**Lomnicky claims second national title of career at NCAA indoor meet**

By Jimmy Robertson

It may come as a surprise to many people, but Virginia Tech’s Marcel Lomnicky really doesn’t like the weight throw event. In fact, he rarely practiced for it this past season.

But his end results weren’t too shabby for something he viewed with a touch of disinterest.

Lomnicky again showed his undeniable talent for throwing heavy objects when he won the national championship in the weight throw at the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships held March 9-10 in Nampa, Idaho.

It marked Tech’s 11th individual national championship in track and field and the second for Lomnicky, who won the hammer throw title during the outdoor season in 2009. His current title wrapped up the Nitra, Slovakia, native’s career at Tech.

“Every time you win, it’s a great feeling,” Lomnicky said. “To do so in my final meet as a member of the Virginia Tech track and field team makes it even more valuable to me.

“I was fortunate to win. I threw a lot of hammers this winter because it was not as cold. I only threw the weight in the meets. I think I had about 20 throws in the weight all season.”

Lomnicky, who won with a throw of 72 feet, 3.75 inches, participates in the weight throw only as a way to help the Hokies gain points during the indoor season. He prefers the hammer throw, his specialty and the event in which he’s trying to qualify for the summer Olympics. Yet he’s won two ACC titles and a national title in the weight throw.

“It’s much heavier, and the timing is different,” Lomnicky said of why he doesn’t like the weight throw event. “It doesn’t really help with the hammer either. It doesn’t require the same technique or patience. Most good weight throwers are big, strong guys, and I’m not as big and strong as those guys.”

Alexander Ziegler, who beat Lomnicky in the hammer throw to win the national title last summer, finished third in the weight throw. He and Lomnicky were a big reason the Tech men’s team finished in eighth place with 22 points – the most ever by a Tech team at the NCAA indoor meet.

Also, Hasheem Halim scored points for the Hokies. He finished third in the triple jump, breaking his own school record with a jump of 53 feet, 6.5 inches.

Lomnicky, Ziegler and Halim all earned All-America honors for their efforts.

On the women’s side, freshmen Martina Schultze and Victoria von Eynatten both earned All-America honors in the pole vault. Schultze finished seventh with a mark of 13 feet, 11.25 inches, while von Eynatten came in tied for eighth, clearing a height of 13 feet, 9.25 inches.

The meet marked the end of the indoor season, but Tech fans can still watch Lomnicky, who plans to train for the hammer event in Blacksburg and compete in meets as an unattached athlete. He hopes to qualify for the Olympics, which will be in London this summer, and compete for his native Slovakia. He already has met the “B” standard of 74 meters. Only one participant from each country with a “B” qualification mark can go, so Lomnicky wants to achieve the “A” standard of 78 meters for automatic qualification to remove any doubt. He also needs another year to finish work on his degree in business management.

“I’m looking forward to it,” he said of this spring. “This is a great opportunity for me. I’ve got a great coach [Greg Jack], and the facilities and weight room are perfect for training. It depends on how you use it, but you can train like a professional.

“And I like it here. I’ve got a lot of support here. I can’t describe how excited I am to continue training and hopefully qualify for the Olympics.”