

SMALL SCHOOL, BIG RUNNER

Mars Hills student new asset to distance track

Eric Miller | Staff Writer

In any given race, track runner Joe Thistleton will compete against more people than he has in his entire graduating class.

Thistleton is senior at Mars Hill Academy, where the 2015 graduating class is just four students, including himself. Thistleton has taken advantage of new OHSAA legislation that allows him to compete for Mason since Mars Hill is not officially OHSAA recognized. Mars Hill does offer track and field, but Thistleton said he wanted to be a part of Mason's track program to help him run at the next level.

"I joined Mason track because I am hoping to run in college," Thistleton said. "I knew that Mason would give me the right training I need to be an elite runner."

Thistleton began his running career at Mars Hill but just last year he was training to be apart of the cross country program for one of Mason's biggest rivals.

"The spring track season of eighth grade was when I began running," Thistleton said. "I ran with Mars Hill in track and cross country all the way through eleventh grade. I trained with Sycamore High School for my twelfth grade cross country season, but I still had to wear a Mars Hill jersey because I didn't live in the Sycamore school district and therefore couldn't be a part of their team."

Assistant boys track coach Tom Rapp said he has only had one instance in his coaching career that is comparable to Thistleton's.

"(I) had one runner in cross country one time who was a homeschooled kid," Rapp said.

"That legislation just changed a couple of years ago and he was the first one."

Rapp said there is only one disadvantage to Thistleton not attending Mason, but that it has an easy fix.

"The con is it is fun to see your athletes during school," Rapp said. "There can be a 'Hey, can you drop by my class after third period?' That's a little harder. But obviously with texts and phones we can communicate."

Thistleton said even though he started the season as somewhat of an outsider, he said his teammates have helped him become better oriented to Mason's team and bond with the boys who were once strangers.

"I completely feel like a part of the team," Thistleton said. "The guys have been awesome, distance runners and sprinters included. I came in knowing Tommy Stewart really well and he made it really easy for me to transition into the Mason program. I became friends with a lot of the guys quickly and can definitely say that I now have some of my best friends on the team."

Rapp agreed with Thistleton and said that his maturity helped him transition into Mason.

"(Being new) would affect a lot of people but Joe is very socially mature," Rapp said. "He's outgoing and enjoyable. He enjoys being on a team of our caliber. I think he's having as much fun as anybody on the team."



Joe Thistleton

Photo contributed by Mike Kreil

24

Senior Tyler Krabbe leads the baseball team with 24 runs this season.

97

Junior volleyball player Jacob Grove leads the conference in defense with a season total of 97 blocks.

85

Sophomore softball pitcher Elle Buffenbarger is top three in the GMC with 85 season strikeouts.

48.31

Senior Amit Maity took first in the 400-meter dash at the Mason Invitational with a time of 48.31.

Results as of May 10.

The Chronicle Sports

MVP: NADIM BOULOS

Sport: Tennis

Class: 2015

Claim to Fame: First singles on varsity A

Best thing about tennis: Both a physical and mental game

Worst thing about tennis: People assume it's an easy sport but it's not

Toughest Opponent: Sycamore

Motto: Play every opponent like he's a champion

Celebrity Crush: Roger Federer

Embarrassing Moment: I broke all the strings of my racket and had to borrow a racket from my opponent

Netflix Addiction: Sherlock



Photo by Charlie MacKenzie