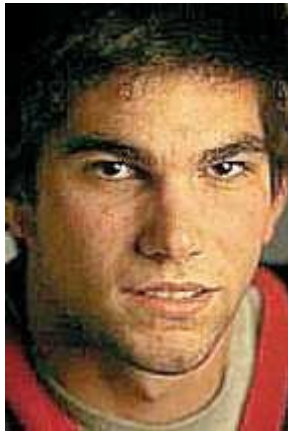


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Quick-witted sprinter saves wandering tot

By Mary Jo Monnin NEWS SPORTS REPORTER



Shane Biggs missed the East Aurora team bus to Saturday's ECIC track and field meet, but the senior sprinter was quickly forgiven.

While driving to the high school to catch team bus around 7:15 a. m., Biggs was shocked to see a toddler wandering in the middle of Sweet Road. Biggs at first thought it was an animal in the road, but the closer he got, he realized it was little boy.

"What? Is that a little boy? I thought I was seeing things," said Biggs, who estimated the toddler's age at 2 years old. "I go, 'Are you lost?,' and he was just crying, walking down the road. I took him by the shoulder and guided him over to the side of the road. Right when I did that, my sprinting coach was coming over the hill, and he probably wouldn't have seen him."

Biggs stayed with the toddler, who said his name was Matthew, until police arrived. They searched nearby homes. Several other cars had stopped by this time, and those drivers helped with the search. One of those volunteers eventually located the boy's home less than a mile away.

Biggs said the toddler's parents were on vacation, and he was being cared for by an aunt and a sister. The aunt left the home without telling the sister, and the toddler awoke before the sister.

"It was the weirdest morning," Biggs said. "I almost didn't take that way [to school]. At the same time, I was thinking about what bad stuff could have happened if I didn't take this way."

East Aurora police Saturday refused to describe their involvement in the matter, if any. A dispatcher said no information would be available until Monday.

After he was sure everything was all right with the toddler, Biggs got back in his car and drove to the JFK complex in Cheektowaga for the track meet, arriving an hour late.

But once on the track, he ran and finished first in the 100 meters in 11.34.