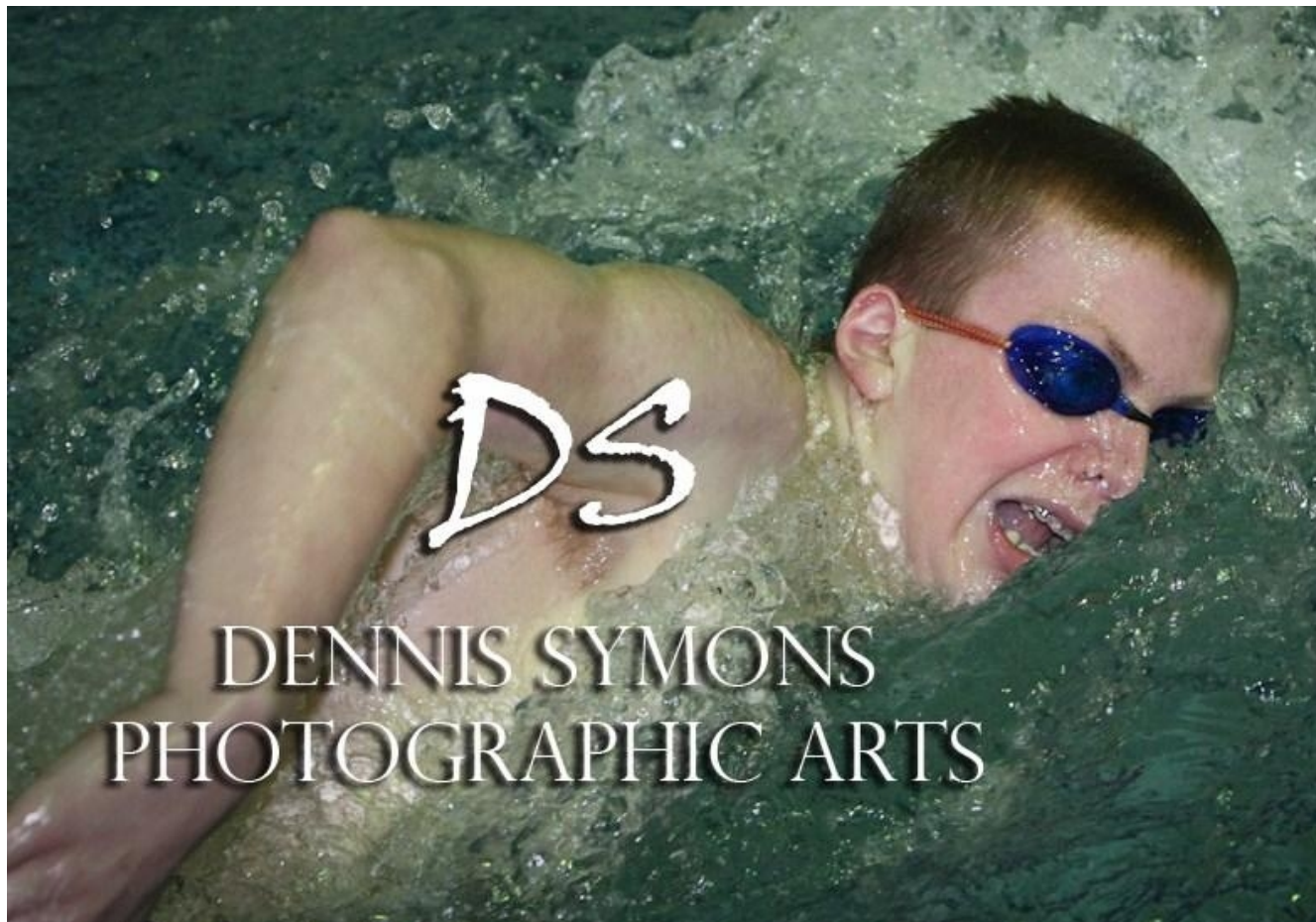


Feb. 4 MCT Boys Swimming



Hamilton West freshman Griffin Hutton swims his way to a sixth-place finish in the 400-meter fly at today's Mercer Meet, and he also re-set his school record again (Photo by Dennis Symons Jr./purchase photos at www.dennissymons.com).

Mabin's gold medal effort in breast helps Steinert to fourth-place finish

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

Feb. 4: With the kind of season Steinert junior Zach Mabin has been enjoying, it would have been downright unfair if he didn't win a Mercer County swimming title this year.

Fortunately, fairness prevailed as Mabin swam to a first-place time of 1:07.72 in the breaststroke to give Hamilton Township a champion among a sea of Princeton in today's Mercer County Championships at Lawrence High School.

Mabin, who also took third in the 400 free (4:14.34) helped Steinert to its highest team standing in years as the Spartans finished fourth with 112 points.

Mabin just beat out Princeton's Colburn Yu, who clocked a 1:07.77

"I was hoping for a great race and Colburn and the other kids gave it to me," Mabin said. "It's great competition and it's a lot of fun."

That's the beauty of Mabin. For him, it's as much about the competition as it is about the result.

That's not to say the result doesn't mean anything.

"I wanted to win the breaststroke," he said. "And I'm happy with the free. Last year I finished third as well. I was hoping to defend that place or do better."

“This really means a lot. It makes me feel like I’m proud of myself. It’s something I always wanted to do. It almost puts me into like, being a leader.”

He is a leader. . a leader among all male breaststrokes in Mercer County for 2012.

Steinert coach Jen Smith feels it’s only fitting.

“He’s been having a great year,” Smith said. “All along he has his goals set and he’s hit every single one of them.

“His breaststroke time is unbelievable. He swam in the last (400 free) relay event and they dropped four seconds. He’s just having a great year. . . and we still have him for another year.”

Mabin teamed with Tommy Wright, Kevin Diefenbach and Tyler Gulsby to take third in the 400 free relay in 3:50.92.

“We were really happy with that,” Mabin said. “We dropped four seconds from our relay time so we’re really proud of that, and how we did as a team.”

Although Mabin was the Spartans lone medal winner, Steinert still got plenty of standout performances from Diefenbach (two sixths), Tyler Gulsby and Wright.

“Everybody did great, fantastic,” Smith said. “We had more boys come back then we usually do for the finals and consolation round. I don’t even remember the last time we were up that high in the standings.”

The coach is also pretty sure that Steinert will qualify for the states and take on West Windsor-Plainsboro South, who the Spartans beat in a dual meet on the final relay earlier this season.

“Going into states, this is a good pick up for the entire team because we had such a high finish and everybody dropped times,” Smith said. “It was a great day for our swimmers.

“The West Windsor meet was so close the last time and with how the meet ended, West Windsor South is gonna be gunning for us. But for now the guys are really proud of what they did today and I’m happy for them.”

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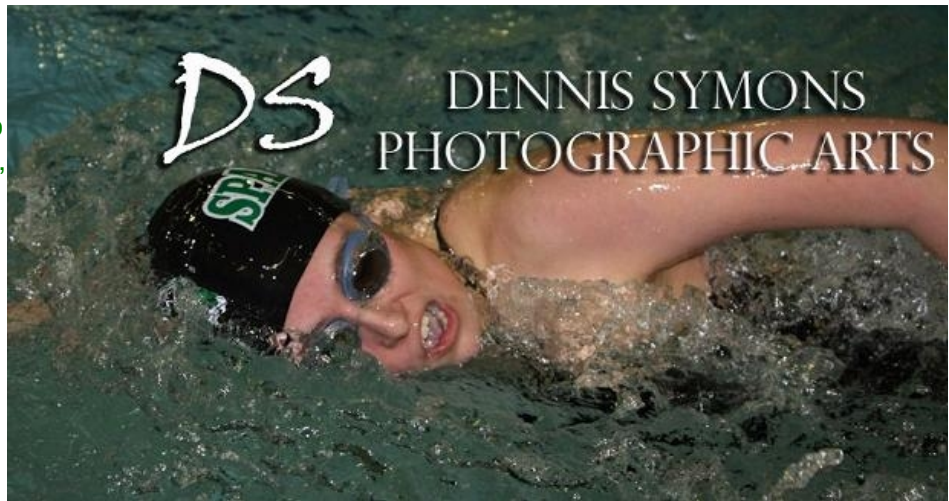
All year long Griffin Hutton has been putting up big times and winning races, but today marked the freshman’s coming out party in high school.

Would he continue to thrive under pressure, or melt under the bright lights of the MCT?

Answer – thrive.

Hutton finished fifth in the 100 fly in 1:04.17 and sixth in the 400 free (4:21.47) after being seeded sixth in both events. The 400 time broke his school record yet again.

“I was astounded I got into the top eight as a freshman,” Hutton said. “I was hoping I would do good and make it back (to today’s finals), which I did. I went up (a seed) in the 100 fly stayed the same



Steinert's Tommy Wright churns his way to an 11th-place finish in the 400 freestyle at today's MCT (Photo by Dennis Symons Jr./purchase photos at www.dennissymons.com.)

in the 400. That's all I can ask for."

Hutton is a veteran of big meets due to all his years of swimming club. But he admits that the county meet is a different bear.

"It was about what I thought it would be and I'm just happy that I'm still swimming (today)," he said. "I was a little nervous because I was racing upperclassmen but mostly I was just excited."

Indeed, the juices were flowing.

"I always love to swim when there's a lot of adrenaline going," he said. "That's what I felt today, and it helps."

The following is a complete round-up on Hamilton Township finalists. Top 3 swimmers earn medals and the next nine earn ribbons:

HAMILTON WEST

Griffin Hutton: 5th, 100 fly (1:04.17), 6th, 400 free (4:26.47).

200 medley relay: 12th, Jacob Torres, Griffin Hutton, Aleks Henson, Nick Walter (2:19.04)

400 free relay: 12th, Sam Markos, Aleks Henson, Jacob Torres, Griffin Hutton (4:30.01).

NOTTINGHAM

200 free relay: 11th, Eric Cougan, Frank Gonzalez, Edgae Sarat, Jeremy Oiler (1:55.56).

400 free relay: 11th, Michael John, Joe Oliver, Frank Gonzalez, Jeremy Oiler (4:18.94).

STEINERT

Zach Mabin: 1st, 100 breast (1:07.72), 3rd, 400 free (4:14.34)

Kevin Diefenbach: 6th, 200 free (2:03.6), 6th, 100 free (56.58)

Tyler Gulsby: 10th, 200 IM (2:23.90); 6th, 100 back (1:04.95)

Tommy Wright: 11th, 400 free (4:42.16)

200 medley relay: 7th, Billy Maloney, Tyler Gulsby, Zach Mabin, Kevin Diefenbach (1:59.17)

200 free relay: 5th, Frank Sun, Matt Jensen, Tommy Wright, Kyle Gulsby (1:51.63)

400 free relay: 3rd, Tommy Wright, Kevin Diefenbach, Tyler Gulsby, Zach Mabin (3:50.92)