

Clark cross country runs into transition

Former Heritage coach shares duties of running program

By **PAUL VALENCIA**

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The Clark College cross country program hopes two coaches are better than one this year.

Dave Caldwell, who is heading into his fifth season with the Penguins, has welcomed former Heritage High School coach Ryan Hovde as a co-head coach. The Penguins met Friday morning for their first practice, and both coaches are excited about the concept.

"He's going to do more of the training stuff, and I'll do more of the behind-the-scenes work: paperwork, eligibility," Caldwell said.

"He's got to show me the ropes the first year," Hovde said.

The plan, Hovde said, is for him to take over the cross country program next year, allowing Caldwell to focus more on track and field in the spring. Caldwell is the head coach for both sports.

"I've always wanted to coach at the college level. I spent 11 years at the high school level," Hovde said. "I finally looked at the big picture and said now is as good a time as any."

His boys and girls squads at Heritage combined to win eight league titles and six district championships. The Heritage boys have won the last three league and district titles.

"It was bittersweet to leave, but I thought I might as well go for it," said Hovde, who will remain on Heritage's campus as a counselor.

Caldwell said Hovde will be a perfect match with the Penguins. Caldwell wants to keep local athletes in the area, and he expects Hovde's link to the high school running community to help in recruiting.

"He's a serious guy. He's a true distance runner. He understands it," Caldwell said. "He understands the dedication and commitment it takes. The distance athletes understand this, as well. They are attracted to people ... who can bring that every day."

"He was very successful at the high school level. I really don't see how he couldn't be successful at the college level."

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Friday was the first day of practice for the other fall sports at Clark, as well: men's soccer, women's soccer, and volleyball.

The men's soccer team, coached by Biniam Afenigus, won the Northwest Athletic As-

sociation of Community Colleges championship last year.

This is a season of change in Clark athletics, too. Lisa Quednow-Bickler, who has been the athletic director since 2003, resigned in the summer.

Dennis Huston has agreed to be the athletic director on an interim basis. His first day on the job is expected to be Monday.