

Stevenson claims Challenge Cup

Ike 'played hard' but couldn't catch the Titans

By John Shull
Special to The Macomb Daily

The inaugural championship of the Challenge Cup Tournament matched two familiar high school hockey foes who know each other all too well, Stevenson (14-3-4) and Eisenhower (15-4-1). These teams played to a hard-fought 4-4 tie, Dec. 23. On Saturday it was Stevenson winning the Challenge Cup, over Eisenhower, 4-3.

Eisenhower defeated Ford on Friday night 8-0 to advance to the finals, and the Titans of Stevenson defeated the Chieftains of Utica, 5-3.

The first period was a defensive battle as neither team could gain any momentum on the other. Even when Stevenson's junior defenseman Will Shier gave his Titans an early 1-0 lead, the game felt very much in neutral. This was due in large part to the magnificent goaltending early on by Eisenhower goalie John Onaga and Stevenson's Rick Ice. To say the least, both teams showed up in the first period with their skates sharpened and their minds on each other. Stevenson would take a 1-0 lead into the second period.

The Titans came out of their locker room to start the second and added a quick goal at 12:39 of the second to extend their lead to 2-0. The Titans had many scoring opportunities out of gate early thanks largely in part to the puck-handling and shifty moves of seniors Brandon Branthoover, and Dan Dougherty. However, Eisenhower would not go

quiet into the night so to speak and quickly answered with their first goal of the game at 10:03 of the second period, a deflection off of the stick of junior forward Ryan Maloney. Maloney would add another goal late in the second period on the power play to make the score 3-2 for Stevenson in the second period.

"(Ryan) Maloney is a great addition to our hockey team, he plays smart, and is a great leader on and off the ice," Ike coach Bob Hall said.

The third period would start with Stevenson out in front and Eisenhower trailing 3-2. With both teams feeling the pressure and wanting to take the Challenge Cup back to their respective schools for a year, the hitting was becoming plentiful. Hitters like Stevenson senior defenseman Greg Stevens and Eisenhower senior defenseman Ryan Persha were delivering hits back and forth to opposing

forwards while it seemed that neither team could grab a hold of momentum as the early minutes of the third period ticked away.

"We played hard, had our opportunities and just did not capitalize on some of them," Hall said. "You really have to take your hats off to Stevenson, they played a great hockey game."

Midway through the third would see Stevenson's Nick Gregorich fire a shot and watch it get past Eisenhower's goalie Onaga to give Stevenson the 4-2 advantage. The Eagles would remain resilient. As the clock ticked down in the final period, junior forward Justin Whitson of the Eagles scored on a rebound and that seemed to give the Eagles new life heading into the last five minutes of the period.

As the Eagles would continue to fire shots and get the puck into the Titans' zone, the Titans would repeatedly clear the puck and play strong team defense



Macomb Daily photo by David Dalton
Stevenson's Justin Zyvon scores a goal in the Titans' 4-3 victory over Eisenhower in the final of the Challenge Cup.

that would eventually lead to the clock striking zero and giving the Titans the 4-3 victory and the Challenge Cup.

Stevenson coach Alan Korolewicz explained how much this tournament meant to him and his hockey team: "The kids really enjoyed the Challenge Cup tournament, it was just a great experience overall. We knew it was going to be a battle

with Eisenhower and that is what it was. I am excited to coming back and defend the cup again next year."

Both these teams fresh off of this on-ice battle will get ready to do it again February 13 at Great Lakes Sports City. The consolation game of the Challenge Cup Tournament saw the Utica Chieftains defeat the Falcons of Ford by a score of 7-2.

Laurain likes the pay off

Romeo senior is meet's top swimmer

By John Hetzler
Macomb Daily Sports Writer

Romeo senior Tyler Laurain never misses a practice, never shows up late and never needs reminding of what it takes to be a champion.

On Saturday, four years of hard work paid off as he earned outstanding senior swimmer of the meet at the Macomb County Swimming and Diving Championships at L'Anse Creuse North.

"It feels good," said Laurain, who won the 50-yard freestyle and 100 backstroke as well as helping the Bulldogs to meet record-setting victories in the 200 medley and 200 freestyle relays.

"It's horrible getting up at 5:20 in the morning," Laurain said. "But it's the rewards like this that make up for it."

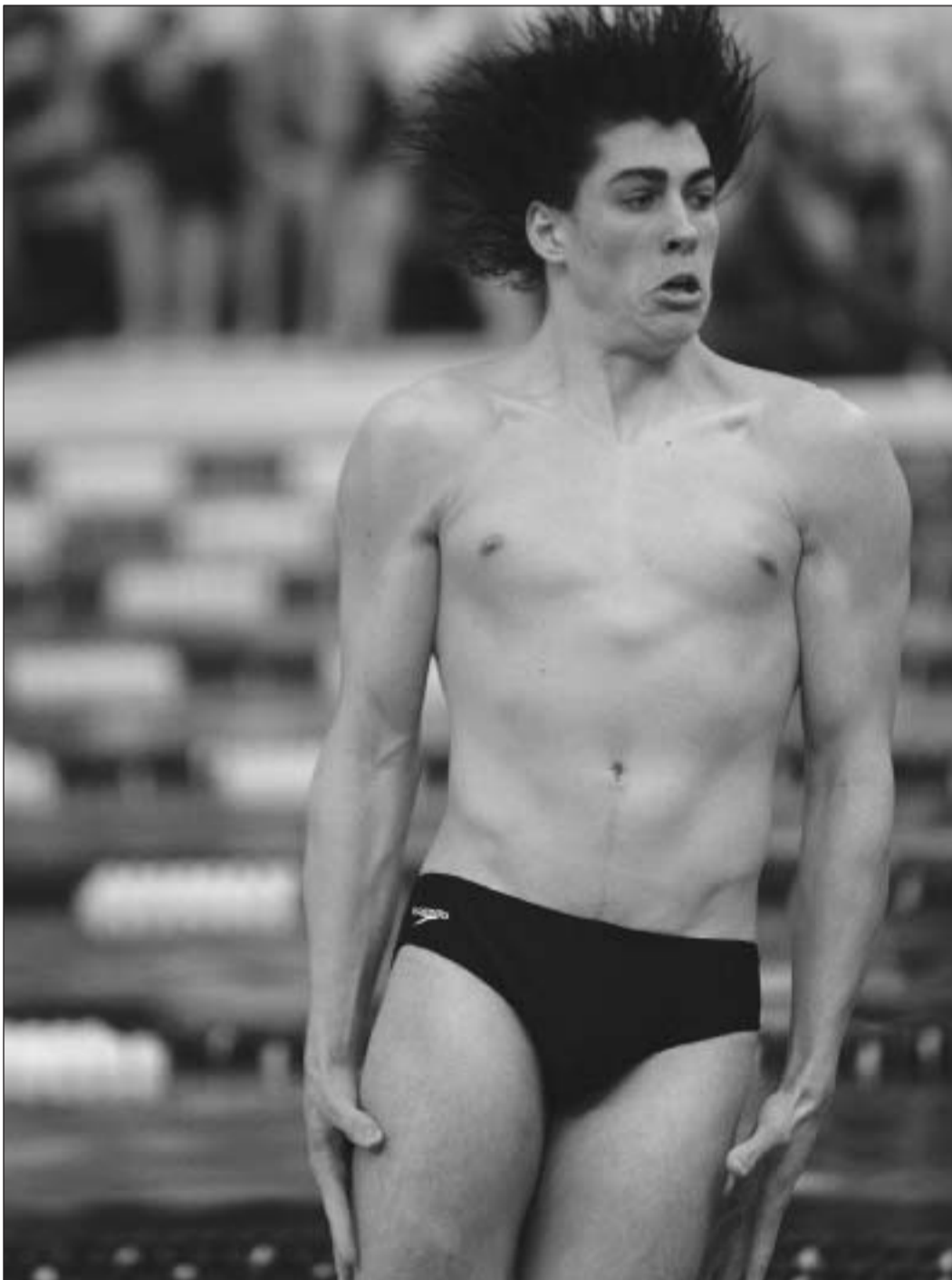
Laurain serves as a captain on Romeo along with fellow seniors Mike Glinski and Devon Compeau, and together they led the Bulldogs to their second straight county championship and their ninth since 1998.

"He doesn't miss a practice," Romeo coach Kendall Peake said of Laurain. "He's on time every day. He's a great leader. ... He's just there every day, every morning, every night."

Laurain's day started strong as he teamed with Glinski, Compeau and senior Max Hensel to win the day's opening event, the 200 medley relay, with a meet-record time of one minute and 40.79 seconds.

After falling just short of the record at last year's meet, Laurain said the Bulldogs went into Saturday's race aiming for a piece of county history.

He got that and then reached another goal when he swam a state-qualifying time in winning the 50 freestyle. He entered the



Macomb Daily photo by David Dalton
Roseville senior Dennis Defauw won the diving competition with a score of 341.95.

meet already having qualified in the 100 backstroke.

"That means everything," Laurain said. "I wanted to swim in two individual events (at states), and now I got it."

Laurain posted a time of 22.62 seconds to edge De La Salle sophomore Mack Biggert by .06 seconds.

"I just realized this is my last

chance to prove myself at county," Laurain said. "I thought my start went really well, and my flip turn went really well."

After helping Romeo set another meet record in the 200 free relay — Laurain swam a leadoff leg of 22.98 seconds as the Bulldogs finished first in 1:32.27 — he capped his day

with a triumph in the backstroke.

His time of 55.91 seconds in the backstroke set a new Romeo varsity record.

"I didn't realize I had the record because I thought I went slower than I usually do," Laurain said. "My legs didn't die out on me. The last 25 I still had a kick left."

MEET: Belonged to the Bulldogs one more time despite strong effort by Tars

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well in practice."

De La Salle sophomore Mack Biggert captured the 100 freestyle in 50.11 seconds, and he also finished second in the 50 free with a time of 22.62 seconds.

"They were good swims, his two best swims of the year so far," Michol said. "Hopefully, he can keep improving."

Chippewa Valley, which placed a top-six finisher in nine of 12 events, capped its strong day by winning the 400 freestyle relay. Michael Arena, Jeff Chew, Jeff Voss and Kevin Schnieders combined for a school-record time of 3:27.89.

But the meet belonged to Romeo.

Laurain won two events, the 50 free and 100 backstroke, and Glinski finished first in the 100

breaststroke with a time of 1:03.53.

"I felt good in the medley relay," Glinski said. "I had good rhythm."

Everyone on the Bulldogs felt good in the medley relay as Laurain, Glinski, senior Devon Compeau and Max Hensel recorded a time of 1:40.79 to shatter the old meet record of 1:43.44 by almost three seconds.

Anchor Bay's Andrew Leopardi, Nick Victor, Shields and Ben McVay finished second in the medley relay with a time of 1:42.76.

"It kind of pumped us up," Glinski said. "To smash it felt pretty good and set us up for the rest of the day."

Romeo and Anchor Bay had another duel in the 200 freestyle relay, the meet's race of

the day.

Compeau held off Shields, who swam an anchor split of 21.48 seconds over the final 50 yards, to win with a time of 1:32.27, just .02 ahead of the Tars.

"When Devon touched out Aaron Shields, I lost my voice then and there," Peake said. "There was nothing more exciting."

Except perhaps another county crown for the Bulldogs, who savored the victory.

"It'll be another 20 years before I have group of kids like this," Peake said. "They're so special."

The top eight finishers in each event receive medals. Competitors who place ninth through 16th receive a certificate from The Macomb Daily.

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SPARTANS: 'Are an outstanding team'

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lead over Purdue and the winner of Saturday's late Minnesota-Ohio State game in the conference race. The Spartans (19-4, 9-2) have not won a Big Ten title since 2001.

"We were a little mad at Draymond. He charged that one time or he'd have had a perfect game," MSU coach Tom Izzo said. "He was a surprise today. ... He's been playing better, he's shooting free throws a lot better. So he helped us a lot in there."

Green, a 6-foot-6, 235-pound freshman, was one of the few Spartans who had any energy early against the league's worst team. He dominated the young Hoosiers inside with his girth, and kept MSU afloat in a disjointed first half with eight points and six rebounds in nine productive minutes.

MSU led just 33-26 at the break, but after Indiana scored two quick baskets to open the

U-M: Douglas puts up 20

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Stu Douglas hit six 3-pointers and scored 20 points to lead Michigan (15-9), which was coming off a 71-51 victory Thursday over Penn State. Manny Harris added 15 for the Wolverines.

Connecticut, playing its first week as the No. 1 team since 2005-06, hasn't lost since dropping a 74-63 decision to Georgetown in the Big East opener on Dec. 29.

UConn opened the game on an 8-1 run, punctuated by an ally-

oop from A.J. Price to Stanley Robinson. But the Wolverines fought back using several backdoor cuts to beat UConn's half-court trap and full-court press.

The Wolverines forced 10 first-half turnovers from the Huskies and went on a 9-0 run that turned a 21-20 deficit into a 29-21 lead.

The Huskies closed the half on a 12-5 run to cut the Michigan lead to 34-33. It was just the fifth time UConn has trailed at halftime this season.

second half, the Spartans pulled away with an 18-5 run. Indiana (6-16, 1-9) went seven minutes between field goals during its cold spell.

When Green, who made all five of his field goals and all five of his free throws, left the court for the final time with 2:56 to play and MSU leading by 25, the Izzone student section serenaded him with chants of "Draymond, Draymond."

"We didn't have a lot of energy coming out," Green said. "It's not that we underestimated them or nothing, that's just sometimes how it is. Coach always tells us guys coming off the bench have to bring energy. That's what I tried to do."

Chris Allen added 16 points and was 4 of 6 from 3-point range for the Spartans, who survived a 1-for-11 shooting day from Durrell Summers.

"The rim didn't like me today," Summers said.

Goran Suton scored 12 points

and Kalin Lucas had 10 for his 14th straight double-digit performance for MSU.

"They are an outstanding basketball team," Indiana coach Tom Crean said. "I'm not surprised how good they are. They've been the standard bearer of this league for a long time and our players saw it first hand today."

"Their depth, their speed, their toughness, it just took control of the game. We don't have much margin for error anywhere and you certainly don't have any margin for error when you're playing Michigan State in Breslin."

Crean, a former MSU assistant who was Izzo's first hire 14 years ago, said Saturday marked his first time in the visitor's locker room at the Breslin Center. It was also the second time Izzo and Crean have met, with the Spartans beating Crean's Marquette team in the first round of the NCAA Tournament two years ago, 61-49.