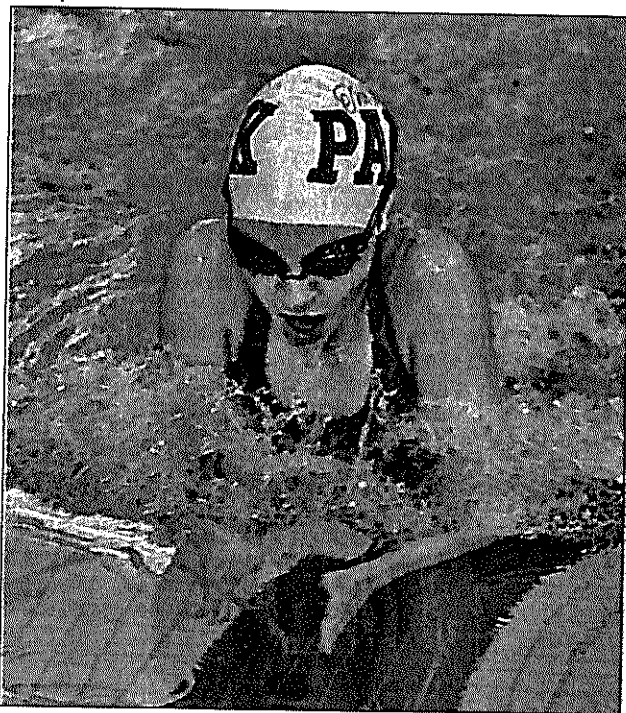


Championship Day In the OVAC



Park, St. C. Sweep Swimming Titles



Photos by Cody Tomer

Left, Wheeling Park's Jenna Bopp competes in the girls 100 breaststroke during Saturday's OVAC swim meet at Brooke. Right, St. Clairsville's Michael DiBetta competes in the 100 Butterfly. The Red Devils stand-out helped their team to its first OVAC swimming title.

Patriots Girls Claim Third Straight; Devils End Linsly's Reign

By CODY TOMER
Staff Writer

WELLSBURG — All season, teams from the Ohio Valley have been preparing for the OVAC swim meet, along with regionals and hopefully states.

That first goal can be crossed off the list for both Wheeling Park and St. Clairsville.

The Patriots' boys and girls earned a sweep in the OVAC big school championship, while the Red Devils' boys and girls each took home the OVAC small school title on Saturday at Brooke.

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young lady. She is fun to be around but she is all business, too.

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Please see Swimming, Page B5

SWIMMING

Continued from page B1

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It was a day to remember for St. Clairsville as both the boys and girls earned their first OVAC title in school history.

The win also knocks the five-time reigning champions of Linsly from the top spot on the podium.

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Heilman picked up a pool record in the 100 butterfly with a time of 1:00.14, along with a win in the 100 backstroke (1:00.05). Turner also rewrote the record books with a new school record in the 100 freestyle at a time of 55.09, while breaking her own school record in the 50 freestyle with a mark of 25.24.

Adding to the record day for Park was the 400 relay squad of senior Victoria White, Heilman and freshmen Jenna Bopp and Turner, who clocked in at a speedy 3:50.54 pace to claim the school record.

"Victoria and Sarah have been here for three years and everyone just worked really hard for this," Durkin said. "They came out and were very serious about what they

did. They had a goal and they reached that goal.

"Now we have a couple more weeks to get ready for regionals."

White gave Park another spark in the 200 IM with a win at a time of 2:21.62, while the girls 200 medley relay squad of White, Heilman, Bopp and Turner won with a time of 1:55.41.

Junior Charles Schellhase was the lone victor for the Park boys but that is all it took with a strong team performance, overall.

Schellhase took home the gold in the 500 freestyle in a time of 5:08.26.

"Chucky did an outstanding job swimming," Durkin said. "Caleb Lucas did a good job and Nick DeFazio's time dropped, too. It's a pleasure because they do work hard for this."

Freshman Maggie Marody paced the St. C girls with a school record in the 200 (1:59.33) and a pool record in the 500 (5:16.95) freestyle race.

Michael DiBetta led the boys with a 2:08.24 time in the 200 IM, while also anchoring both the 400 relay (3:33.35) and 200 relay (1:38.14) squads in victory.

Joining DiBetta on both teams were Matthew Marling, Ethan Banks and Nathan Yost.

"Everybody improved," Ernie Banks said. "Marody crushed it in the 200 and 500 and DiBetta was great in the IM and butterfly."

"Ferry was leading for awhile in the girls event but our girls just brought it home. When the B team got fifth overall in the 400 relay, it was absolutely amazing. It's a good day."

Other local winners include Weir's Wil Visnic in the 200 and the 100 butterfly, Martins Ferry's Jarrett Bolinger in the 100 and the 100 breaststroke, Linsly's Sian Longley in the 100 breaststroke and Brooke's Noah Horvath in the 100 backstroke.



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OVAC Swimming

OVAC Bill Brubaker Swimming Championship
(at Brooke)
Boys

Big School

Wheeling Park 431, Parkersburg South 258, Beaver Local 247, Brooke 204, Weir 196, University 105, John Marshall 92, Morgantown 43, Indian Creek 32

Small School

St. Clairsville 429, Linsly 221, Martins Ferry 148, Edison 130, Wheeling Central 67, Steubenville 44, East Liverpool 27, Steubenville Central 4, Barnesville 2

200 Relay: Beaver Local A (Littleton, Snow, Chafins, Voorhees), 1:49.84; Brooke A (Horvath, Robey, Sludak, Taylor), 1:50.79; Parkersburg South A (Fletcher, McDuff, Collins, Fletcher), 1:52.94; 200 Free: Vianic (Weir), 1:51.12; Schellhase (WP), 1:53.08; McDuff (PS), 1:55.69; 200 IM: DiBetta (STC), 2:08.24; Horvath (Brk), 2:11.91; Lucas (WP), 2:15.91; 50 Free: Collins (PS), 22.32; Marling (STC), 23.97; Littleton (LBE), 24.41; 100 Butterfly: Vianic (Weir), 55.17; DiBetta (STC), 56.55; Chafins (LBE), 59.11; 100 Free: Bolinger (MF), 49.34; Collins (PS), 49.57; Lucas (WP), 52.14; 500 Free: Schellhase (WP), 5:08.26; Banks (STC), 5:17.89; Robey (Brk), 5:18.70; 200 Free Relay: St. Clairsville A (Marling, Banks, Yost, DiBetta), 1:38.14; Wheeling Park A (Lucas, Dague, Schellhase, Seals), 1:38.31; Weir A (Vianic, Beatty, Miller, Hoover), 1:40.96; 100 Backstroke: Horvath (Brk), 59.02; McDuff (PS), 59.37; Littleton (LBE), 1:00.39; 100 Breaststroke: Bolinger (MF), 1:01.82; Snow (LBE), 1:08.40; Dague (WP), 1:09.00; 400 Free Relay: St. Clairsville A (Marling, Banks, Yost, DiBetta), 3:33.35.

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BILL BRUBAKER OVAC SWIMMING TOURNAMENT

(at Brooke)

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St. Clairsville, Wheeling Park swimmers sweep

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For The Times Leader

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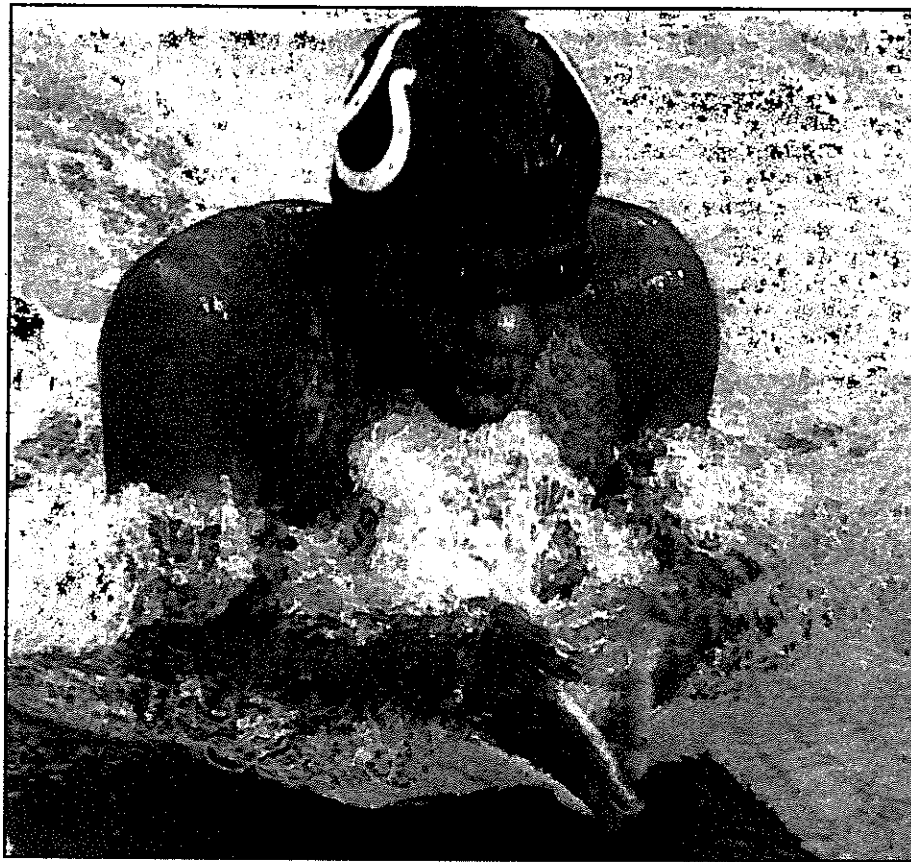
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Photo/CODY TOMER

MARTINS FERRY'S Jarrett Bolinger swims to a championship in the 100 breaststroke Saturday at Brooke High School. He won two titles.

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ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S Katelynn Davenport competes Saturday at Brooke High School.

• Swimmers

Continued from Page B1

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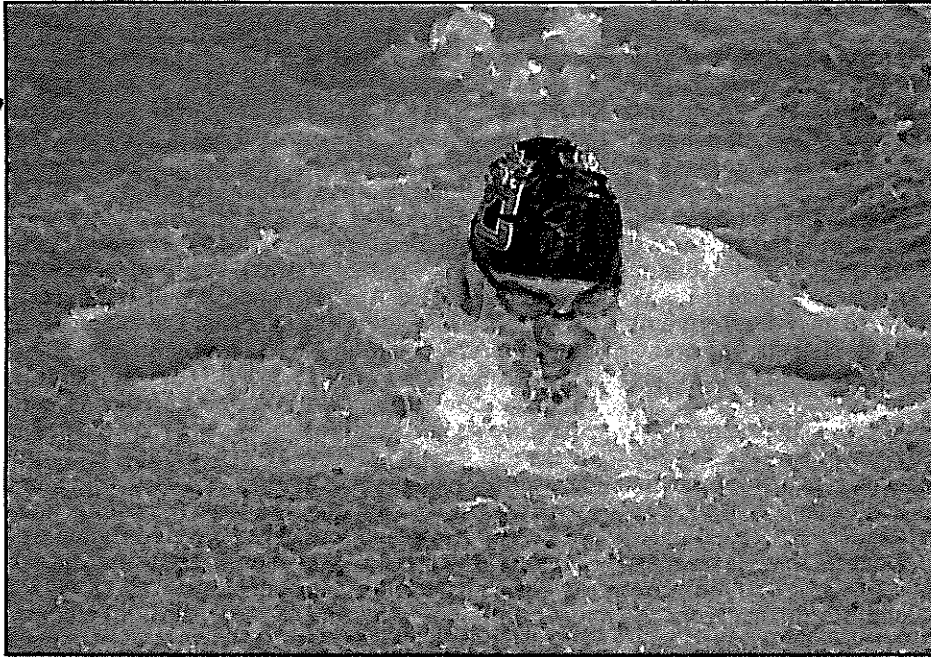
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ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S Michael DiBebetta competes in the 200 IM on Saturday at the OVAC Bill Brubaker Swimming Championships at Brooke High School. DiBetta, a senior, won the event with a time of 2:08.24. He was seeded first in the event, as well as second in the 100 Fly.



Photo/CODY TOMER

MARTINS FERRY'S Rylee Reis works in the 100 Free on Saturday at the OVAC Bill Brubaker Swimming Championships at Brooke High School. Reis finished third in the event with a time of 56.43. For complete coverage of both the boys and girls action, see Monday's edition of The Times Leader.

OVAC swim titles to be handed out on Saturday

By **SETH STASKEY**,
Times Leader Sports Editor

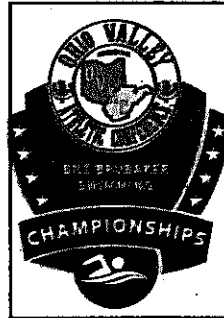
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With the wrestling tournament ongoing at WesBanco Arena, area swimmers will be on the deck at Brooke High School, starting at 10 a.m. Saturday at the annual Bill Brubaker OVAC Swim Championship.

The field is comprised of the top 30 individual qualifiers in each event and all relay teams. The field is gathered by virtue of times posted during the course of the season.

As has been the case the last few seasons, the meet will be divided into two classes as it pertains to the team scoring. The 5A schools will compete by themselves, while the remaining four classes will be combined into one division.

Cast in the role of defending champions are Parkersburg South and Linsly on the boys side along with Wheeling Park and Martins Ferry on the girls' side. All four teams — along with several others — expect to be back in contention this weekend.



The Class 1A/4A division is actually shaping up like a three-horse race on the girls side and a two-team battle on the boys.

Linsly, which owns 59 conference titles in the pool, St. Clairsville and Martins Ferry all boast highly competitive and relatively deep squads. On top of that, all three qualified well for this weekend's meet, putting them in prime position to make a run at the top trophy.

According to Cadets head coach Bill Brubaker, he believes St. Clairsville is the clear favorite on the boys' side.

"St. Clairsville's talent and depth has them the favorite if you look at how many swimmers they have seeded to score," Brubaker said. "I believe us and Martins Ferry will be locked in a close meet for the runner-up position."

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Along with DiBetta, the Red Devils' Matthew Marling is the second seed in the 50 freestyle and the St. C. 200 medley team, 200 free and 400 free team are seeded second as well. All told, the Red Devils have at least one entrant seeded in the top five of nine events.

"To be able to have a chance against

See, **OVAC**, Page B2

Continued from Page B1

programs like Linsly and Martins Ferry is something we strive each and every year," St. C. head coach Ernie Banks said. "I believe this is going to be a close team race and it may not be decided until the 400 free relay is completed."

Banks, who saw his team claim the Buckeye 8 championship on Monday, has been pleased with the progress his team has made since the start of the campaign.

"We've grown into a strong team," Banks admitted. "We're in the best position, as a whole, that I've ever seen us. We will need to have our best day of the year, so far, this weekend."

While much of the focus is on the top entrants in each event, the depth plays a role, too. For instance, St. Clairsville qualified its 'B' relay in all three events and are in scoring position in both the 200 and 400 free relays.

Martins Ferry, meanwhile, doesn't have the depth of St. C. or Linsly. But, the Purple Riders feature a quality cast on the boys' side. Sophomore standout Jarrett Bollinger leads the way. After claiming a conference title last season, he's back as the top seed in the 100 free at 50.25. He's also the top qualifier in the 100 breast at 1:05.82.

"We are looking to swim up from our seed times and continue to improve," Ferry head coach Nick Levi said. "The team has worked extremely hard this season and the OVAC entry times reflect that work. We hope this meet is able to springboard us to a strong finish (to the season)."

The other boys' top seeds

(500 free), Brooke's Noah Horvath (100 back), Brooke (200 medley relay) and Parkersburg South (200 free relay).

GIRLS

Martins Ferry and Wheeling Park captured the top trophies last season and both expect to be right in contention once again.

The Purple Riders put forth a very impressive showing last winter en route to scoring the most points overall in the meet. Much of that cast returns for Levi's team.

Despite have the bulk of that nucleus back, nothing is taken for granted once the first splash is made.

"We can only control what we do in our lanes," Levi said. "We have no affect on what the other teams may do. Having said that, we have a lot of competitors on our team and we're looking forward to competing. We will let the chips fall where they may."

The Riders have nary a top seed in the field, but they boast a top-five entrant in nine events. Included in that is senior standout Rylee Reis, who is seeded second in the 100 free and third in the shorter version.

Ferry's 200 free relay is also seeded second and just tenths of a second behind Linsly.

St. Clairsville, which won the Buckeye 8 earlier this week, features depth and versatility, according to Banks.

"We've developed into a sturdy, durable roster," Banks said. "From fresh

themselves in order to give us a chance."

The Red Devils boast nary a top seed, but freshman Maggie Marody is second in the 200 and 500 freestyles. All told, St. C. is seeded within the top five in five events.

Linsly, which owns a conference-best 11 female crowns, expects to give the two Eastern Ohio squads all they want once again.

"It's going to be close between all three teams," Brubaker said. "It will play out based on how the swim-

mers from those three teams place, but the also by the separation them from other schools. It would be an interesting

meet if it were just these three teams."

Linsly is led by a top-five seed in seven events. Included is the top mark in the 200 free relay. Senior Sydney West is one to watch in the 100 backstroke along with Sian Longley in the 100 breaststroke. The Cadets' 200 medley relay is also seeded second.

Wheeling Park's girls, who won the Class AAA state title last winter, appear primed to make it three consecutive conference titles in the big-school race. Coach Pat Durkin's team features the top seed in six events.

Included are Victoria White (200 IM), Abby Turner (100 free), Sarah Heilman (100 back), Jenna Bopp (100 breast), 200 medley relay and the 400 free relay.

Massena's Abigail

Want More?
Team pictures of area participating squads can be found on Page B6