



## MEDINA TOWNSHIP RESIDENT STEELE WASIK WINS GOLD MEDAL

By: Laurie Shoemaker

I had the fortunate opportunity to sit down with Medina Township resident Steele Wasik and his parents, Robert and Michelle. Steele won the gold medal at the **AAU Junior Olympic Games** decathlon July 28, 2013, held at Eastern Michigan University. He was also awarded the Joel Farrell Outstanding Performance Memorial Award, given to an athlete each year based on performance and sportsmanship.

The decathlon consists of ten events in track and field. Each event is based on a point system, 1000 points for each event. Steele accumulated 7,037 points in the decathlon, bypassing his goal of 7000 points, isolating himself by more than 1,300 points from his competition. I asked him if he knew any of the other kids at the games competing in his age group. Steele said "I did know some from last year, and the cool thing about the decathlon is that you're not really competing against anyone, your competing with them. If someone beats you in one of the ten events, it doesn't really matter because it's based purely on points so when you realize that, you're able to help each other and that's cool".

He won the 100 meters (11.32 seconds), 400 (49.02), 110 hurdles (14.25), high jump (6-foot-7) and long jump (21-5.25); was second in the discus (135-04) and shot put (42-06.75); third in the javelin (144-01) and pole vault (10-11); and fourth in the 1,500 (4:47.44).

Steele attends St. Edwards High School, and carries a 4.6 grade point average. Two years in a row he helped win the indoor and outdoor Division I State Championships for his school. As a senior, he is confident that, with the help of his teammates, St. Ed's will win a third this year.

When I asked Steele why he chose to give up playing high school football and basketball and train for AAU Junior Olympics, he said "until St. Edward assistant coach Mike Young suggested the idea, I hadn't even heard about it." Steele competed last year in Houston and took third place. Although he was only 16, they bumped him up to the 17-18 age group making him the youngest competitor in his age group. He said "Last year when I competed in Houston, it was more to get a feel for it but this year was more to prove a point; that I dropped football and basketball for a reason. And it was worth it."

Steele is being recruited by numerous Division I colleges. Ivy League coaches have told Michelle and Robert that with Steele's current height and weight of 6'5" and 190lbs., he is still a diamond in the rough. He had just met with the coach from Stanford the day before our interview and plans on meeting with Notre Dame, Oregon, Princeton and others who offer a highly respected business administration program.

Steele's parents, Michelle and Robert, of course could not be more proud of their son. I asked how they juggle their jobs and Steele's schedule, in addition to their daughter Alexandra's who is a sophomore at Villanova, is a highly respected pole vaulter and a two-time Academic All-American. They said they try for at least one or the other to attend all the events.

Steele's goals for the future are to compete next summer in the decathlon in Pan America and Argentina. After his freshman year, he hopes to make it to the NCAA all four years, which only the top 16 decathletes in the country qualify. His plans are to be a member of the US Olympic team.