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High school swimming notebook: Record-setter Sead Niksic seeded No. 2 in PIAA meet

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By Keith Barnes / Tri-State Sports & News Service

Sead Niksic was sick for a week before the WPIAL Class 2A individual championships and had every excuse to just mail it in and prepare for the state finals Wednesday at Bucknell University's Kinney Natatorium.

Instead, the Obama Academy junior turned in a record-setting performance that will be hard to top in the PIAA Class 2A championships.

Niksic swam a 51.29 to set a new record in the 100-yard backstroke, beating the previous mark of 51.49 set by Carlynton's **Matt Millikin** in 2009. It was the only boys individual record set on the second day of the meet last week at Pitt's Trees Pool.

"I haven't even been at practice and I've been dying in bed," Niksic said. "It felt good to win this one and get some confidence getting ready for states."

Despite setting the record, Niksic will not be favored when the two-day meet opens. He will enter as the No. 2 seed in the event, 0.30 seconds behind **Connor Killion** of Lower Moreland, who switched out from the 500 freestyle to compete in the backstroke this year.

Niksic also qualified for the state finals in the 100 butterfly, where he may get a rematch of the final heat of the WPIAL finals with top-seeded **Zach Baum** of Derry Area. Baum beat Niksic by 0.23 seconds as he hit the wall in 50.29.

One of the advantages this year as compared to last year is his familiarity with the atmosphere. Though he qualified individually as a freshman, he did not make it through to the championship heat and only swam in the nighttime consolation race.

"It's invaluable," Niksic said. "I know what it's like to swim there and swim in front of a crowd like that. Finishing in the top 5 at states last year showed me the confidence I needed to look to get to the top this year, but we'll see."

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