

Boys' Swim Starts 104th Season with Win over Suffield

In the midst of tryouts and after only three practices, the Andover Boys' Swimming & Diving Team traveled to Suffield to take on the host team as well as national powerhouse Peddie. Peddie's year-round training regimen proved too much for Andover in this early December meet (a 66-117 loss), yet although Andover and Peddie will not see each other again, it will be interesting to compare their times at the end of the season after Andover has comparable training under its belt.

As is becoming the norm at this annual event, Suffield serves as a terrific host bringing together a packed house, many recruits, ample enthusiasm, and some fast performances. Clearly, the host team gets fired up for this meet. This kind of environment was a perfect first rehearsal for the championships, and Andover, with typical early season performances, remained focused throughout the competition and came through with a victory.

The meet opened with the diving competition, and Andover's veteran contingent did not disappoint. Jack Belluche '16 was 1st with 197.65 points; Matt Grottkau '17 was 3rd with 149.90 points; and Rob DeLaus '16 was 6th with 134.40. (Score: Andover 9 - Suffield 7)

Led by Ralph Koo '15/'16, who is doing a second senior year at Suffield, Suffield's Medley Relay won the event with Andover's squad of Richard Zhong '17, co-captain Darren Ty '17, Jack Warden '19, and Christian Alberga '17 in 2nd in 1:40.05, and Andover's group of Nate Smith '18, Jacob Hudgins '19, Sarp Orgul '16, and Michael Najem '16 in 3rd in 1:48.10. Tony Faller '18, Harvey Zheng '19, Ben Janoscheck '16, and Will Kantaros '18 swam 1:50.73 in exhibition. (Andover 15 - Suffield 15)

In the 200 Freestyle, co-captain Marcello Rossi '16 placed 2nd in 1:48.38; Nick Isenhower '18 placed 3rd in 1:52.32; Thomas Choi placed 4th in 1:54.08; and David Cohen '18 swam 2:18.85 in exhibition. (Andover 24 - Suffield 22)

The 200 IM marked Andover's only win in an individual event of the day. Ty swam an impressive 2:00.58, followed by Warden's 2:05.58 for 3rd, and Orgul's 2:14.84 for 5th. Rick Ono '19 was 2:11.92 in exhibition. (Andover 34 - Suffield 28)

In the 50 Freestyle, Koo established a new Suffield school record with a blistering 20.93. Alberga's 22.12 placed 2nd, Nick Faulkner's ('16) 24.00 placed 4th, and Jonathan Xue's ('17) 24.01 placed 5th. Kantaros was 24.34 in exhibition. (Andover 41 - Suffield 37)

Suffield's Koo won the 100 Butterfly in another impressive performance, 50.16, and Warden was 2nd in 55.78, Zhong 4th in 58.41, and Orgul 5th in 59.92. Janoscheck swam 1:02.24 in exhibition. (Andover 48 - Suffield 46)

In the 100 Freestyle, a Suffield swimmer again placed first, but Andover's depth

again assured it won the event: Alberga, 2nd in 48.88, Choi 3rd in 51.35, Faulkner 4th in 52.73. Ono's 53.74 in exhibition would actually have placed 5th, but a team can only score three people in an event. (Andover 57 – Suffield 53)

Coming off only three practices proved an understandable challenge for Andover in the 500 Freestyle and sparked a run by Suffield in the team race. Rossi was 3rd in 5:02.54; Isenhower was 4th in 5:10.19; and Dan Tran '17 was 5th in 5:15.52. Zheng swam 5:24.83 in exhibition. (Andover 63 – Suffield 63)

In the next event, Suffield again put together an impressive relay, winning the 200 Freestyle in 1:24.85. Warden, Choi, Rossi, and Faulkner were 2nd in 1:32.55, and Orgul, Najem, Isenhower, and Xue were 4th in 1:36.41. Janoscheck, Cohen, Kantaros, and Tran swam 1:38.95 in exhibition. (Andover 67 – Suffield 73)

Finding itself down by 6 points with only 3 events left, Andover called a quick team meeting to explain how the meet is scored—half the squad had never before been to a varsity high-school swimming and diving meet—and to emphasize that every member holds equal value in the team competition.

Zhong, Smith, and Najem did exactly what needed to be done in the 100 Backstroke placing 2nd, 3rd, and 4th in 58.43, 1:02.13, and 1:03.53 respectively. Faller's 1:01.90 in non-scoring exhibition would have placed 3rd. (Andover 76 – Suffield 80)

Ty put together a great race in the 100 Breaststroke and was a close 2nd in 1:00.32. Hudgins' 1:04.62 was a strong 3rd, and Xue's 1:06.62 was right for 4th. Zheng swam 1:09.04 in exhibition. (Andover 85 – Suffield 87)

Going into the final event of the day, the 400 Freestyle Relay, Andover needed to not only win its second event of the day but also needed to place 3rd in order to secure a win. Placing 1st and 4th would have yielded a tie; placing 2nd and 3rd would have yielded a loss. At this key moment, Andover aced its first test of the season. Rossi, Isenhower, Ty, and Alberga swam an 3:17.94 for the win, and Najem, Faulkner, Xue, and Choi swam 3:39.82 for 3rd. Again showing its depth, Ono, Cohen, Tran, and Zheng swam 3:37.64 in exhibition. (Andover 95 – Suffield 91)

Recognizing the team's vast potential—and knowing the team has much to work on in both conditioning and technique—the Andover boys are looking forward to five weeks of intense training before the season resumes against Choate in early January.