

Welch's determination, hard work pay off



By Kevin Gordon

Seth Welch almost quit Eastwood's boys track and field team at the start of his sophomore season.

He's never regretted his decision to remain with the team.

The senior steadily has improved in the shot put and the discus during his last three seasons.

Now, Welch has a chance to place in the shot put by finishing in the top eight of the Northern Buckeye Conference

Championships Saturday at Lake. His career-best of 45-7 at the Eastwood Relays April 20 ranks sixth in the conference this season.

The distance was more than three feet farther than his previous best of 42-6½ April 6 at the Whitmer Invitational. Welch's best last season was 40-0. He threw 35-4 as a sophomore and 30-4¾ as a freshman.

"I've been determined and worked at it," Welch said, adding he'd like to hit the 48-foot mark at the NBC meet or the Division II district meet Wednesday at Oak Harbor. "I like the way I'm throwing. I'm throwing farther and farther consistently. I still feel like I have some big throws left. I just need to make some small improvements in what I'm doing."

His other goals are to qualify for the regional and to earn a spot on the Eagles' all-time Top 10 list in the shot put. A throw of 48-2 is needed to make the Top 10.

Welch's personal record in the discus is 100-9 earlier this season, an increase from 95-9 last season, 89-11 as a sophomore and 60-10 as a freshman.

"The biggest thing about Seth is he's a hard worker," said Eastwood assistant coach Thomas Heckman, who works with the team's throwers.

Welch is a three-sport athlete who played offensive guard and defensive tackle on the football team and wrestled. He said both sports helped his throwing. Football increased his strength and wrestling improved his agility.

"He really improved in the weight room," Heckman said. "He was really committed to being stronger on the football team. He wanted to start on the football team and that transferred to (track) really well."

But Welch almost quit track and field as a sophomore because he had already been on the junior varsity teams in football and wrestling, and likely would have been on the junior varsity track and field team.

Quitting track and field would have enabled Welch to concentrate on lifting weights for football

"I wasn't a very good thrower back then," Welch said.

But a chat with track and field coach Brian Sabo helped him change his mind. He's earned a varsity letter as a sophomore, junior and senior

“He told me to go home and think about it, and I decided to stick it out,” Welch said. “It’s been a great experience. I’ve never regretted it. I figured if Coach Sabo believed in me, I should probably believe in myself. It’s all worked out.”

“He’s an effort guy,” Sabo said. “I love his emotion. He’s a people person. He’s a quality human being. He’s a great kid who works hard, and has turned into a great leader. I liked him a lot and I wanted him around.

“He had a big breakthrough year as a sophomore, and he’s kept building ever since,” Sabo added.

Welch is popular with his teammates and coaches because he’s a hard worker and an all-around good guy with a great sense of humor. He brings a ton of enthusiasm and emotion to his events and enjoys celebrating every big throw — whether they belong to him or his teammates.

The 5-foot-11, 204-pounder is a cheerleader for his teammates.

“Even though I wasn’t the best thrower as a sophomore, I knew I could contribute with my enthusiasm and by making them laugh,” Welch said. “That would help them improve their days. That’s happened with me, too. My teammates have helped me get through some days when things haven’t been going well.

“When I first started, I didn’t realize how big PRs (personal records) were,” Welch added. “Now, I do. They’re a great reason to celebrate. PRs are always a big deal.”

The track and field season is finishing an excellent year for Welch.

He was a first-team All-NBC selection on both offense and defense in football last fall, and was named the conference’s lineman of the year. He also was an honorable-mention all-district honoree. The team was 14-1 overall and 7-0 in the conference, losing in the Division V state championship game in overtime.

In wrestling, Welch won a conference championship at 220 pounds and competed in the Division III state tournament at 195 pounds. He was second in the sectional and fifth in the district before advancing to state as an injury alternate.

Welch, who was 45-10 as a senior, earned four letters in both wrestling and football.

“Just a lot of great memories from all three sports, especially being able to share with them with my friends,” Welch said.

Welch, who has a 3.6 grade-point average, will attend Bowling Green State University in the fall and major in construction management.