

Michalski continues improbable run toward Olympics

By Scott Halasz

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EUGENE, Ore. — It wasn't too long ago that Daniel Michalski was running around delivering groceries for an Indianapolis-area Walmart.

Now the 25-year-old Xenia native is on the verge of running in the Tokyo Olympics for the U.S. track and field team. Michalski is in Friday's finals of the 3,000-meter men's steeplechase at the Olympic trials in Eugene, Ore., and is in position to make the team.

He finished third in the first first heat on Monday in 8:22.03 to advance to the finals after entering the competition seeded sixth. He has already met the Olympic standard, so if he can maintain that third-place spot — or move up a spot or two — he will be headed to Japan as one of three steeplechasers.

"It would mean the world," Michalski said by phone Tuesday, one of two rest days during trials, which began June 18 and conclude June 27. "I would be really proud to represent my country."

The opportunity seemed unlikely at best a year ago when Michalski, then a Realtor, was laid off due to the coronavirus.

"Things slowed down and my job is real estate,"

he said. "I had nothing to do, literally."

So Michalski — who was a Division-II national champion Cedarville University and an All-American at Indiana University — went to Walmart to maintain some income. He was also able to make the short commute to Bloomington a couple times a week and train with fellow IU alum Andy Bayer and the rest of the team.

"I got a lot better training with him too," said Michalski, who chopped 14 seconds off his time, going from 8:44 to 8:30. "That was a big drop."

Then he and wife, Abby, found out they were pregnant.

"I said, 'Oh shoot, I've got to get a full-time with benefits job,'" Michalski said.

Through his connection and remote training with University of Colorado Colorado Springs distance coach Mark Misch, Michalski landed a job at Division-III LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas in September 2020.

"I've been dreaming of getting into coaching," Michalski said. "It's gone really well, my first year there."

While he couldn't "sleep on somebody's couch and be a running bum," anymore, Michal-



Xenia native Daniel Michalski, who starred at Cedarville and Indiana universities, is on the brink of making the U.S. Olympic team in the 3,000-meter steeplechase. He is in Friday's finals and the top three finishers make the team.

ski was able to continue to train. He didn't have a packed schedule, but when he ran, he made it worth the effort.

In April, Michalski broke a decades-old steeplechase record at the Drake Relays, running unattached in 8:29.83. On May 9 he was second at the USATF Golden Games in Walnut, Calif., in 8:21.25, which satisfied the Olympic standard and was by far his personal best.

It will likely take a

similar time to win Friday, as the first two finishers — Isaac Updike and Hillary Bor — finished Monday's first heat in 8:21.02 and 8:21.09.

Bor ran at the world championship in 2019 and another runner in the finals, Donn Cabral, is a two-time Olympian.

"He's a guy who knows how to make a team, apparently," Michalski said. "(But) we're going to give those older statesmen a run



Photos courtesy Cedarville University

for their money."

Michalski already has a mental picture of what Friday's race will entail.

"I anticipate it will look pretty similar to my prelim," Michalski said.

On Monday, Michalski was seventh after the first of eight laps and then methodically moved up.

He expects to establish an early position in the middle to front third, no matter the pace, and be close enough to respond to moves off

the front. Michalski said his sound hurdling will allow him to be more efficient toward the end when other runners start to hurt.

"It should be a really competitive race and really fun," Michalski said. "I'm going to go for it. There's not very clear favorites right now."

But Michalski is definitely in the mix, something that seemed impossible a year ago.

Contact Scott Halasz at 937-502-4507.

SPORTS DIGEST

Summer sports results needed

Now that the spring high school sports season is over, this newspaper wants to report on summer baseball, soccer, volleyball, softball, and any other sport taking place. Whether it's youth, middle school, high school, or college, we want to tell your story. If a soccer team does well in a tournament, let us know. Same goes for basketball, volleyball, or softball. If an athlete has a particularly good game or deserves some recognition, let us know.

Xenia holding student aide workshop

The Xenia High School athletic training department through Kettering Health will be offering an athletic training student aide workshop for any Xenia High School student interested in the sports medicine profession. The workshop runs July 12-15. For more information, email Tyra Senter tsenter@xeniachools.org or call 937-562-9637. A flyer is also available on the Xenia athletic website.

Bellbrook football hall of fame seeks nominations

The Bellbrook Football Alumni Association is accepting nominations for its Golden Eagle Gridiron Greats. During summer 2021, the association will be inducting the fifth group of former players and coaches.

Nominations should include basic information on the former player including graduation year and any known stats or pertinent facts. Email nominations to MSig10@woh.rr.com.

Present inductees are Coach Joe Rush, Tony Ernst, Luke Clemens, Austin Spitler, Craig Fryman, Jason Tincher, Bill Crisovergus, Matt Timmons, John Greenhorn, Jack O'Dell, Stacy Russell, Nathan Clemens, Jeff VonHandorff, Neal Blank, and Coach Chris Baker

with special recognition for Harold and Carroll Fryman.

Xenia looking for hall of fame nominees

Xenia Athletic Hall of Fame officials are ready to begin considering those individuals and teams to be inducted as the class of 2021. No class was inducted last year due to the COVID pandemic, but hall officials are assuming everything will be up and running in December when the ceremony takes place.

Nominations can be for athletes, teams, coaches, and community contributors who were associated with Xenia Central, Xenia High School, Xenia East, and/or Spring Valley. Nominations will be considered from all eras.

A nomination form can be obtained by visiting the website for the hall of fame at www.xeniaathletichalloffame.com.

Nominations are due Sunday, Aug. 1 and anyone with questions can contact Gregg Cross at 937-477-2255.

Send Greene County sports information to sports@xeniagazette.com. Game reports should include the final score and first and last name of players who deserve mention, along with their stats from the game. Reserve, freshmen, and middle school information is welcomed as well.

Indians beat Cubs 4-0, lose Civalo to finger injury

By Jay Cohen

AP Baseball Writer

CHICAGO — When it comes to all the pitching injuries for the Cleveland Indians, manager Terry Francona doesn't have time to feel sorry for himself.

He has to figure out the next step for his team.

Cleveland lost another starter when Aaron Civalo exited with a finger injury Monday night, but Bobby Bradley and Josh Naylor homered to lead the Indians to a 4-0 victory over the Chicago Cubs.

Civalo, who leads the majors with 10 wins, left with two out in the fifth inning because of a right middle finger injury. The right-hander had a 3-2 count on Eric Sogard when he was visited by Francona and a trainer.

"The tip of his finger was bothering him, so we didn't mess around with that," Francona said. "We just got him out of there."

Francona said the team wants to have



Charles Rex Arbogast | AP

Cleveland Indians starting pitcher Aaron Civalo delivers during the first inning Monday against the Chicago Cubs in Chicago.

Civalo see hand specialist Dr. Thomas Graham as soon as possible. Any prolonged absence for the 26-year-old pitcher would be a big blow for Cleveland, already missing ace Shane Bieber and right-hander Zach Plesac due to injuries.

"Rather than feel sorry for ourselves, we'll just try to figure it out the best we can," Francona said.

Naylor finished with two hits as the Indians improved to 2-2 on a nine-game road trip. They moved within two games of the idle White Sox for

the top spot in the AL Central.

Chicago lost for the sixth time in eight games, and Javier Báez was pulled by manager David Ross after the shortstop made an embarrassing mental mistake. Adbert Alzolay (4-6) permitted three runs over 4 2/3 innings in his return from the 10-day injured list after being sidelined by a blister on his right middle finger.

With one out in the fourth and Báez aboard after a fielder's choice, Anthony Rizzo hit a fly

ball to left field. Báez thought there were two outs and was almost to third when he was doubled off first base, leading to a round of boos from the crowd of 32,934 at Wrigley Field.

"We've just got to make sure we're focused and locked in during the game," Ross said, "and sometimes our frustrations can distract us a little bit. We had a good conversation and I think that's behind us."

Báez said he respects Ross' decision.

"I blame it on myself. I lost the count of the outs," he said. "We talked about it. We are on the same page, and I'll be there tomorrow to help the team."

Sergio Alcántara replaced Báez in the field and was unable to throw out Harold Ramirez on an infield single leading off the fifth. After Bradley bounced into a fielder's choice, Naylor hit a drive to right-center for a two-run homer on the ninth pitch of his at-bat, making it 3-0.

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