

Golden summer for Ellingson



Jordan Ellingson of Maple Ridge displays his two gold medals from the B.C. Summer Games in Surrey and the the Legion Royal Canadian National Youth Track and Field Championships in Charlottetown, P.E.I. on Aug. 17.

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If the summer of 2012 will be remembered for one thing, it will be the enduring memory of Olympic athletes triumphing over the odds to realize their dreams.

Years of endless hours of training, where sleep is sacrificed for early morning workouts, culminate in one brief moment where the hopes of Olympic glory can be decided by the smallest of margins.

While not all do not come home with medals, every athlete who made their way to London this summer will take the experience of representing their country as one of sport's greatest achievements.

For 15-year-old Jordan Ellingson, the road to the Olympics may have just opened as the six-foot two Maple Ridge Christian School student added two javelin gold medals in the span of just more than a month.

Ellingson, who is a member of the Langley Mustangs track team, won gold last month at the B.C. Summer Games. Proving that was no fluke, the Grade 10 student took top honours in the Youth Under 16 division at the Legion Royal Canadian National Youth Track and Field Championships in Charlottetown, P.E.I. on Aug. 17.

"This kind of came fast, I wasn't even really planning for it," said the humble Ellingson.

That's mostly because Ellingson is relatively new to the sport. Ryan Gee, a teacher at MRCS, saw him throw the javelin a couple of years ago and seen potential in Ellingson.

That promise was then fostered when he was referred to Langley Mustang's track coach Tom Nielsen, whose own son Kyle is a three-time All-American javelin thrower at the University of Washington. Nielsen was encouraged with what he saw.

"I could see the potential with Jordan and I just broke down some of the techniques to make it simple for him. When at first looked at him I saw that this could be something special," said Nielsen, who has also previously coached at the University of British Columbia and continues to train some of the country's top javelin prospects.

The Langley Mustang's coach said he slowly integrated Ellingson into higher levels of competition this summer as well as having him train with some of his top level athletes, like his son Kyle.

For Ellingson, the wins are all part of learning to combine his natural athleticism with the techniques needed to compete at the nation's highest level.

"I was going to the nationals with the hope of beating my personal best," he said.

A throw of 49.65 metres not only topped his personal best, it secured the gold medal by more than 60 centimetres over his closest competitor.

Ellingson laughs as he recalls his first experience throwing a javelin. He was just in Grade 3 and was on the track field with his older brother after school.

“I asked if I could give it a try and he said yes. As I went to throw, the javelin smoked me in the back of the head. Thankfully no one saw it.”

Ellingson said he's thankful he's been able to pursue the sport. He said without the strong coaching and support of his family, he would never have had the chance.

Ellingson's mother Michelle said she is more than pleased they have been able to offer him the opportunity.

“There are so many kids out there with potential but they just may never know without that push from a coach or a teacher,” said Michelle. “As parents, you can't always be there to see it.”