

Big Blue Focuses on Racing in Preparation for New Englands

By Defeating Hopkins, Andover Brings League-Record to 6-0; Overall Record is 6-1

At the end of a three-hour bus ride to New Haven, the members of the Andover Boys' Swimming & Diving Team—minus the divers this week—climbed scores of steps leading to the pool at the Hopkins School to face the Hilltoppers. After a remarkably brief competition as well as several season and personal best performances, the Big Blue emerged victorious.

In the 200 Medley Relay, Jack Warden '19, co-captain Darren Ty '16, co-captain Marcello Rossi '16, and Christian Alberga '17 combined for a season-best 1:38.92. Dan Tran '17, Jonathan Xue '17, Michael Najem '16, and Harvey Zheng '19 were second in an undisclosed time, and Nate Smith '18, Jacob Hudgins '19, Sarp Orgul '16, and Nick Faulkner '16 were third in 1:47.47. Warden and Hudgins both had season-best splits.

Andover placed second, third, and fourth in the 200 Freestyle with Thomas Choi '16 in 1:50.71, Rick Ono '19 in 1:54.54, and Richard Zhong '17 in 1:56.29.

The 200 Individual Medley was an entirely ninth-grade affair with Warden capturing first in 2:05.22 (season best), Zheng second in 2:05.46, and Hudgins fourth in 2:08.36 (season best).

For the 50 Freestyle, Andover explored the "Team of Rivals" idea and placed Alberga, Ty, and Rossi—who, along with Nick Isenhower '18, established a new school record in the sprint freestyle relay three weeks ago—in the same heat, which they swept. The competition sparked Alberga to a personal best, 21.58, making him the fourth-fastest performer in Andover history, behind Michael Camarda '14, TJ Durkin '99, and David Mainen '89 and placing him just ahead of Ty. Ty swam a solid 22.21 and Rossi a personal best of 22.36.

In a last-minute switch, Ty entered the 100 Butterfly and cruised to a 53.58. Zhong was third in 58.75, and Orgul was fourth in 59.25.

In the 100 Freestyle, Alberga again posted a personal best, racing to an impressive 47.35, making him the eighth-fastest performer in Andover history. Xue was second in a season best 52.05, and Najem was third in a personal best of 52.86.

Rossi returned to the 500 Freestyle for the first time since early December and posted a strong in-season performance of 4:51.44. Zheng was fourth in a season best 5:13.78, and Warden was fifth in 5:23.12.

In the 200 Freestyle Relay, Ty, Faulkner, Rossi, and Alberga combined for the win in 1:31.61, and Orgul, Zhong, Ono, and Choi were third in 1:36.05. Zhong split a season best.

The 100 Backstroke marked another Andover sweep. Smith swam a season best of 59.54 for first. Tran was second in 59.59, and Najem was third in 1:01.04.

Hudgins achieved a personal best of 1:01.77 in the 100 Breaststroke. Xue placed second in 1:05.15, and Ono was third in a season best 1:07.46.

The 400 Freestyle Relay saw Tran, Zhong, Ono, and Zheng place second in 3:29.31, and Orgul, Choi, Faulkner, and Hudgins place third in 3:32.10. Choi, Zheng, Zhong, Orgul, and Hudgins all had season best splits.

With one week until Exeter and three until New Englands, which based on dual-meet performances looks like it will be pure chaos, the Big Blue will hunker down for another few weeks of great training with the expectation of performing its best at Deerfield the first weekend of March.