

Hanks leads Warriors to team championship at H-DNL track championships

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Del Norte sophomore Deken Hanks continued to dominate at this year's H-DNL track and field championships, which were held at McKinleyville High School on Saturday (May 4).

The Warriors sprinter won all four of his events and helped lead his team to a championship in the boys competition.

Hanks, who recently became the fastest athlete in the history of the H-DNL after setting a new league record in the 100 meters, successfully defended his league titles in both sprints, and also played a key role in a pair of relay wins.

"He was four for four, and that was the game plan, that was the goal," Del Norte head coach Taylor Duncan said.

Competing on a wet track after a morning of non-stop rain, Hanks won the 100m in a time of 11.07 seconds and followed that later in the day with a victory in the 200m in a time of 22.43 seconds.

He was named the track athlete of the meet, an award voted on by the league coaches.

Hanks' senior teammate Caden Harrison also had a big day and was second in the 100m in a time of 11.73 seconds.

Harrison also won the 300m hurdles with a PR time of 41.83 seconds, as well as playing a part with Hanks in both the 4x100m and 4x400m relay wins.

“Deken and Caden are leaders on our team and they stepped up for us, which was awesome,” Duncan added.

As a team, the Del Norte boys won six of the 17 events and scored 137 points, which was well ahead of Arcata, Eureka and Fortuna, who all tied for second with 99 points apiece.

Several other Del Norte athletes impressed, including junior distance runner Dylan Ridriguez, who placed second in both the 1600m and 3200m and third in the 800m.

Junior Lyon Rigden also had a good day and scored some valuable team points with a victory in the pole vault, setting a new PR with a winning mark of 12’ 6”.

The Warriors took four of the top six spots in the pole vault, with Jason Murphy and Cody Burshem each setting a PR or 11’ 0” on their way to placing third and fourth respectively.

Their teammate Mathew Martinez was sixth in the event.

“Our pole vault group has been good all year,” Duncan said. “We had first, third, fourth and sixth, which was huge for us.”

In the girls competition, senior Lily Sherman won the triple jump with a jump of 33’ 6” and was second in the long jump with a jump of 15’ 4.5”.

The Warriors standout, who will compete for Shasta College next spring, was named co-field athlete of the meet along with Eureka’s Isabella Claussen.

“She had a good day,” Duncan said. “She’s been battling through a little ankle injury, pretty much all year, and she’s kind of been under the radar.

“She’s just our steady rock on the women’s side and it was great to see her get some recognition.”

Sophomore Hollyn Wakefield also scored some valuable team points for the Del Norte girls, who placed fourth overall in the team competition, which was won by Eureka.

Wakefield was third in the discus with a PR throw of 99’ 1” and second in the shot put with a throw of 31’ 7.5”, with senior teammate Breann Winingham placing third in the shot put with a throw of 29’ 11.5”.

“Hollyn is only a sophomore and she has a huge future ahead of her in the throws,” Duncan said. “We’re real excited for her. And Breann’s a hard worker. She stepped up for us, which was awesome to see.”

Other Del Norte athletes to impress included sophomore Jeana Erler, who was fourth in the high jump, and freshman Avrey Ritter, who was fourth in the 100m hurdles and sixth in the 300m hurdles.

Alexis Aguirre also was fifth in the girls 200m, three spots ahead of Erler, while Erler was sixth in the 100m, one spot ahead of Aguirre.

Other Del Norte boys to impress included Kyle Dixon, who was sixth in the 200m and seventh in the 100m, while impressive freshman Landon Balent was eighth in the 400m, Roy Short was sixth in the 110m hurdles

and Jakyde Johnson was fourth in the 300m hurdles.

Johnson and Balent joined Hanks and Harrison on the 4x400m relay winning team, while Balent and Dixon joined them on the 4x100m relay winning team.

The Del Norte trio of Nathan Barker, Sebastian Espinoza and Zaid Titus were third through fifth in the shot put, while Aaron Burger was second in the discus and seventh in the shot put.

Brandt Pennington also was fourth in the high jump, while Rigden was eighth in the long jump.