

## Hiser 'really excited' by her progress in the discus, shot put



*Photo Credit: Tammy Schmeltz*

By Kevin Gordon

Makahlen Hiser didn't start throwing the discus and the shot put at the high school level until her junior season.

She wasn't fazed by the late start.

The senior has steadily improved in both events, and she's already posted season bests in her specialties this season.

Hiser's season-best in the discus is 98-1, an increase from 83-0 last season. Her best in the shot this season is 28-6 $\frac{3}{4}$ , an increase from 25-11 $\frac{1}{2}$  last season.

"I'm really excited about how I'm doing," Hiser said. "It's a definitely a lot better than last year. It's nice making a good progression."

But Hiser is optimistic she isn't finished rewriting her personal record book.

She believes she'll hit the 100-0 mark in the discus, and Eastwood assistant coach Lucas

Friess said the 110-0 mark isn't out of the

question. A distance of 116-2 or better would make Hiser one of the Top 10 throwers in school history.

Her goal in the shot is to hit at the least the 30-0 mark.

"Her improvement comes from having more confidence," said Friess, who works with the Eagles' throwers. "Last year, she had some good throws. We knew that could happen again, but it was just getting her to believe in herself."

Hiser threw 61-0 in the discus during her first varsity meet March 28 last season, but improved to 71-10 and 75-5 $\frac{1}{2}$  in the two meets after that. She then hit her season best of 83-0, just under a month after her first varsity meet.

In the shot, Hiser began last season with a distance of 23-1 $\frac{1}{4}$  before her best mark of 25-11 $\frac{1}{2}$  three weeks later.

"This year, she comes out with a positive attitude every day," Friess said. "She works hard. She's really dedicated to throwing and works hard at it. She comes ready every day to improve on the little things we talk about. It's been really exciting to watch her grow."

Hiser first started throwing as a seventh grader and enjoyed the experience, but she elected to concentrate on volleyball as an eighth grader and didn't compete in track and field again until she was a junior.

She decided to join the track and field team last season at the encouragement of her friends, who already were in the program. She also liked that the team's head coach was Nikki Sabo, who taught Hiser's freshmen and sophomore science classes.

"Last year, I heard a lot of people talking about the program in general," Hiser said. "It's a family atmosphere, and the girls feel the same way. It's a really fun thing to be part of."

"A lot of my friends were already in the program, so it was an easy decision to join the team," Hiser added. "Mrs. Sabo is a great teacher and a great coach. Everyone is so encouraging. I like the way we set goals before each meet."

The discus and the shot aren't easy events because of the technical work involved, especially the footwork.

"It gets frustrating," Hiser said. "But with the encouragement of your teammates and coaches, there's always someone there to cheer you up. You just have to let the bad days go and come back stronger than before the next day."

"She's very quiet, but you can tell there's that self motivation, that self determination she has," Sabo said. "When she's at practice, she goes to work. She has some goals she wants to achieve, and she's going after them."

But the throws aren't Hiser's only success.

The National Honor Society member has a 3.9 grade-point average and will attend Bowling Green State University. She plans to major in business and marketing.

Hiser already is taking College Credit Plus and should be close to sophomore status when she begins class at BGSU in the fall. She was a delegate last summer to Buckeye Girls State, a hands-on program designed to increase the delegate's knowledge of government.

"(Buckeye Girls State) was fun," Hiser said. "I have a bunch of friends from that who I stay in contact with, and you learn a lot about government. You learn about it in class, but this puts you in an actual position so you get a more in-depth feel to it."

Hiser likes politics, but is leaning towards pursuing a career in business. She'd like to own a business some day.

"Owning a business would be really cool," Hiser said. "But I'm open to seeing what other business careers I might like."

Hiser is a member of the Eastwood chapter of the Future Farmers of America. She's the chapter's reporter, meaning she's in charge of taking pictures at all of its events. Her scrapbook of those events earned a gold rating in the state FFA competition. A gold rating is the highest available.