

# DENISON

## Men's Swimming 08-09

### Men's Swimming & Diving: 2009 NCAC Championship Preview

**Date:** February 10, 2009

**Location:** GRANVILLE

On Thursday (Feb. 12) the Denison men's swimmers and divers will hit the water for the 2009 North Coast Athletic Conference Swimming & Diving Championship from C.T. Branin Natatorium in Canton, Ohio. The Big Red are coming off a narrow 35-point second-place finish a season ago and return a strong mix of veterans and newcomers primed to post their best times of the season.

The trio of **David Curtis (Ann Arbor, Mich./Pioneer)**, **John Geissinger (Darien, Conn./Lawrenceville School)** and **Jon Behnke (Orinda, Calif./Miramonte)** have combined for 16 NCAC Championships over the last three years and all three will be threats in their respective events and as a part of the Big Red's relay squads.



A six-time NCAC champ and defending national champion in the 500 and 200 freestyles, Curtis will return to defend his crown in both events along with the relays. Geissinger will be DU's top threat in the sprint freestyle events. He has already reached his NCAA automatic qualifying time in the 50 free and has posted three consecutive third place finishes at the conference championships in the 100 free. Geissinger boasts the nation's third fastest time in the 100 free at 44.70.

Behnke comes into the meet tied with Curtis for the most conference titles at six. All of those championships have come in the relays which will be critical if Denison is to stay on pace with their rivals from Gambier. Look for the trio to attempt to set the tone in Thursday's 200 freestyle relay. Denison has won the last three conference crowns in the 200 free relay.

Head coach Gregg Parini loves the leadership that the three provide.

"David is a great competitor who really loves that competitive moment. That's where he shines," said Parini. Geissinger has show perpetual improvement since his freshman year and he has done a lot with a small body. Then in Behnke you have a great relay swimmer who ties things together."

Aside from those three there are plenty of others ready to make their impacts on the big stage in Canton.

"You never really know who it's going to be at this meet and that's what's so great about it," stated Parini.

Senior **Chris Sellon (Lawrence, Kan./Free State)** will swim in the individual medley's along with **Jon Nemeth (Pittsburgh, Pa./Central Catholic)**, **Andy Brabson (Boonsboro, Md./Boonsboro)**, **Jake Lewing (Yardley, Pa./Pennsbury)** and newcomer **Dan Thurston (Ann Arbor, Mich./Huron)**. Thurston, along with **Robert Barry (Richmond, Va./St. Christopher's)**, **MJ Barzcak (Beverly Hills, Mich./Brother Rice)** and **Austin Vierra (Placerville, Calif./Ponderosa)** are first-year's who could play a major role at this meet and again at nationals in March.

Barry will be leading off the medley relays and swim the backstroke events while Vierra will swim the

1650 free, the 500 free and the 400 IM.

Another newcomer to watch is sophomore **Chris Bagley (West Bloomfield, Mich./Brother Rice)**. After transferring from the University of Maryland, Bagley is beginning to hit his stride and should be a factor in the butterfly events.

One of the biggest advantages for the Big Red at the conference championship comes from their rapidly improving diving program led by third-year head coach Steve Ritter. Despite the loss of five-time NCAC champion Stephen Julka, senior **Russ Bornschein (Ann Arbor, Mich./Pioneer)** returns with sophomore **Cody Smith (Ardmore, Pa./Haverford)** and freshman **Phil Meyer (River Forest, Ill./Oak Park & River Forest)**. Bornschein has been the runner-up in the 3-meter dive and third in the 1-meter dive in each of the last three seasons.

Denison will kick off competition at the three-day championship meet on Thursday (Feb. 12) with preliminaries beginning at 10 a.m. The finals will begin each night at 6:30 p.m. In addition, for the first time in meet history the championship will be available over a live video webcast provided by Teamline. Fans unable to make the trip to Canton can purchase a one-day pass for \$15 or a three-day pass for \$45. More information can be found [here](#).