

Now in its 101st season, the Andover Boys' Varsity Swimming and Diving Team opened the 2013 campaign against Choate with both trepidation and excitement.

For the second consecutive year, Andover returns a group of student-athletes who scored fewer than half its individual points in the previous season, and for the first time, Andover will forgo seeking a fourth consecutive New England Championship to instead compete at the Eastern Championships in late February. While the move to Easterns was made to ensure that all members of the varsity team get individual swims at a championship meet—as explained in a November news release posted on the team's website—the team is uncertain how it will perform against internationally recognized programs such as Germantown, Peddie, and Mercersburg.

Fortunately, Andover is led by Captain Joe Faller '14 as well as other strong returning swimmers and divers, and the talent of these student-athletes is augmented by an infusion of several rookies who will ably fuel the program for years to come.

After only two days of classes and three practices, Andover traveled to Choate to face the perennial powerhouse in its 25 meter—rather than the standard 25 yard—facility, and in its first race of the season, the 200 Medley Relay, Andover broke Choate's pool record. The team of Tim Wynter '14, rookie Scott Simpson '14, Faller, and David Cao '14 swam 1:48.97, which lowered the previous standard of 1:51.24 and would have established the New England record had Andover not swum 1:47.87 last year. Varsity rookie Charlee Van Eijk '14, Andrew Yang '14, Alex Li '15, and Andrew Xuan '13 swam 1:56.44 for third place, and rookie Darren Ty '16, Chris Li '15, rookie Aaron Teo '15, and Connor Fraser '13 were fifth in 1:58.75.

Moments after competing in the 200 Medley Relay, Faller and Teo returned to the pool in the 200 Freestyle and—joined by Justin Wang '13—swept the event: 2:01.80, 2:07.47, and 2:07.87 respectively. Rookie Thomas Choi '16 swam 2:13.57 in non-scoring exhibition.

In the first individual event of his Andover career, Simpson won the 200 IM in 2:19.52, while Alex Li was third in 2:21.36 and Fraser was fifth in 2:26.29. Competing exhibition, rookie Marcello Rossi '16 swam 2:26.83.

Choate gained on Andover in the 50 Freestyle: Heson Oh '14 placed second in 25.32, Cao was fourth in 25.83, and Van Eijk was fifth in 26.16.

In the diving event, Kade Call '14 placed fourth with 122.05 points and rookie Thomas Bakken '14 placed fifth with 101.50 points.

Following diving, Wynter won the 100 Butterfly in 59.31. Simpson was second in 1:01.91, and Xuan was fifth in 1:07.32. In exhibition, Chris Li swam an impressive 1:03.41.

Oh returned to the pool in the 100 Freestyle and won an individual event for the first time in his career, swimming 55.46. Cao was third in 55.76, and Ty was fourth in 58.04.

With the graduation of Andover great Jun Oh '12, the team needs to solidify its strength in the distance freestyle, and in the 400 Freestyle against Choate, Andover saw real potential in several rookies. Teo swam 4:23.43 to win the event. Choi was fourth in 4:38.96, and Rossi was 4:38.93 in exhibition. In addition, Andrew Yang '14 swam a strong 4:24.59 for second place to start the challenge of competing in three of the last five races.

Andover's 200 Freestyle "A" Relay—Xuan, Faller, Simpson, Cao—swam 1:41.79 for the victory, and its "B" relay of Yang, Rossi, Chris Li, and Oh swam 1:48.29 for third.

In the 100 Backstroke, Wynter appeared to cruise to another win in 58.58. Van Eijk was second in 1:04.27, and Fraser fifth in 1:08.64. Ty swam 1:08.29 in exhibition.

The 100 Breaststroke is another event in which the departure of the Class of 2012 is deeply felt, but again, Andover demonstrated rebuilding in the performances of Wang, who was second with 1:13.16, Yang, who was third with 1:14.87, Chris Li, who was fifth in 1:17.10, and Alex Li, who was 1:16.88 in exhibition.

Andover swam all three of its 400 Freestyle relays in exhibition, and had several good individual performances. The team of Faller, Fraser, Oh, and Wynter swam 3:50.19. Wang, Van Eijk, Choi, and Teo swam 4:01.02. Rossi, Xuan, Alex Li, and Ty swam 4:01.13.

With that, Andover defeated Choate 106 to 78. The team sets its sights now on a week of tough training before its meet against Loomis next week—all in preparation for the Eastern Championships.