



16-year-old Mark Zillman spends lots of time training in the pasture behind his family farm in Uxbridge Twp. The blind athlete has benefited so much from his rigorous practice schedule that qualifying for the 1988 Disabled Olympics is a

realistic goal. Mark recently returned from the Canadian championships in Winnipeg, Man. His trip was funded by a donation from Uxbridge Lions Club.

—Chris Shanahan

**Mark Zillman**

**Blind athlete excels inspiration to others**

UXBRIDGE TWP. — One of Uxbridge's best athletes hasn't been able to see since he was about three years old.

If anything, blindness has motivated Mark Zillman to work harder than most in competitive sports like running, wrestling and swimming.

He recently returned from the Canadian National Games for the Disabled in Winnipeg, Man., with a silver medal he collected in the 1,500 metre run. He also placed fourth in the 800 metres.

In earlier competition at the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled, he won a handful of medals.

Mark, 16, the son of Klaus and Helga Zellman, R.R.2, Uxbridge, was foiled in his attempt to qualify for Los Angeles this summer, but that hasn't dampened his enthusiasm.

He's already aiming toward a spot on the Canadian team that will travel to Seoul, Korea in 1988.

He says wrestling and running are his two main sports.

Mark does much of his training for

the latter around the family farm.

With the help of cousins Paul and Michael Klose, Mark can run along the local roads without danger. The two boys lead the way for the runner on their bikes.

And when it comes to training in the back pasture lands, the young athlete uses a horse's lead shank for guidance.

He judges how many circuits of the field he makes by feeling the wind blowing on his face, his father-Klaus explained.

Mark, who now attends W. Ross

MacDonald School in Brantford, has been competing since about age eight.

His eye troubles first surfaced when he was about a year and a half. Tumors developed on his retinas and he eventually had to have both eyes removed and replaced with artificial ones.

Mark had lost his sight completely by age three.

The friendly youngster isn't easily discouraged. He appears determined not to let his blindness stop him from leading a full life.

Mark has de-

veloped a special relationship with Jim Cain, who lives near Sandford on Conc. 4. The two are good friends and Mark appreciates Jim's assistance.

Mr. Cain helps out with transportation and often drives Mark to school. He also teaches him about things around the farm.

Mark is now training for cross-country races against students from public schools. Although he requires a guide to help him through the course, he still records some excellent times.

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