

Del Norte sophomore sets new league record in the 100 meters

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Del Norte's Deken Hanks is rewriting the Humboldt-Del Norte League record books in track and field this spring, and you get the sense he's far from done as he continues to build momentum ahead of the postseason.

In just his sophomore campaign, the sensational Hanks recently broke the school record in the 100 meters twice in just three days, while also setting a new league record and officially becoming the fastest athlete in the history of the H-DNL.

Hanks, who is the defending league champion in both the 100 and 200m, will compete in this year's league championships at McKinleyville High School on Saturday, before turning his attention to next week's North Coast Section championships.

And he is expected to make a lot of noise at both meets.

Competing on his home track at Del Norte on April 24, Hanks set a PR in the 100m and broke the old Del Norte High School record with a blistering time of 11 seconds flat.

Just three days later, Hanks and his teammates traveled to Medford, Ore., to compete at the Phoenix Invitational and he smashed that PR by almost a quarter of a second, setting a new league record with a time of 10.76 seconds.

The previous H-DNL record of 10.8 seconds, which was set by Eureka's Khack Khongsaedao, had stood for 23 years.

And Hanks wasn't done yet.

Later in the day, he set a new Del Norte school record in the 200m as well, winning the race in a time of 21.96 seconds, which is the third fastest time ever in league history.

But none of that really surprised Del Norte head coach Taylor Duncan, and it's something the impressive Hanks has been building towards.

"The nice thing with Deken is he's always wanting to do extra, he's always wanting to work," the coach said. "He really takes it seriously and has really grown as an athlete.

"He's starting to understand the mental side of the sport. Sprinting is really a mental thing, and he's really been working hard on that and buying into it."

Remarkably, Duncan believes Hanks' performance in the 100m that day could have been even better.

"His 100 was great, but his start wasn't as good as it could have been," said the coach, who added, "There's definitely a lot of room to improve, which is cool. The sky's the limit."

With over two years remaining in his high school career, the expectations are that Hanks will continue to set new standards in both sprints and could yet also break the league record in the 200m, a record held by Eureka's Alexis Robinson who ran a 21.73 in 2013.

Hanks' time in the 100m is also the sixth best in the entire North Coast Section this spring and the second best among sophomores.

In the 200m, he is ranked seventh in the section.

"It was definitely exciting," Duncan said of the record-breaking performance.

"It was pretty cool to see."