

Tribal Member Breaks 45 Year-Old High School Record

By Toby McClary

Tribal member Alec Palanuk has been competing in track and field events throughout his high school career. While competing, Palanuk remained focused on one goal; breaking the distance record in the shot put event.

At a May event that took place in Colton, Palanuk made his dream come true. He tossed a record-breaking shot of 48 feet, 6 inches breaking the previous record of 48 feet, 4.75 inches set in 1962 by Denny Houston.

"He (Houston) told me that if I ever broke his record, he would give me his letterman sweater from 1962," said Palanuk.

Houston stayed true to his word. At the spring sports awards banquet held in Willamina, Houston presented Palanuk with the letterman sweater to kick off the event.

"It was the first award presentation of the night," explained Palanuk, "it was really neat."

Houston also had Palanuk's name embroidered onto the sweater and presented Palanuk with a \$20 gift certificate for Coyote Joe's Restaurant.

Since setting the original record in Colton, Palanuk has gone on to throw an even higher number of

49 feet, 10 inches, a distance that Palanuk does not see anybody beating for quite some time.

"As long as it's many years down the road," said Palanuk, "I will give the sweater to the person that beats my record."

Palanuk has not only competed in track and field all four years of his high school career but also lettered all four years. This year, Palanuk placed fourth at the district meet for discus and third at districts for shot put. He went on to take second place at the State Championship meet with a throw of 49 feet, 3 inches.

Palanuk graduated from Willamina High School on May 26, 2007. He plans to attend Chemeketa Community College for two years and hopes to then transfer to Portland State University to study computer tech. He wants to do a partnership with Linfield College so he can continue to compete in track and field while attending college.

"Eventually I would like to come back to the Tribe and be a Computer Technician," said Palanuk.

Palanuk is the son of Tribal member Rebecca Goeserich and the grandson of Tribal Elder Hubert Mercier. ■



Denny Houston presented Tribal member Alec Palanuk with his original letterman sweater after Palanuk broke Houston's 45 year-old shot put record.



Alec poses for a photo with his mom Tribal member Rebecca Goeserich and his grandfather Tribal Elder Hubert Mercier during his high school graduation this year.

Photos courtesy of Alec Palanuk

Education Holds Summer Kickoff BBQ



Above, K-12 Education Coordinator Molly Matthews (l) served some up to Tribal member Mary Lopez, 14, and below, Early Education Director and Tribal member Vikki Bishop (brown coat) and PreSchool Administrative Assistant Sandy Bobb (red shirt) also helped serve.



Above, Tribal members Sharona Jackson (l) and Mary Lopez do the canoe dance in the Tribal gym. Youth Education brought in the summer this year with a big outside BBQ, with hundreds of chicken shish kebabs cooked up by Tribal members Toby McClary and Leslie Riggs and Bob McElderry (Flathead), all Tribal employees.



Afterwards, the canoe family put on a performance in the gym. At left is Jeff Martinez and Nick Atanacio doing the canoe family dance.

Photos by Ron Karten