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East Peoria girls and boys basketball teams compete at holiday tournaments, see Sports, Page 5

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Broe volunteers to coach track at high school

■ Olympic runner will assist other track coaches

By Christina Smith

TimesNewspapers

An East Peoria resident and Olympic runner will soon coach at the school he once attended as a student.

Tim Broe first made a name for himself as a high school track and cross country star at East Peoria Community High School, during



Tim Broe

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— *Tim Broe*

which he won the Illinois State Boys Cross Country meet for both his junior and senior year of high school, along with winning two state track championships.

After graduating from high school in 1995, Broe majored in fitness management at the University of Alabama.

In 2001, Broe moved to Ann Arbor, Mich., where he trained for the 2004

Summer Olympics.

Some of Broe's career highlights include being a three-time USA Outdoor 5,000-meter champion (2003-05); placing 11th at the 2004 Olympic Games for the 5,000; American 3,000-meter indoor record holder; and a two-time U.S. indoor 3,000 champion (2001-02).

Broe will be a volunteer assistant coach for both the girls and boys

track teams and the boys cross country team.

Broe will work with Jim Dulin, the head boys track and cross country coach; Kristen D'Alfonso, the head girls track coach; and Ed McGraw, the girls cross country coach.

Although this is Broe's first time coaching at the high school level, he has six years of coaching experience from his time as a volunteer track coach for the University of Michigan.

Broe said he came back in the fall to watch a cross country meet and noticed the boys team seemed to be lacking the focus and drive of the girls team.

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Broe

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"I was fortunate to have a good coach when I was in cross country, and I would not be where I am today without (Ed) McGraw," Broe said.

McGraw said Broe brings a lot of knowledge to the boys cross country program and will help lay a foundation for next year's seniors to realize their full potential.

"Over the last few years, the boys team has not been successful, but there is a lot of talent on the cross country team and their potential needs to be realized," McGraw added.

Broe said his goal is to help give the runners a sense of direction and teach them to believe in themselves and that the rest will follow, which is what McGraw taught him as a high school runner.

Referring to what it was like to coach Broe, McGraw said, "As a coach, it is really challenging when you coach a person with tremendous possibility. We both have large egos and think we are always right. We were able to compromise and it worked."

Broe said he contacted EPCHS principal Paul Whittington last summer to inform him that he would be moving back to the area.

Broe added he told Whittington he was interested in volunteering as a coach while he continues recovering from three surgeries that he had last year and prepares for the 2008 Olympics.

"The neat thing about Broe is that, over the years, our relationship has grown more than that of a coach and an athlete. My wife, Annie, and I have already made our reservations for the 2008 Olympic trials in Eugene, Ore., and we have told Broe he has to be there," McGraw said.

Despite EPCHS students being on Christmas break, Broe said he has already been practicing with the track teams.

Broe added some of the students were intimidated by him at first but have since opened up to him.

"I do not care whether we win or lose. I just want the kids to have fun and become better athletes and better people," Broe said.

Broe said he has noticed a new energy in the runners and in the running program since he started working with the kids.

"Being a very active person, and only being able to run for 20 minutes a day while I am recovering, has left me with a lot of free time, and I am looking forward to get

involved with the high school while I continue my recovery," Broe added.

Broe said he plans to be around to help coach the track team next year and would like to continue his coaching indefinitely.

"My heart has always been in Peoria and I have always wanted to move back here. It feels good to be home," Broe added.

In October, Broe was contacted by Amory Rowe, who founded "In the Arena," a non-profit organization which provides funding for individuals who want to make a career of being an athlete.

Rowe said the organization encourages athletes to get involved in doing community service projects in the communities where they live and train.

Broe said he asked Rowe if his coaching at the high school would count as community service and was told it would, which allowed him to receive some funding from the organization.

Rowe said she heard about Broe from Princeton classmate Chris Lear.

"Chris knew I was starting this non-profit organization and told me that I needed to get ahold of Broe," Rowe added.

The purpose of getting ath-

letes involved with their communities is to provide more positive role models for youths, Rowe said.

In the Arena is based in Cambridge, Mass., and was started Sept. 1.

"Tim is such a talented and good-hearted person. We are so fortunate to be working with him. He exemplifies the work ethic, positive attitude, and inspiration In the Arena seeks to make accessible to America's youth," In the Arena principal Sarah West said.

Broe said he plans on racing at the end of next summer and preparing for the Olympic trials next fall.

To qualify for the 2008 Olympics, Broe said he will have to place in the top three at the July 2008 Olympic trials.

"I feel very blessed to have had the support I have had in Peoria. It is nice to come home and have people know what you have done. It makes you feel really good," Broe said.

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A beauty