

Leo was interview by a reporter from the Peoria Journal Star

Washington Co-op junior Leo Edwards is one of the Journal Star area's top freestyle swimmers. He also plays soccer for the Panthers in the fall prior to the swimming season. Edwards is among the area leaders in the 200 freestyle, 500 freestyle and the 100 breaststroke events, but considers himself as a freestyle specialist. He was second-team all Mid-Illini Conference last season. Edwards has been swimming since he was 9, when he was talked into it by his grandfather, Walter Ruppman, who helps coach the team.

Journal Star reporter Johnny Campos had five questions for Edwards:

1. Is playing soccer during the fall beneficial for you, as far as getting in shape for the swimming season?

Both of these sports involve a high level of fitness, and soccer is good cross training which helps me build up my cardiovascular endurance.

2. The Panthers had their highest finish in the Mid-Illini Conference meet last year, when they placed second. Did the team have high expectations coming into this season?

For the Mid-Illini Conference meet, our team and coaches have the highest expectations.

3. How did your grandfather talk you into swimming, and how is it having him helping coach the team?

I was signed up for the Washington Water Jets at age 9 and I was terrible. But my grandpa saw potential and helped me become a better swimmer. My Grandpa is very encouraging to all the swimmers on the team, and he loves to offer advice on how to improve your stroke. Coach (To m) Smith and Grandpa are the perfect duo.

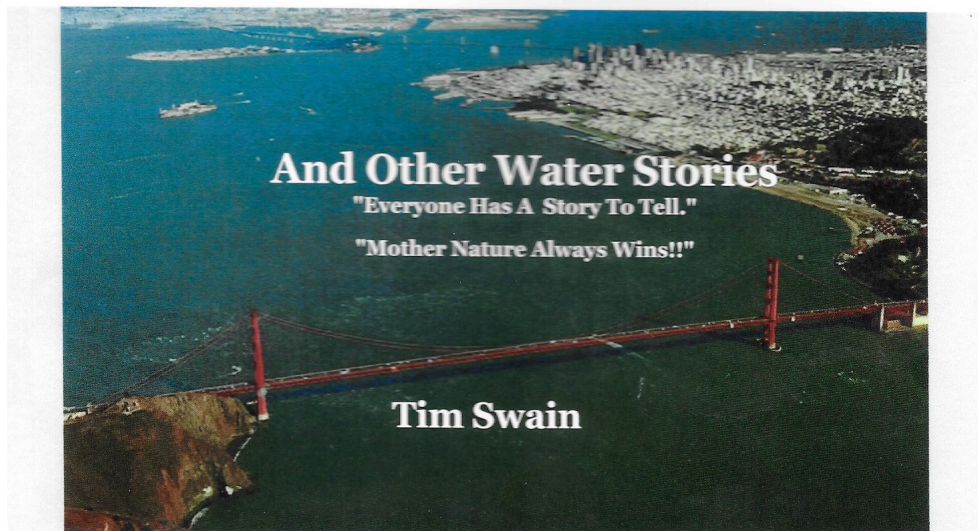
4. You seem to favor the freestyle events, even though you do swim the "odd strokes." Why do you prefer the freestyle?

I prefer the freestyle because its the fastest and most competitive stroke.

5. You are not a year-round swimmer. Are you satisfied with the progress you have made since joining the Panthers, only swimming during the season? And do you enjoy the extra free time that decision allows for you?

I am proud with my progress but you can never be satisfied until you have reached your full potential. I never really have free time, I play club soccer in the offseason and study for school. In the summer, I work full time. Fun fact: My Grandpa, my father, and I race triathlons in the summer.

More about the answer to Question 3



1. Submitted to Tim Swain for his book: Teaching my grandson to swim.

The Peoria Journal Star would run an article giving a brief description of a high school and ask five questions. Leo Edwards, a Washington high school swimmer, was interviewed. One of the questions he was asked was **"How did your grandfather talk you**

into swimming, and how is it having him helping coach the team? I was signed up for the Washington Water Jets at age 9 and I was terrible. But my grandpa saw potential and helped me become a better swimmer.

The answer is only partially true. His mother, Gabrielle Edwards, signed him up for the summer swim program, Washington Water Jets, (WWJ), and he was truly a terrible swimmer. I saw absolutely no potential for him to become a good swimmer. His mother asked me to help him and I said, “no he is terrible.” My wife got involved and asked me to help Leo and I said “no”. My wife then told me that I would help him!

His parents purchased a pass good for ten admissions at the Washington 5 Points pool for me. They were members but I was not. After ten sessions with Leo, his father told me that he would help Leo with his swimming. After one session with Leo, his father purchased another 10-session pass for me. After that I joined 5 Points.

Leo began to compete for WWJ and it was not going badly. He didn't drown. In one of his first meets he was to swim the 50-yard backstroke. He hit the lane line three time before he hit his head against the wall at the turn around and lost his swim goggles. Why he did not give up right then and there and get out of the pool is beyond me, but he finished the race. Of course, in dead last. If he was going to keep trying after that I was going to work with him. By the end of the summer season he was actually showing some promise.

The Peoria YMCA had a winter swim program, DOCS, at the Washington 5 Points pool and Leo signed up to train and compete. He continued to swim in both the WWJ and DOCS programs until he got to high school. He joined the Washington High School swim team and was the most valuable, high points, swimmer each

year. By the end of high school, he set six records in the eight individual events and was on two record setting relay teams. In the summer he continued to swim with WWJ there he set three individual record and was on both record setting relay teams. The 200 Medley Relay record had been set in 1976 and was beaten by 5.37 seconds. After high school Leo went to St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa where he swam and competed in the NAIA Nationals Championship.

Some people suggest that Leo's success in swimming was a result of my working with him. But I would say that it was Leo's determination and the many good coaches working with him that was the reason for his success. My role was to have Leo enjoy the water and learn proper technique. His success also proves that I do not recognize potential.

Leo's Washington Water Jets Records



Leo's Washington High school Records

GIRLS RECORDS	EVENTS	BOYS RECORDS
Misselhorn, Shangraw Stockton, L. Jenkins 2:00.24 12	200 MEDLEY RELAY	C. Buck, W. Essig 1:47.43 19 J. Bradburn, L. Edwards
S. Adams 1:53.36 94	200 FREESTYLE	Leo Edwards 1:48.67 19
S. Adams 2:08.55 93	200 IM	Leo Edwards 2:09.99 17
S. Adams 24.11 94	50 FREESTYLE	Leo Edwards 23.13 19
Julia Jenkins 224.00 18	DIVING-6	E. Dusch 189.40 13
Julia Jenkins 395.50 18	DIVING-1	E. Dusch 353.00 13
L. Stockton 58.88 12	100 BUTTERFLY	Christian Buck 56.51 19
S. Adams 51.60 93	100 FREESTYLE	Leo Edwards 49.39 19
L. Stockton 5:18.67 11	300 FREESTYLE	Leo Edwards 5:10.61 18
Stockton, Willis Misselhorn, Dwyer 1:44.55 11	200 FREE RELAY	S. Swatzenhuber, M. Langunten B. Schmidt, J. Klekamp 1:34.89 15
C. Scheirer 1:03.74 08	100 BACK	Leo Edwards 59.20 18
M. Lauderback 1:14.78 19	100 BREAST	B. Schmidt 1:03.37 14
Dwyer, Misselhorn Willis, Stockton 3:48.96 10	400 FREE RELAY	L. Edwards, D. Seibert 3:28.57 19 C. Buck, J. Bradburn

Walter Ruppman (Grandpa) and Leo Edwards

