

Zach Llewellyn's dedication with discus leads to McKendree University scholarship

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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GODFREY – Zach Llewellyn can, for the most part, be described as a “self-made” athlete when it comes to track and field's throwing events.

Llewellyn mostly self-taught and self-coached himself for three years as part of Alton's track team, but the hard work and dedication he brought to the shot put and discus throw earned him a college scholarship as Llewellyn signed a letter of intent to attend **McKendree University** in Lebanon in a ceremony Thursday at Alton High's campus.

“Growing up and watching my older brother throw” attracted Llewellyn to the throwing events as a youngster, “and I saw how much he enjoyed it. I thought it might be something I'd like, so I took it up by myself, not to match him, but to be better than he was.

“That's what I'm training for, to get a farther and farther (personal record).”

“Anytime one of our athletes moves on to the next level to play, I'm excited, it generates some good words for the program and he's done a great job for the last four years throwing for us,” said **Redbird throws coach Eric Dickerson**. “We didn't have a throwers coach for his first three years until this year, so he's been pretty much self-taught to throw the shot and the discus.

“He's steadily improving; this year, he's PRed in almost every meet, so it's been nice. It's been fun to watch; I've had the opportunity to work with him this year on the shot and discus.”

When asked which event is his best, Dickerson said “right now, the shot, but he's got the ability to succeed in both. He still just has to put a few little things together, just some techniques. He's got the upper-body strength.”

There's no shortage of top throwers throughout the entire area; the Southwestern Conference alone as many of the best in the area, and Llewellyn acknowledges it. “The Southwestern Conference is a really tough conference,” Llewellyn said. “We have amazing throwers from every school; there's no week where one kid will throw and he won't do his best, and then the next week, he'll come out of nowhere and just throw a monster. It goes back and forth like that.”

The work and technique used in the throws involve a lot more than what many people may see at the area's track meets. “It's a real work in progress,” Llewellyn said. “Like coach Dickerson said, it's been three years of coaching personally and then a year with him to help me narrow down where my mistakes are in my technique.”

Llewellyn plans on majoring in engineering at McKendree and hopes to go into petroleum engineering after his graduation.