Del Norte Triplicate

NEWS

Del Norte girls hungry to repeat as Little 4 champions

September 13, 2025











One year after winning an historic first-ever conference championship in girls soccer, the Del Norte Warriors are hungry to do it again.

The Del Norte girls will kick off their conference schedule in mid-September and early indications are they will be among the contenders for the Little 4 once again.

Second-year head coach Shawn Eckart likes what he's seen from his players through the early season and in particular their commitment to the goal of winning this year's L4.

"I like that they're really into being coached, and I think they're really bonding as a group," he said. "They just work it out on the pitch and at practice.

"They're hungry. But it's a different kind of hunger this year. They can see it and they want it."

This year's roster features a core group of influential returning starters, as well as a young contingent of players who benefited tremendously from playing at the JV level a year ago.

In fact, some of the sophomores have been so impressive, they have jumped into the starting varsity lineup and are having an immediate impact.

Among the key returning players whom Eckart expects big things out of are senior defender Teexeeshe Scott and dynamic midfielders Hollyn Wakefield and Aurora Mitchell.

Mitchell was an all-league selection a year ago, while Wakefield was an all-league honorable mention, and both players have hit the ground running this fall.

"They work really well together," Eckart said of the two team captains.

One of the most impressive performers early in the new season has been junior Avery Ritter, a third team captain who has taken over in goal after the graduation of all-league goalie Deja Payne.

"Avery Ritter is filling the big shoes of Deja Payne," the coach said of the 5-foot-9 shot-stopper. "She's been working very hard, she's very coachable and she's got the height. Avery Ritter is bringing it for sure."

In front of her are three starting sophomores in defense, alongside the experienced Scott.

After getting some valuable game time as freshmen JVs a year ago, the talented and hardworking trio of Alex Eckart, Deanna Montanez and Calia Deater all are playing well and look set to anchor the team defense for the next few years.

“Because of all the work they put in last year, they’ve been able to step right in,” the head coach said.

The hard-working trio are among the seven sophomores on the 15-player roster.

Also back from last year is all-league selection Lillie Franklin, who scored the team’s only goal of the game in a recent 1-1 tie in a non-conference game at Little 4 rival St. Bernard’s, and she appears poised for another big season

Elisabeth Lopez also netted early in the new season in an impressive 1-0 victory against Fortuna and will play left midfield this fall, with attacking midfielder Jaden Bennett rounding out a solid Del Norte midfield.

“She has matured and has gotten stronger,” Shawn Eckart said of Bennett. “She’s got a cannon.”

New to the team this year is assistant coach Melaine Alvarado, a former Del Norte player who also played in college.

“She’s brought a lot to the team and she works really well with these girls,” the head coach said. “I think anybody would be stoked to have her.”

As for the team goals this season, the Warriors are not shying away from expectations, and after their breakthrough championship in 2024 they’re eager to make it two straight league titles.

“That’s the plan. They really want it,” Shawn Eckart said. “And I know the girls are looking forward to the season, and I’m looking forward to the season.”

https://triplicate.com/news/f5e3e6ca-36dd-42e3-9097-7c54399df2f6 Printed November 23, 2026 · © Del Norte Triplicate