

Limes enjoying a breakthrough year



By Kevin Gordon

Jake Limes is putting everything together.

The Eastwood High School track and field senior has run a personal-record time twice in both the 100 and the 200 this season.

And Limes believes he can lower his times even more as the Eagles enter the most important four weeks of the season.

He has PRs of 11.50 in the 100 and 23.82 in the 200 as Eastwood prepares to compete in the Northern Buckeye Conference Championships. The conference meet is Saturday at Memorial Stadium in Fostoria.

"I'm running pretty well, but I can definitely run faster," said Limes, who also has run the 4x100, 4x200 and 4x400 relays this season.

"The coaches have done a lot to help me," Limes added. "Even with the mechanical stuff, I was a little bit sketchy at the start of the year. Looking at the videotape and looking at all of the drills we do with block starts, etc., it's coming together now."

Limes entered the season with PRs of 11.64 in the 100

and 24.02 in the 200.

He lowered his mark in the 100 to 11.57 at the Napoleon Invitational April 16 and 11.50 at the Eastwood Relays April 22. His best in the 200 beginning the season was 24.02, but he dropped it to 23.86 March 29 at Oak Harbor and 23.82 at Napoleon.

"We've cut some time already, even on the cooler and windier days," Limes said. "If you go out there and you know you threw, you ran or you jumped as hard as you could, that's all you can do. The coaches are looking for us to go out and do our best.

"I want to keep getting better and better, running as fast as I can every single race, and PR every time out," Limes added.

Like every other athlete and coach in the NBC, Limes is hoping to compete in sunny and warmer weather during the next month. This week's weather forecast is good so far, according to the Weather Channel, although there is a chance of thunderstorms late Saturday afternoon. Highs should range from 82-86 degrees.

After the conference championships, Eastwood heads to the district meet May 19 and 21 at Oak Harbor. The regional meet at Lexington High School is May 26, and 28, and the state meet is June 3-4 at Jesse Owens Stadium in Columbus.

"I wish we could get some good weather, so we can get some PRs and really show what we can do, and so we don't have to keep bundling up before and after every race," Limes said. "It's hard to stay warmed up when it's cooler or raining. On a warm weather day, you can stay warmer for a longer period of time. That helps you perform better."



Even more success

Limes has been a solid contributor during his career, starting with PRs of 11.95 in the 100 and 24.98 in the 200 as a freshman.

After his sophomore season was canceled because of Covid, he lowered his PRs even more last season when he became a regular for the Eagles.

“He’s becoming really coachable,” said Eastwood assistant coach Cody Seifert, who works with the team’s sprinters. “When he’s doing his workouts, he’s already figuring out his own issues before we even need to tell him anything.

“He’s come a long way since his freshman year to now. He knows what he’s doing wrong,” Seifert

added. “He knows how to fix them. That’s become a big thing for him. Everything’s coming together in terms of his mechanics, but I do like his attention to detail in the (starting) blocks, and he’s really going after the curve in the 200. He’s not just jogging the curve. He’s a lot more aggressive, in general, and that’s really helped.”

Seifert and Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said Limes can go even faster, with Seifert believing times of 11.0 in the 100 and in the 22-second range are realistic yet this season.

“I’m hoping he can have some big time drops,” said Seifert, who remains Eastwood’s record holder in both races. He ran 10.84 in the 100 and 21.76 in the 200 in 2008.

“Typically, when you’re consistent, the next thing you know, you’re going to see a big drop, the weather gets nicer, you start to feel better,” Seifert added. That’s how Coach Sabo trains the kids, to do better at the end of the year.”

“There’s a lot more left in the tank for him,” Sabo said.

During last season’s NBC meet, Limes finished sixth in the 200 and seventh in the 100. He ranks fourth in the 100 and fifth in the 200 in the conference this season.

Eastwood still is finalizing its lineup for the NBC meet, but Limes could run the 100 and the 200, and two of the three sprint relays.

“This year has been a breakthrough year for him,” Sabo said. “He’s had much more significant drops in his times. He’s always been solid as someone we’ve always been counting on, ever since he was a freshman. Everything’s come together for him.”

The 5-foot-10, 140-pound Limes said his success this season also has been fueled by his Eagle basketball teammates, who encouraged him to lift weights.

“I feel a lot stronger,” Limes said.

Relay contributor

Limes also has run on 4x100, 4x200 and 4x400 relays this season, and all three have the fastest time in the conference going into the NBC Championships. Eastwood is hoping to qualify all three relays to state.

“The relays have been pretty solid all year, mixing guys in and out of it,” Limes said.

“Hopefully, we can start by winning leagues and then going far in the tournament run. Our relay teams are really solid. They’ve been really good this year.”

The Eagles value all four relays, and their 4x800 team has its sights set on a state berth, too. But the 4x400 relay has long been the signature event for the Eagles.

Sabo and retired head coach Gary White, who started the tradition of the 4x400 at Eastwood, love the race because it's the final event of the meet and because the race requires a demanding mix of speed and endurance.

The Eagles, both boys and girls, position themselves around the track to cheer on their teammates during the 4x400s.

"Relays have always been looked at as great events at Eastwood," Limes said. "Most of track is solo events, but the relays are where you get a group of guys to go after it, and they want to PR in their splits and PR as a team. There's definitely a lot of camaraderie, a lot of love among the guys on the relays, and there's a lot of emotion, and love from the people watching the relays. That pushes you to run even faster."



You can count on me

Limes has been a workhorse for the Eagles the last two seasons, often running in three or the maximum four events in the weekend invitationals.

One of Sabo's fondest memories of Limes came during last season's first meet at Oak Harbor. The Eagles' needed a fourth runner for their 4x400 team at the last second when Sabo decided to hold out the original fourth runner for precautionary reasons because that runner was hurt.

Sabo inserted Limes into that spot, and the Eagles won the relay and the meet as a result. Eastwood trailed by four points going into the 4x400 before pulling out a 69-68 win.

"He loves track, and you can see that," Sabo said. "When I think of Jake Limes, I think of a guy who has a run a lot of races, and a guy we can always count on. If I tell him, I need him to run, he always

says yes and goes out and runs hard.

"What will be weird next year is not having him," Sabo added. "He's run many, many races over the last four years, and he's always been somebody we can count on. He's always willing to run. You lose people like that every year, and people always come along to fill those spots every year, but you never replace those guys. I'll miss him."

What's next

Limes already is in his third week of working at DeWese Plumbing. He plans on joining the pipe fitters union and after being in the plumbing program at the Penta Career Center. "Going to Penta was a big help," Limes said. "It gave me a head start with work. It's been a big help, getting experience with what I want to do in life.

"I've been doing a little bit of shop work and going out on a few plumbing jobs," Limes said of working at DeWese Plumbing. "It's something I really enjoy doing."