

just want to RUN

Tedros Eckstein adapts to new life through cross country

It was just a normal Thursday and **Tedros Eckstein**, 10, was running the mile in gym class—until that mile turned into a not-so-normal 5 minutes and 20 seconds finish.

“Everyone went crazy, the cross country coaches were knocking on my teachers’ door the next hour trying to get me to join the team,” Eckstein said.

Eckstein moved to South Carolina from Ethiopia three years ago. He was adopted into an American family, had to use money he had never seen before, and adapt to a brand new way of life.

“I had to make major adjustments to what I did every day. I didn’t even know how to use a vending machine. Everything was so different to me,” Tedros said.

Coach **Bret Davis** now had the task of coaching someone who had never been a competitive runner but obviously had the talent to be successful.

“When I first saw him run, I realized he could be something special. He was raw in experience and I knew that if we groom him properly he could do some amazing things,” Davis said.

The boys cross country team won state in 2015. Eckstein placed 16th out of 155 runners, making him a vital part of Wando bringing home the win.

“I was very happy that we won the state championship. We haven’t won in a few years and I know everyone really wanted to. It was a team effort and I really felt like a part of it,” Eckstein said.

At the start of every season, all the runners fill out a “goal pyramid” and athletes list times, places, awards or other personal or team goals they have along with how they plan to achieve them.

“When we gave Tedros his pyramid, he simply wrote in all the sections ‘I just want to run.’ It was so simple and pure. We adopted it and put it on the back of our team shirts for the season,” Davis said.

Even though Eckstein really helped the cross country team, his mother, Linda Eckstein, thinks that they might have helped him even more.

“When he started going to Wando, he didn’t know anybody and cross country has really helped him make the transition. He has found a family with the team,” she said.

Eckstein agrees as he thinks cross country has helped him with other aspects of his life.

“Running has helped me make a lot of new friends, and it’s helped me become responsible and disciplined,” Eckstein said.

Coach Davis reflects on Eckstein’s impact to the team and their season.

“He was a top three runner all year long, but also he was just the new guy with no expectations. He was the missing piece of the puzzle our team needed,” Davis said.

—Jack Rhiel



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