

Growing up in Oil City, Scott Moon played baseball and football, but track and field was hardly even on his radar.

However, his athletic career and life changed forever after assistant track and field coach Mike Mitchell asked Moon to go out for the team during his sophomore year in high school.

Moon took to the throwing events right away, winning a District 10 title in the javelin in his first year of competition before going on to win back-to-back PIAA Class 3A titles in the event in record-setting fashion in 1981-1982. He also won two D-10 titles in the shot put and another in the discus, finishing his high school career having won six D-10 individual titles in all as the Oilers won consecutive D-10 team crowns as well.

After such a legendary career, Moon was recently elected to the Pennsylvania High School Track and Field Hall of Fame, with his induction taking place at next year's state meet on May 23 at Shippensburg University.

"It's a good thing to have happen before I'm dead if they were going to do it," Moon said with a chuckle in an interview with the newspaper. "It's an honor to be inducted. I was surprised when I found out and it's kind of humbling."

Moon's winning throw of 230-8 in the 1982 state meet during his senior year broke the meet record of 230-0 set in 1969 by Ray Mushinski of Ambridge. It was the third-oldest record in the books and still ranks No. 4 all-time.

He was also the Athletics Congress national junior meet champion that year when he was a Track & Field News third team All-American selection.

Earlier that season, Moon led Oil City to its second straight D-10 team championship by sweeping the shot put, discus and javelin, giving him six individual district titles. His throw of 218-4 in the javelin was a D-10 meet record. He was named Athlete of the Year for the Class of 1982.

Moon was a three-time D-10 champion in the javelin. His winning throw as a junior was 215-6. He also won the shot put that season.

“Mike Mitchell just asked me to give it a try. I had nothing else better to do at that time of year, so I tried it out,” Moon said of going out for the track and field team. “I think I started in 10th grade, so I only had three years in track and field. I guess I was a natural. I played baseball every summer as a kid and I was a pitcher, so the throwing motion was pretty natural to me.”

Moon credits a lot of his success to Mitchell, who was the throwing coach with the Oilers.

“I had a good coach in Mike Mitchell. He passed away a few years ago, but he dedicated a lot of time to me,” Moon said. “I also got a lot of support for traveling back then when we had Quaker State and Pennzoil in the area. They helped fund some of my traveling. It gave me a whole lot of opportunity I wouldn’t have imagined having at that time in my life.”

Moon’s success allowed him to be able to travel the world and compete in other countries, with him winning the Junior Pan Am Games in Venezuela.

“I was fortunate enough to travel with the U.S. Junior Olympic team for a couple of years. We went to Canada and to Venezuela for the Junior Pan Am Games and a sports festival in Indianapolis, so it gave me a lot of exposure to what big time track and field was,” Moon said. “I wasn’t very competitive outside of my age group, but I got to compete against the best in the world back then, so that was pretty cool.”

After achieving so much in high school, Moon earned a scholarship to compete for the University of Miami of Ohio in track and field.

“It provided me so many opportunities I never would have had, specifically in education,” Moon said of his track exploits. “Without that scholarship, I probably would not have gone on to college as my parents wouldn’t have been able to afford it.”

Once Moon got to college, he had to adjust to a different world than what he was used to back home in Oil City.

“I was a redneck kid getting introduced to rich kids. I didn’t fit in there very well,” Moon said of his peers in college. “A lot of the kids were driving around in BMWs and I was walking. I think the first vehicle I bought was a beat up little pickup truck for \$800, so it was a culture shock for sure. I guess there were some other kids like me in athletics, but I wasn’t the normal college kid at Miami of Ohio.”

However, the culture gap didn’t stop Moon from excelling at the next level, but an arm injury did bring a sudden end to his career.

“I won the Mid-American Conference championship during my freshman year and went to the NCAAs that year, but during my sophomore year, I injured my arm and had to

have surgery. After that, I wasn't able to fully come back or improve on what I did previously," Moon said. "However, I still hold the records for the old and new javelin at Miami of Ohio."

With his athletic career ending, Moon, who owns Moonlight Packaging in Oil City, persevered and graduated with a degree in Education.

"The success I had definitely gave me more confidence. I had no grandeur of going on to college. I was not a great student in high school, but Miami took a chance on me by giving me a scholarship and I ended up graduating with a 3.2 GPA. I made it through college, I got a degree, and now I own my own business."

With his incredible career with the Oilers being brought to the surface once again, Moon is looking forward to returning to Shippensburg for the induction ceremony. But, this won't be his first trip back there since his heyday in the early 1980s as he traveled to the state meet in 2011 to watch his son, Mike Moon, compete in the discus. (The younger Moon was also an all-region tackle for the Oilers, who played with Ben Koyack, Mark Kulinski and Dallas Williams and that gang.)

"It would be fun to go back," Scott Moon said of returning to the site of the PIAA meet. "My son, Mike, competed at the state meet, too, about 14 years ago and my wife and I went down there to watch him compete. It was interesting then and it will be interesting this year, also. It definitely brought back some memories. I walked around to where we threw and reminisced about everything I did back in the day."

Penny Weichel, the former sports editor of the Derrick, contributed to this story

