



Focused Eastin powers Crean Lutheran to Academy title

BY DAN ALBANO

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Crean Lutheran swimmer **Ella Eastin** is back?

The senior never left and her winning ways haven't faded, but perhaps her ability to dominate resurfaced Thursday at the Academy League finals.

Eastin sliced through the cool and wind at Kennedy High to capture the 500-yard freestyle in an Orange County-leading time of 4 minutes, 46.60 seconds to highlight the Saints' fourth consecutive league title.

"I'm really glad to be back into it truly," said Eastin, selected the league's most valuable female swimmer after smashing the 500 record by about 11 seconds. "(It) took me a little while and I got junior-itis and then a little bit of senior-itis. I'm really looking forward to the next two weeks and everyone is going to do well."

Sage Hill captured the boys title, outdistancing dual-meet champion Whitney of Cerritos.

Eastin clocked her second-fastest 500, challenging her 4:44.47 from her historic sophomore season. That CIF-record time, which ranks her eighth in county history, came after she set the national private high school record in the 200 individual medley in a still-standing 1:55.15 at the CIF Division 3 finals.

Eastin helped the Saints capture the Division 3 crown last May but raced through a shoulder issue and lacked some of her regular sizzle.

Her 500 on Thursday could mean that fast times await at the Division 2 championships next week. The only certain event for the Stanford-bound Eastin is the 200 IM.

"It's a good sign that I'm on the right track to swimming really fast," she said.

Eastin also combined with her sister, **Emily**, **Tianna Jorgenson** and **Elise Garcia** to capture the medley relay in a county-leading and league-record 1:43.80.

The Saints mostly raced off events but racked up 203 points to outdistance runner-up St. Margaret's (85).

Crean sophomore **Kevin Chao** set meet records in the 200 (1:45.76) and 500 (4:39.12) freestyles. Sage Hill outscored Whitney, 151-113. Male swimmer of the year **Taras Polakoff** of Sage Hill touched first in the butterfly (54.92) and backstroke (56.14).

Sage Hill lost to Whitney in the dual meet season by nine points but stormed back Thursday for its first league crown since 2010.

"It was an all-around team effort," Sage Hill coach **Tom Norton** said. "We knew our fastest swimmers were going to do a good job in this meet. It was going to come down to our third and fourth swimmers."

Sage Hill won the meet-opening medley relay with **Ethan Vovan**, **Harry Miller**, Polakoff and **Michael Phan** in 1:45.30 and led the rest of the meet.

In the Golden West League finals:

Seegerstrom's boys and Ocean View's girls won titles and the Seahawks' **Hannah Cook** and **Christian Estiamba** earned swimmers of the meet honors at Ocean View.

In the Orange League finals:

Katella's winning 400 free relay of **Anthony Marin**, **Jason Guzman**, **Stefan Vo** and swimmer of the meet **Joseph Concepcion** clocked a 3:35.03 to post the league's only automatic Division 4 qualifying time at Savanna and highlight the Knights' fifth straight title. Santa Ana Valley won the girls title for the first swimming league crown – boys and girls – in school history. "This is a big deal for us," said Valley coach **Fred Lammers**, who is retiring after the season.

In Sunset League diving:

Dolly Payne (453.60) of Los Alamitos and **Grant Newcombe** (438.80) of Marina won league titles.

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