

Orsulak a 'natural talent'

Though his father is a former Baltimore Oriole, senior Joe Orsulak - a phenomenal middle-distance runner for Loyola Blakefield - knew running, not baseball, was for him.

"I played in a lot of recreational baseball leagues during middle school, but I wasn't as good as I thought I should be," said the younger Orsulak, stretched out on a bleacher seat at Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex, Landover, between events at the MIAA - IAAM Indoor Track and Field Championships on Jan. 18.

"Then I was cut from a basketball team in middle school and decided to turn all of my attention to running," Orsulak said.

His teammates tell him that he runs like a gazelle - and they're right. To prove it, Orsulak has broken a number of school track and field records in his four years as a varsity runner for the Dons. "I like to see my name up there on the board, and I like clearing the board for future generations," said Orsulak, who has indeed topped the charts in the 300 meter, 500 meter, 800 meter, and the 4×200, 400 and 800 relays.

"He is a natural talent, a super competitive kid and has grown into his 6-foot-2 frame," said Chris Cucuzzella, longtime head coach for the Dons.

Cucuzzella, who is in his 22nd year with Loyola, is revered by Orsulak, who said, "Coach Cucuzzella is the best coach ever. He knows how to coach. He doesn't yell at us, but he lets us know what we need to do. He is just the best coach ever."

Orsulak took first place in the 500-meter run at the championships with a time of 1:08.12 and anchored the 3,200 relay and the 400 relay. The Dons took second place in the 4×400; Gilman's anchor edged out Orsulak by seven-hundredths of a second as the Dons finished with a 3:29.94.

Overall, the Dons placed fourth in the championships behind Mount St. Joseph, Irvington; Calvert Hall College High School, Towson; and Gilman.

Orsulak looks to attend Mount St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, next year and join

their running program. His major is undecided.