



Edwardsville's Brooks wins shot, discus at Granite City Invitational

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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GRANITE CITY – Edwardsville's Amari Brooks knew he was stepping into some big shoes when this track and field season got started.

Brooks, a junior, was one of three Tigers this season taking the place of last year's throwers for the team, A.J. Epenesa and Bruce Wachowski, joining Cameron Kirkpatrick and Blake Williams who are stepping into the very large shoes left when Wachowski and Epenesa graduated.

Brooks has been filling those shoes well, winning both the shot put and the discus throw in Friday's Granite City Invitational track meet at Granite City's Memorial Stadium /Kevin Greene Field with tosses of 52-3 in the shot and 164-2 in the discus; Kirkpatrick, a sophomore, took seventh in the discus with a throw of 138-4 and Williams, a junior, finished third in the shot with a heave of 48-5.

"I've been throwing for about six years," Brooks said. "I started in middle school."

Brooks acknowledged the large shoes Epenesa left after last season. "He had some pretty big shoes" for Brooks to fill, he said. "He handed me the torch and stuff, but I was really eager to take it as a sophomore – I was all like I have to uphold the tradition of EHS dominating in the field."

Brooks got started in track as a kid. "It's a funny story; I remember I used to run around the house and I never really wanted to do anything else but run around the house," Brooks recalled. "My dad said, 'we're going for ice cream' one day; he just pulled me out and dropped me off at the track and said, 'OK, you're going to throw'.

"At first, I really hated it because I used to always lose; I would get last place and I was really, really tiny. I guess I grew and got stronger and faster and perfected my technique; I guess I learned to love the sport."

Brooks set some goals for himself entering the season. "This season, I wanted to actually qualify for state in the discus," Brooks said, "and I wanted to medal in the discus; in the shot, I didn't even expect to throw over a 50, so the fact that I'm throwing over 52, close to 53, is really great."

There is more to the throwing events than most people may realize; it's not just all strength, it's also a matter of having the right technique to launch big throws. “I know literally that the smallest people can be the ones who dominate,” Brooks said. “I remember when I was in the Junior Olympics, there was this kid - he was really, really tiny and he was throwing like 75 feet; he was around my age and he had the speed and technique. He was really, really good.

“It's a lot more than just strength and size; even looking at me out there, I'm the smallest guy out there – I'm not big – but I have to have that technique and speed.”