

## Dec. 8 Swimming



*Steinert's Lauren Cruz reached out and grabbed on to four first-place finishes in today's victory at Lawrence (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing [jbsportsphoto@aol.com](mailto:jbsportsphoto@aol.com)).*

### **Freshmen put their potential on display as Steinert girls top Lawrence**

**By Rich Fisher**

**Fish4Scores.com**

**Dec. 8:** Sara DeAngelo, Lauren Cruz and Taylor Kwok have become household names to fans of Steinert girls' swimming.

This year, the house might be getting a little more crowded.

The Spartans are happy to welcome two promising freshman to the team in Tess Dalton and Hailey Thayer, who both showed their potential in today's 101-69 win at Lawrence.

Dalton was a triple-winner in the 500 free (5:12.19), 100 breast (1:30.64) and 400 free relay, while Thayer won twice in the 200 medley relay and 100 back, while also taking second in the 50 free.

Both are Hamilton Aquatics Club swimmers who train year-round.

"It was clear right away they had a lot of talent," coach Jacquelyn Nami said. "It was nice to see how they fit into the big picture swimming against upperclassmen. I think it's nice for them in the first couple meets to place and do so well.

"They're really nice girls. They train hard, so I'm glad to see them having success here."

Although it is not surprising, as Nami has a superb talent scouting team.

"My upperclassmen told me about them," the coach said. "And they're pretty accurate with

their predictions.”

Not only are the ninth-graders providing some valuable points, they are giving Nami more flexibility with a suddenly deeper lineup.

“They’re contributing so much, and it’s nice because they’re filling in on events that Sara and Lauren would have had to do before. Now they can do other things. So it’s really just giving us extra strength.”

The seniors flaunted that strength today against a depleted Lawrence lineup, which was missing two of its best swimmers as Caitlin Lavery and Kate O’Rourke were both at a club meet.

Steinert was still impressive, however, as Cruz, DeAngelo and Kwok swam on both the 200 medley relay (2:20.24) and the 400 free relay (4:32.18).

Cruz and DeAngelo were quadruple winners, as Cruz also won the 200 free (2:22.79) and 100 free (1:05.36) while DeAngelo claimed the 200 IM (2:39.82) and 100 fly (1:13.34).

Kwok chipped in with seconds in the 100 free and 100 back.

“Taylor’s having a great season,” Nami said. “We expect her to come up big as the season goes on.”

Also helping the cause were Carley Conti (second, 200 IM), Ciera Jones (second, 100 breast, third 50 free) and Sarah Sacco (third, 500 free).

The victory was Steinert’s first of the young season, coming on the heels of an opening-day loss at Robbinsville.

## **Smith makes sure all the pieces fit as Spartan boys edge Cardinals**

Jen Smith was a busy girl on Wednesday.

She was undoing what she did, then doing it again, then undoing it, and on it went.

But after mixing it all up and putting it on the table, the Steinert boys’ swim coach came up with a gourmet meal as the Spartans won the 400 relay to clinch today’s tense 90-80 victory at Lawrence.

Since this is traditionally a tight meet (more so with the girls, but the boys have had their battles), Smith tried to squeeze every point she could out of the lineup after taking an opening-day win over Robbinsville.

“Oh my God,” she said. “We didn’t know what to expect. After Robbinsville, we said “OK, one piece of the puzzle is done. Some spots fit good.’



*Tyler Gulsby had three first-place finishes and one second for Steinert in their tense win over Lawrence (Photo by Bryan Eveland)*

“Coming in here, I must have switched the lineup like, 100 times. We sit down, I get some of the guys’ input, we switch things around here and there. We switch the order of relays. It’s very time consuming, but it paid off today. I’d do it again, that’s for sure.”

Especially in a meet like this one, where one mis-placed aquaman could bring down a team.

“It comes down to the wire every time we’re here,” Smith said. “Sometimes it goes the other

way. It's just nice to have this strong lineup to get us going."

It is so strong that it managed to survive without Kyle Gulsby, who is battling "a bit of a knee injury" according to Smith.

Steinert has some studs to pick up the slack. Zach Mabin and Kevin Diefenbach were quadruple winners against the Cards.

Both were in the winning 200 medley relay (2:39.75) and 400 free relay (3:55.19), while Mabin won the 200 free (2:03.45) and 100 breast (1:10.21), and Diefenbach won the 200 IM (2:46.41) and 100 free (57.27).

Although the goal is to peak at the end of the season, Smith says Mabin is exactly where he should be right now.

"He's so focused and determined," she said. "He doesn't always show it on his face. He's got the heart and soul for swimming and he doesn't think about anything else. You can't ask for anything more when he gets in the pool."

Diefenbach is right there with him as he hopes to make his senior year memorable.

"I'm just looking to have some best times and post some records, I'm always looking at them," he said. "I'd like to get some first and second place finishes at counties this year."

What's nice is that Diefenbach and Mabin don't have to carry the load, as Tyler Gulsby and Tommy Wright are also solid along with emerging Billy Maloney. The return of Kyle Gulsby will only make things better.

"It's great knowing in every meet you're always gonna win some events and you always have strengths," Diefenbach said. "There's certain events you don't have to worry about and you're always gonna get those points. Especially later in the meet, where we're really strong."

Maloney and Gulsby rounded out the 200 MR today while Wright and Gulsby were on the 400 FR.

Wright won the 500 free (4:44.08) and took third in the 200 free; Gulsby won the 100 fly (1:05.16) and was second in the 100 back; and Maloney was second in the 500 free and third in the 100 back.

Steinert also got third-place finishes from Stephen Huie (200 IM), Gary Liedtka-Bizuga (50 free) and Frank Sun (1:03.5).

They were all important points as Lawrence refused to let Steinert put much distance between the two teams. The Spartans largest advantage was 61-49, but that got cut to two after the Cards took 1-2 in the 200 free relay.

Mabin restored order by winning the breast, and the Spartans only needed to finish second and third in the 400 relay to win it. They took first and third to win the meet and improve to 2-0.

"It adds a little pressure when it comes down to the relay, it makes us all work harder," Diefenbach said. "It was great."

Spartans swimmers may be saying that last phrase quite a few times this year.

## **Nottingham's Mazukewicz has strong outing against powerful Princeton**

Nottingham wasn't expecting miracles against powerful Princeton today, and would take whatever positives it could from the meet.

The girls got a nice one with Lisa Mazukewicz, won took first place in the 100 backstroke (1:15.88) and third in the 200 IM in the Northstar girls' 124-46 home loss to the Little Tigers (2-0).

Sam Williams also had a nice day, taking second in the 500 freestyle and third in the 200 free, while Alex Morante took second in the 50 free.

## **Northstar boys have several positives in setback to Little Tigers**

Like the girls team, the Northstar boys were just hoping for some progress against Princeton, and they got several bright spots in the process.

Granted, Princeton took a 112-54 victory, but Nottingham received several strong efforts, including five second-place finishes. Runners-up for the 'Stars were Jawad Shah (100 back), Frank Gonzalez (500 free), Eric Cougan (100 free), Jeremy Oiler (100 fly) and Joe Oliver (200 IM).

Finishing third for the home team were Michael John (100 breast, 100 free) and Oiler (200 free).

## **Notre Dame dominates Hornets but boys and girls have bright spots**

The Hamilton West girls ran into a buzzsaw with Notre Dame, dropping a 120-50 decision, but Madi Uram continues to show her freshman year was no fluke.

Uram won the 100 breaststroke for the Hornets, and also took third in the 50 freestyle. Abi Wagner had a nice day by taking third in the 200 free and 100 free, while Sofi Walter took second in the 200 IM and Stephanie Sparano was second in the 100 back.

"We knew it would be a tough meet against Notre Dame so I decided to test our flexibility and put some girls in events they weren't used to swimming," coach Kyle Schulke said. "The girls stepped up to the challenge and I was pleasantly surprised by their swims.

"Sofi has strong swims in the 200 IM and 100 breast, showing me that she can compete in almost any event. Stephanie Sparano and Christine Carbone has great swims in the 400 free and Stephanie was able to get second in the backstroke only two events later."

The improvement did not stop there.

"La'Quashia Ashmore dropped 10 seconds in her 100 breast and Autumn Sharkey dropped five seconds in her 100 fly," Schulke said. "The best part of the meet was seeing the girls smiling after finishing an event they weren't used to swimming and surprising themselves with their great performances."

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The Hornet boys also took some positives from their 135-34 loss to Notre Dame. Jacob Torres was second in the 200 free (2:25.31) while Gerritt Furda finished third in the 50 free (32.48).