

Sports

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Our Athletes

Wednesday night lights

Wrestlers unveil spotlight during alumni festivities

By JOHN GORALSKI
SPORTS WRITER

Fans had to wait a full hour longer than expected for the scheduled start, but it was all part of the wrestling team's pomp and circumstance. On Wednesday, Jan. 18, the Blue Knights unveiled a facelift of sorts in the Southington gym. Two large banners were unfurled upon the wall to list the program's history of state championships. Alumni paraded before the team as the Knights rolled out their brand new mat and lowered a spotlight.

Are you ready to rumble?

Wrestling

Darkness settled onto the crowd like a blanket. Projected images of water dripped down the walls of the gym. Music echoed across the floor in driving rhythms and athletes battled upon the mat. A new day is dawning for the up-and-coming Knights.

"We're trying to make it an event," said Blue Knight



JOHN GORALSKI

Tyler Mirando (106) scrambles for a point during a 40-21 win over Newington on Wednesday, Jan. 18. Southington improved to 13-1 in dual meets.

wrestling coach Derek Dion. "We work harder than any other sport in the school, but they seem to get more fan support from the student body—whether it's football with the cheerleaders or basketball with the cheerleaders. We wanted to make this a show. It's worth all the work that these kids put in. We want to make it exciting and fun for the fans.

Jan. 18
Southington 40
Newington 21

Even if they don't know wrestling all that well, they can come out and enjoy it."

The new look was a part of Southington's alumni day festivi-

ties, where the Knights championed their 25 state championship titles since 1977. Dion, himself, came up through the Southington ranks, and the player-turned-coach championed the event.

"It was such a great thing to see all the alumni come down to

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It takes a village to win a meet

Knights win twice, avenge last season's loss, improve to 4-0

By JOHN GORALSKI
SPORTS WRITER

Each time Newington drew close, Mike Smigelski dove into the water to end their hopes. On Friday, Jan. 20, the Indians clawed their way to within two points four times during the meet. Each time, Smigelski came to the rescue.

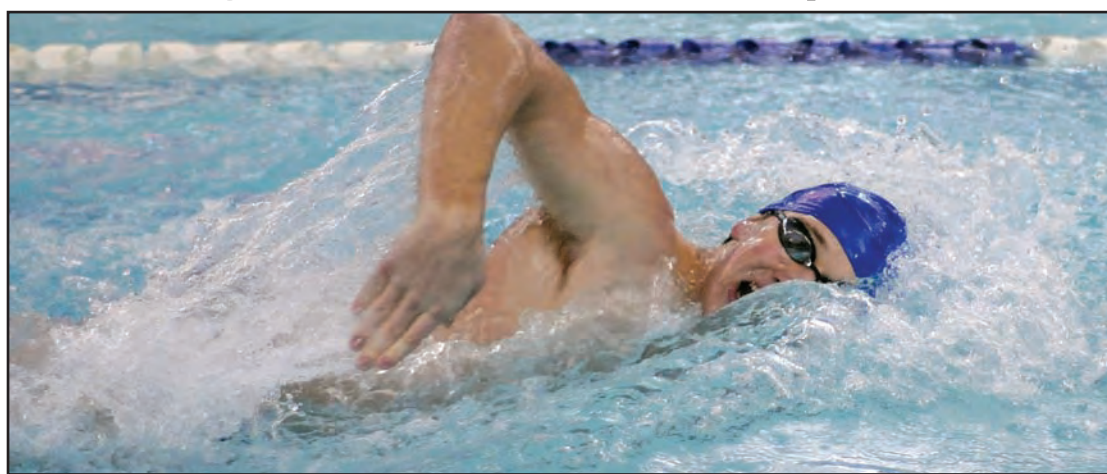
Smigelski won the 200 freestyle (1:51.76) by almost 10 seconds. He won the 100 freestyle (50.78) by more than five seconds. He swam the final leg of the 200 freestyle relay (1:39.45) to open up a tight race.

Swimming

Clinging to a 79-77 lead at the start of the final relay, the Knights turned to Smigelski once again. It was a no-brainer for Southington coach Evan Tuttle.

"You put him in the anchor for a relay, and that's it. You put him out front, and you know you're going to get a lead," said Tuttle. "That's pivotal in those races and in these meets. That's something that Mike's been able to do for us consistently for a number of years now. In that respect, he's in a class of his own."

Smigelski seemed to skip



JOHN GORALSKI

Mike Smigelski swims the 100 freestyle as the Knights win twice last week.

Jan. 18
Southington 96
East Hartford 69

Jan. 20
Southington 89
Newington 81

across the pool like a water bug, building a lead that spanned nearly half the pool. Vladislav Kiveliyk, Jesse Cooney, and Ed Klein continued to build with each leg of the relay, and Southington clinched the win with a first place (3:44.62) and second place finish (3:59) in the 400 relay. Last year, Newington handed Southington their first loss of the season. This year, the

Knights returned the favor with an 89-81 decision.

"This is our fourth win, but before this meet we weren't really tested. We went into our first three meets with the expectation that we were going to win and the raw confidence that we can get into the heads of those guys," said Tuttle. "This was closer than I expected. There were some races that went our way, and there were

some races that went the other way that I was shocked about. I give a lot of credit to Newington and the work that those kids did. They put in some fast times today."

Smigelski called it a team victory. He pointed to his teammates in a postgame meeting and then again with the press.

"One person doesn't win a meet," he said. "We have so many guys this year and so many more people that are putting in the effort. I definitely don't look at it

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Alex Sabian
The Trainer's Table

Supplements and the high school athlete

Alex Sabia ATC/L, CSCS is a Licensed Certified Athletic Trainer and Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist who works for Select Physical Therapy, performs athletic training duties at Southington High School, and offers individual strength and conditioning training.

What supplements, if any, should the high school athlete be taking to aide in their sport and training performance? First, everyone needs to know that the FDA (US Food and Drug Administration) regulates dietary and supplement products under different standards than "conventional" foods. All the supplement manufacturer is responsible for is making sure that the product is safe to consume. Manufacturers do not need to register or receive approval from the FDA to sell their products. The FDA is only responsible for taking action against the supplement manufacturer after the product hits the market.

One must understand that the supplement business is a billion dollar industry. With new products being put on shelves with rapid regularity, it is important to make sure that the high school athlete consults with a trained professional such as: a Certified Athletic Trainer, Certified Strength and Conditioning Coach, or their Medical Doctor prior to taking any supplements.

So, what is the supplement that is the safest and most important for a high school athlete to take? Water. Many people often overlook the fact that water plays a crucial role when it comes to participating in sporting activities. Making sure your body is properly hydrated is a must in order to maintain core temperature, cardiac output and force production throughout workouts. Studies show that even decreasing hydration levels by as little as 2% will decrease work capacity by 35% to 45%. Drinking 20 oz. of water or sports drink 2 to 3 hours prior to exercise and then 8 oz. of a sports drink 10 to 20 minutes before activity is your best bet to insure you are properly hydrated so your body competes at its top performance level.

The easiest way to tell if you're hydrated is by looking at your urine color. If your urine color is consistently a light yellow to clear you should feel confident that you are properly hydrated.

My second recommendation for high school athletes is making sure they are supplementing with protein. Protein (amino acids) is responsible for carrying out most of the chemical processes in your body and

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