

Del Norte Warriors enjoying successful spring in track and field

May 25, 2022



Seven Del Norte Warriors have advanced to this weekend's North Coast Section Meet of Champions in track and field after another strong showing for the team at the NCS Redwood Empire championships.

One week after claiming both the boys and girls H-DNL team championships, the Del Norte athletes traveled to Petaluma High School on Saturday and came away with 11 top-10 finishes in the section meet.

Senior Edwin Zepeda placed second in the boys triple jump with a jump of 42 feet, 11 inches, which was the seventh best jump in the entire NCS this spring and good enough to qualify for the Meet of Champions.

Zepeda, who is competing in track and field for the first time this year, has had an immediate impact on the team, winning two individual events at the league championships and also placing eighth in the high jump on Saturday with a jump of 5-8.

Sophomore Lily Sherman also enjoyed an outstanding NCS meet and placed second in the high jump with a jump of 4-10 and seventh in the triple jump (33-9.25), advancing to the Meet of Champions in both events.

The Meet of Champions will be held at Dublin High School, with the top three in each event advancing to next week's CIF State Championships.

All in all, it's been a good season for the Warriors, who have had huge numbers on hand all season, with 54 athletes on this year's team.

"They were amazing," first-year head coach Taylor Duncan said. "We have 17 seniors and I think that was a huge advantage. It's one of the biggest teams we've ever had."

Duncan, who is a former Del Norte student-athlete who competed in football, basketball and in track and field, returned to the area this past year after seven years coaching track and cross country at Shasta College.

He says he was hoping for about 35 athletes to show up for this year's team but was pleasantly surprised with the numbers that came out, and more importantly the enthusiasm they brought.

"The kids bought in," he said. "Every kid was out there every single day, and that was pretty awesome."

In addition to Zepeda and Sherman, teammates Alyssa McCovey, Gianna Taylor, Tianna Thompson, Lili Nunez and Teresa Martinez have also qualified for the Meet of Champions.

The outstanding McCovey has qualified in three different events — both hurdles races and the 4x100m relay — after three top-five finishes this past Saturday.

The senior standout placed fourth in the 100 meter hurdles in a time of 17.06 seconds and fifth in the 300m hurdles in 48.05, while teaming with Taylor, Nunez and Thompson to place fifth in the 4x100m relay.

The sprinters all played a major role for the team in the league championships, which the Warriors hosted in Crescent City.

The talented trio of Taylor, Thompson and McCovey each had three top-three finishes on the day, which was pivotal in an 11.5 point team victory.

The Del Norte girls scored 136.5 points, followed by Arcata (125) and Eureka (111).

In addition to the 4x100m relay win, Taylor placed first in the 100 meters with a PR of 12.95 seconds and third in the 200 meters, while Thompson won the 200 meters with a PR of 26.59 seconds, and also was third in the 400 meters.

McCovey placed second to Eureka's Ginny Brooks in both hurdles events.

"Alyssa has been a stud for us all year and just has a good work ethic," Duncan said of the senior standout, who will compete for College of the Redwoods next year along with Thompson.

Senior teammate Caleh King also has enjoyed a good spring and placed first in the discus and second in the shot put at the league championships, and followed that with a 10th-place finish in the discus at the NCS Redwood Empire meet.

Martinez, meanwhile, won the league championship in the pole vault and followed that this past weekend with a seventh-place finish at Petaluma (8-8), qualifying for the Meet of Champions in the event.

For the boys, Zepeda placed first in both the triple jump and high jump at the league championships, while outstanding freshman Aden Mintonye placed first in the 300m hurdles and teamed with Caden Harrison, Bryson Price and Emmanuel Nunez to win the 4x100m relay.

As a team, the Del Norte boys scored 111 points and posted a comfortable 29-point win for the team championship, with Eureka second.

“They’re just a good group of kids,” the head coach said of his athletes.

The two-day Meet of Champions runs through Saturday.