

## New mindset, increased strength fuel Wendt's goal of more success



*Photo Credit: Tammy Schmeltz*

By Kevin Gordon

Logan Wendt's career is off to a solid start.

The Eastwood High School junior already is a two-time Northern Buckeye Conference champion and a regional qualifier in the hurdles. But a new mindset and increased physical strength have him excited for even more success.

Although Eastwood's first spring outdoor meet isn't until March 26, Wendt is improving. He's already posted a career-best time in the 60-meter hurdles during the winter indoor season.

Wendt's time of 8.97 at Bowling Green State University Feb. 17

bettered his time of 9.08 last year. The time also was the third-fastest in Eastwood history.

"The season is going pretty well so far, better than the past, and I feel stronger," said Wendt, the conference champion in the 110 hurdles last season and the 300 hurdles as a freshman. He also qualified for the Division III regional in the 110 hurdles as a freshman.

"I definitely feel stronger, and it's good to know I set a (personal record) by a mile in the hurdles," Wendt said. "I've hit the weight room more, and that's helped. I've always had springs in my legs, but I feel stronger this season. I'm running better already."

But Wendt's biggest change is his mental approach to running. His sole focus this season is on running itself, and not the high expectations he's placed on himself. Wendt believes the self-induced pressure slowed his development the last two seasons. He had personal-best times as a freshman of 15.95 in the 110 hurdles and 42.80 in the 300s, and dropped those to 15.50 and 42.37, respectively, last season. But Wendt believes he should have even been faster last season.

"I'm focusing on what I have to do to get better now, and that's been my mindset the entire time," Wendt said. "I'm not worried about anything else. The new mindset and feeling stronger physically have gone hand in hand and definitely helped."

Wendt's goal in the 110 hurdles this season is to crack Eastwood's Top 10 in the 110 hurdles. A time of 15.34 or better is needed for that. He's hoping to run in the mid 41s in the 300 hurdles.

"That's huge," Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said of Wendt's different mindset. "You try to teach and preach that, but you can't literally get into their heads. He had a really good freshman year. Last year, maybe he put too many expectations on himself. We typically don't as coaches.

"We want to see you give good effort and attempt PRs (personal records), try to do the things you need to improve. It's hard, that's the hard part of coaching — can you get them to relax, not get them to put all that pressure on themselves."

Wendt also finished third in the 300 hurdles in the NBC meet last season. As a freshman, he was second in the 110 hurdles.

"(Athletes) want to do well, and I understand that, but we're going to judge you by effort, attention to detail, are you coachable?" Sabo said. "If we want you to try this, are you willing to try it, regardless of the result? That's what's important, and I think he realizes that. He just needs to give great effort and try to get better, and try not to put that pressure on himself."

Wendt has fared well since he first competed in the hurdles as a seventh grader, at the encouragement of middle school coach Nathan Howard. He won the NBC championship in the 110 hurdles as a seventh- and eighth-grader. In the 200 hurdles race, he was first as an eighth grader and sixth as a seventh grader.

Wendt's indoor PR earlier this year was even more impressive because it came only 20 minutes after he ran in the 4x200 relay, meaning he had to quickly recover mentally and physically from the relay to run the hurdles.

"He wants to get better," said Eastwood assistant coach Ethan Downey, who works with the team's hurdlers. "He studies workouts. He'll do different things and he's very coachable."

Wendt enjoys the challenge of the hurdles, which the Eastwood coaches consider a sixth field event because of the skill involved in the event.

"Mr. Howard takes the people he thinks can be good hurdlers and sees what they can do," Wendt said. "He saw potential in me, and it started from there. I liked the hurdles from the start, just because I was pretty good at it, and I still like it. I love the challenge of hurdling, that's what I like the most about it. It's so technical. It's more demanding than it seems. I like that aspect of it."

Wendt also is motivated by a disappointing race last season in the preliminaries of the 300 hurdles at the Division II district meet at Oak Harbor.

After failing to qualify for the finals of the 110 hurdles, Wendt fell coming over the second hurdle of the 300 race and stumbled coming over one of the final hurdles, ending his hopes of qualifying for the regional. He still finished the race, running a time of 48.06, but did not advance to the finals.

"I messed up big time, and that's unfortunate," Wendt said. "But it gave me a fire, a fuel for this season. I'm more driven."

"He really, really went after it, knowing he had to run hard to make it (to the finals)," Sabo said. "Even though he fell, I appreciate the effort. He was willing to fall to run the race he needed, and that's important."



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Although Wendt's ultimate goal is qualifying for state, his primary goal is daily improvement.

As a freshman, Wendt advanced to the regional semifinals at Lexington in the 110 hurdles. He finished 11<sup>th</sup> and didn't qualify for the finals.

"I like what I've seen so far, especially indoors," Downey said. "His indoor PR should translate to the 110s, and he should be running pretty well pretty quickly. He's a technician, and understands the technique involved. Now, we're working to improve his speed and strength."

Wendt, who has a 4.1 grade-point average, plays on the

school's soccer team. The defender was an honorable mention All-NBC selection last fall. He also is a member of the Key Club and the International Club.