

# **Distance Runner Ryan Watts Is iCAN Clinic Male Athlete Of Month For Tigers**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville High's distance runner Ryan Watts recently had a weekend to remember.



On a Friday night in a showcase meet at Carmel, Ind., Watts broke the school's 3,200-meter run record previously held by Stephen Pifer since 2003 when he won the race at 8:54.09, then came back on Saturday to win the 1,600 meters at the Winston Brown Invitational meet at home, winning with a time of 4:19.93, with teammate Geo Patrylak coming in second at 4:27.49.

Watts is the iCAN Clinic Male Athlete of the Month For Edwardsville High School. Watts was very happy with the outcome of the record on that Friday.

"I'm feeling good," Watts said in an interview that followed the 1,600-meter race. "It's been a full day to recover. Now, this meet is nice to get a good mile in."

The race Watts competed in had a loaded field, with a pair of state champions running with him and Patrylak.

"It was great competition down at Carmel," Watts said. "Two All-Americans, a couple of state championships between them. Obviously, all the other guys were very good at running. So the competition was great, the weather was really good, too. So, it just all worked out well."

The important thing in the Winston Brown meet was that Watts and Patrylak were able to score valuable points for the Tigers which helped them win the meet. And breaking Pifer's record, which was 8:57.94, was a very good feeling for Watts as well.

"It's a really great feeling," Watts said. "Obviously, it was there for 19 years and that was my main goal and I knew it would be tough to get. But through all the hours in the pool and on the bike and getting back into running and I'm getting back into running, it's all good to actually get it done."

Now that Watts had the record, he'll start cooling down and running a limited schedule as the IHSA Class 3A state meet series approaches and Watts will make a run for the state championships.

"We'll probably kind of chill out and not go into hard races until sectionals and state," Watts said, "and just focus on helping the team get as many points for state as possible."

Already having a successful senior year and heading off to run for Iowa State this fall in Ames, Ia., Watts is focusing on keeping things going in the right direction.

"Right now, I'm trying just to keep the ball rolling," Watts said, "keep myself healthy and to keep the momentum rolling."