

Build to jump ... and to run
State champ Kelvin Singleton has Centreville thinking big

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BY DEL NEWELL

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CENTREVILLE - There's nothing singular about Kelvin Singleton when it comes to high school track.

"He was born quick," says Bob Critz, Singleton's track coach at Centreville. "He has no body fat. He's short and muscular and built to run."

And he is built to jump, as in long jump, an event he won a championship in last spring at the Class D state track and field meet.

Singleton also won the 400-meter dash and placed second in the 200 a year ago when he led Centreville to a runner-up team finish.

"As a freshman he was on the winning 800 relay team and as a sophomore he was on the 1600 relay team that was first," Critz said. "He's had a pretty good career."

"I'd rank Kelvin right up there with Nick Enders (best times: :48.5 in the 400 and :22.2 in the 200) and some of those real good kids I used to have at Mendon," said Critz, who has been coaching track for close to 28 years, 18 of them at Centreville, where he is also a teacher.

Critz, one of the most popular coaches in the St. Joseph Valley League, has also coached football for over 32 years, with coaching stops at Colon, Mendon and Allegan.

One of his football standouts at Mendon was current Constantine football and track coach Tim Baker.

Although Critz counts on Singleton to rack up lots of points in the big meets, Singleton doesn't have to play Jim Thorpe and be a one-man team.

"We have a pretty good hurdler in Kasey Sahli," Critz said. "He was third in the 300 hurdles at state last year."

"We have five seniors - Singleton, Sahli, Michael Mostrom, Dustin Bainbridge and weightman Dan Cripe - four pretty good junior distance runners - Marc Wilson, Nick Risko, Eric Peterson and Marc Ziemanski - and a good freshman sprinter in Torrie Gilmore."

"Gilmore broke all Singleton's junior high records. He's already gone :11.1 in the 100-meter dash. He's a good one. He's learning, just like Singleton had to learn. Enders helped Singleton and now Singleton is helping Torrie."

Critz, who has experienced winning state championships in track at Centreville and five times as an assistant to Mendon head coach John

Schwartz in football, said it's going to take a super effort to bring back another state title trophy in track.

"The state realigned the divisions and 28 new teams moved into Division 4, including Detroit DePorres, New Haven, Cassopolis, Schoolcraft and White Pigeon," he said. "Our goals before the season were to finish in the top three in the SJV (St. Joseph Valley League), top two at regional and top five at state.

"Sixty-eight points won it last year (Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher), but because of so many more good teams this year it might take only 30 or 40 points. If that's what happens, we're a factor, especially if Singleton has a 30-36 point day."

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