

Priorities set for Ted Rudel

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

It's an all too familiar scenario. High school swimmer star goes off to college, swims for a year, has some success, gets good publicity in the local press. Second year, times don't improve, swimmer gets frustrated, fed up, quits the team.

Burnout is common among swimmers. It happened to Doug Cleland — one of the area's most highly-touted prep swimmers. Cleland had been swimming competitively since he was 6 years old. He starred at Rochester Adams and went on to Tennessee, a college swim power, and was doing well. But suddenly, Cleland quit and came home. Swimming had become too much of a chore for him; it was no longer fun.

But for every Doug Cleland, there's a Ted Rudel.

get on friendly terms with the people you compete against. You can talk to them during the meets and stuff. It's not like there are real bitter rivalries. It's a much more friendly atmosphere."

DON'T GET the idea that Rudel isn't competitive when he hits the water. He's presently one of Lehigh's top swimmers. At the East Coast Conference meet last month, he won the 1,500-yard freestyle in 16:10.23 and placed third in the 500 free (4:37.59). He led Lehigh to a third place finish in the meet.

He is a determined competitor and one of the hardest workers on the Lehigh team. But more significantly, Ted Rudel has an affection for the pool.

"I still love to swim," Rudel said. "I know Doug Cleland, and I know that burnout happens a lot. But there's not really as much pressure on me. I haven't burned out, and I don't think I will in the next two years, either."

Rudel burn out? No way. The man's unflappable. Heck, Rudel wasn't even bothered by the news of his 500 record being topped. Harrison's Kirk Raddatz broke his record at this year's Western Lakes league meet.

"I'm just glad it was someone from Harrison that did it," Rudel said. "I know Kirk. I swam with him last summer. He kept telling me he'd break my record. I guess he was right."

PART OF the reason for Rudel's positive attitude is that his times continue to fall. He lopped 8 seconds off his 500 time this year and expects to drop another 5 seconds by next year.

"Yeah, I still have a lot of room to improve. I'd like to get my 500 time down to 4:31.0 and my 1,500 down to 16:05.50."

"Plus, I know that once I graduate, swimming is over. I want to do as well as I can so that 15 years down the road I won't look back and say, 'I should've done this and that.' I'll be able to look back and say 'I did do that.'"

Perhaps all universities should require their athletes to take a course in perspective — and get Ted Rudel to teach it.

Diver takes a Buckeye plunge

By C.J. Riskak
staff writer

All Mike Wantuck needed was the right atmosphere. The Bloomfield Hills Andover graduate couldn't find it at the University of Texas. He never got a chance to search for it at Michigan.

Almost by default, the former high school state diving champion ended up at Ohio State. And he couldn't be happier.

Neither could the Buckeyes, who finished first-third-fourth on the 1-meter board and first-second-fourth on the 3-meter at last weekend's Big Ten championships.

WANTUCK PLACED second on the 3-meter with 555.00 points and was fourth on the 1-meter with 479.10 points. OSU's Mark Bradshaw captured top honors in both events.

"I was looking for a different type of team," said Wantuck, now a sophomore in athletic eligibility. "At Texas the diving program is on a very individual level. It takes a lot of individual motivation. They deal with your psyche, with your mental approach. Unfortunately, a lot of that had a negative effect on me."

Wantuck credited a trip home and a talk with his high school coach, Ann Aubrey, with what success he had as a freshman at Texas: a fifth on the 1-meter board and an eighth on the 3-meter at the NCAA championships, a performance that earned him All-American honors.

Still, Wantuck knew Texas wasn't right for him. He dropped out and planned on enrolling at Michigan. He had trained under Wolverine diving coach Dick Kimball previously.

people in sports

BUT KIMBALL "just didn't feel the timing was right for me to be back in the program," said Wantuck, who admitted he was somewhat confused by Kimball's reaction. "He was refusing to coach me, so I was faced with making a decision between school and diving."

It was the lowpoint of Wantuck's career. "I felt like I was some kind of disease, that nobody wanted anything to do with me," he said. "I was ready to say, 'Forget it, let's hang up the suit. I've had a lot of nice times.'"

Ohio State diving coach Vince Panzano changed Wantuck's mind. The two had met on a trip to Europe as part of a national diving team. Panzano served as the team's coach.

Wantuck, who earned a spot on the squad by finishing fifth on the 3-meter and sixth on the 10-meter tower at the 1983 Indoor National Championships, got Panzano's attention by winning the Bolzano International Trophy, awarded to the top diver in combined events.

WHEN PANZANO discovered Wantuck was going to enroll in Michigan and not dive, he interceded.

"Vince kind of came to my rescue," said Wantuck. Panzano convinced him his studies — Wantuck is enrolled in the English honors program — would not suffer at OSU. And he offered him a full scholarship without question.

What rejuvenated Wantuck was Panzano's approach. "Everyone does things together here," he explained. "The program highly stresses physical fitness, tumbling, lots of callisthenics... I'm in better physical condition than I've ever been in at my life."

"But," Wantuck added, "the best thing is that everyone here does it together. It's an excellent team and family-type atmosphere."

WANTUCK'S DECISION to enroll at Ohio State in December 1983 was only the beginning of a difficult road back. He was not in shape, and "I had gone through so much trauma, I lost a lot of confidence. I had to really get myself back in shape."

Wantuck had only five months to prepare for the Olympic Trials. Yes, his talent was evident: He finished fifth on the 10-meter tower "which wasn't all bad, considering all that had happened in the last year."

He became eligible at OSU in January, although he admits he hasn't reached top form yet.

"I'm so much stronger, and I'm doing harder dives," Wantuck explained. "I'm finally getting back to where I should have been before."

Between now and the NCAA's, his plans are simple: "My diving's sharp but not totally together. It's just a matter of time, though."

IN TWO WEEKS, Wantuck will return to the Texas campus in Austin for the NCAA championships, an event he is eagerly anticipating.

"Potentially, I should be right up there for the championship on the 3-meter," he said. "I've been diving really solidly, but I'm still on an upward climb."

"I think I can be a main contender, but I've got to get my list of dives together."

On the 1-meter, Wantuck considered himself "a solid diver with a basic list (of dives). How well I do really depends on how well or how poorly others do."

Stars shoot hoops for charity

A team of celebrities, including Horace King and Alvin Hall of the Detroit Lions as well as several media celebrities, will take on Schoolcraft College's student programming board in benefit basketball game at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at Schoolcraft.

Tickets, available at the Schoolcraft activities offices and at the door Wednesday, are \$2. All proceeds will go to the March of Dimes to help fight against birth defects.



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