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Campbell's Leopard on prowl in track

By Nick Abramo on May 3, 2017 | **FEATURED** ([HTTP://WWW.HAWAIIPREPWorld.COM/CATEGORY/FEATURED/](http://www.hawaiiprepworld.com/category/featured/)), **TRACK AND FIELD** ([HTTP://WWW.HAWAIIPREPWorld.COM/CATEGORY/TRACK-AND-FIELD/](http://www.hawaiiprepworld.com/category/track-and-field/))



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Campbell's Leilani Leopard, left, is happy she won her bet against hurdles coach Mike Hanakahi, who is happy she won both hurdles events at the OIA championships Saturday. Photo courtesy of Guy Leopard.

Remember the name **Leilani Leopard**.

Not hard to do, since the Leopard in the animal world is known for its fast running and jumping and leaping of great distances. And hunting.

Leilani Leopard, a sophomore track and field athlete at Campbell, has some of those physical characteristics. And she is constantly hunting better times and distances.

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OIA East Boys Basketball



Campbell coach Mike Hanakahi with his beard intact. Photo courtesy of Guy Leopard.

Leopard medaled in six events at the Oahu Interscholastic Association championships Saturday at Pearl City, and of the six, they were in the three different disciplines – hurdling, jumping and running.

Leopard won both hurdling events, placed second in the 4-x-100-meter relay, third in the 4-x-400 relay, fourth in the long jump and fifth in the 200.

VIDEO: Watch Leopard at the OIA championships (<https://www.youtube.com/embed/ZahzyEFUX8c>)

Earlier in April, during the OIA Western championships, Leopard won five times — the two hurdling events, the long jump, the 200, and was part of the winning 4-x-100 relay team. She was also on the second-place 4-x-400 team.

On top of it all, Leopard won a bet with Sabers hurdling coach **Mike Hanakahi** and got to shave off his beard by winning both OIA hurdling titles.

“She is one of the hardest workers I know, to be quite frank,” Hanakahi said in a phone interview a few hours before he lost the beard. “She really wants to do well and she pushes herself. With this drive and this desire to win and excel, she can get frustrated sometimes. We as coaches try to uplift her and keep her motivated.”

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Leopard has only been working on the hurdles since February. Hanakahi tried to get her to do it as a freshman, but she was needed more on the sprints.



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Campbell hurdles coach Mike Hanakahi after losing the bet and the beard to Sabers athlete Leilani Leopard. Photo courtesy of Guy Leopard.

"This year, she promised to come out for hurdling and she stuck with it," the coach said. "I knew she had a chance to win both hurdling events, but I also knew she would have to fight for it if she wanted it, so I decided to make that deal."

A year ago, Hanakahi agreed to cut his below-the-shoulders long hair, which was somewhat of a compromise. He was actually going to shave his head if **Jonah Jessup** broke the state-meet record in the 300 hurdles.

"The weather was the worst possible for a hurdler," Hanakahi said. "It was really windy and he didn't win it, but he won states to become the first individual champion for Campbell in about 30 years. Cutting my hair was a way to honor that deal."

Leopard, Hanakahi said, is trying to become the Sabers' first girls individual state champion in 20 years at the state meet May 12-13 at Keaau High on the Big Island.

Leopard is also trying to learn new events and, according to Hanakahi, has a goal to be a heptathlete in college.

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“She made states in cross country as a freshman, she is a great sprinter and jumps over 16 feet in the long jump,” he said. “She’s only been doing the long jump for a month or so. She is so excited to try all these new events. The pole vault coach would love to have her and she tried it a couple of times at practice. We’ve talked about her doing the shot put to give her some experience. She would definitely have to hit the weights. She’s that type of athlete, not afraid to try new things. And if she puts her mind to it, she’ll excel.”

Hanakahi, a 2005 Word of Life Academy graduate, also works with the Leeward Track Club.



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He was good friends with **Logan Taylor**, a 2004 Word of Life graduate who was the fastest hurdler out of Hawaii at the time and went on to compete for USC.

“Logan would learn things from some of the top coaches and teach me,” Hanakahi said.

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