 200 yard individual medley and third in the 100 yard backstroke, losing both times to seven-time state champ Alex Walton of Muscatine.

"Our whole team was really determined today," he said.

Kelley finished third in both the 200 and 500 freestyle, both times behind Ben Colin of Dubuque Senior and the simply sensational West junior Aidan Keen.

Thorson, Saulnier and Kelley also helped Washington pile up points in the three relay events, including a fourth in the 200 yard medley and a strong second to West in the 200 freestyle.

"This has been a great year," said Kelley. "At the start of the year there were doubts that we'd do well, maybe not even win the districts again.

"But we really wanted to win that (district title for the 52nd straight time). And that goal just carried us over into state.

"Now, we're second in state. It feels great."

TEAM STANDINGS

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1. Iowa City West 189, 2. Washington 140, 3. West Des Moines Valley 119.5, 4. Dubuque Senior 98, 5. Dowling Catholic 88.5, 6. Dubuque Hempstead 80, 7. Waukee 75, 8. Johnston 71, 9. Lewis Central 62.5, 10. Bettendorf 53, 11. Kennedy 42, 12. Newton/Pella 41, 13. Pleasant Valley 39, 14. Linn-Mar 38.5, 15. Muscatine 32, 16. Ames 31, 17. Davenport Central 21, 18 Davenport North 13, 19. Fort Dodge 12, 20. Decorah 11, 21. (tie) Sioux City 10, Iowa City High 10, Council Bluffs Lincoln 10, 24.

Waterloo West 8, 25. Ankeny 4, 26. Jefferson 2, 27. Des Moines Roosevelt 1.

WINNERS

200 medley relay - Iowa City West 1:33.39
200 free - Aidan Keen, IC West, 1:40.32
200 IM - Alex Walton, Muscatine, 1:49.20
50 free - Mark McGlaughlin, IC West, 20.73
100 fly - Jared Thorson, Washington, 50.56
100 free - Mark McLaughlin, IC West, 44.76
500 free - Aidan Keen, IC West, 4:33.69
200 free relay - Iowa City West 1:24.75
100 back - Alex Walton, Muscatine, 49.18
100 breast - Nick Staver, Pleasant Valley, 56.74
400 free relay - Iowa City West 3:02.98

METRO PLACE-WINNERS

Top 6

WASHINGTON

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2. Nick Saulnier, 200 IM, 1:51.74
2. 200 free relay (Nick Saulnier, George Durin, Jared Thorson, Cameron Kelley) 1:25.83
3. Cameron Kelley, 200 free, 1:42.90
3. Cameron Kelley, 500 free, 4:35.79
3. Nick Saulnier, 100 back, 50.73
4. 200 medley relay (Kaleb Donels, Matt Jackson, Jared Thorson, Nick Saulnier) 1:36.28
6. Kaleb Donels, 100 back, 53.04
6. 400 free relay (Michael Janssen, Kaleb Donels, Jared Thorson, Cameron Kelley) 3:14.67

KENNEDY

5. Stefan Kitsos, 100 breast, 58.92
6. Brennan Urbi, 50 free, 21.30
6. Brennan Urbi, 100 free, 46.84