

Distance Standout Geo Patrylak Is An iCAN Clinic Male Athlete of Month For Tigers

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - It is not often a coach has a son who shares a love of a sport as much as they do. Geo Patrylak, the son of George and Roxanne Patrylak, shares the adoration of track and field and cross country just like his parents.

For the family, this past weekend's IHSA Class 3A State Track and Field Boys Meet was special as Geo notched an All-State position, placing ninth in the 1,600 meters with a fantastic time of 4:14.43. Teammate Ryan Watts won the race in a time of 4:11.16. Geo plans to run cross country and track for Missouri Southern State in the fall, another one of his dreams. Geo Patrylak is an iCAN Clinic Male Athlete of the Month for the Tigers for his extraordinary performance at state and in his final meets of the season.

Possibly what was most special for George, Geo and Roxanne occurred after the meet when the team received a second-place trophy. For the Patrylaks what made it extra special was the fact that Edwardsville Head Boys Track and Field Coach Chad Lakatos' son, Clayton, was also on the team stand. Clayton, a young freshman, is the future of the Tigers' track and field program in the sprints, hurdles, and relays. He completed an unbelievable freshman season at state. Both Clayton and Geo have hung out with the track and field teams since they were young boys. Both young men probably know more about track and field than any of their peers after years and years of involvement.

"Watching them on the stand was one of those magic moments," Coach Patrylak said. "We joked that both have almost been on the track since they were born. We always brought both boys around to the meets. I think Clayton Lakatos will be a big part of many state performances for Edwardsville in the future. Seeing them both there was one of those moments that made me tear up."

Geo and Ryan Watts are also like track and field and cross country brothers, Coach Patrylak said.

"After Ryan finished first in the 1,600 he looked back to turn around and find Geo and to see his reaction and embrace of Geo when he finished becoming All-State was priceless," Coach Patrylak added.

A track and field expert told Coach Patrylak the times recorded in the IHSA 3A 1,600 meters were some of the best for a field in state history. Watts won in 4:11.16, followed by Roy Llewellyn of Downers Grove North (4:11.22), Luke Wiley of Gurnee (Warren) (4:4:12.31, Balin Doug of Oswego (4:4:12.47), Declan Tunney of Orland Park (Sandburg) (4:12.71); Owen Forberg of Oak Lawn (Richards) (4:12.98); Geo Patrylak (4:14.43), and Ethan Summer of Elmhurst (York) (4:14.45).

"Geo has blossomed this year," George said. "Prior to this season had a time trial of 4:27 in the 1,600 and he dropped 13 seconds from the beginning of the year to the state meet. I think his choice of Missouri Southern State is a good one; they are a great Division II program and Geo is a perfect candidate for their team. They almost always make nationals and hopefully, Geo will help them get there next year."

Coach Patrylak said both Geo and Ryan Watts knew how important the 1,600 race was for the team, with the Tigers competing in a small number of events. Points at that point were desperately needed for a top state team finish.

“It was the kind of stuff kids dream about,” the coach said. “It was like a kid in Major League Baseball with the bases loaded in the bottom of the ninth with two outs and the championship on the line. This is what dreams are made of.

“We knew if we could pick any two athletes to get it done it was Ryan and Geo just like they had done all year. I am so proud of both of them and the team.”

