

Dunn chooses Hogs over Hawks

Written by Mike Koolbeck

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Kyle Dunn had a choice to make.

Dunn, a two-time Iowa state champion in the 400 meter hurdles for Linn-Mar, was being courted by Iowa and national track power Arkansas.



On the one hand you had Iowa and former national champion 400 meter hurdler Joey Woody, a Hawkeye assistant coach.

On the other, you had the irrepressible Chris Bucknam, who built Northern Iowa into a national contender with Iowans such as Woody before being wooed away to Arkansas three years ago.

"I know Joey's a great coach, but to have the coaches that made Joey so great, I knew that could definitely be advantageous for me," Dunn said of his choosing the Razorbacks, who have won 11 outdoor and 19 indoor NCAA team championships since 1984.

"Arkansas is perennially a good track program," Dunn said. "I knew the track coaches were previously at UNI and I heard great things about Coach Bucknam, coach (Doug) Case and coach (Travis) Geopfert."

But Arkansas was a long shot when the recruiting process started.

"I hadn't sent them back a letter or anything, but it was a little bit after they could start calling me that they contacted one of my coaches and saw if they could get my phone number," Dunn said. "They just called me one night and we hit it off. I wasn't really thinking about them. They were one of my last visits I set up."

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Dunn visited Arkansas the weekend the football team, which ended up playing Ohio State in the Sugar Bowl, was playing Alabama.

"It was amazing. I had no idea," Dunn said. "The coolest thing about it was that they are really centered on track. They have great facilities. The coaches are real down to earth."

Dunn said it was hard to turn down Woody and the Hawkeyes.

"They have a great track program, it was just mainly academics," Dunn said. "Iowa didn't have my major."

Dunn said he will major in computer science engineering at Arkansas.

And he will run.

Dunn said his goals at Arkansas are to compete in the 400 hurdles and the open 400, possibly running a leg on the 4x400 relay. Beyond that, he is aware that the Razorbacks have a tradition of developing Olympians. A total of 27 Arkansas track athletes have competed in the Olympics, including gold medal triple jumper Mike Conley. Calvin Davis won a bronze in the 400 meter hurdles at the 1996 Olympic Games.

"It (Olympics) are kind of on the backburner right now," Dunn said. "I haven't even made it to college yet, so to talk about the Olympics ... But that's always a track athlete's goal, to get as big as you can."