

Urbi, Kitsos power Kennedy swimmers

Written by Jim Ecker

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Brennan Urbi and Stefan Kitsos of Cedar Rapids Kennedy have their names written all over the state leader board in boys swimming this year.

Urbi ranks 10th to 22nd in three events, Kitsos ranks 12th to 25th in three other events and they are members of three relay teams that rank 13th to 21st.

That's not bad for now, but they both think they can climb even higher as the season moves toward the state meet in February.

"I definitely think we have the potential to move up," Urbi said Monday night. "I think it's just going to come down to what we want to put in at practice and how much we really want to buckle down and make ourselves get better, no matter how much it's going to hurt during those weeks of training."

Urbi and Kitsos, both juniors, had a hand in four victories Monday as the 16th-ranked Cougars topped No. 27 Jefferson, 104-66, in a Mississippi Valley Conference meet at Jefferson.

Urbi claimed the 50 freestyle and 100 backstroke and swam on the triumphant 200 medley relay and 200 freestyle relay. Kitsos captured the 200 IM and 100 breaststroke and swam on the victorious 200 medley relay and 400 freestyle relay.

Cade Schoenauer, a sophomore, was also a four-time champ for Kennedy in the 100 butterfly

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and all three relays. All told, Kennedy won eight of 11 events.

Max McChesney took the 200 freestyle and 500 freestyle for the J-Hawks and Paul Hummell won the 100 free.



Urbi made a strong showing at the state meet last year as a sophomore when he finished fifth in the 50 free and ninth in the 100 back. Kitsos also fared well at state as a 10th grader with an 11th-place showing in the 100 breast and 17th in the 200 IM.

Urbi, Kitsos and Schoenauer helped Kennedy take 15th in the 200 freestyle relay and 20th in the 200 medley relay at state. The Cougars finished 18th in the state meet last year but are looking to move into the top 10 this season.

"I would say that would be our goal right now," Coach Shawn Thomsen said.

Kitsos likes what the Cougars have accomplished so far.

"I feel we're doing really good right now," he said. "And I feel like we're just touching the surface. I feel like we could do so much more than we have right now.

"Come taper time, we're going to do so much bigger things than we have in the past few years. It's going to be a good season, I feel. If we just work harder on all our deficiencies and get those perfected, we could be so much better in the pool."

Urbi began competitive swimming when he was 5 or 6 years old. He qualified for the state meet

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during his second year of youth swimming and stuck with the sport.

"Ever since then I've been intrigued by it," he said. "I love the water. There's no getting me out of it."

His favorite event is the one that goes by in a flash. "I really like the 50 free," he said. "It's all-or-nothing right there. There are a lot of little details in the race."

Swimming is a demanding sport, often requiring two workouts a day, but Urbi also participates in show choir, speech and choir while maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

Kitsos began competitive swimming when he was 10 and quickly gravitated to the breaststroke as his favorite event.

"I've been doing breaststroke since I was really young," he said. "It was the first stroke I ever tried and I've always been good at it, and so I've just stuck with it and made it better and better as I go."

Kennedy has a solid team with good depth, but the Mississippi Valley Conference is loaded with strong clubs again this year with No. 1 Iowa City West, No. 7 Linn-Mar, No. 9 Washington, No. 12 Dubuque Senior and No. 15 Dubuque Hempstead.

The conference meet will be held on Saturday, Jan. 24 at Linn-Mar.

KENNEDY 104, JEFFERSON 66

200 medley relay - Kennedy (Brennan Urbi, Stefan Kitsos, Cade Schoenauer, Logan Ruzicka)
1:45.73

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200 free - Max McChesney, Jefferson, 1:56.65

200 IM - Stefan Kistos, Kennedy, 2:09.63

50 free - Brennan Urbi, Kennedy, 22.40

100 fly - Cade Schoenauer, Kennedy, 59.99

100 free - Paul Hummell, Jefferson, 52.34

500 free - Max McChesney, Jefferson, 5:17.88

200 free relay - Kennedy (Cade Schoenauer, Carter Kramer, Brennan Urbi, Brady Gibson)
1:34.57

100 back - Brennan Urbi, Kennedy, 57.04

100 breast - Stefan Kitsos, Kennedy, 1:03.04

400 free relay - Kennedy (Cade Schoenauer, Tim Zange, Stefan Kitsos, Brady Gibson) 3:39.48