

Butterfly Man

by Daniel Harris

Our backstroke guy missed the turn. Frank, our breaststroke man was good and held our position, maybe three body lengths from the lead. I was the butterfly man. Looked like we were holding fifth place. Coach was not going to be happy. His swimmers had never lost a medley relay in a state meet in fifteen years.

I lined Frank up between my thumbs and followed him into the wall. I hit the water pumped.

Now it was black line, wall, turn, and black line. When I hit the wall I was feeling good, but couldn't see the competition and didn't have time to look. The guy in the lane to my left was a body length ahead. His kick was throwing up a big wave. I put out a big effort. Now my head was at his waist. The swimmer on my right seemed to be fading a little. I pulled up even with him. There were ten yards to go. On my next breath I turned my head slightly to see the guy on my left. Our eyes met. I knew I had him.

No one was going to beat Chuck in freestyle. He was nationally ranked. We won by half a second. Coach never said anything to me, but he gave Harry the backstroker a good five-minute earful. He wanted a new record.

