

Sports

Lincoln East graduate switches allegiances

By Rob White
Staff Reporter

When Todd Eubanks left Lincoln East High School upon graduation, he was heading toward New Mexico State and a basketball scholarship. Now, three years and a coaching change later, Eubanks has switched allegiances and is a member of the Aggies' track team.

Eubanks was recruited out of high school by basketball coach Wilden Drew, but after two "below-par" years, Drew was fired.

"He had a poor recruiting year, and then the following year he recruited a lot of athletes, but they were characters and really didn't have any discipline," Eubanks said. "But we had the talent to be a very good team."

Neil McCarthy replaced Drew and began making changes right away.



Eubanks

"He took away a lot of scholarships right from the start," Eubanks said. Eubanks' scholarship wasn't taken, but he had reservations about the amount of playing time he would receive.

"He brought in a bunch of new players, junior college players, that he had made promises to and he put them out there right from the start," Eubanks said. "I debated with myself whether or not I should complete the season or transfer to another school. In my heart I felt I had a basketball future if I was given the chance, but by the time December rolled around, I went and talked to the track coach."

"I knew he had run track in high school," Aggie track coach Art Morgan said, "but basketball is a time-consuming sport that takes up most of the school year, so he normally wouldn't get the chance in college. But he wasn't getting much playing time in basketball, and he wanted to do something, so he talked to his coach, they worked it out, and he was able to make the move."

Both Eubanks and Morgan said the

layoff from his high school career until this past spring slowed his progress, but Eubanks said he hoped his 800-meters time of 1:54 will be lowered to around the 1:50 mark by next year.

Eubanks was first brought to the attention of the New Mexico State program by Glenn Potter, the former coach of Brigham Young and now a color commentator for many televised college basketball games. Potter is a neighbor of Eubanks, and Potter's son, Sam, was a teammate of his at East.

"He knew the coaches and told them about me, and also Derek Sailors (an East graduate) had a pretty good career down there and they were pleased with him," Eubanks said. "Then the coach came and saw me play and figured I was worth recruiting."

Eubanks' recruiting trip to Las Cruces sold him on the Aggies.

"I really liked it down there, and at the time it was a really up-and-coming program. They had a big crowd, and I liked their style of play, the crowd support, and the student support. They really love their basketball down there, it was a drastic change from what I was

used to at Nebraska games. It was very intriguing."

Eubanks' older brother, Kurt, played second base for the Nebraska baseball team, but the Cornhuskers never seriously recruited Todd.

"I would've probably taken them into serious consideration," Eubanks said, "but I only had a few phone calls from (assistant coach) Tom Baack and they sent me their mailers, but they never recruited me full-scale."

Other schools Eubanks considered accepting basketball scholarship from included Kansas State, Colorado State, UNO and South Dakota State.

"Kansas State was kind of a funny situation," Eubanks said. "They were calling me the summer before my senior year, and when fall came they went to my high school to visit, but I couldn't get out of class so they just talked to my coach. All of a sudden they just stopped recruiting me. I had been pretty interested."

Eubanks wasn't seriously recruited for track since he signed his letter-of-

intent with New Mexico State before his senior year of track, in which he won the state championship in the 400 meters.

An interesting sidelight to Eubanks' basketball career is his association with guard Steve Colter, a former first-round draft choice of the Portland Trailblazers who was a teammate of Eubanks at New Mexico State.

"He's the best I've ever played against and I've played against UNLV, some All-Star teams after high school, and most of the really good players on the West Coast," Eubanks said.

"He's so quick and wiry, he can do it all. He's one of those guys that whatever he's doing, he is outstanding at it. The best thing about him is that he's a natural leader. He's a popular guy, a really good Christian, and just a good guy to be around."

Eubanks is majoring in electrical engineering and, although he plans to find work after graduation, he hopes he can find a good track club where he can continue to train and compete.

Kinser wins racing championship

By Mike Reilley
Staff Reporter

EAGLE — In a sport where experience measures as a precious commodity, sprint-car driver Mark Kinser has carved a comfortable niche for himself.

Kinser, 21, held off a mid-race threat from 42-year-old Bobby Allen to win the One-Third Mile National Championship Saturday night before 5,500 fans at Eagle Raceway. He started on the inside of the front row and led the entire 30-laps.

In doing so, Kinser, of Oolitic, Ind., became the third driver to win the championship since the event started in 1984. His cousin, Steve Kinser, won the inaugural race. Defending champion Bobby Davis Jr., of Memphis, Tenn., was knocked out this year when another car severed his gas tank.

This is Mark's second full-time season with the "World of Outlaws" — a group of drivers whose cars reach speeds of more than 100 mph. He finished sixth in the group's season point standings last year.

His win at Eagle was his second of

the year and third of his career.

Despite his inexperience, Mark thought his youth gave him an edge against the veteran Allen, who began racing sprinters about the time Mark was born.

"I love racing on these short tracks," Mark said of Eagle's banked oval. "You have to work a lot harder. Since I'm so much younger and stronger, I had an advantage."

Mark also used some of Allen's strategy.

Allen, of Hanover, Pa., is noted for his ability to ride the inside cushion of the track and did so in his preliminary feature win on Friday night. Mark started 12th in that race and finished fourth.

But on Saturday, it was Mark who rode on the cushion. He and his pit crew noticed a groove forming in that part of the track prior to the feature race.

"Everybody was running low and they were blowing all of the dusty stuff up high," Mark said. "We set the car up to run down there. We didn't do it because of Bobby. We just knew that

was the place to run."

Mark learned racing's "guessing game" from his father, Karl, who's the chief mechanic for Steve's car. In the eight-year history of the "World of Outlaws," Steve has won the points title six times and has posted 155 feature wins.

While Mark was studying the finer points of racing, his high-school teachers were wondering where he was. He often skipped classes to go on the road with his father and cousin.

"When I got to be a senior, I said to hell with school and went racing," Mark said. "I graduated, but I only went to class when I had to."

During the winter, Mark would work in a saw mill to earn money for his racing excursions in the spring.

Along with a trophy and champagne, Mark received an \$8,000 check for Saturday's win. He said he will sink most of the money back into his \$40,000 race car.

"This is more money than I would make at the saw mill," Mark said, "and working there wasn't nearly as much fun as this."

Reaction to Len Bias' death causes radical turn in feelings

Len Bias died 10 days ago, and everyone grieved — fans, players, moms, dads, Red Auerbach — even "Average Joe six-pack" on the street held a place in his heart for the roundball wizard.

Bias died of a heart attack. It was the "cruellest thing ever," according to Larry Bird. Bias died undeservingly, with only a quick plane ride to the Boston Garden separating him from stardom as a professional. Dreams unfulfilled, death unjustified, Len Bias' name passed sadly into basketball history.

utes before he died.

The new view surrounding Bias' death was chilly, even cold. In a matter of a few days, Bias had changed from a helpless heart-attack victim to just another overpaid, mindless drug user trying to live in the fast lane.

The argument ran like this: "Len made a big mistake. He got what he deserved. Let that be a lesson to others who want to experiment with drugs." Lousy argument.

Granted, Bias did not do a wise thing when he snorted cocaine early that morning, but if every professional athlete received the same death sentence Bias was dealt, our weekends might be dull. No players, no games, no exaggeration.

So while Bias pulled a life-ending blunder that morning, it's fair to say he didn't do anything most professional athletes have done more than once.

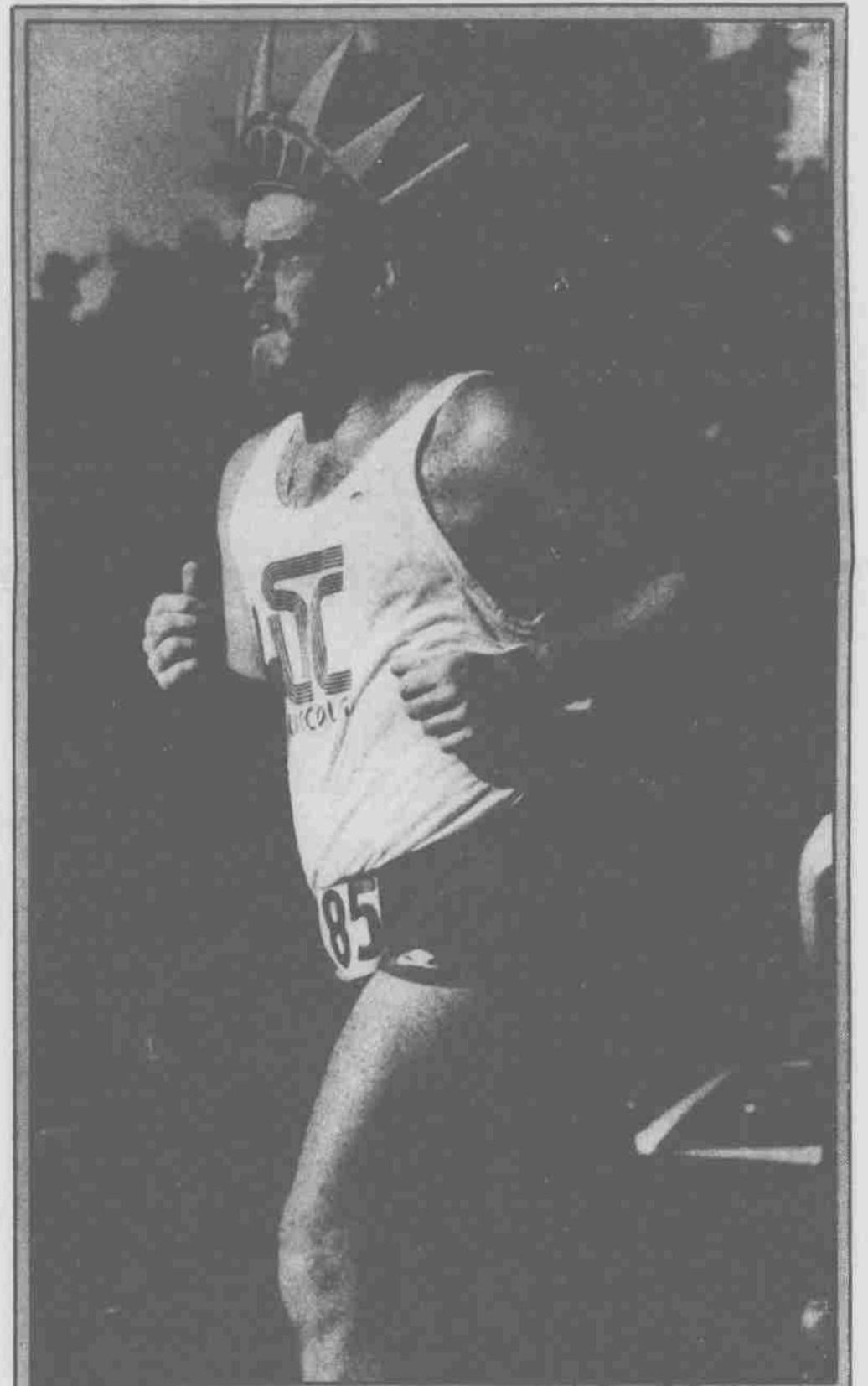
Bias didn't have to take the deadly dose of cocaine. But imagine something for just a moment. You're the top pro prospect in the nation. You're constantly in the spotlight. The world is at your fingertips. It's hard to imagine, but give it a shot.

Now do we fault a pressure-ridden superstar for experimenting just one time? Most people live and learn. Bias didn't get his chance to learn.

I'm not advocating Bias' action or drug use in any way — to the contrary. But my grief for Len Bias has not changed, and it won't. Bias was not a bum, but he got a bum deal.

Bias was not alone. Take a look around. Willis Wilson swipes three bases, Darrell Porter is named MVP of the series, and Bernard King scores 40 points in Madison Square Garden. All three faced serious drug or alcohol problems, and we didn't stop cheering for them. They probably sign autographs every day.

So before we shut the book on one of basketball's greats forever, let's go back about nine days. Remember that? Bias was dead. It was cruel, undeserved, a real shame. Let's remember it that way. Len Bias deserved that much, and so much more.



Linda Story/Daily Nebraskan

A Statue running

Lincoln's John Dawson competes in the third-annual Stroh's Run for Liberty on Saturday. Omaha's Tim Dooling was the winner of the men's division, while Nebraska's Mary Amen captured the women's title.

Steve Thomas

But Bias' death didn't stand the test of time. The truth came out a short time later: Bias' death wasn't unprovoked, it wasn't unnecessary, and oddly enough, it suddenly wasn't even sad anymore. Bias' death came not from a heart attack, but from cocaine.

I didn't take the pulse of sports fans across the nation, I didn't even take a poll from the Lincoln area, but I did listen closely to the general reaction of Bias' death both BC — before cocaine — and after. With drugs in the picture, some people's reactions seemed to take a 360-degree turn.

In the before-cocaine era, the whole thing was such a shame. But the sympathetic view crumbled as doctors and investigators unveiled the facts: Len Bias had snorted cocaine just five min-

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at an Executive Committee meeting
June 24. Eleven members of the Foundation's Board of Trustees comprise the Executive Committee.

Thomas Ash, UNL director of publications, was also fired at the June 24 meeting.

The two firings are not related, both Wenke and Hirsch said. Ash declined to comment.