

Hoff runs to Island title

Grade 11 Hoff lays claim to senior boy's cross-country championship

KEN ZAHARIA / CAMPBELL RIVER COURIER-ISLANDER

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Brendan Hoff, who now trains at the Canadian Sports Institute in Victoria, with his first place Island senior boy's cross country ribbon and gold medal.

Brendan Hoff has done it again.

Campbell River's long distance running phenom, who now trains in Victoria at the elite Canadian Sports Institute and attends Reynolds Secondary School, became the first Grade

11 runner in history to lay claim to the Vancouver Island High School Senior Boy's Cross Country Championship last Thursday at Beaver Lake in Oak Bay.

Hoff finished the 6.2 km course, which featured two challenging big hills, in 21 minutes and four seconds, five seconds in front of runner-up Nic Ascui, a Grade 12 athlete from Dover Bay.

Hoff is no stranger to going up against older opponents and winning but claiming the Island cross country title as a Grade 11 in his first year of senior high school competition was special to him and he hopes to carry over his winning ways to the BC Provincial championship tomorrow (Saturday) in Victoria at Westshore Park.

"Crossing the line placing first could not have felt any better. I was so happy to be able to win the Island championship as a Grade 11," said Hoff. "I'm very excited for BC's. I'm going into the race very confident and I'm comfortable with the course and I just have to run a great race and stay focused and calm the whole way through. It will be more competitive with the Grade 12s from the Lower Mainland but I'm up for the challenge." Strategy wise Hoff likes to stay near the front pack, or lead the pack, and the Island championship race fit right into his game plan. "I stayed in the very front of the lead pack the whole race and was shoulder to shoulder with Nic Ascui -the race was pretty much down to me and him," explained Hoff. "My strategy going into the race was really to do whatever it took to win, I knew I had to give it 100 per cent, stay mentally strong all the way, and stay calm and relaxed."

Hoff can now add an Island senior boy's cross country title to his already incredible resume which includes the 2013 BC High School Cross Country Junior Championship, plus 2013 2,000m Outdoor Canadian Champion, 2013, 2014 1,500m and 3,000m BC High School Junior Champion, 2014 3,000m Indoor Canadian Champion, plus in 2014 he represented Team Canada at the Youth Olympic Trials in Florida.

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