

Legend had it that after the swim team hastily defeated Shawnee Mission East for the first time ever, they celebrated their hard fought victory by dining at a scrumptious Chinese Buffet. While the team took over the buffet, Dipthong, their snail mascot, came into view of a young victorious swimmer. From then on Dipthong had been a vital part of each swim team, winning multiple meets and essentially bringing them to State.

"Actually, Dipthong was broken by Mr. Deffer on our way home from the Japanese Steakhouse after the recent State meet," junior Jackson Conrad said.

According to Conrad, Dipthong was beheaded after being jostled around during the drive by assistant coach Nicholas Deffer. The mascot was rammed into the window of the vehicle, ripping off his head. While many might find Dipthong to be a superstitious figure, he brought the swim and diving teams to State. The teams placed 10th at the Kansas 6A championships. Juniors Jackson Conrad and Ali Arab placed 3rd and 5th at the diving events.

"I wasn't too surprised actually. It was my goal and I was OK with getting third," Conrad said.

Both Conrad and Arab scored well enough in diving to receive consideration for All American Honors. Last year the swim and dive teams competed in the 5A competitions and took State for the team. This year they competed in 6A.

"I was more concerned with their performances than the placing of them. I wanted to make sure that they were all OK and performing to the best of their ability," Coach Bruce Bove said.

While the swimmers and divers worked to their best ability during State, they also worked vigorously during practices.

"Every day after school at 3:10 I have to be in the wrestling room hallway to stretch, then Bove tells us what our practice is then we go up to the pool and do the practice. Our diving coach doesn't come until four and practice ends around five," Conrad said.

When moved to the 6A division their practices improved and progressed.

"The most rewarding feeling about being a swim coach is watching the swimmers and divers improve throughout their high school years," Bove said.

Coach Bove coached swim for 44 years with 39 of those years at South.

"I enjoy the interaction between the swimmers and me. I believe it keeps me young," Bove said.

While Coach Bove had been coaching for most of his life, junior Zach Brown had also been swimming for almost half of his life.

"I started when I was 10 years old at a country club," Brown said. "I practice six days a week for about one or two hours."

Being together as often as they were, team bonding was an essential aspect to getting along.

"We have team dinners, go out to like China Star or Chipotle after practices and just have fun together," Brown said.