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North Penn dominates conference championships

By KEV HUNTER, Staff Writer

TOWAMENCIN — Pretty much everything North Penn's Dan Dingman and Nico Gimenez do at swim practice carries over to the meets.

That now includes singing the national anthem.

"That's something that started earlier in the season with Nico Gimenez and myself - during practice we would sing it, and then we started singing it before every home meet," Dingman said.

Who better to get the Suburban One League National Conference Championships started on Friday, as Dingman and Gimenez sang the anthem, then handed over the microphone and started winning gold medals, powering the Knights to their 36th straight conference crown, a streak that started all the way back in 1973.

"I can't say we expected to win because there were some very talented teams here - Council Rock North, Pennsbury - they always come up with talented swimmers, they have depth, they have great coaching," Dingman said. "We came in here with a postseason mentality that we're just gonna get up and swim as fast as we can."

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Dingman surely did that, as he won gold in the 200 IM and the 100 free to help the Knights outscore second-place Council Rock North 356-263.5.

"Dan's a phenomenal athlete," said Knights coach Brian Daly, who continues the long line of great coaches in the North Penn swim program. "I don't know yet what we're gonna put him in at districts, so (Friday) we took a look at him in two of his favorite events, and he went comparable to his lifetime bests in both of them. I think Dan thrives in this part of the season. He loves the postseason. He's trained all year for this, and this meet for him means there's light at the end of the tunnel because he starts his taper at this meet."

Dingman posted times of 1:57.57 in the 200 IM and 48.21 in the 100 free to earn a pair of trips to the medal stand. The only other

swimmer at the meet to win two individual events was Pennsbury's Rich Deley, who won titles in the 200 free and the 100 fly.

North Penn took gold in the 200 medley relay, and also had two other individuals win gold - Brandon Ward took the 500 free and Gimenez won the 100 breast.

Gimenez and Dingman started the meet together by singing, and finished it by swimming - they teamed up with Jeff Smallwood and Ryan Coupe to win the 400 free relay.

"The 400 free relay's one of my favorite races because everyone gets up for it, everyone's excited and fired up," Dingman said. "All the relays are exciting but the 400 free relay is something special because everyone gets up, goes all out, and to post a time like that (3:17.80) - that's a fast time going into districts,

so we're satisfied with that."

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