

## Training program helps Jefferson boys track

Written by Jim Ecker

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Ron Tower took attendance last week and counted 95 guys for the Cedar Rapids Jefferson track team this year.

The J-Hawks have quantity, and Coach Tower thinks the quality is rapidly improving, thanks in part to an offseason training program conducted by [Performance Therapies](#).

The company has been working with Jefferson athletes since the winter of 2009-2010 and Tower sees a noticeable improvement among members of his team.

For proof, he conducted time trials before Jefferson's first indoor meet this month and compared the results with what the same athletes did outside 10 months ago.

"You expect an improvement, but it was significant improvement," he said. "No question."

In fact, some of Jefferson's times at the Mississippi Valley Conference indoor meet March 14 in Cedar Falls were faster than their outdoor times last May, despite the smaller track in the UNI-Dome.

"I had some sprinters that ran their best time ever, indoors, versus districts last year at the end of the year on a perfect day outdoors," he said. "We have improved. There are a lot of reasons for it, but I keep looking at that."

### **Performance Therapies helps athletes**

And "that," in Tower's opinion, is the work his athletes have done with Performance Therapies, which has locations in Cedar Rapids and Coralville.

Jefferson junior Chance Tiedtke has done the program for two years and has noticed a significant improvement in his strength and speed. All Jefferson athletes, boys and girls, are

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eligible for the program that's held at the school.

"It's a great program. It helps a lot," said Tiedtke. "On the track you can really tell, because our times have dropped. And if we drop even more, it will be something."

Blake Tiedtke, Chance's cousin and a star athlete at Jefferson 10 years ago, is one of the instructors from Performance Therapies who works with the J-Hawks. Blake Tiedtke was an all-state tailback at Jefferson, set five school records and helped the J-Hawks make the playoffs in 2000.

Blake Tiedtke also excelled in basketball and track at Jefferson, making all-conference in both sports, and played football at Nebraska, where his major was exercise science.

"He helps a lot," Chance Tiedtke said. "He's there for you when you need help. He's not like one of those coaches who's going to sit there and yell at you. He's going to teach you how to do it right."

### **Coach praises program**

The training program includes weightlifting and cardiovascular exercises. It was voluntary for Jefferson athletes at first, but now they receive class credit for participating.

Tower thinks the program is beneficial for all sports at Jefferson.

"Consistency is the main thing, if every coach buys into the same thing, and season after season the kids are getting the same message," he said. "There are a lot of ways to be successful, there are a lot of ways to lift, but if you're all doing the same thing, it just builds on each other."

Jefferson needed more quantity and quality for the boys track team this season. The J-Hawks failed to score a single point at the 2010 state meet, but Tower said they are stronger and faster

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this year.

### **Praise for Chance Tiedtke**

He points to Chance Tiedtke as an example.

"I like his leadership," said Tower. "It's a confidence factor you see in kids when they know they're getting better.

"It's not an arrogance, it's a confidence, and then he can step out and tell other people, 'This is what you're going to do,'" said Tower. "You have to have those kids, because somebody has to have been there before, and somebody has to lead the way.

"We went soft a little the last couple of years," he said. "And when that happens, you have to rebuild it again."

Tiedtke is a sprinter, specializing in the 100, 200 and sprint relays. He noticed a big difference with J-Hawk sprinters at the MVC indoor meet on their splits in the 200s.

"Our whole relay is running 23's (23 seconds) right now, and everybody that was in relays is in Performance Therapies," he said. "We're all working together."

Tiedtke said he looks forward to the training program at school. "It releases stress, because you can just take it out on the weights," he said. "It just helps a lot."

Tiedtke said he's close to his cousin, Blake, and talks to him regularly, but was too young to pay careful attention to Blake's football career at Jefferson. "I think I came here one game," he said, standing at Kingston Stadium, home of the Jefferson football and track teams. "It started to rain, so I left."

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Rain or shine, the J-Hawks are optimistic about having a stronger team this season. "It's exciting," said Tower. "I love it."