

Boys Swimming and Diving: Andover 93, Deerfield 93
Saturday, January 31, 2015

With both teams diminished by illnesses and an unfortunate bus mishap for the visitors, Andover and Deerfield competed in a tense, spirited and at times controversial dual meet that finished with both teams tied 93-93.

While Deerfield jumped out to an expected early lead with a 1-3 finish in the 200 Medley relay, the margin of victory for the team of Will Hrabchak, Alan Lam, Miles Smachlo and Ballard Brown (1:39.29) was just 0.26 seconds over the team of Darren Ty '16, Aaron Teo '15, Alex Li '15 and Chris Li '15 (1:39.55), auguring of how close the rest of the meet would likely be.

Matthew Hrabchak won the first of seven individual wins for the boys in green in the 200 Freestyle, with Marcello Rossi '16 and Richard Zhong '17 taking 2nd and 3rd. And after Lam won the 200 IM in front of Teo, Deerfield enjoyed what would be its largest lead of the day, 29 to 17.

Christian Alberga '17 started turning things around for the boys in blue, recording the only individual win in the swimming events for Andover with a 22.44 in the 50 Free, with Chris Li taking third in 23.86.

As has ben the case all season, the diving team won precious points for Andover, with Jack Belluche '16 easily winning with 249 points, while newcomer Robert Delaus finished a very good third with 180 points.

As swimming resumed, Deerfield was still in the lead 43-39. From this point forward, Deerfield would win every single individual event, but the Andover boys doggedly kept pushing to stay in the meet, knowing that some of the later events favored the team's depth.

Miles Smachlo won the 100 Fly, but the 2nd and 3rd places for Alex and Chris Li kept the meet close. The same pattern emerged in the 100 Freestyle, with Smachlo amazingly winning his second individual event in a row ahead of Ty and Alberga. The 500 Freestyle saw Deerfield increase its lead to 6 points (66 to 60), with the Hrabchak brothers taking first and third, while Rossi grabbed second place.

The 200 Freestyle relay proved to be a crucial event for Andover, notching its only relay win of the day, with Chris Li, Ty, Rossi, and Alberga sprinting to a 1:30.64 finish, and just as importantly the team of Nick Faulkner '16, Sarp Orgul '16, Felix Liu '15 and Michael Najem '16 taking third place in 1:37.08. At this point the meet was even 70-70.

The younger Hrabchak won the 100 Backstroke for Deerfield, but Andover's Zhong, Ty and Matt Li '18 grabbed the next three spots, giving Andover its first lead of the

day 79-77. Lam won the 100 Breaststroke, but Teo and Alex Li took 2nd and 3rd, keeping Andover's lead to just two points as we got to the last race of the day.

With relay scoring at 8-4-2 points for the first three spots, Andover decided to split its relays, knowing that Deerfield's best 4 would likely win the event, and opting to go for a tie for the meet. Deerfield countered by splitting its own relays, leaving the race, and the meet, as a wide-open free-for-all.

Deerfield's A-team raced to an early lead, while Andover's split squads followed behind in 2nd and 3rd place. With one athlete to go, Andover had a relatively firm grip on the two spots that would earn the tie, with Rossi and Alberga on the blocks to finish the relays. But Deerfield B-team was not done, with Smachlo once again proving a dominating force for the green team. Under the ear-splitting cheers of the crowd assembled, all three swimmers raced toward the final wall, with Deerfield apparently earning the 3rd place, and the win in the meet. As the officials gathered after the race, one of Deerfield's B-team swimmers was found to have left early, giving Andover the 3rd place, and both teams a hard-fought tie.

There were too many season-best results in this fun, exciting high-school meet to report here, but a few best-ever swims are worth noting. 100 Freestyle: Aaron Teo (50.11), Michael Najem (52.13), and Dan Tran '17 (52.77). 50 Backstroke: Darren Ty (25.34), Matt Li (28.32). 100 Backstroke: Matt Li (59.21). 50 Breaststroke: Jack Belluche (30.77). 100 Breaststroke: Alex Li (1:03.59). 50 Fly: Sarp Orgul (25.98), Felix Liu (26.33). 100 Fly: Sarp Orgul (59.26). 200 IM: Sarp Orgul (2:12.60), Nate Smith '18 (2:14.72). Diving: Jack Belluche (249.15), Robert Delaus (180.30).

Andover will next host Hopkins on Valentine's Day (February 14). For full results and an historical perspective of our program, consult www.andoveraquatics.net. League results are posted on www.nepssa.org.