#### HIGH SCHOOL SWIMMING



JOHN SCHULTZ PHOTOS, QUAD-CITY TIMES

Rock Island senior Nduwikunda David, who was born in a refugee camp in Tanzania, is the first person in his family to learn to swim. He was voted to be a captain on the swim team this year.

# Refugee develops into leader of 'swim family'

Rocks rally around captain who is first in his family to swim

MATT DAHLSEID

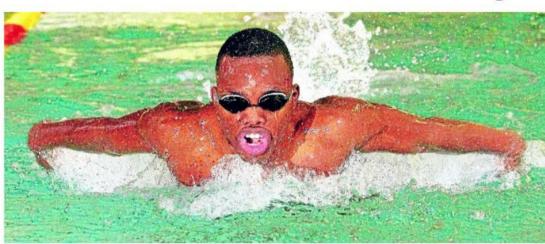
The words are completely unintelligible to all but one person in the huddle of the Rock Island boys swim team, yet the pre-meet speech resonates with everyone because of how it's de-

livered and who it comes from.

He can now speak fluent English, but Nduwikunda David sometimes breaks into his native his teammates before a competition. With a wide smile and an energetic aura emanating from team as a shy freshman he had his small frame, David is able to impart a message that transcends language barriers and ignites a charge in his fellow Rocks.

"For a couple of the captain's speeches he's spoken Swahili," senior co-captain John Ponsetto said. "We don't understand what he's saying, but we just get so pumped just from the way it sounds."

Born in a refugee camp in Tanzania, David is the first person in



Rock Island senior Nduwikunda David, a Tanzanian refugee who first learned to swim as a freshman, says tongue when trying to motivate being in the water relaxes him. "I just keep going and then everything else just goes away. You just keep swimming, like Nemo," he said.

zero experience in the water and had to wear "every kind of flotation aid you could think of just to get from one end of the pool to the other," coach Grant Bramer

Four years later, David's skills still haven't caught up to those of his teammates who have far more experience, but his work ethic and upbeat personality have made him a leader on the team. When captains were decided at his family to learn how to swim. the start of the season, it was Da-

me, but I like talking to everybody," David said. "I think that's why they chose me, because I interact with everyone."

With two meets left in David's prep career, the coaches who taught him to swim and provided him with a support system when he needed it are in awe of how far he's come.

"If (the captain's vote) says anything about how the team rallies to him and looks to him for leadership, that's the big-When he joined Rock Island's vid who received the most votes. gest argument you can make,"

"Some of them are faster than Bramer said. "To go from being a no-name in the sport and barely being able to swim, to senior year being a captain and representing us on the championship team, that's a big deal. A big deal."

### Born as a refugee

David never had the chance to grow up in his father's homeland. Barutwanayo Jacques was born in the small East African nation of Burundi, which shares borders with Rwanda to the north,

Please see David, Page D5

IOWA AT INDIANA. 8 P.M., ESPN

# Clash at the point keys big matchup

Iowa's Clemmons, Gesell go up against Indiana star Ferrell

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IOWA CITY - Fran McCaffery admitted he can't ever recall having a situation quite like what he has on this year's Iowa basketball team.

basketball

Most college coaches consider themselves fortunate if they have one good point guard. If they're really lucky, it's a battle-hardened senior.

Having two such guys? Mc-Caffery uses the word "luxury" to describe what it's like to have both Mike Gesell and Anthony Clemmons on his roster.

"You look at our ability to play tough teams oftentimes on the road and not turn the ball over, it's a function of those two guys,' McCaffery said. "If you're not



Gesell

turning the ball over, you've got a chance every time you take the

The question to be answered tonight when the fourth-ranked Hawkeyes visit Indiana in a Big Ten showdown: Is it better to have two really good senior point guards or one great one?

The Hoosiers' Yogi Ferrell also is a fourth-year starter and an All-American candidate who has helped steer his team into contention for the Big Ten title. Indiana is 9-2 in league play, just a game behind the front-running Hawkeyes, and there's little question that Ferrell is a primary reason.

Please see lowa, Page D2

■ INSIDE: Preview capsule for tonight's Big Ten showdown in Bloomington. Page D2

**AUGUSTANA 76, ILLINOIS WESLEYAN 60** 

## No. 1 Vikings finish off unbeaten home regular season

Augustana nails eight 3-pointers to shoot down Wesleyan zone

**STEVE BATTERSON** sbatterson@qctimes.com

Illinois Wesleyan wasn't the only basketball team that showed up at Augustana's Carver Center in a zone Wednesday night.

The top-ranked Vikings were in a zone of their own, striking quickly against the 2-3 zone the Titans deployed at the onset of Augustana's 76-60 College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin men's basketball win.

thought we would see how they would handle it," Illinois Wesleyan coach Ron Rose said. "They handled it. They were clearly the aggressor

Jawan Straughter knocked down 3-point baskets on the Vikings' first two possessions of the game, sending Augustana to a lead that reached 13-2 when Hunter Hill buried a three of his own just over five minutes into the game.

'We expected some zone and we were ready for it," Hill said. "It helped us start the way we like to start, fast."

Finishing off its first undefeated "We had a little success against regular season at home since them with the zone at our place the 1978-79 season, the Vikings

and were up two at the half, so we knocked down eight shots from behind the arc in the game including a 4-for-5 performance by Dylan Sortillo.

The sophomore from Bettendorf buried three during a stretch of just over two-and-a-half minutes, helping Augustana open a 34-16 lead with 6 minutes, 4 seconds remaining in an opening half that ended with the Vikings in control

"Dylan really blew the game open for us. He's been passing up some shots lately and we got him a lot of looks in practice on Monday that really seemed to pay off," Augustana coach Grey Giovanine said.



LOUIS BREMS, QUAD-CITY TIMES

Augustana's Tayvion Johnson (25) hits a jumper over a Wesleyan Please see Augustana, Page D2 defender Wednesday at the Carver Center.



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NASCAR

## Vickers replacing injured Stewart at Daytona 500

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. - Brian Vickers is expected to replace injured NASCAR season opener at Daytona International

Speedway, The Asso-

ciated Press has learned. Stewart-Haas Racing has scheduled a

Friday news Vickers conference to discuss its plans for the No. 14 Chevrolet. A person familiar with the situation told AP on Wednesday that it will be Vickers. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the

team is awaiting word from

NASCAR on whether Vick-

ers is medically cleared to

Vickers ran only two races last season before suffering a driver Tony Stewart for the recurrence of blood clots. He can't compete when being treated for the clots because the blood thinners increase his risk of serious internal bleeding if he crashes.

Stewart is sidelined for the start of his final NASCAR season with a fractured vertebra. He was hurt riding an all-terrain vehicle in the desert in California last

Vickers is only expected to run at Daytona, which opens Friday ahead of the Feb. 21 season-opening Daytona 500. SHR is still looking at all of its options for beyond Daytona. Stewart is expected to race at some point this

Vickers has been sidelined four different times for health issues since 2010.

He missed the final five races of the 2013 season because he was placed on blood thinners to treat a blood clot in his right calf. He also missed 25 races during the 2010 season when clots were discovered in his legs and lungs.

During his 2010 absence, he underwent a pair of procedures, one to close a hole in his heart and another to insert a stent into a vein in his left leg. He was private about the heart surgery and didn't address it until a month after the procedure.

He was looking forward to last season, but surgery in December 2014 to repair a hole in his heart sidelined him for the first two races.

## **David**

From D1

the Congo to the west and Tanzania to the east. He became a preacher in the United Methodist Church, met his wife and they started a family. Life was good, Jacques said. But things quickly changed.

Burundi held its first democratic election in June of 1993 and within 15 months two presidents were assassinated amid conflict between the country's two main ethnic groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi. A civil war that spanned more than 12 years resulted in a death toll in excess of 300,000.

Violence was all around. No place felt safe.

"When we saw it was difficult to be in our country we said (we must leave) because there were many people who died," Jacques said. "Many people died in their church."

Jacques' family fled to a refugee camp in Tanzania and lived there from 1996 until 2008. The camp included displaced people from all over Africa including the Congo, Rwanda, Sudan and ming, like Nemo."

est of seven children, was it. born in 1998 and grew up in that melting pot where many interactions in the beginning languages were spoken. He remembers going to school, playing soccer with friends and doing his chores that included feeding cows, chickens and goats.

Jacques provided for his family by serving as a community health worker and profiting from his learned skill of crafting electric guitars. But life was challenging and opportunities were limited. After a dozen years in the refugee camp, Jacques' family jumped at a chance to resettle in the United States.

The family lived in Raleigh, N.C., for three years before moving to Rock Island in 2011 when David was in eighth grade.

## A surprising choice

Soccer is the sport most African refugee students at Rock Island tend to gravitate toward. It's familiar to them, inexpensive to play and many already excel at it.

David played pick-up soccer with African friends he made upon arriving at Rock Island but said he never really had a desire to play in school.

A tragic incident involving the death of a friend spurred David toward an unlikely alternative. During the summer before David's freshman year, a boy his age who was an immigrant from Burundi drowned in the Mississippi River. David wasn't there, but some of his other peers were and they couldn't swim to save their friend. That fall, David was convinced to join a group of about nine Africans that went out for the swim team.

"I just wanted to try something new," David said. "My parents have taught me to try something new all the time. You can't just keep doing the same thing."

his parents' advice, David's family couldn't believe his decision.

"We were shocked," said the Democratic Republic of Kundimana Laurence, David's sister who's a freshman at RIHS. "We were like, 'You don't know how to swim."

Venessa Taylor helped fix

The Rock Island assistant coach usually has a group of beginners she works with at the start of each season. David's freshman year she had her hands full with the large group of African students. As underclassmen, David's

English-language learner (ELL) friends dropped out one by one as they struggled to balance school, sports and family responsibilities. David didn't have that problem. The routine and stability swim practices provided helped him learn to manage his time and improve his study habits.

It didn't take long for David to develop an affinity for his new activity.

"I really like being in the water. It relaxes me," David said. "I just keep going and then everything else just goes away. You just keep swim-

Taylor knew right away David, the second young- that David would stick with

> "I could tell from David's that he was going to be someone who would be around for a long time," Taylor said. "He didn't want to just come to learn to swim, he wanted to come learn to swim and then become part of something."

### **Working together**

Taylor saw glimpses of herself when she worked with David.

An who went to Dunbar High School in Chicago, Taylor also learned how to swim her freshman year. There was no girls swim program at her school, so she participated on the boys team. By her senior year, she was a co-captain.

From the time David put on his floaties for his first lesson, Taylor could see he was going to do the work.

"He was dedicated. He was determined," Taylor said. "His day started before our day started because if practice started at 5:45 (a.m.), he would have to call me like at 4:30 in the morning, because if you don't call me and become my alarm, I'm not going to come and get you."Dubbed "Coach Fix-It" for her ability to solve any problem, Taylor gave rides to the ELL students who needed transportation and helped buy them food when the team would stop at

restaurants after meets. David learned all the strokes his freshman year and started swimming in junior varsity meets. As he interacted more with his teammates, he also became more comfortable speaking English. Josh Fleming, a 2015 RIHS graduate and school record holder, was one swimmer who took David under his wing.

"I was in (an ELL program) for four years because I was still learning English. I joined the swim team and the next While he was heeding year I was done with ELL be-

cause I was speaking English and talking with everyone," David said. "All the swim team members were nice to me, all of them. Everybody was nice and that's where I got my swim family."

David began swimming in varsity meets his junior year and continued to progress as a senior after swimming two-a-days in the summer with the Rock Island Orcas club team. He's willing to compete in any event, but his favorite is the 200 individual medley where he can swim all the strokes.

Out of the water, his value to the team is probably more significant. Bramer said David is an ambassador of the swim program to the ELL program and sets a good example for his teammates.

"He's definitely more of a team person than someone who cares about himself," Ponsetto said. "Probably more than myself or (co-captain) Chandler Steele, he always cares about how the other swimmers do more than himself."

### The final lap

Ten days and two meets are all that remain in David's high school swimming career.

Saturday is the Western Big Six meet at Moline and on Feb. 20 Rock Island hosts a sectional meet.

Last Thursday, David's father was in the stands for Rock Island's senior night, one of the few times Jacques has been able to see his son compete.

"It was wonderful. I felt good," Jacques said. "When I saw him swim with the other guys, I say, 'Oh my goodness!'"

When the season is over, African-American David won't stop swimming. Inspired by his friend's death and an experience at a waterpark in Raleigh when he needed to be saved by a lifeguard, David has become a lifeguard himself. He helps at the Rock Island Fitness and Activity Center when he has time during the school year and plans to work at Whitewater Junction for a second straight summer.

"I just wanted to be a lifeguard so I could do the same thing she did," David said. "She helped me, so I just wanted to do the same thing and help others."

David also has a passion for drawing, which began in Africa when he would watch an older sister make comics that helped kids learn different languages. After high school he wants to learn to paint and repair cars.

He'll also probably teach his sister Laurence how to swim, as she plans on joining the girls team next fall. Bramer and Taylor look forward to working with Laurence like they did with her brother, but they get emotional when they think of the short time they have left with the quiet boy they've watched grow into a leader.

"David's a great kid. It's going to be pretty impossible to replace him," Bramer said. "He's been a big character builder and a big character on our team. It's going to be sad seeing him go."



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