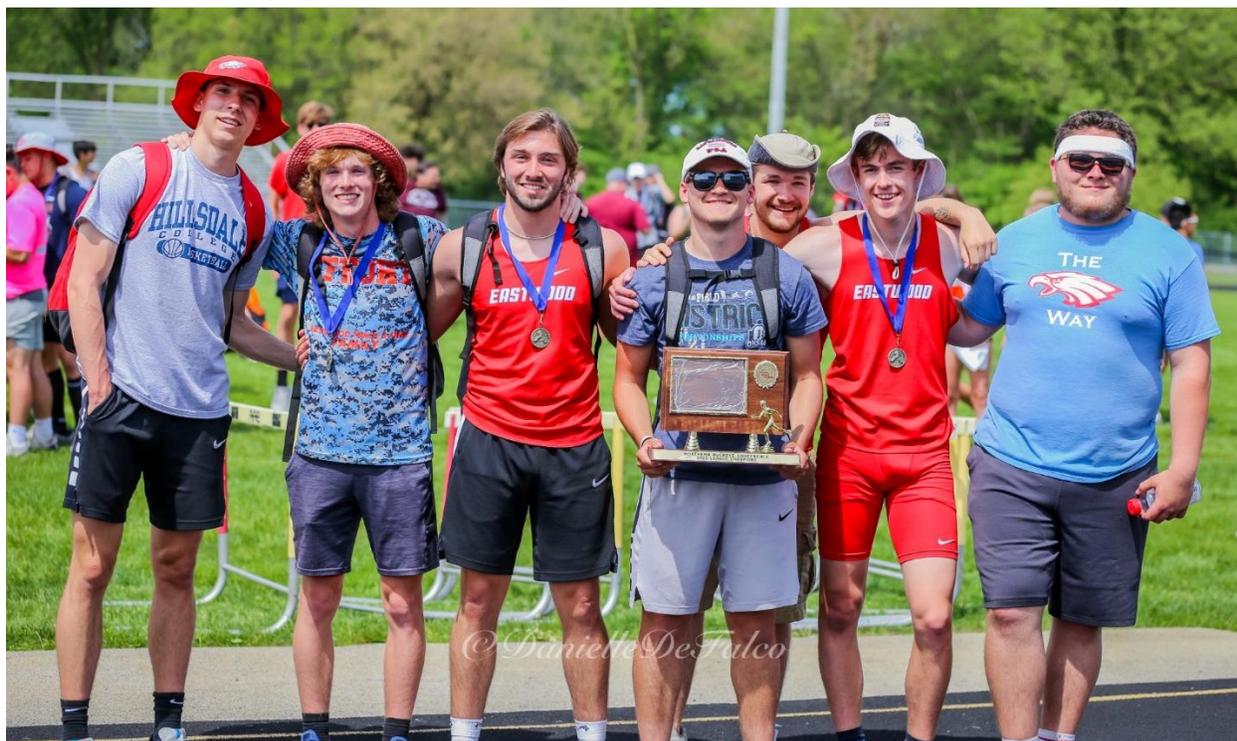


Getz, Kwiatkowski and Stonerook contributed to boys success



Boys Captains, Kwiatkowski (holding trophy) and Stonerook (behind Ethan)

By Kevin Gordon

Emmet Getz, Ethan Kwiatkowski and Jacob Stonerook all contributed to the success of Eastwood High School's boys track and field team this season.

The three seniors each helped in a different way, and head coach Brian Sabo said all three "added value to the team."

Following is a look at each of them:



Emmet Getz

Emmet Getz

Getz emerged as one of the Eagles' top throwers this season. He led the team in the discus with a throw of 149-0, the 10th-best distance in Eastwood history His PR in the shot put was 42-10½, second only to classmate Nate Heskett at 46-1½

The throwing of Getz was even more impressive because he didn't compete in the sport last season and his sophomore season was canceled because of Covid. As a freshman, Getz high jumped and long jumped for the Eagles. He finished third in the Northern Buckeye Conference meet in the high jump, clearing 5-8. He had

PRs of 5-10 in the high jump and 18-1½ in the long jump.

"I really didn't think I'd do this well, since I didn't throw until this year," Getz said. "The first few times I threw, I thought I could be OK at it, but my form was really bad. I didn't throw very well, and I thought I might improve a little bit, but I didn't think much of it."



Getz steadily improved after throwing the discus 99-10 and the shot put 39-11 during the team's first meet March 29 at Oak Harbor. In the NBC meet, he finished second in the discus (142-8) and fourth in the shot (42-3½). He also sprinted for the Eagles. He PRd six times in the shot and five times in the discus.

"He was talented as a freshman, but he's gotten more physically gifted this year," Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said of the 6-foot-3, 225-pound Getz who was 6-1, 145 as a freshman. "His technique kept improving, and the power and the technique he has have met, and now he's throwing really well."

Getz said he decided to rejoin the track team this season at the encouragement of some of his teammates.

"I thought it'd be fun to do it with my friends," Getz said. "I've enjoyed it. It's been fun."

Sabo said he saw Getz practicing his craft at the school's throwing rings a number of times when he drove past the Eastwood campus.

"He's embraced track again and embraced throwing," Sabo said. "He's realized he's good at it, and he likes it. There have been many days he's been throwing by himself — that tells me he's enjoying the season, he's enjoying track and being around the guys. That means a lot to me. That's what we want.

"I don't care what event you do," Sabo added. "I want you to be good at it, and then be a part of it. He's been a part of it, and he's been more invested in it. He's never up or down emotionally, so sometimes you don't know where he's at. It's been a pleasant surprise, but it's been nice to see him enjoy track again."

Getz, who also plays football and basketball for the Eagles, cracked the school's all-time Top 10 in the discus at home May 4 during a dual meet against Elmwood and Rossford.

"That was nice. I really didn't think that would happen, especially since it was my first year of throwing," Getz said. "Seeing my distances improve really helped because it told me I was getting better. I thought my athletic ability would help, but it was way tougher than I thought it would be."

Getz, who has a 4.2 grade-point average, will play football and attend school at the Ashland University in the fall. He's planning on majoring in physical therapy.

Ethan Kwiatkowski

Kwiatkowski almost didn't have a season after he suffered a torn hip labrum during the Eagles' football game against Lake Sept. 24.

But after surgery, followed by physical therapy with Mike Messaros and Teresa Badenhop at Wood County Hospital, the 5-foot-8, 175-pounder was cleared to run. He first competed in the Eastwood Relays April 22 when he ran a leg in the 4x100 relay.



Ethan Kwiatkowski

Kwiatkowski also competed in the 100 during a May 4 dual meet against Elmwood and Rossford, and during the district meet at Oak Harbor.

“It felt great to run in the (Eastwood Relays),” said Kwiatkowski, who was injured when he was tackled on a running play with about three minutes left in the game. “I didn’t run the times I wanted, but I wasn’t focused on that. I was happy to be back on the track, back with my team, actually a part of the team. I was actually back with my team, competing and having fun.”

Even though Kwiatkowski’s contributions have been limited, he still attended practice on a regular basis. The only practices he didn’t attend were when he had physical therapy.

He was finally cleared to run in late March/early April, but he still remained involved with the team as a student coach and as a cheerleader. As a sprinter, Kwiatkowski helped his teammates with their starts and handoffs. He also brings a ton of energy to the team.

Kwiatkowski helped Eastwood finish fourth in the 4x200 relay during last season’s conference meet. This season, he even earned the nickname, “Coach Kwi.”

“This was my fourth year, so I had put in a lot of time and effort into running to this program,” Kwiatkowski said when asked if he ever thought about not coming out for the team this season. “I thought it would be mean, horrible, unnecessary of me not to come back and at least give my perspective, my opinion on any questions. I loved that role. It was a lot of fun.

“It was a good morale boost for me, too,” Kwiatkowski said. “This is like a second family for me. I love all of these guys and girls in the program, and it’s just a great community to be around.”

In the days after surgery and during his 2-3 months of physical therapy, Kwiatkowski wasn’t sure he’d be healthy enough to return — until he was officially cleared.

“Everything kept getting pushed back,” Kwiatkowski said. “The only thing in my mind was I’m not going to run this year. I was upset for a while, but when I was told, I’ll be able to run track, I was so excited. I wanted to run through walls. I was jumping up and down.”

Kwiatkowski also was voted one of the team’s captains by his teammate prior to the start of the season, and before he was cleared to compete.

“We’ve had a lot of people injured who through their own accord distanced themselves or became non-existent,” Sabo said. “To me, you still have value to the team in some way, and he found a way to still be valuable to be the team. It also says a lot when you’re voted a captain and you’re not out there competing and doing things with the guys. That says a lot about his leadership ability. He says things in a positive manner, tactfully, but motivating. I told him and Jacob (Stonerook) both, that means more than any time, distance or throw you’ve ever had.”



Ethan Kwiatkowski, who has a 3.7 grade-point average, eventually attend the University of Toledo and major in mechanical engineering, but he'll start his career at Owens Community College in the fall.

Jacob Stonerook

Stonerook, who threw the discus and the shot put, didn't expect to be a captain, but his name was the first one called Sabo announced the captains during a team meeting in March. The captains were chosen by a vote of the athletes. "It meant a lot," Stonerook said. "I didn't know they thought that highly of me. I was proud. It was a great experience. I was surprised. I was happy. I was proud of myself and the way other people thought of me, and that they thought I deserved to be a captain."

Stonerook tried to lead one day at a time, by example, with energy, and by treating his teammates the way he wanted to be treated.

"If there's one thing I try to do, I try to find the guys who didn't throw well or didn't run well, and tell them, it's all right, you've got next time or you did your best as long as you put it all out on the track," Stonerook said.

"If something happens and it has to be addressed by me or the other captains, then you handle it," Stonerook added. "You do your best to lead by example. If your team is down, you need to pick them up. If your team is doing great, you acknowledge that. Every day is different, whether it's a good day or a bad day, so it's one day at a time. No matter what, I have to make sure everyone is feeling good at the end of the day."

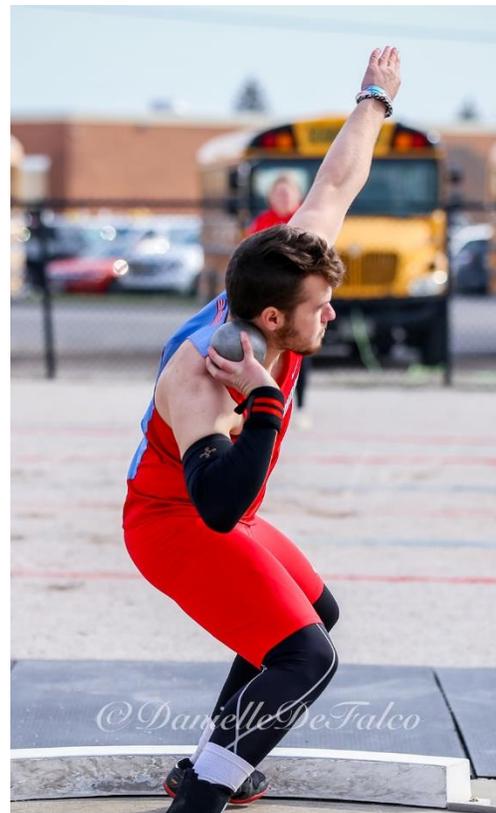
Sabo became better acquainted with Stonerook when the thrower took his leadership class.

"He's not afraid to ask questions or put himself out there to give a thought," Sabo said. "He's gotten a lot more social. He's built some confidence, and that's allowed him to be more social. That tells me he's pouring into others, giving of himself, knowing that some of these guys could beat him, yet they felt he gave enough to be a captain."

Sabo said Stonerook also "gives great insight, great input" during the regular meetings he has with the captains.

"He can say things to people tactfully and in a positive manner, that's a tough thing to do," Sabo added. "He's helped lead. He's excitable, so he gives a positive, emotional euphoric reaction to individuals and the team."

Stonerook started throwing in the seventh grade, and continued throwing in high school.



Jacob Stonerook

He credited Eagle alums Austin Kieper, Erik Fertig, Holden Ruck and Mason Steele, and former assistant coach Zach Jacoby for helping him and believing in him early in his career. His spring outdoor season as a sophomore was canceled because of Covid.

“All of those guys helped me with my technique, always helped me keep my head up and did everything they could to keep me going,” Stonerook said. “If I was down, they’d get me back up and tell me to get back up and get back on that line. As a freshman and a sophomore, that was really important because it was something I really needed, that get back on the line mentality and that energy.”

Now, Stonerook is helping maintain the positive and energetic environment that’s been developed by the throwers during the last few seasons.

“The people on the track team, if they called me and said they needed anything from me in the future at any time, I would show up,” Stonerook said. “Family supports family. The family is the people who are here now, the people who came before you and the people who will come after you. The mentality of you put on that jersey and leave it in a better place, and you take the lessons you learned from the Ninth Lane in track, and you walk

forward with them and go throughout your life living those lessons.”

Stonerook, who has a 3.6 grade-point average, will attend Bowling Green State University in the fall and major in criminal justice. He’ll also join the school’s Army National Guard ROTC program. He’s planning a career in law enforcement and might join the military. At Eastwood, he also helped with the school blood drive, and was a member of the backstage crew for the school musical. He’s a long-time member of the Boys Scouts.



“He’s a great teammate,” Sabo said. “He’s done a great job as captain, and I hope it’s helped him realize he can lead in any facet of his life as long as he’s confident.”