



Season preview: Track and field team faces new hurdles

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Despite losing key runners, the Palo Alto High School track and field team is looking to expand on its achievements last year with young potential and a set of new coaches.

Last year, the Paly boys finished fifth in the De Anza league (2-4), and the Paly girls finished third (4-2). This was a step down from the 2013 season when the Paly boys came in first in the De Anza League and the girls came in second.

According to head coach Kelsey Feeley the team looks to the upcoming season to repair its drop in status.

“Our team goal this year is to improve on what we did last year,” Feeley said.

Junior sprinter Catherine Yu concurs with Feeley.

“Our main goal is to win DAL and SCVAL [Santa Clara Valley Athletic League] for both [the] boys’ and girls’ teams,” Yu said. “We have strong individuals for the boys’ sprint group and jumps and an overall strong distance group for varsity boys as well. Girls have a few standouts in both middle distance and distance, but we are still testing the waters for sprints.”

The teams will also suffer from the loss of a number of substantial contributors, including sprinter Nick Sullivan who finished fourth in the 400-meter at the Central Coast Section Championships last year.

“Unfortunately, we lost a few people to graduation that had a big impact, but we have a lot of new kids who look like they’re going to do great things,” Feeley said. “We’re really missing Nick Sullivan, who was a state meet competitor and one of the leaders of the team.”

However, the team feels it can fill the void with young runners who show potential, including sophomore Kent Slaney, who excelled in cross country this year and runs middle distance.

Slaney said he hopes to improve from last season after being out with an injury during most of his freshman year.

“I’m hoping to get to States and that the distance and sprinting teams do well,” Slaney said. “I’m hoping to get a 4:20 mile and hoping to do well in invitationals. I got injured a lot last season, and I’m hoping to have a solid season this time.”

The team also has two new sprint coaches, Casey Fields and Lewis Hori, who the team hopes will lead Paly to a successful season, according to Feeley.

The first meet of the season will take place at 3:15 p.m. tomorrow against Milpitas High School at home.