

Increased strength, confidence paying off for Brianne Kwiatkowski



Photo Credit: Tammy Schmeltz 1

By Kevin Gordon

Brianne Kwiatkowski's increased strength and confidence are paying off. The Eastwood High School senior is running well.

And Kwiatkowski is striving for even more improvement this season after she helped the Eagles win the 4x100 relay in the Northern Buckeye Conference meet and ran her career-best time in the 100 last season.

Her PR in the 100 is 13.74, a time she hopes to lower to at least 13.5 this season.

The sprinter already has run in the 4x100, 4x200 and 4x400 relays this season, and competed in the 200 and the 400 earlier in her career.

"I feel good this year," Kwiatkowski said.

"I have a lot more strength after being in the weight room a lot during the summer, and last fall and winter. I really like the way I performed last year, and it's carried over pretty well this year.

"Because of the weight room, I'm more powerful and more confident," Kwiatkowski added, crediting senior teammate Jami Fruth for increasing her weight room attendance and an improved attitude when she was there.

Kwiatkowski also praised girls head coach Nikki Sabo, and strength coaches Andy Friess and Brian Sabo for encouraging her in the weight room.

"I was there a little bit as a freshman, but it was more of a social gathering," she said. "Now, I'm there to lift and work hard."

Kwiatkowski is striving to earn an even larger role this season.

The Eagles have been loaded with talented sprinters during recent seasons, leaving Kwiatkowski as an alternate for the sprint relays. When

she did compete in one of the bigger meets it was often just in one or two events.

"She's very versatile," Nikki Sabo said. "She ran in the conference meet last year, but she's also been very patient. She's always been the fifth or sixth person the last couple years. Now, it's her turn. She's embraced that. She embraced being an alternate the last couple years, and those experiences will help her this year."

Kwiatkowski is looking forward to the opportunity.

"It's hard to stay patient, but being an alternate was a compliment because it meant the coaches thought I could do the job," Kwiatkowski said.

Kwiatkowski has a different mental approach, too. She's concentrating only on what she has to do, instead of worrying about the competition.

"I just worry about myself and what I have to do," Kwiatkowski said. "I don't worry about anyone else. I go out and run my race."

Eastwood assistant coach Cody Seifert, who works with the team's sprinters, thinks Kwiatkowski could lower her 100 time to the low 13s.

"She's improved immensely over the last year," Seifert said. "She's much more powerful and way more confident than she was last year. She knows this is her year to step up."

"She's worked hard," Seifert added. "She's staying longer at practice. She wants to work on her block starts, asking where her hips are, where her first step goes. Those things shave off tenths of a second all the time. Her first two, three steps coming out of the blocks, they're covering a lot of ground."

Kwiatkowski enjoys running the relays.

"I love working with the different girls and working as a team," she said.

"A relay makes any race 10 times better."

Kwiatkowski likes the challenge of running against junior teammate Jamie Schmeltz, who is one of the NBC's best sprinters. She also enjoys being on the same relay team as Schmeltz.

"(Schmeltz) is faster, but I try to keep up with her as best I can,"

Kwiatkowski said. "Having her to run against pushes me to be the best I can be."

Kwiatkowski is one of the team's captains.

"I try to lead by example and by talking to the other girls, being positive, helping them if they have questions," Kwiatkowski said.

"She's very helpful to the younger athletes. She provides good leadership," Nikki Sabo said.

Kwiatkowski, who has a 3.7 grade-point average, will attend Stautzenberger College where she'll be in the vet tech program. Her goal is become a veterinarian for small animals, primarily cats and dogs. She's a member of the Eastwood Future Farmers of America, and is involved in 4-H.