

## Our Athletes

# Missed by inches

## Knights nearly topple Simsbury

By JOHN GORALSKI  
SPORTS WRITER

A stronger kick here. A harder stroke there. In the sport of swimming, personal bests are measured in fractions of seconds.

Once a lopsided rivalry fought with Simsbury's second string swimmers, this year's contest was no easy match. On Tuesday, Jan. 26, it came down to the final race. Whoever won the event would win the meet.

### Boys Swimming

The Knights pared seven seconds from their previous best, but were edged by Simsbury's best swimmers in a 91-89 loss on the road.

Coach Jay Dubinsky said that the two-point contest shows how far the program has come and the effort it

takes to win.

"It just shows you where their heads were and where their hearts were," Dubinsky said. "Yes, they didn't win the event, but to take that amount of time off in one meet is just incredible."

The Knights led throughout much of the contest. Simsbury won all three relays, but the Knights finished second and third in each race. Southington won six of the nine individual events, and led by 12 with just three races remaining.

"We led most of the meet based on our depth," said Dubinsky. "We knew that, going into the last couple of events, they were really strong. We knew that we had to swim up if we were going to contain them."

Kyle Nitz led the Knights with wins in the 200 freestyle (2:03.03) and the 500 freestyle

Jan. 26  
**Simsbury 91**  
**Southington 89**

(5:45.85). Jesse Cooney captured the 200 individual medley (2:17.08), and Mike Smigelski won the 50 freestyle (23.53). Kate Monbaron (161.78) led the diving competition, and Colin Magaro placed first in the 100 freestyle (54.53).

Simsbury used its depth in the backstroke and breaststroke to cut into the lead, but it took a win in the final relay to decide the outcome.

"We didn't really know how we were going to fare against them coming in, but to be ahead throughout the meet was a great feeling," said Dubinsky. "We came into that last relay, and everyone was pumped up and



JACK ADIE

Michael Smigelski swims the 100 butterfly during a 91-89 loss to Simsbury on Tuesday, Jan. 26.

excited in the pool. They just had a couple more horses than we did to pull out the win."

Despite Southington's relative youth, the Knights have closed the gap against some of the powerhouse teams in the CCC, and the loss to Simsbury shows how far the Knights have come in a short period of time.

Dubinsky called the loss a testament to Southington's depth, but was hesitant to call the contest a 'moral victory.' These Knights want to win.

"It's nice to be in a very competitive meet. It's nice to be in a meet that goes right down to the end, no matter which way it goes," said the coach. "The plus is that

everyone came out of that meet saying that, if we just worked a little harder here or there, we might have won. For them to say that and not just sit back and say that they are close was so nice to see."

To comment on this story or to contact sports writer John GoralSKI, email him at [jgoralski@southingtonobserver.com](mailto:jgoralski@southingtonobserver.com).



VINNY ROSSITTO

# Trojans surprise Knights

## Southington cruises past Rocky Hill, falls at Simsbury

By JOHN GORALSKI  
SPORTS WRITER

Running into Simsbury for the second time this season, the Blue Knight basketball team ran into a wall. On Friday, Jan. 29, the boys' first bid for a season sweep fell short on the road. Simsbury rallied in the second half to hand the Knights a 50-32 loss.

Southington, who shot 44.4 percent in the first meeting, was held to 21.1 shooting in the rematch. Simsbury answered a 52-37 loss in late December with an 18-point victory at home.

### Boys Basketball

"It's a very tough gymnasium to play in because Simsbury's very fundamental and very well coached," said Blue Knight coach Bob Lasbury. "When we played them [at home], I don't think they had their best performance."

At left, Jordan Chapman scores a lay-up during a 70-48 win over Rocky Hill.

Jan. 26  
**Southington 70**  
**Rocky Hill 48**

Sal Romano collected 12 points, nine rebounds, and four blocks in the rematch, but Southington shooters went just 1-for-17 (5.9 percent) from the perimeter. Tyler Dube finished with seven points, eight rebounds, and eight steals. Jordan Lamson scored five points, but nobody else scored more than four points in the loss.

The Knights led early, out-scoring the Trojans, 11-7, in the first quarter, but entered the half clinging to a 16-16 tie. Simsbury opened the second half with a 16-4 rally after the break and held on for the win.

The loss came on the heels of a lop-sided, 70-48 home victory over Rocky Hill on Tuesday, Jan. 26. The Knights had three players in double-digits, shot 50-percent from the floor, and out-scored the Terriers, 36-27 in the second half to get the win.

"I think everybody was on tonight," said Lasbury. "We worked together as a

Jan. 29  
**Simsbury 50**  
**Southington 32**

team, and we were hot shooting. Our defense was good no matter what defense we were in, so it was definitely an all-around, good performance."

Nick DeFeo led the assault with 19 points. Jordan Chapman added 15 points. Tyler Dube added 13 points and six steals as Southington forced 16 turnovers. Sal Romano (5 points) and Mike Rhodd (8 points) collected 10

rebounds apiece.

"After a tough loss, we could have come out flat or feeling sorry for ourselves," said Lasbury. "Instead, we came out with a lot of energy, and that was so important. Nick DeFeo's hot shooting really carried us at the start."

Now, the Knights (9-4 overall, 5-3 in the CCC West) will try to rebound once more against a pair of conference opponents. Southington will attempt to secure their first season sweeps at Newington on Tuesday and at home against Conard on Friday.

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