

Harris Signs With Charlotte

Written by Mike Kelly
Friday, 30 March 2012 08:39

Watauga High senior pole vaulter Reid Harris has signed his National Letter of Intent with UNC-Charlotte, where he will continue his track career next season. Harris, who is considering electrical engineering and

computer sciences as a possible major, will be joined by teammate Max Ruble, who will be a walk-on for the 49ers.

"Charlotte has a great track program,," Harris said. "I'm real excited. I've been to a couple of track meets down there. They have great facilities and I really like their coach (Robert Olesen). And to be competing at the Division I level is very special. Being a part of this program at Watauga has really prepared me for this."

And much of the credit goes to Daniel Isaacs, now a pole vaulting coach in Hawaii. Ironically, the student bested his mentor just a couple of weeks ago as Harris broke the school record in the pole vault by clearing the bar with an effort of 14-feet, nine-inches at the Lake Norman Twilight Meet on March 16. It broke the old mark of 14-5 set by Isaacs during his senior year in 1997.

"I didn't even know about the record until later," Harris said. "Coach (Kevin) Shaw set the bar at 14-9. I thought it was at 14-6, which would have been the record anyway. But I cleared the bar with a strong jump. It's an honor to break that record, especially one set by my old coach. I got to speak with him about the record. He was real proud of me, and like the coach that he is, Daniel brought me back down to earth, and got me back to focusing, so I can be in this position again."

Harris began working with Isaacs during his freshman year. And four years later, all that hard work and dedication has paid off in a huge way.

"I had no idea what pole vaulting was about when I met coach Isaacs," he said. "Coach Shaw just sent me to him, and told me to work with him. I was pretty scared my first time out, and I'm also afraid of heights. But coach Isaacs talked to me, taught me the finer points of this event. He taught me to focus and relax. He spent a lot of time with me, making me a better vaulter. I owe all of this to him, and the coaches I've been blessed with here at Watauga.

"They've dedicated a lot of their time to help me achieve what I've done so far in my career. It's truly been a gift."

And how fitting it would be for Harris to close out his career with a state championship. But Harris knows, it takes a little luck as well to achieve such a lofty goal.

"The main thing is to keep my focus, and I just have to put everything together that day," he said. "I just have to be relaxed and comfortable. It would be special to win state, but I'm not going to dwell on it too much. I'm just going to keep working hard and give it my best shot."

Sally Gurganus, who continued her track career at the University of South Carolina, won five state pole-vaulting championships during her career at WHS (in indoor and outdoor track combined). She won her last title at the state outdoor meet in 2006.

Andrew Vandenberg of the Pioneers will be signing with Milligan College, an NAIA school in Johnson City, TN., according to WHS coach Randy McDonough later this spring. He will join former WHS pitcher Jake Watts, who is currently a freshman on the Milligan baseball team. Vandenberg was an All-State runner in cross country last fall.

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The Pioneers travel to Johnson City, TN for the Johnson City Invitational on Saturday.

WHS SOFTBALL CANCELS GAME

Watauga High Athletics Director Tom Wright has announced that the softball game between the Pioneers and South Iredell scheduled for Good Friday, April 6, has been cancelled. No make up date has been announced. The WHS softball team (6-6 overall; 3-4 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) will host Hickory next Tuesday, April 3 and T. C. Roberson, next Thursday, April 5, at the Sports Complex.