

# SPORTS

LEXINGTON COUNTY CHRONICLE AND The Dispatch-News—SINCE 1870

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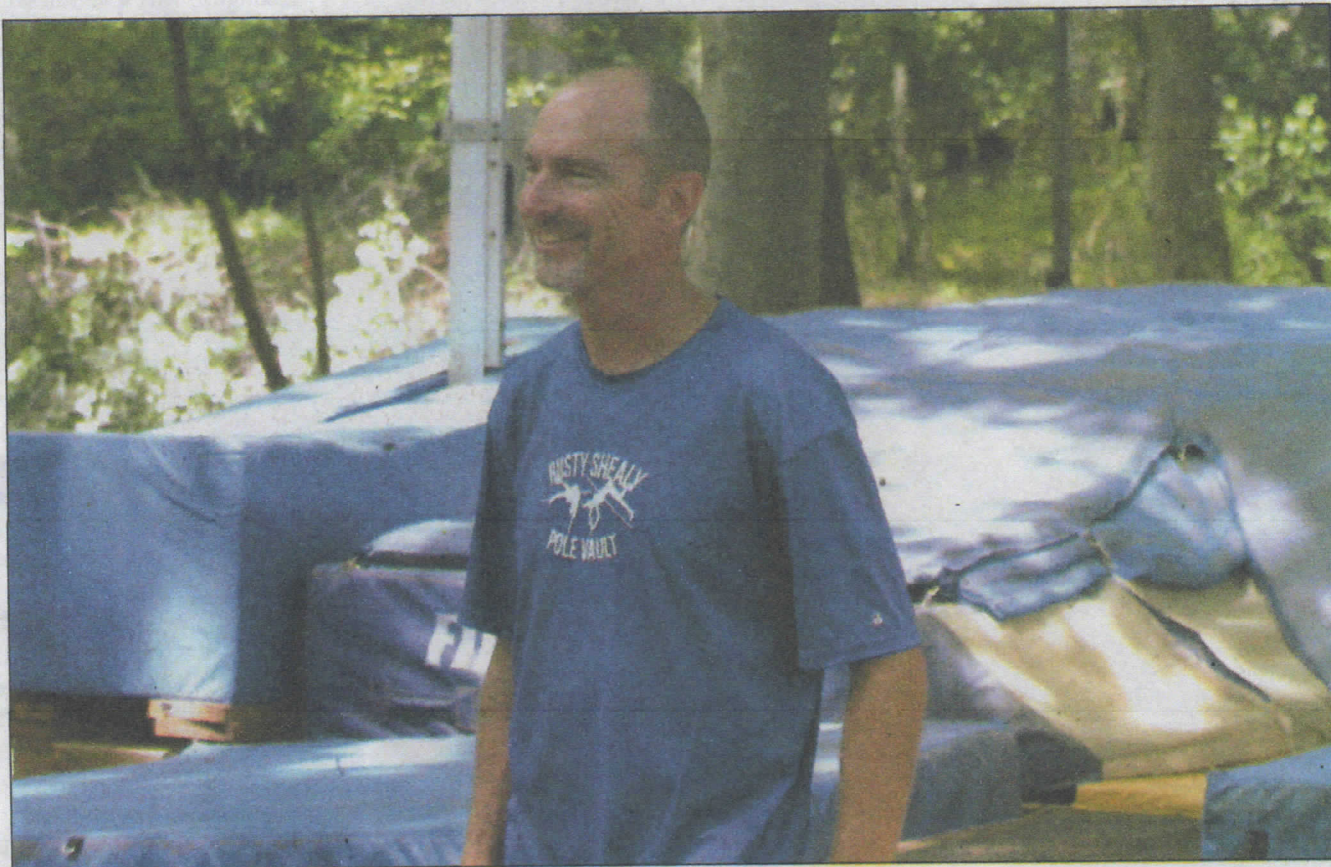
Sports Editor | 803-359-1946 | chroniclesports@yahoo.com |

## Columbia Post 178

**BOLAND**  
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TRAVIS BOLAND | CHRONICLE

Rusty Shealy smiles as he watches some of his pole vaulting students practice. Shealy started coaching at Brookland-Cayce High School and eventually started his own school in the backyard of his house in Columbia.

# Shealy teaching the art of the vault

**BY TRAVIS BOLAND**  
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It started as a passion. For Rusty Shealy, pole vaulting has been a part of his life since he was a student at Brookland-Cayce High School.

"I started pole vaulting in high school, and went on to South Carolina," Shealy said.

Shealy would hold the school record for pole vaulting until his son Chase came through.

"(Chase) vaulted 17'1 and shattered my record," Shealy said.

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 Shealy would hold the school record for pole vaulting until his son Chase came through.  
 "(Chase) vaulted 17'1 and shattered my record," Shealy said.  
 He would start coaching at B-C in 1998 and found many coaches from around the state would ask him to work with their vaulters.

"There is a lack of coaches in the state," Shealy said. "I had little knowledge, but it was enough. Coaches and parents would come to me and it continued to grow."

It eventually grew into a business as Shealy has built a training facility in the backyard of his home in Columbia.

"Vaulting is a clique," Shealy said. "Everybody knows everybody else. I have connections with people all around the country. I've known a majority of the vaulters who have gone on to represent the United States at the Olympics."

Athletes from around the southeast come to train with Shealy.

He has coached 69 state champions including the two-time Class 4-A champion Madeline Aune who was working out Friday.

"(Madeline) has worked hard to be



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**Beaufort's Madeline Aune practices at Rusty Shealy's home. Aune is a two-time state champion who trains with Shealy.**

a state champion in her freshman and sophomore year," Shealy said. "She will compete at the Junior Olympic Nationals later in the summer."

Shealy said pole vaulting is very addictive because you can see your progression every time you practice.

"If you work hard you make changes to your position and you can see those changes in height."

Shealy got into the business of pole vaulting to help athletes.

"I enjoy helping the kids," Shealy said. "Pole vaulting builds self-confidence. If these kids can compete and succeed it makes them feel like they can accomplish anything."

Shealy also enjoys watching the progression of his athletes.

"For some, you can see it when they start," Shealy said. "You can see the tools, the ingredients to succeed at a high level."

Shealy said a number of athletes go through their high school career without the proper coaching, but he's happy to give pole vaulters a place to shine.

"Pole vaulting is about taking steps," Shealy said. "I help the kids break stuff down and succeed on every level. It's not just a lesson they learn in pole vaulting, but a way to succeed in their lives."



## Eagles ranked in preseason poll

**BY TRAVIS BOLAND**  
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region championship last year and advanced to the third round of the Class