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ATHLETE of the Week

WES REGISTER

Sacred Heart

Sacred Heart goalkeeper Wes Register needed to make only one save in earning the shutout in the Gremlins' 4-0 soccer district-winning victory over Cole Camp.

Voting

W. Register, S. Heart 324
C. Backes, Tipton 227
B. Waters, Warsaw 112
sedaliademocrat.com



Brendan Hurley

Everybody into the WATER

5 from Smith-Cotton earn trip to state meet

BY SETH STRINGER

THE SEDALIA DEMOCRAT

They couldn't sit idly by and let their teammate make the trip to state alone. What would be the fun in that?

Failing to qualify for state in their respective events with just one regular season event left, Smith-Cotton swimmers Austin Stees, Brendan Hurley, Derek Thomas and Michael Smith were determined to make the trip with sophomore diver Derrick Kerbo, who had shored up his second-straight trip to state in the opening meet of the season.

"Kerbo was telling us the whole season, 'I don't want to go to state alone, I don't want to go to state alone.' We told him, 'Don't worry, we'll make it by the end of the season,'" Stees said.

The pledge didn't come to fruition, though, until Thomas approached Tigers' coach Jerry Tankersley with an idea.

The junior wanted to see what Tankersley describes as the "A team" — four swimmers who had previously been split between the 200m and 400m freestyle relays — compete in the 200.

"Well, he was putting in entries for the (Independent League Champi-

BOYS SWIMMING AND DIVING

onships) and I knew everybody could hit a 23 (seconds in the) 200m, so I asked if we can try to qualify."

The four swimmers were given the green light in the ILC on Nov. 4, and they narrowly missed the state cutoff time by .13 seconds. Two days later, though, they broke through in the "last chance time trials" in Kansas City, easily qualifying with a time of 1:34.09.

"State was 1:34.99, so we knew going in that was a number we could beat and we were almost a second under," Hurley said.

Tankersley, who was reluctant early on to allow the team to swim after time trials, had no doubt they would surpass the mark and give the Tigers the most state qualifiers they've had since 2005.

"Originally I didn't expect it to be that close," he said. "In previous time trials, the guys swam about a 24.50 with Derek Thomas hitting a 23. Each guy had to hit a 23 for the team to qualify. Well, all but one of them

TIGERS, see Page B2 >



Austin Stees



Derrick Kerbo

Chiefs' Johnson weathers his storm

Hard work leads to big contract for linebacker

BY DOUG TUCKER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

KANSAS CITY — His quiet, humble spirit has helped make Derrick Johnson a rich man.

Instead of seething when Kansas City coach Todd Haley benched him last year, Johnson hunkered down and worked hard. He worked harder than he'd ever worked in his life.

Going all the way back to the playgrounds of Waco, the former star

linebacker at Texas could not remember a time when he was not only a starter, but also just about the best player on his team. Now the Chiefs were using him only in certain situations and seemed to be saying that this new coaching staff did not see him as a player they wanted to build around.

Faced with such humiliation for the first time in what had always been a charmed life, a lot of athletes would rebel. Johnson, after all, had been the national defensive player of the year when the Chiefs drafted him in the first round out of Texas in 2005.

But heeding lessons he learned growing up in a stern but loving home, Johnson kept his mouth shut. He tried to keep a good attitude. He never complained, never grumbled.

Now he leads the Chiefs with 79 tackles and the ink is drying on a five-year contract extension that could be worth as much as \$34 million. Once again, he's a star player on a winning team.

Instead of saying, "Hi, mom," when cameras catch him on the sideline, Johnson would probably say, "Thanks, mom!"

"She taught me to stay humble. Believe in God. Know that something good will happen if you just keep working hard. It paid off for me," Johnson said Wednesday with a big smile.

A sixth-grade math teacher, Beverly Johnson was not a mom to be trifled with. "She instilled a lot of education and a lot of discipline," said Johnson. "She was really strict on me when I was a kid. I got to know right from wrong. She's a big part of why my character is strong now."

For Haley and what he calls his "transitioning" football team, Johnson brings a bonus, something besides outstanding plays, such as tying an NFL record last year by returning two interceptions for touchdowns against Denver.

He is also living proof of what can happen when a player buys what the Chiefs are selling. Work hard, hang tough, accept discipline and the opportunities on this team are limitless.

It's something Haley steps gingerly around.

"As we go through this process there are going to be guys, that it becomes clear to us that are the right kinds of guys," Haley said. "And at the same time, it becomes clear to players that maybe, 'This is where I want to be. This is the way I want to do things, and I want to be a part of this.'"



UP NEXT
Chiefs at
Broncos
3:05 p.m.
Sunday
TV: CBS
Radio: KDRO
(1490 AM)

QUICK hits

PUJOLS, MOLINA WIN GOLD GLOVES

NEW YORK (AP) — The new version of the Big Red Machine plays some pretty slick defense, too.

Cincinnati third baseman Scott Rolen won his eighth

Gold Glove on Wednesday, one of three Reds players to be honored following the team's first playoff appearance in 15 years.

Second baseman Brandon Phillips and pitcher Bronson Arroyo also were among the National League

recipients announced by Rawlings.

St. Louis catcher Yadier Molina and Philadelphia outfielder Shane Victorino each garnered their third Gold Glove in a row. Colorado shortstop Troy Tulowitzki and outfielder Carlos Gonzalez joined Arroyo as first-time winners.

Cardinals first baseman Albert Pujols won for the second time (2006), and speedy Houston center fielder Michael Bourn was a repeat winner.

BLUE JACKETS ROUT BLUES 8-1

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — It was a rout 10 years in the making.

Jake Voracek scored on two breakaways, six teammates also had multipoint games and the Columbus Blue Jackets rolled to the easiest win in the franchise's decade of existence, pounding St. Louis 8-1 on Wednesday night to end the Blues' winning streak at seven games.

NHL ALL-STAR GAME GETS MAKEOVER

NEW YORK (AP) — The NHL announced Wednesday that it is switching from the conference-vs.-conference format it has used for years to a player draft conducted by the All-Stars, in which captains selected by the players will determine the teams.

"We know what the All-Star game is and we know what it isn't," said Brendan Shanahan, an eight-time All-Star who is now the NHL's vice president of hockey and business development. "We're not trying to make it anything other than a great, entertaining and fun event for the players."

A's send 2 pitchers to Royals for DeJesus

BY JANIE MCCAULEY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND, Calif. — David DeJesus has been on the Oakland Athletics' radar for a while now. They like his near-perfect defense, baserunning and consistent bat.

The A's acquired the outfielder from the Kansas City Royals on

Wednesday for right-hander Vin Mazzaro and minor-leaguer lefty Justin Marks. General manager Billy Beane immediately said he will start in one of the corner outfield spots.

"He's a guy we've always liked," Beane said. "He's been a well-respected guy and does everything very well. I think he's

just another good player to add to the mix of players out there."

One of Beane's priorities this offseason was to find a capable hitter who could help the A's score more runs for their talented pitching staff.

DeJesus, while not the power

ROYALS, see Page B3 >



David DeJesus

DEMOCRAT FILE PHOTOS BY HAL SMITH