

Orach

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tance runner's success. "These past two seasons I've been injury free, and I've been able to get a lot of mileage in," Orach said. While he came to Orono with no cross-country experience, Orach excelled on the track and the soccer field at Gorham High, specializing in the mile and the 2-mile.

He was prepared to learn the ropes of the sport, as the training focus can be different than that of the shorter track and field distances.

"Pretty much I just knew if I wanted to be on the indoor and outdoor team, I had to show I could compete in cross-country as well," Orach said.

Orach has made the transition thanks to his work ethic, even while not being able to pound the pavement because of the nagging injuries.

"When he was having some of his overuse injury issues, he was either in the pool or on the [stationary] bike sometimes twice a day just hammering it out," Lech said. "All he was trying to do was increase his aerobic capacity. He's learned what it takes to be a good distance runner."

He also was well aware of UMaine's history of producing outstanding runners, and he watched one in particular.

"Kelton Cullenberg is the one I looked up to the most," Orach said. "He was there for my first two years."

Now Orach, who was one of two Black Bear athletes to win the school's prestigious "M" club Dean Smith award earlier this year thanks to his hard work in the classroom, is the one teammates look to for inspiration.

He maintains an impressive 3.95 grade point average.

"He's definitely a father figure," UMaine sophomore



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The University of Maine's Jesse Orach (right) leads the pack during their cross country meet against the University of New Hampshire in Orono on Friday. Orach won the race and now has four individual wins in his first five races this fall.

Aaron Willingham said. "It's just good to have someone there in workouts to hang on to."

"Everyone kind of feeds off him, especially in the races and in workouts," UMaine junior Jacob Johns added. "We just all feed off that and put the work in."

Leader of the pack

Orach has emerged as one of the top runners in New England so far this fall, but he knows that short-term focus is key to long-term success.

Even after blazing through UMaine's course on Friday in 25 minutes, 16.3 seconds, a 5:03-per-mile pace, Orach almost immediately turned to what he needs to work on to reach his ultimate goal, which is qualifying for the NCAA championships.

"Sometimes I lose focus in the mid part of the race," Orach said, referring to the challenging third and fourth miles of a 5-mile race. "I'll start out strong and lag in the middle."

He has plenty of time to work on his approach, with the America East championships more than a month away.

"I don't think they're

peaking too early because we haven't worked hard yet," Lech said.

Orach and the Black Bears don't race again until the Oct. 8 New England championships in Boston, with the America East meet slated Oct. 29 in Baltimore.

"I'm looking forward to seeing some more competition to try to better myself," Orach said.

Another thing Orach said

"The ultimate goal for the team is to win the conference championship, and we've taken a lot of steps toward doing that."

UMAINE'S JESSE ORACH

he will need to work on as the competition gets tougher is being an aggressor at the start.

"I've got to learn how to go out hard, because at the big races that's what the big guys do," he said.

Focused on the team

Even though Orach is earning plenty of individual praise this season, he is a team-first guy.

"The ultimate goal for the team is to win the conference championship, and we've taken a lot of steps toward doing that," Orach said.

That includes exhibiting outstanding pack power because a team is only as good as its fifth runner.

Maine's pack has been paced by Orach, including a 44-second spread between Orach and No. 5 Simon Powhida in Friday's dominating win over UNH.

"He's going to do all he can to run his fastest, and they're going to have to keep close," Lech said.

"He makes it easier to run as a pack," Willingham said. "He definitely brings up the morale of the whole team."

His final cross-country race in Orono ended with an outstanding individual performance against a traditional rival, but Orach is nowhere close to the finish line.

"Knowing that it's my last year I just want to finish with no regrets," he said. "I think I'm well on my way to doing that. I'm not finished yet."

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UMaine

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ceptions thrown by senior quarterback Dan Collins.

"Our defense played pretty well for the most part but you can't give the opposing team more opportunities by turning the ball over," Harasymiak said. "Dan has to make better decisions with the football so we can extend drives."

Harasymiak is concerned that his team held leads going into the fourth quarter of their games against UConn and James Madison. UMaine squandered a 21-14 lead in the 24-21 loss to UConn and let a 20-17 advantage slip away against JMU.

"We have to be able to hold leads in the fourth quarter. If we keep putting ourselves in that position, it will happen," he said.

Wright back in the mix

On a positive note, the Black Bears regained the services of All-CAA second-team wide receiver Micah Wright on Saturday. He had served a two-game suspension after being arrested for disorderly conduct at a party last May.

Wright recently pleaded guilty to illegal possession of alcohol and paid a \$300 fine.

He made three catches for 84 yards, including a 40-yarder, against JMU.

"There were some situations in which we got him in one-on-ones and he made some plays. He probably didn't make as many as he wanted to but it was a very, very positive first game for Micah," said Harasymiak. "He was up against a quality secondary and he proved he can be a great player in this league."

Wright said it felt great to be back on the field but quickly added, "this (losing) feeling surpasses the feeling of being out there by a lot. We didn't get the win. We didn't execute in the second half. That's what matters."

Wright was UMaine's offensive player of the year last fall when he caught 61 passes for 818 yards, fourth-best in the CAA in both categories.

UMaine was without leading receiver Jaleel Reed (9 catches-180 yards, 1 TD) on Saturday, who was suspended for one game for a violation of team rules.

Arnie

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March of Dimes Fund.

Bangor Daily News Outdoor Editor Bud Leavitt reported on Aug. 22, 1972, that an estimated crowd of 3,000 area golf fans turned out at PVCC to watch Palmer and Portland golf pro John Mills Jr. take on tour pro Doug Sanders and PVCC standout Rick Ambrose. Palmer and Mills won the match-play competition 3 and 2.

"I am so happy for a chance to come back here," Palmer said. "I had a good time a year ago and these people work terribly hard to raise money for the March of Dimes. If Doug and I can help, and folks want us to come back, then certainly the pleasure is all ours."

Arnold and Sanders were gearing up for a pair of pro tournaments scheduled that year at Pinehurst in North Carolina.

Palmer fired an eagle, four birdies and a single bogey (on the fifth hole) during his 5-under-par round of

67. Sanders shot 72, while Mills carded a 71 and Ambrose a 73.

Perhaps the hole of the day, according to Leavitt, was Palmer's effort on No. 16. He reportedly hit a 1-iron to within two feet and sank the putt for a birdie.

With Palmer's heyday as a competitive golfer having long ended, he nonetheless won the Union Mutual Seniors tournament at Purpoodock.

Palmer earned a three-stroke victory over Don January by shooting a 3-under 68 that left him 13 under for the 54-hole tournament.

He created a buzz with his final-round effort on the par-5 16th hole, a double dogleg. Palmer cleared the trees with a fairway wood and put the ball within eight feet of the hole, according to a report by The Associated Press.

He two-putted for an eagle that helped him secure the win and the \$38,000 winner's check.

Palmer also worked with author Jim Dodson, formerly of Topsham, who co-authored an autobiography of the golfing great called, "A Golfer's Life" in 1999.

Palmer

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ters. Not wanting to overstay my welcome, I thanked him for his time, his hospitality and for breakfast.

"You got enough?" he asked. "I'm going down to my workshop to work on some clubs if you want to stick around a while longer."

That became another 90 minutes.

Palmer did that for everyone.

More than anything, Palmer always understood that fame and fortune aren't a one-way street. Prior to the 1997 Masters, Palmer took Tiger Woods to lunch in the champion's locker room at Augusta National. Woods was still a few days away from his first Masters victory -- so Palmer hosted him.

Woods was singing a song that went something like, "It's just not fair. I can't be a normal 21-year-old."

"You're right," Palmer said. "Normal 21-year-olds don't have \$50 million in the bank."

Palmer always connected with young players. As with Woods, he never coddled

them. He told them exactly what he thought about their games, the way they behaved, even the way they looked.

In 1996, when Paul Goydos won at Bay Hill -- and thus qualified for the Masters -- he asked Palmer during the awards ceremony if he could play a practice round with him at Augusta.

"Only if you lose that ridiculous beard," Palmer said. "You look awful."

Goydos lost the beard and asked that it be air-brushed out of his champions portrait that hangs in the Bay Hill clubhouse. "I didn't want Mr. Palmer to walk by it and think I looked ridiculous," he said.

This past March, a number of players changed their schedules to play Bay Hill because they knew Palmer was ill and it might be their last chance to pay tribute.

Twenty-five years ago, Palmer made the cut at Bay Hill -- for the final time -- at the age of 61. That night, Peter Jacobsen went to a bakery and asked for a sheet cake for 100 people.

"I need it first thing in the morning," Jacobsen said.

"Monday is the earliest I can do it," the baker said.

"It's for Arnold Palmer."

"We open at 8 tomorrow.

Is that soon enough?"

When Jacobsen presented the cake to Palmer that afternoon during a rain delay with the entire field in the locker room, Palmer cried. Then he cut a piece for every player.

"I cried because Peter and all the guys were saying to me that I was still one of them," Palmer said. "That meant a lot."

He never stopped being one of them.

On a searingly hot June day in 1994, Palmer played his last U.S. Open round. He was clearly exhausted coming down the stretch, but it never stopped him from returning every wave, every, 'go Arnie,' every cheer of any kind, with a smile, a wave, a "thanks," or "how's it going?" Every one of those people got a look in the eye and the famous smile. They all could go home and told their friends, "Arnold Palmer said hello to me today."

Because he did.

As Palmer walked up the 18th fairway that afternoon, many players came out of the clubhouse to stand behind the green and join the throngs. On the 10th tee -- adjacent to the green -- players refused to tee off so they could watch.

When Palmer made his

final putt, playing partner Rocco Mediate, like Palmer a blue-collar kid from western Pennsylvania, leaned down, pointed at the thousands around the green and said softly, "All this is because of you."

A few minutes later, when Palmer came into a packed interview room, he was overcome by tears on several occasions. He tried to talk -- and stopped. He tried again -- and stopped. Finally, he stood to leave. Every single person in the room jumped to their feet and applauded.

It was completely unprofessional. No cheering the press box. And yet, it was absolutely the right thing to do because no one ever did more for the media than Palmer.

A handful of us trailed him back to the locker room. There, he composed himself and talked for another 20 minutes.

"I shot 81 today," he said softly. "I was terrible. In any other sport, I'd have been booed -- should have been booed. Instead, I get cheered."

He paused for a moment. "How lucky have I been to have played this game for all these years?"

Actually, the luck was ours.

Ashby

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tutelage, compiling an astounding record of 188-15-6, good for a percentage of .914.

In addition to college coaching, the Lubec High graduate also coached at Lawrence High School in Fairfield in 1982 and at Narragansett in Harrington in 1988.

A willingness to learn is one thing that has kept

Ashby in the profession as long as he has coached.

"Just the culmination of putting time in and learning as much as you can," he said. "All that stuff adds up. The more you work in coaching, the more you learn from other coaches."

UMFK has never lost more than three games in a season under Ashby's watch, winning United States Collegiate Athletic Association national championships in 2011 and 2015. He has been chosen as the

National Soccer Coaches Association of America Coach of the Year six times.

Ashby's 2008 UMFK team advanced to the NAIA Elite Eight, the furthest any UMFK team has advanced in any sport. He has certainly found a home in the St. John Valley.

"It's a good school, they let me manage things so we can be successful in our other sports, too," Ashby said. "They let me establish that leadership role here and we've gotten some nice stuff done."



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Submissions may be selected for use in our printed special section set to publish in the BDN on Friday, Nov. 11.

