

THE DALLAS POST

SportsWeek

Section 2

LL coach on pro javelin circuit

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LEHMAN TWP. - The off-season hasn't exactly meant rest and relaxation for Lake-Lehman track-and-field head coach Ed Radzinski.

Since the end of scholastic competition in June, the 32-year-old Lehman resident has stayed busy by pursuing his own athletic endeavors. His efforts, which involved competing in the javelin at professional track-and-field meets throughout the nation, have yielded some striking results.

Radzinski said he garnered a pair of first-place finishes and logged a personal best throw while taking part in meets this month in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

The Black Knights coach said he set a personal record with a heave of 253-feet, 3-inches Aug. 9 at the Ohio State Buckeye Olympic Developmental Invitational. Prior to that, he said he threw 248.8 Aug. 6 in an all-comer

meet at Lehigh University.

With those two throws, Radzinski placed first at both meets, each of which was sanctioned by USA Track and Field and featured professional competitors from throughout the United States.

The Lake-Lehman graduate said he also captured a second-place finish Aug. 2 at an additional Ohio State Buckeye Invitational meet with a throw of 245-11.

The results have produced modest excitement in Radzinski, a member of USA Track and Field. During the past two seasons, he has competed in more than two-dozen professional meets sanctioned by the organization.

"I'm just enjoying it. I'm enjoying the ride," he said.

Last year, Radzinski took part in 16 professional competitions, including events held at venues such as Rutgers University and the University of Pennsylvania. This year, the veteran javelin-hurler thinks he may compete in as many as 24 professional meets.

Radzinski said he averages between 235 and 245 feet per throw. However, he knows that the potential for another sensational toss, like the one he had in Ohio, always exists.

"When you're stuck averaging 240, you know you're going to have a breakout throw."

That possibility has inspired the former Lake-Lehman cross-country and track athlete to continue working hard both in the weight room and on the practice field.

"He does something usually every day, regardless if its lifting weights or the drills," said his girlfriend, Cathy Savage.

Despite sustaining a slight rotator cuff tear in his right shoulder two years ago, Radzinski believes he can eventually reach his ultimate throwing goals.

"For me, realistically, I would like to throw in the vicinity of 255 to 260 before my shoulder shuts down."

Radzinski hasn't ruled out the possibility of trying to qualify for the 2004

Olympics in Athens, Greece. According to USA Track and Field's Web site, athletes need to record a throw of at least 239 feet in a sanctioned meet between Jan. 1, 2003 and July 1, 2004 to receive an automatic bid to the Olympic Trials next July in Sacramento, Calif. That is a feat Radzinski has already accomplished several times this year.

The top three javelin finishers at the trials will qualify for the U.S. Olympic team.

But whether he reaches the Olympics or not, Radzinski said he enjoys taking part in the professional meets and relaying the information he learns back to the athletes who compete under his direction at Lake-Lehman.

"When I go to these meets, I always pick something up." He said that so far, he has learned some additional flexibility stretches, which have helped him stay loose for his throws.

In addition, he credits a new javelin he switched to this year with helping

him add an extra 10 to 15 feet on some of his tosses.

His success has gripped the attention of others in the Back Mountain community.

"He's phenomenal," Dallas cross-country head coach Matt Samuel said. "He's really perfected his technique."

But besides that precise technique, there also churns within Radzinski a driving force — one that quietly motivates him to succeed, no matter whether it's on or off the field.

"I think he could accomplish whatever he sets his mind to," Savage said. "He's very goal oriented. That carries over into every aspect of his life."

Still, Radzinski said his main goal lies in helping the athletes he coaches.

"I think, long-term, I would like to fulfill every kid's dream that I ever coach and make them reach their fullest potential. My objective is kids before myself."

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



Mounties gear up for season

The Dallas football team capped the first week of official football practice with a scrimmage on the Wilkes-Barre Memorial Stadium turf against Wilkes-Barre Meyers. Pictured clockwise from top left, quarterback Matt Kelly (3) rolls out and looks for a block from fullback Buddy Kocher (26); Tailback Doug Harris (4) cuts back to avoid a tackler; Wide Receiver Mike Rice (5) turns the corner on a block from wingback Elijah Miller (23); and Head Coach Ted Jackson points out instructions to Harris.

PHOTOS BY JIM PHILLIPS