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**By JAMES W. WADE III**

Staff Reporter

Today's youth athletes are tomorrow's champions! As the number one high school and junior high school participatory sport, track & field, long distance running, and race walking offer a variety of competitive and fitness opportunities.

Will Carter, is one of those up and coming athletes. Carter age 16 is a junior at Orange High School. He was inducted into the National Honor Society in May 2011, one of 4 Black males in a school of 713 students. Has a varsity letter in band (plays the clarinet, alto and tenor sax) and track.

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Running workload includes volume (distance), intensity (speed or effort), and frequency (number of days a week). Just like with adult training, children should start a running program with a low volume, low intensity, and limit frequency to a couple days a week.

Carter's workload has increased over the duration of the program, but has remained appropriate for the individual student. Playing other sports has helped Carter stay in shape to endure and excel in Track and Field.

He is currently preparing for the AAU Jr. Olympics Games in New Orleans, July 29-Aug. 6. His track club is Cleveland Express Track Club (CXTC) and 60 athletes qualified for nationals. Carter qualified in the Long jump third place with 20'10", high jump first with 6'2", triple jump first with 39'2" and 4x400 third with 3:31.80. He is a 4x100 alternate.

The AAU Junior Olympic Games originated from "telegraphic" state track and field competitions. National Champions were determined through telephone and/or mail entries instead of head-to-head competition. In 1949, the AAU conducted its first "live" national meet in Cleveland, Ohio – giving birth to the AAU Youth Sports Program. Because of the success of the national track and field head-to-head competition, AAU leaders solicited support from the business and corporate sector. The Chevrolet Division of General Motors Corporation and the Quaker Oats Company assisted the AAU in their vision of the number of youngsters that could be helped.

As the popularity of the AAU Youth Sports Program increased, the AAU leaders decided to conduct two national championships simultaneously. The idea came to fruition when

Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey proclaimed the first AAU Junior Olympic Games open on August 21, 1967 in downtown Washington, D.C at the Departmental Auditorium on Constitution Avenue. Five hundred twenty-three athletes competed in the inaugural AAU Junior Olympic Games in Washington, D.C. in 1967. National champions were determined in swimming and track and field. Eighteen AAU records in swimming and three in track and field were established.

Since its beginning in Washington, D.C., the AAU Junior Olympic Games have been conducted in 19 states and 30 cities across the United States. The state of Tennessee leads the way with six AAU Junior Olympic Games to its credit. “There's nothing junior about it” has become the theme of the AAU Junior Olympic Games while growing to over 16,000 participants in over 20 sports. The Games popularity has exploded to now represent all 50 states and several United States territories.

In May, Carter got a personal record (PR) of 6-1 in the High Jump at OHSAA District Track and Field Championship, Lakeview, placing second. He got a PR of 21-2.5 in the Long Jump at Chagrin Valley Conference
, placing first.

The Cleveland Express Track Club is trying to raise $30K to send all these athletes to New Orleans. Candy sales, sponsorships and scratch offs are some of the ways CXTC is fundraising. Just straight donations are appreciated as well.

The Cleveland Express Track Club established itself as a youth track & field nonprofit organization in 2008. Formerly members of the Cleveland Heights Rebels, Cleveland Express became an independent organization when the Rebels’ head coach, Claude Holland in his retirement discontinued the AAU portion of the Rebels Track Club. Recognizing a need for youth programs in the Greater Cleveland Area, Cleveland Express Track Club was formed with a five member volunteer board of directors and three volunteer coaches who specialized in field events, sprinting, and distance running. Curtis Jackson continues to volunteer his time as head coach.

Please support CXTC's latest fundraiser. Applebee's Dining To Donate – Applebee's will donate 15 percent of your check when you order to go or dine in at either the Solon location (6140 SOM Center Rd 440-248-2226) or the University Hts. location (14020 Cedar Rd 216-382-0941). You must present our flyer to your server or your To Go Specialist on Wednesday, July 27th 11

- 9pm

Curtis Jackson is the head coach and can be reached for questions at (216) 694.8595.