

Shuman and Rakosky push for excellence

A pair of lions are making their mark on the field events in the IAAM B Conference for track and field this season.

The dynamic duo at Maryvale Preparatory School, Brooklandville, sophomore Lacey Shuman and senior captain Emma Rakosky are two very competitive athletes who have been training and competing together for the last two years, and both are seeing remarkable results.

Shuman is tall and lanky and quickly picked up on the trade secrets to field event success, while Rakosky, the lone senior on the squad and team captain, is a bit shorter in stature, exudes confidence and works tirelessly to improve her numbers each season. Rakosky is a mentor for Shuman. They work hard on the improvement of their skills and technique; they set the bar high for each other.

For Shuman and Rakosky, their events are the high jump, long jump, triple jump and the hurdles, and their times and distances rank up there with the very best the IAAM has to offer. They are elite athletes.

The Maryvale Lions have had a competitive cross country team over the years and head coach Jason Miller knew he wanted to see the running program expand into participation in the indoor and outdoor seasons for track and field. It was a natural progression for this small school from Brooklandville.

The team competes in the IAAM B Conference and currently stands with a record of 4-1 in the league, it would not be surprising to see the Lions move up into the A conference in 2009 with their lone loss, a two point loss, to St. Mary's Annapolis, another new team to the outdoor league.

Lions' assistant coach Kyle Reagan, a 2000 graduate of Mount St. Joseph High School, Irvington, has been with the team for the past two seasons and has witnessed the incredible progress over a 24 month period. "I work with the field event athletes and I've seen how Emma and Lacey push each other. They are so

close in everything they do and they can get very competitive,” said Reagan.

“They certainly will be the first to cheer for each other at a meet but at practice, both Emma and Lacey are pushing each other and competing to get the edge,” Reagan said.

Reagan is a very demanding coach. He accepts nothing less than the best from his athletes. It’s how he was coached by Gene Constantine from Mount St. Joe, and it’s how he will keep the bar going forward. “If there is one thing that is a pet peeve of mine, it’s seeing people waste their potential,” he said. “I just see how good these girls can be, and I won’t settle for anything less than their best.”

For Shuman and Rakosky, the 2008 indoor season was a record-breaking time for them in the high jump, where Shuman jumped 5-foot-7 for the gold, while Rakosky followed up with a 5-foot-6 clear for the silver.

Both athletes are scoring points in droves for the young Lions this season with triple jumps of 31-feet, and long jumps topping 14.5 feet. With these numbers, coupled with a 17.50 time in the 100 hurdles, the Lions are placing 1-2-3 more times than not in season competition.

Rakosky is not just succeeding in track events; she is also a dynamite field hockey goalie and a talented equestrian. Rakosky will be headed to Sweet Briar College, Va., where she will compete in field hockey, riding and club track.