

Campbell clears hurdles in spite of adversity

Stacy Kaneshiro | ScoringLive
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EWA BEACH – Campbell track: first in the Oahu Interscholastic Association, last in facilities.

The Sabers' boys and girls placed first and second, respectively, at the Oahu Interscholastic Association championship Saturday at Mililani. It was the boys' third consecutive title, their second in a row while practicing on make-shift facilities literally on campus, as opposed to an athletic field that's part of the campus. The Sabers don't have access to their track and field because the football field is in the closing stages of renovations.

There's a concrete walk way for the sprinters. Another concrete walk way that ends with dirt for the jumpers. A grass area outside the cafeteria is used for shot put and discus training.

And then there are the hurdles. If meets gave points for creativity, the Sabers would earn a gold medal. If there is an event that would require a regulation track, it would be the 100- (girls), 110- (boys) and 300-meter (both) hurdles. There is timing and rhythm involved in this event that precisely-spaced hurdles would be nice.

The master of make-shift is hurdles coach Michael Hanakahi. As an athlete at the old Word of Life, his track teams practiced at Mother Waldron Park in Kakaako, as well as at Kakaako Waterfront Park. Since it's hard to find space for the 300-meter hurdles on grounds mixed with concrete sidewalks and grass, he designed a ribbon-shaped course (think the breast cancer-shape ribbon). There's a grass area between the school's newest building, Saber Hall, and the administration building. Four hurdles are strategically placed as close to true distances as possible on the grass area. The course begins from one end near Saber Hall with two hurdles along the way before crossing the opposite end of the administration building. And hitting a concrete walkway that circles the administration building, which closest simulates the turns on a track. The runner then transitions from the concrete to the grass and finishes the final two hurdles. The grass area isn't exactly level either.



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"The hurdles is really difficult because it's a technical race," said senior Jonah Jessop, who won the 110- and 300-meter hurdles at the OIA meet. "A lot of it is steps and rhythm. We get those rollers and kind of measure out as close as we can get to our races. We measure out the loops so we know how far everything is. That's about all we can do."

Track aficionados probably cringe at hearing the Sabers train on different surfaces (grass and concrete), but Jessop said they wear their unconventional training as a badge of honor.

"By no means practicing on our bumpy field is easy, but it gives us this sense of pride," Jessop said. "We don't have anything, but we're still going to go out and compete with these high-end schools. We're still going to the best as we can and that's what we've been doing."

Twice a week during the season, the Sabers have been allowed to practice on Leilehua's all-weather track. Jessop said it was important to get in quality time during those precious occasions.

"Considering everything, I'm very impressed with what he's accomplished," Hanakahi said. "I'm going to miss the guy because he's a hard worker and dedicated to his craft. All he wants to do is get better. When you have an athlete like that, it's huge."

Jessop wasn't the only one earned points for his team. Teammate Kevin Johnson placed fifth in both hurdle events. Even the second-place girls had moderate success in the hurdles. Jeanette Corpuz placed second, Kira Perdido sixth and Danielle Silva eighth in the 300. Sydney Kane took sixth in the 100.

"It's not what you have that matters," Hanakahi said his coaches told him when he was in high school. "It's what you do with what you have."



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