

Quiet Heskett speaks loudly for Eagles



By Kevin Gordon

Nate Heskett admits he's on the quiet side.

The Eastwood High School track and field team's senior prefers to lead by example and doing everything the right way.

As a result, he's speaking loudly.

He's building relationships and connections with his teammates, both boys and girls.

Heskett is one of the captains for the Eagle boys. His leadership has played an important role in the team's throwers performing consistently well this season.

He's also having a solid season in the shot put ring where he's already thrown a personal record of 45-8 to rank third in the Northern Buckeye Conference, fifth in the Oak Harbor High School district and 11th in the Lexington High School regional.

"He's such a nice guy, a good kid," Eagle head coach Brian Sabo said. "He's really helpful, polite. He's always asking if he can help out or do something. He does a good job of when he's telling someone information, he does that in a way that's not a directive.

"He leads by example," Sabo added. "He's humble. He's quiet, but he leads with his actions. He's honest. I'm really glad to see him doing well."

Heskett received a handful votes for captains from his teammate as a junior, leading Sabo to believe he'd be a captain as a senior.

"The throwing part comes and goes," Heskett said. "But what I want to be remembered for is how I treated everyone. I try to be nice to everyone, and make connections with everyone. I hope I give off an approachable attitude, and, hopefully, they see me as someone they can always come to."

Sabo instructs his captains at the start of the season to quickly learn the names of all of the team's athletes, and Heskett said it took approximately 2-3 weeks to do that. The team and the throwers are his second family.

"We try to have a family atmosphere among the throwers," Heskett said. "We want coming to practice and the meets to be fun. We try to be encouraging, so everyone has fun and improves. I try to be myself and lead by example."

Heskett has patterned himself after former Eastwood throwers and captains Erik Fertig and Mason Steele.

Fertig was a captain in 2018 and 2019, and won a Division II state discus championship as a senior. He's throwing collegiately at the University of Louisville. Steele graduated last year, finishing second in the NBC in the discus and fifth in the shot put.



2022 Captains

"I always looked up to (Fertig and Steele)," Heskett said. "They were throwers who always stood out to me. When I became a captain, I was like, cool, I'm at the level those guys were, and I finally lived up to my role models. "They always brought the energy and the family feeling, and they were always encouraging no matter how they did that day," Heskett added. "They could have had a bad day, but they were still going to encourage you, the second you walked into the ring.

The distance you threw didn't matter, it was that you tried."

Sabo has impacted Heskett, too: "Mr. Sabo leads by example, and I try to lead like he does. He builds connections with us, and he leads by diving in. That's something I try to do."

The Eagle throwers have plenty of depth, allowing them to perform consistently well this season

"He sets a good example by leading," said assistant coach Tyler McCrory, who works with the throwers. "He comes to practice every day to throw, and he's asking questions. He'll help out other athletes with technical things they're doing wrong and give other guys advice. Having someone like him is like having another coach, like (Steele) was last year." Heskett said the success of the throwers is the result of hard work and dedication.

"We all care about this, and we all want to be the best we can be," Heskett added. "There's a friendly competition between us to get better, and that pushes all of us to improve."



In the ring

His PR of 45-8 in the shot came in the team's first meet, a March 29 dual at Oak Harbor. The throw bettered his previous mark of 42-7 last season. He's thrown at least 43-7½ in five of the Eagles' seven competitions, including three meets of at least at 44-0 or better.

"He's had a good year," Sabo said. "He came on last year in the shot, and I still think there's more in the tank for him. He really wants to improve."

Heskett entered the spring outdoor season with a ton of confidence, thanks to a strong winter indoor season where he threw PRs in both the shot and the weight throw, and qualified for the Division II-III state indoor meet in the weight throw.

"I feel good right now," Heskett said. "I'm working on my consistency and the speed in my feet, the fundamentals. I

threw during the indoor season to get me ready for outdoors, to be as good as I can be, and I feel like I definitely hit that during indoors.”

Like Sabo, McCrory believes Heskett has even longer throws in him and is capable of hitting the 48-foot mark. Heskett threw 37-4½ as a freshman, and his sophomore season was canceled by COVID.

“He works hard and doesn’t waste a throw,” McCrory said. “He threw during the offseason. He throws high quality throws every day at practice. He doesn’t waste throws. He takes every throw seriously.”



Future plans

Heskett, who has a 4.2 grade-point average, will attend school and throw collegiately at Ohio Northern University in the fall.

He’s a member of the National Honor Society and Tri-M, a music leadership group. He plays the trombone in the concert band. He was the prosecuting attorney in this year’s mock trial at Eastwood after serving as a defense attorney last year. He’s an Eagle Scout, too.

Heskett plans to major in forensic biology at ONU, and hopes to work at a state level crime lab to examine evidence.