

## Rome's Hunter wins state

• The junior bests his own school record in the 100-yard breaststroke to win Saturday's finals.

 From staff reports

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### PREP SWIMMING

With a bevy of school records already broken at this year's GHSA Swimming and Diving Championships, turns out there was one more to make the books.

And it turned out to be a golden one.

Rome High's Mason Hunter, boosted by his school-record time set the night before, went all-out Saturday in the finals of the boys' 100-yard breaststroke and finished first with a time of 56.66 seconds. The time was .06 seconds faster than his preliminary time, breaking his still-fresh Rome High mark.

It was the best finish of a group of local athletes who swam on the final day of the state meet, held at Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

Rome High finished with a total of nine top-ten finishes in the finals, with Hunter taking seventh in the boys' 100 freestyle with a time of 48.23 and Viola Hasko coming in the same place in the girls 100 breaststroke in 1:09.52.

"It's always a hard adjustment to go to a two-day meet," Rome coach Joey Powers said. "We were very optimistic after yesterday's swims and trying to beat those times today. It's definitely a learning experience for our athletes to listen to their bodies and see how it works at a two-day meet."

Darlington's Samson Mumber, who set Darlington's school record in the boys' 100 backstroke on Friday with a preliminary time of 53.06, finished seventh in the event's finals Saturday, coming in at 53.13.

But Hunter's state title reigned as the top finish of any Floyd County swimmer at this year's championships, even if he wasn't sure initially how it was going to go.

"I was really nervous and just tried to strip myself of emotions so I wasn't stressing over it," the junior said. "Going in I knew I had to leave it all out there; swim with my heart this time instead of just my muscles."

Chamblee Charter's Liam Bell was Hunter's nearest opponent, and the person who had edged him in the prelims for the No. 1 time. The two had gone up against each other a few other times in recent months.

"When I made the second turn I saw him and realized, 'this is it, this could be my time to beat him,'" Hunter said. "Coming into the last 12-and-a-half yards, I had the feeling that I was ahead of him, but it was a great relief when I looked up at the end and saw I had beaten him. I didn't know what to think."



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Rome High's Mason Hunter won the 100-yard breaststroke.