

Foos places 5th in 50 freestyle

BY KEVIN SHIELDS • Sports writer • March 2, 2010

FREMONT -- Five years ago, Dexter Foos wasn't even swimming. Now he's one of the top-five swimmers in the state at one of his events.

Foos, who swam a personal-best-time of 21.26 seconds Saturday, finished 12 100ths of a second shy of first in the 50 freestyle, leading Fremont Ross with a fifth-place finish at the Division I state swim meet in Canton.

"It's indescribable," Foos said. "I never thought I'd come that far in five years.

"I was watching the tape afterwards and it actually looked like I hit first -- it was anybody's race."

According to Ross coach Phil Moran, Foos had only been training and swimming four months a year since starting in the eighth grade.

"To do what he did is pretty amazing," Moran said of his senior. "He really is a great athlete with a lot of talent."

The Little Giants qualified nine total swimmers to the meet, with five coming on the girls side and four on the boys.

Joining Foos for the boys were teammates Alex Hoffman, Luke Wilhelm and Keith Wasserman. Hoffman, a junior, qualified in the 100 butterfly and was part of the Little Giants 200 and 400 free relays. He is another swimmer that started in eighth grade and had a really good season. Wilhelm and Wasserman were also a bit green when it came to experience.

"Alex was tremendous all year," Moran said. "Luke and Keith had never same for USA Swimming and Luke never did the summer program, so it really was an amazing relay group we had.

"In the past, my relays have had a lot of experience and swam year-round and this group had almost none. It says something about those kids' abilities."

Though the 200 free relay failed to make the top 16,

the 400 free relay group took 13th, swimming a personal-best time of 3:15.90 in the final.

Hoffman, making his second state appearance, was the Greater Buckeye Conference champion in the 100 butterfly and swam a 52.69 in Friday's preliminary round, missing Saturday's finals by two spots.

"It gained a little time," Hoffman said. "But I was pretty happy with it."

Hoffman swam the opening leg of the 400 relay with Foss closing.

Wilhelm, a member of the two relays that also won the GBC this season, was making his first appearance in Canton. He finished second leg of the 400 relay with split times of 24.01 and 27.30.

"It was really fast down there," said the junior. "It was an amazing experience."

This winter was Wilhelm's first as a full-time member of the relays after making brief appearances as a sophomore. Wasserman was another first-timer to the state meet and says he knew the Ross relays could do something special after getting on the podium first at the GBC championships.

"That's really where it hit for me that we could go pretty far this season," he said. "It was a really good feeling getting up on that podium as league champion."

Wasserman was third leg of the 400 free relay, swimming marks of 23.60 and 26.94. It was a squad that one of the privileged few to make it to state.

"We were one of three teams in Northwest Ohio to get their relays to state," Moran said. "I was kind of amazed we got out of the district meet when you looked at our qualifying times."

The other boys teams to qualify relays were Findlay and Toledo St. Francis de Sales.

"It was a tremendous meet by the boys," Moran said. "We had some guys who had never been there get there and get a lot of great meet experience. We'll be back to the drawing board again next year. There isn't as much talent on the boys side as the girls, but the nice thing is they just seem to pop out of the woodwork for us."



The Fremont Ross state qualifiers in swimming: front, junior Taylor Waggoner, senior Courtney Gabel and sophomore Sammi Miller; middle, junior Christy Meggitt and freshman Laura Duncan; back, junior Alex Hoffman, senior Dexter Foos, junior Luke Wilhelm and sophomore Keith Wasserman. Foos had the best finish for the Little Giants, placing 5th in the 50 freestyle in a time of 21.26 seconds. (Kathy Williams | News-Messenger correspondent)