

Strong state swim meet finish shows promising future for Blue Waves

John Robert Walker, Staff Writer

Junior Blue Waves swimmers Dylan Wiley, Rushyendranath Reddy Nalamalapu and Maddie Brain each made it to the finals of their events at the Oct. 22 state swim meet at the Tupelo Aquatic Center, with Wiley taking home third place in the 100-yard butterfly event.

The state meet is a long meet, with preliminary heats starting early in the morning at 7 a.m. and finals following in the afternoon lasting until 7 p.m. Despite the length of the meet, all three swimmers representing MSMS persevered and made it to the finals in their events.

Wiley said the meet went better than he expected because he improved his performance from the prelims.

“During prelims I placed seventh, but when I got to finals, I was able to bring in third place from an outer lane,” Wiley said. “In swimming, it is quite hard to see a victory come from an outer lane, especially a high placement, because of how the lanes are structured.”

All three swimmers who competed in the state meet for MSMS were juniors, which means the Blue Waves will have an experienced group returning next season.

“Experience is important for any sport or activity, and I feel like we are prepared for how the [state competition] is going to go next year,” Nalamalapu said.

Chris Chain, Blue Waves swim team coach, said he believes the team performed well but will place better in events next year with more practice and experience.

“We did very well, but we have a lot of work to do for next season,” Chain said.

With a solid core returning, Nalamalapu and Wiley said they both look forward to making a run for a team state championship next season.

“One of the main things that we are looking forward to next year is team qualifications. If we have more people next year and more commitment, then we will be able to place individually and as a team,” Nalamalapu said.

“I think we will be able to take this to the next level if we get some more kids next year. We were already dangerous this year. Next year, we can be a real powerhouse,” Wiley added.

Due to Stark Recreation Center’s pool being closed for most of the season, the MSMS swim team was only able to practice twice a week off campus at the YMCA pool. Wiley and Nalamalapu said being back at SRC will allow them to get more practices in next season.

Wiley and Nalamalapu both plan to continue training during the high school offseason and compete in the short-course and long-course state championships with their club swim teams.

“I really want to focus on what I am good at and get on the podium in all of my events [next season],” Nalamalapu said.



LeAnn Alexander

MSMS Blue Wave swimmers junior Dylan Wiley (left), junior Maddie Brain (second from left) and junior Rushyendranath Reddy Nalamalapu (right) pose with coach Chris Chain. Wiley was a top-three finisher in the state meet’s 100-yard butterfly event.