

Keith's a big wheel after Mansfield win

By The Daily Tribune Sports Staff

Keith Wheeler is becoming a big wheel in prep track circles.

Last week, the Troy junior had an outstanding day in leading the Colts to a dual meet victory over powerful Southeastern Michigan Association rival Southfield then he took first place in the 300-meter low hurdles at the prestigious Mansfield (Ohio) Relays.

"It was quite a week for Keith," said Troy coach John Bancroft. "In our meet against Southfield he ran a 36.9 in the lows, a 14.2 in the highs and he came from behind with a 48.4 anchor leg in the mile relay."

Wheeler's goal at Mansfield was the meet record of 36.8, but he fell short with a 37.2.

"He just concentrated on the one event because he wanted to go for the record, but the wind wasn't favorable at the time of the race," Bancroft noted.

"I think Keith's victory was the first time since 1980 that an athlete from this area — and maybe the first from

Oakland County — has taken a first at Mansfield," the coach added.

Wheeler was among the top hurdlers in the state as a sophomore last year and is starting right in where he left off.

Bancroft ticked off the qualities that make Wheeler so good.

"He has a burning competitive desire," the coach offered. "Second is his power which computes into speed. He's powerful, fast and has tremendous desire. There's no one you'd rather give the baton to when you're behind in a relay."

Another Daily Tribune area runner also made a strong showing in the hurdles at Mansfield. Southfield's Rudy Redmond took a third place in the 100-meter highs.

In the dual meet last week, Redmond and Wheeler staged an exciting duel with Wheeler winning by a couple steps.

"Rudy's technique in the hurdles is a little better right now, but he's not quite as fast as Keith," Bancroft said.