



# sport features

## The fastest man in radio

**NOAH CLOONAN**  
@noahcloonan

It is after 11 p.m. on a late March night in Columbus and a light rain is falling outside of the Staybridge Suites hotel.

Tyler Lance throws on a light jacket and runs out the door. He has no directions, but he runs and runs until his second workout for the day is complete.

It is been a long day for Lance.

After waking up at 8 a.m. for his first run of the day, Lance spent the day covering the Ashland Eagles women's basketball team in the Elite Eight tournament as a color commentator for 88.9 WRDL, Ashland University's student run radio station. He returns after his light 5-mile run and settles into bed to prepare to do it all over again the next day.

Lance is a senior cross country runner and sports broadcaster at Ashland University, and after four years of relentless hard work, Lance has grown into a leader in both.

Chris Ickes, Lance's high school coach, said that he was not always



SUBMITTED BY TYLER LANCE  
Tyler Lance runs away from the pack as he ran for the Kenston Bombers during high school.

the fastest runner, but he was relentless and never stopped improving.

Lance has spent many late nights and early mornings making up runs that he missed due to a game that he was broadcasting but Jacob Sussman, the head cross country coach at Ashland, said that no matter how many times he misses, he always gets the run in.

Lance has been the program director for WRDL for the last two years and this season he is one of just two seniors on the cross country team.

"He's always been a hard working individual," WRDL's General Manager Derek Wood said. "The last thing you'll ever see with Tyler is him taking a shortcut. He always goes to all the lengths he needs to go through to get to what he wants."

After growing up in Chagrin Falls, Lance attended Kenston High School where he began his journey to become the fastest man in radio.

Lance said it has been a lengthy journey.

"I was a very hesitant runner at first," Lance said. "The reason I say that is you know for years you look at me in middle school and I'm just this really tall skinny kid, I look like a cross country runner, but I didn't do cross country at that point. I was still playing basketball, but baseball was my true love, that's what I was thinking about 365 days a year."

He loved baseball.

Lance was drawn to baseball at an early age. He felt at home on the diamond and Lance thought that he was meant to play baseball, but as he progressed through middle school other people in his life pointed him in a different direction.

Lance's neighbor Karyn Markel and his middle school gym teachers began encouraging him to try to go out for the cross country team or the track team because he was built like a runner, but in Lance's mind he was too busy to take time off of baseball and basketball to go for a run.

As he progressed through middle school, Lance began to realize that running may actually be something he is good at, he said.

"You get into middle school and in gym class they always have you run five minutes before the start of gym class to get warmed up," Lance said. "Well being the competitor that I am I always wanted to win those five minutes so I would run really hard and usually run everyone else into the ground and no one could really keep up with me."

His gym teachers watched this happen for three years, but nothing swayed Lance.

He was still a baseball player at heart.

That lasted until his eighth grade year when Jeff Gowdy, one of Lance's gym teachers, told him something he remembered forever.

"He said just one sentence that I will never forget, that stuck with me and made me want to do cross country," Lance said. "He said 'this is your chance to be great' and that sentence just resonated with me so much, I just had to try it," Lance

never thought he would reach so quickly, but his sophomore year brought his first hurdle in his running career.

With the sky high expectations that were carried over from freshmen year, Lance dealt with the disappointment of a tough season.

It was still early in his sophomore year, as Lance prepared for the second meet of the season. It was a 90 degree day and the starting gun sounded at noon.

The heat did not slow Lance down as he blazed through the 5k running one of the best races of his life, but what he did not expect was what followed the race.

"After the race I had severe heat exhaustion and I had to go to the hospital and get an IV," Lance said. "After that my season went downhill. I don't know if it was because that race was kinda in the back of my mind every time I ran, or if it just was not meant to be."

Lance's race times increased with every passing week and he ended the season in a very frustrating position.

He ran one of the worst races of his life at the district meet and he followed that up with an even less stellar performance at regionals, he said.

But for Lance, the disappointment would only last for a semester as he rebounded and quickly responded during the spring track season.

"I moved on," Lance said. "I ended up having one of the best track seasons that I'd had, not in terms of times but in terms of how close I came to my potential."

Lance was able to put the difficult season behind him and Ickes said that because of his work ethic, he was able to work past his struggles and finish his high school career on a high note.

"It was a pretty good testament to his work ethic and his consistency that by time he was a senior at our high school that he had become our number one man and at the time I think he was the eighth fastest man in school history and all this from a freshmen who just really tried to maximize his talents everyday by working as hard as he possibly could," Ickes said.

Lance began to put together all the things that he had learned and after a mediocre junior season was able to turn in one of the best running seasons in Kenston history as a senior.

He ran a 16:30 in the district race and made it to regionals but by the time of the race he was so tired that he just did not have enough to make it onto the state meet.

"I got one of those other life lessons, like sometimes you can work for something really, really hard you can do all the right things and it just might not be your day on that particular day," Lance said.

But for Lance, his running career was far from over as he had committed to Ashland University to join their cross country team.

Upon reaching Ashland, a second life passion that rivaled the passion that he had for cross country reappeared and that was radio.

"Fantastic radio voice," Jacob Suss-

man, Ashland head cross country coach said. "Honestly, that's the first thing I think of when I think of Tyler Lance."

Growing up, Lance had very similar career aspirations that many young children have.

He wanted to be a professional athlete.

That dream burned inside of Lance until his eighth grade year when he realized that it may no longer be an option to make a living as an athlete, but the passion for sports that Lance had, never died.

Lance came to terms with the fact that even though he may never be a professional athlete, he could still be around the sport he loved.

"There's a certain point in your childhood where you go from wanting to be a professional athlete and then you realize that that's not really a feasible goal anymore so once I kinda realized that I didn't have what it takes to be the next centerfielder or the next starting pitcher for the Cleveland Indians, I started to shift my focus to sports broadcasting," he said.

Throughout high school Lance filled his free time at his school's radio station as a deejay.

He did not have an opportunity to broadcast any games during high school, but Lance said that he used his time as a deejay to become accustomed to being on the air and to learn how a broadcaster is supposed to act.

Lance's broadcasting career really took a drastic turn when he arrived on campus in Ashland.

He immediately began working with 88.9 WRDL in multiple different areas including broadcasting AU sporting events.

"Tyler was one of the most professional and polite people that I had ever met in my life," Wood said.

The professionalism that Lance displayed helped him to immediately become a vital member of the sports broadcasting team at WRDL.

He began calling games on the air and he never looked back.

"My freshmen year, I knew what it took to study a team, but I didn't necessarily know what information was valuable for the broadcast, what wasn't and when to use that information and I've got more of a feel for that now," Lance said.

"I'm a dramatically different broadcaster than I was as a freshmen, but that applies to anything with the amount of repetition you get over the years," he said. "I came into my freshman year thinking I was pretty good but now I listen back on some of those tapes and I cringe a little bit."

Lance not only made impressions on the air but also as a college athlete.

"He was pretty quiet," Sussman said about Lance as a freshmen at AU. "He was quiet but determined, he wouldn't stray away from anything."

It has been his determination that has placed Lance in the position that he is in today.

Wood said that as a varsity athlete and a key member in a student me-

dia outlet, determination is key to making a successful student-athlete and Lance has excelled.

"I'm not sure how he does it," Wood said. "It has to be pretty hard. Tyler's had multiple things that he has had to focus on at once but you don't see him taking shortcuts because he is so busy with one, he is always able to balance it."

Lance said that the hardest thing about running and broadcasting at the same time is managing his time so that he can do as many events as possible.

"It is tough sometimes, you know I'd like to call every game, but I also like running cross country and track and it's a balancing act that you have to do between them," Lance said.

Lance may not have the easiest job trying to find time to fulfill both of his passions, but Ickes said that he always finds a way to make it work.

"He was a part of the high school radio station and would actually skip practices some days to do a high school radio show which of course he made up on his own, but I definitely saw him doing something sports related," Ickes said.

The stresses of balancing radio and running have not gotten to Lance. He has continued to grow his experience in both fields and has found himself in leadership positions for both passions.

Lance said that he has learned a lot about how to manage his time during his college career and he is passing some of that down to the underclassman on the cross country team.

"He means a lot, he is that bridge," Sussman said. "He has been there when the team has been really good, he's been there when the teams been kinda down and I think he's really showing the freshmen that we have what cross country is all about and what Ashland is all about."

So far in 2017, Lance is having the best season of his career.

With already two top-10 finishes on the year, Lance has posted some of the best times in his career and Sussman said "he's had a fantastic season so far."

That fantastic season that Lance is having culminated at Northern Michigan University on Oct. 21 when Lance finished 15th out of 101 runners in the 8K at the GLIAC Championships.

The top-20 finish gave Lance second team All-GLIAC honors, a feat he has been working towards since his freshmen season.

Lance's season will continue at the Midwest Regional Championships in Cedarville, on Nov. 4.

The road has not been easy for Lance, "he said, but the gritty, hard working determination that has brought Lance to where he is today and Ickes said that this determination is ready to propel him into the future.

"It's very rare to find an athlete that has as high of character as Tyler does as well as the work ethic he has," Ickes said. "Tyler is the perfect blend of integrity and hard work and no matter what that is whether it's running or the rest of life, he is going to be successful."



SUBMITTED BY TYLER LANCE  
Dean Paolucci (left) and Tyler Lance (right) broadcast an Ashland University women's basketball game for 88.9 WRDL.