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Sunday News-Register

JANUARY 31, 2016

SPORTS

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Linsly, Park Claim OVAC Team Titles

W. Va. schools claim 20 of 22 OVAC events

By RICK THORP
For the News-Register
STEUBENVILLE — It was a banner day for the Mountain State at Saturday's OVAC Bill Brubaker Swimming Championships.

West Virginia schools won all four team titles and captured 20 of 22 individual events inside the Steubenville High School Natatorium. It marks the sixth time West Virginia schools have swept all four team titles since the OVAC went to the Big School/Small School championship format in 2002.

Linsly claimed both Small-School crowns, giving the boys their record



58th conference banner and the girls their 10th, tying Steubenville for the all-time mark.

Wheeling Park's girls won their eighth crown and third Big School championship, while Parkersburg South earned the Big School boys' title for the fourth straight year.

Brubaker, Linsly's veteran coach, had an opportunity to relish yet more titles for a moment after

directing another successful event.

"No, it never gets old," he said. "Because the kids never get old and the kids keep changing and we keep getting new pieces each year to make it still work."

"We had a lot of kids who didn't swim before and put in a lot of hard work and have seen what will come out of that."

Wheeling Park's girls,



TOP: The Linsly boys' swim team, here posing with the Small School championship trophy, won its OVAC record 58th conference championship at Saturday's meet, named for its head coach — Bill Brubaker. The Cadets won four events. LEFT: Members of the Wheeling Park girls' swim team pose with Big School championship trophy following Saturday's OVAC Bill Brubaker Swimming Championships at Steubenville High School. The Patriots compiled the most points of any team — 357 — and won their eighth conference title.

who won the overall title with 375 points, had two individual and one relay victory.

"Our girls are just outstanding," Park coach Pat Durkin said after taking a dip in the pool courtesy of

his swimmers. "We have great senior leadership. These girls have done a great job all year and the young freshmen that've come in, they're awesome. I have outstanding sophomores and juniors ... we

have a team.

"Of all the years I've been coaching, this probably the most fun team I've been around."

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Photo by Rick Thorp

OVAC

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Victoria White won the 200 IM in 2:20.57 and freshman Sarah Heilman claimed the 100 butterfly in 1:01.47. Later, the 400 freestyle relay quad of Emily Heilman, Katherine Stamper, White and Sarah Heilman won with a pool and meet record time of 3:51.74.

"Every kid that hit the water really swam well," Durkin continued. "They really looked great.

"Looking at the numbers coming in, we were so deep. Looking at the relays and at the 200 yard medley and both our A and B teams were seeded in the last heat. When you put a B team in the Top 8, you're doing pretty good

as a team, I think."

Durkin is excited about his team's prospects for the postseason, which begins at the Brooke regional next Saturday.

"We've had a great season," he said. "We didn't lose a dual meet all year. The only setback we had was at the Morgantown Invitational where Parkersburg beat us and we were second. We get to see them again next week up (at Brooke)."

Martins Ferry, which supplanted the Cadets as girls' champs a year ago, finished second this season, 57 points behind the winners.

Of the two Ohio winners, the Purple Riders had

one of them — Alyssa Kalinski, who claimed the 500 freestyle by nearly five seconds on Morgantown's Abigail Riggs in 5:25.87.

St. Clairsville was third in the Small School girls division with 235 points.

"We had some nice swims," Martins Ferry coach Nick Levi said. "We set two school records. Overall, we had some kids swim some good good times."

While finishing third in the 100 breaststroke, Kalinski, a junior, set a school mark with a 1:11.15 clocking. Also, the Purple Riders' 400 Freestyle Relay foursome, which was third in, also

established a school standard with a time of 3:53.59. That group included Jamie Fogle, Rylee Reis, Macy Shriver and Kalinski.

"We got some experience at this meet and this meet kind of mimics the sectional and that's what we're gearing towards," Levi said.

The day got off to a strong start for Linsly when it's 200 medley relay team of Carleigh West, Sydney West, Sian Longley and Eve Scarpone set an open, meet and pool record by winning in 1:53.99.

Sydney West also captured the 100 backstroke (1:01.6) and 100 breaststroke (1:09.99).

"Last year it was a close meet and this year it was just as close," Brubaker said. "We tried to do a couple of things differently and we swam some girls in more relays

than individual events and it worked out well for us."

Morgantown's Courtney Deem continued her dominance of the 200 freestyle (1:55.62) and 50 freestyle (24.75), winning the latter in pool- and meet-record time. She also was part of the pool- and meet-record-winning 200 freestyle relay team with Emily Lederman, Lexi Rowe and Riggs.

Ohio's other individual win came courtesy of St. Clairsville's Michael DiBetta. The sophomore won the 200 freestyle in 1:53.73 to help lead the Red Devils to a second-place showing in the Small School boys standings with 177 points.

Linsly had 285 behind four victories.

Eric Pietz had two of those, claiming the 100 butterfly in pool- and meet-record time of 52.80, and the 100 backstroke in 53.68. Team-

mate Reese Boyd won the 200 IM in 2:09.65, and the 200 freestyle relay team of Raoul Lockhart, Michael Schwarz, Boyd and Pietz won in 1:35.19.

"It was a good day," Brubaker said. "What helps is the people who fill in behind who get 10th place, 12th place. Those points are just as important as all the rest of them."

South, which finished with 356 points to Morgantown's 315, won four events — 200 medley relay (Garrett Fink, Devan Wilson, Kinzie Bailey, Dom Collins) 1:45.47; Fink (50 freestyle), 22.08 (meet record); Fink (100 freestyle) 49.15; and 400 freestyle relay (Bailey, Brandon Lawson, Wilson, Fink) 3:27.67.

Jonathan Lederman (500 freestyle, 5:00.79) and Pantelis Korakakis (100 breaststroke, 1:05.5) won for Morgantown.



Winter Championships

The Times Leader

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MARTINS FERRY'S
Alyssa Kalinski competes in the 100-meter breaststroke Saturday afternoon at Steubenville High School. She was third in this event, but won the 500-meter freestyle.

T-L Photos/RICK THORP

Bill Brubaker OVAC Swimming Championships

W.Va schools rule the water

By RICK THORP
Times Leader Sports Writer

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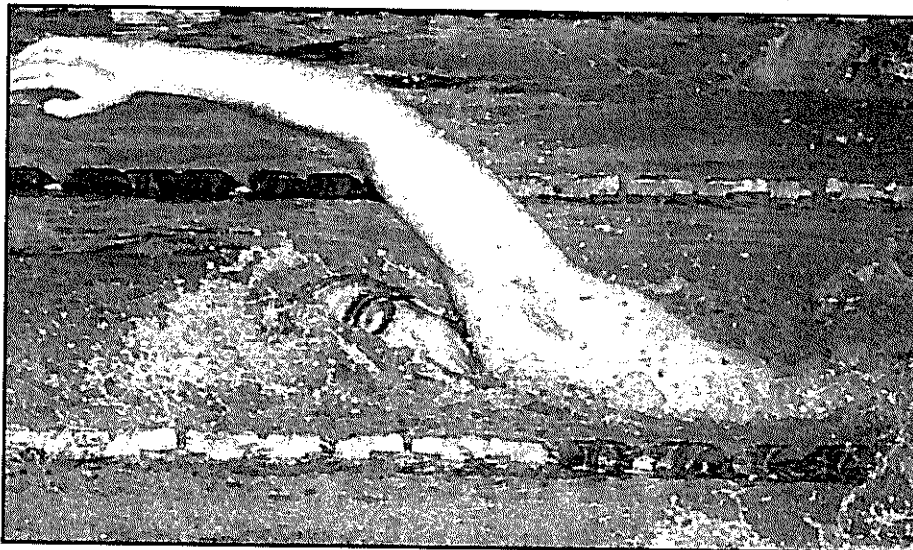
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"No, it never gets old," he said. "Because the kids never get old and the kids keep changing and we keep getting new pieces each year to make it still work."

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Martins Ferry, who supplanted the Ladets as girls champs a year ago, finished second this season, 57 points behind the winners.



ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S Michael DiBetta swims the 200-meter freestyle Saturday afternoon at Steubenville High School. He finished first.

Of the two Ohio winners, the Purple Riders had one of them — Alyssa Kalinski, who won the 500 freestyle by nearly five seconds over Morgantown's Abigail Riggs in 5:25.87.

St. Clairsville was third in the Small School girls division with 235 points.

"We had some nice swims," Martins Ferry head coach Nick Levi said. "We set two school records. Overall, we had some kids swim some good good times."

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Reis, Macy Shriver and Kalinski.

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W.Va.

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Area swimmers ready to go after OVAC title

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

STUEBENVILLE – The last week in January means only one thing in the Ohio Valley prep swimming world.

The annual Bill Brubaker OVAC Swimming Championship is just days away.

Prep swimmers – representing 21 schools – will converge on the Steubenville High School's Natatorium Saturday for the annual meet to crown the conference champions. Swimming action gets under way at 11 a.m.

The top 32 in each event qualify. The qualifying marks were able to posted during any meet of the season, leading up to this past Thursday when the entries were due.

Once again this season, there will be two boys and two girls champions crowned. There will be a division for Class 1A-4A and 5A will have its own class. Those are determined based on the number of schools, competing in each division.

Here's a look at area schools:

BARNESVILLE – The Shamrocks will make the trip to Steubenville with a solid

medals in both of her individual events (at the OVAC). Her hard work is paying dividends."

Sophomores Jamie Fogle and Rylee Reis have enjoyed impressive campaigns thus far. Both were victorious, individually, at the Marietta Invitational. Reis won a pair of gold medal.

"Both Jamie and Rylee have done a terrific job this season," Levi said. "Jamie's continued hard work during the offseason is reflected in her times, and Rylee swam life-time bests in some of her events. I am excited to see how they perform this weekend and into the post-season."

Senior Tara Fogle is another individual to keep an eye on. She's a multiple-time OVAC scorer.

"Tara has really come on the past couple of weeks," Levi said. "I expect her to battle for a high place in her events."

He also believes Kylie Huber, Macy Shriver, Mackenzie Fulst and Megan Ritts could crack the scoring column.

Along with the key individuals, Levi thinks his relay teams also have a chance to score well this weekend.



Photo/PAUL KRAJNYAK

PICTURED IS the 2015-16 Barnesville Shamrocks Swimming Team. Front row, from left, are Trista New-som, Samantha Burkhart, Abbey McMillen, Alexis Starr, Mallory Christman, Karleigh Clouse and Chevy Pavell. Second row, from left, are Alexis Marovich, Brittany Butler and Kasi Castello. Third row, from left, are Kelsey Perdue, Joanna Gallagher, Samantha Drake, Krissanna Hanes and Ashtin Austin. Back row, from left, are Kali Milhoan, Alea Wise, Manny Vasquez, Sarah McMillen, Abby Froehlich and Danielle Stewart.



Photo Provided

PICTURED IS the 2015-16 Bellaire Big Reds Swimming Team. From left are Devynn Edwards, Olivia Travnovich, Nicole Johnston, Savannah Allen and Catlin Rake.



area schools:

BARNESVILLE

- The Shamrocks will make the trip to Steubenville with a solid contingent of competitors who Bobbi Jo Johnson believe could make a push to make the cut.

"We hope to have several swimmers qualify in the top 32," Johnson said. "We're focusing more on the relays this year."

Johnson singled out seniors Abbey McMillen (50 and 100 free), Alexis Starr (200 free, 100 breast) and Samantha Burkhart (100 backstroke); junior Kasi Castello (50 and 200 free); sophomore Samantha Drake (100 free) and freshman Abby Froehlich (butterfly) and Kali Milhoan (200 IM).

MARTINS FERRY

- The Purple Riders are back for more. After winning the small-school title last season, Coach Nick Levi's team has its eyes set on successfully defending their crown this weekend.

"The team has worked extremely hard this season and their entry times for the OVAC meet reflect that," Levi said. "We have several girls and boys who are seeded in the top 16 in both of their individual events."

The Purple Riders other OVAC girls' championship came during the 2010 season.

The pieces are certainly in place for the Riders, who won the Marietta Invitational last Monday. They also claimed the Buckeye 8 title just over a week ago at Wheeling Jesuit.

"As a team we're looking to swim up from our seed times and continue to improve," Levi said. "This is a good meet to help us gauge where we are and will help determine our

key individuals, Levi thinks his relay teams also have a chance to score well this weekend.

"I am very excited about our girls' relays," Levi said. "We are currently swimming faster than we did last season at the same point."

The Purple Rider boys will be led into the conference championship by Brandon Bliss and Shane Bolinger. Both have had strong seasons leading up to this point.

Bliss shines in the breast-stroke and, according to Levi, hopes to make a push toward the school record.

Levi also thinks Thomas Singhaus and Ethan Beale could challenge to reach the scoring column.

ST. CLAIRSVILLE

- The Red Devils enter the conference championship meet with their eyes set on another strong finish. Already champions of the Buckeye 8, the Red Devils hope to position themselves to make a run toward their first conference pennant in swimming.

"I expect a strong showing from both the boys and girls teams," St. C. head coach Ernie Banks said. "The boys team has swam well all season, and I don't expect anything different at the OVAC. They've shown me all year they can compete with anyone."

Leading the Red Devils' charge will be talented sophomore Michael DiBetta. He's the defending runner-up in both the 200 and 500 freestyles.

"I expect Michael to build on his performances from last year," Banks said.

First-year swimmer Jake Stewart has made up for lost time quickly. He's been a standout in the 50 and 100 freestyles all winter and Banks expects him to



Photo Courtesy/EVERT BRIGGS

PICTURED IS the 2015-16 Martins Ferry Purple Riders Swimming Team. Front row, from left, are Kiri Williams, Tara Fogle and Macy Shriver. Second row, from left, are Mackenzie Fulst, Megan Ritts, Kylie Huber and Rylee Reis. Third row, from left, are Ethan Beale, Alyssa Kalinski, Jamie Fogle and Shane Bolinger. Back row, from left, are Thomas Singhaus, Chris Brown, Nick Levi, Brandon Bliss and Jackson Lybarger.



(200 free, 100 breast) and Samantha Burkhardt (100 backstroke); junior Kasi Castello (50 and 200 free); sophomore Samantha Drake (100 free) and freshman Abby Froehlich (butterfly) and Kali Milhoan (200 IM).

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The Riders' charge will be led by junior Alyssa Kalinski. She's the defending 500 freestyle champion. She finished second in the 100 breast a season ago and swam on two placing relays. She's already broken a pair of school records this season.

"Alyssa is having another stellar season," Levi said. "She will be in the hunt for

stroke and, according to Levi, hopes to make a push toward the school record.

Levi also thinks Thomas Singhaus and Ethan Beale could challenge to reach the scoring column.

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Senior Chris Blackwell is one to keep an eye on in the 100 free and 100 backstroke.

Kyle Graham has been a solid contributor to the 400 free relay. Sophomores Zachary Banks (500 free) and Mitchel Hoover (100 fly) are also amongst those that Banks thinks can score well.

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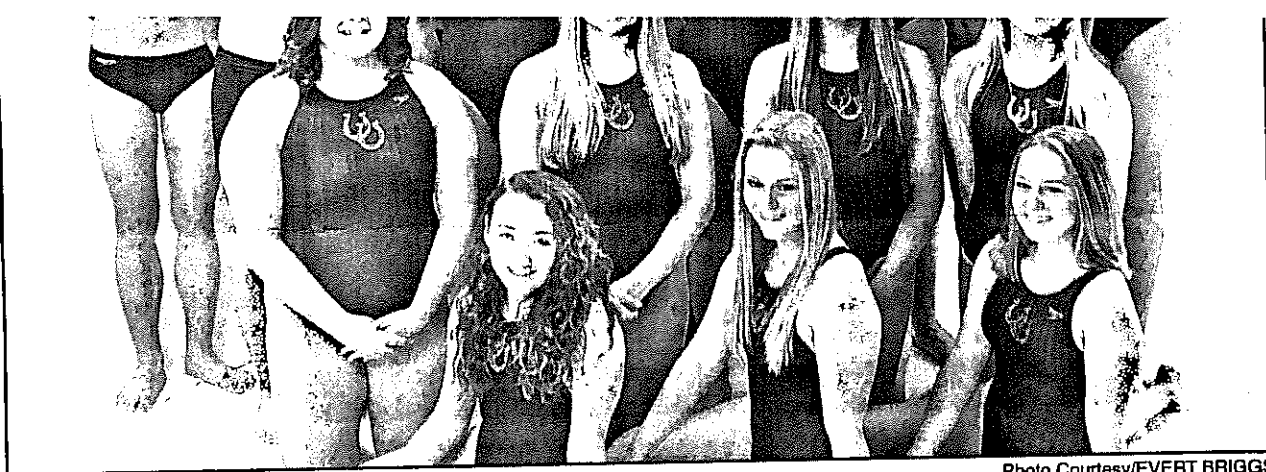


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Photo/NEAL WARREN

PICTURED IS the 2015-16 St. Clairsville Red Devils Swimming Team. Front row, from left, are head coach Ernie Banks, Christopher Blackwell, Marissa Cupp, Delainey Banks, Zina Bohach, Katelynne Davenport, Hanna Vera, assistant coach Melanie Eaton and assistant coach Kate Banks. Second row, from left, are Emily Thomas, Julia Adam Balcar, Kyle Graham, Alexis Causey and Jake Stewart. Third row, from left, are Justin Hoover and Hannah Swisk. Fourth row, from left, are Michael DiBetta, Mitchel Hoover and Eric Balcar. Top row, from left, are Jeb Stewart, Zachary Banks and Keegan Sproul.