

# Rating the State High School Track & Field Programs

By Mike Kennedy, Greg Jones and Doug Speck

As indicated in our last issue we would expand our rankings for the Prep Track & Field squads to the statewide level with this issue. We took the top twenty marks in the regularly contested prep events and awarded 20 points for the top mark, 19 for the second best, and so on down to 1 point if you had the twentieth best effort statewide. Wind-Aided efforts were not considered.

## Women's Division

1 Hawthorne	153½
2 Oakland	80½
3 Poly (Long Beach)	76
Mt. Miguel (San Diego)	76
5 St. Francis (Mt. View)	75
Grossmont (La Mesa)	75
7 Locke (L.A.)	72½
8 Quartz Hill	67
9 Pomona	64
10 Thousand Oaks	59
11 Huensme (Oxnard)	57
12 Los Gatos	55½
13 Roosevelt (Fresno)	53
14 Van Nuys	51
Rio Mesa	51
16 Compton	49
17 Gunderson (San Jose)	44
Newport Harbor	44
Westlake (Westlake Village)	44
20 Hogan (Vallejo)	43

Guess what! There is no surprise on top, as State Champion Hawthorne easily totalled up a much higher score than

anyone with 153½ points for first. The Cougars feature a torrid sprint crew reviewed in the last issue, and Coach Kye Courtney and crew could challenge any dual meet group in the country. A comparison with Sterling of Houston (Texas) and Lake Braddock of Burke (Virginia) might be interesting on paper. Hawthorne returns a lot, but loses big gun Tami Stiles next season, so it should be a bit more competitive along the way. Oakland, the runner-up squad in June's State Meet was also second here, with super all-around athlete Ronda Brooks heading a fine team. Poly (Long Beach) and a fine Mt. Miguel of San Diego group tied for third. St. Francis (Mt. View), scoring in seven events, and a Darcy Arreola-led Grossmont of La Mesa team, tied for fifth at 75 points. Thousand Oaks (59) and Los Gatos (55½) featured the most scorers, outside of Hawthorne, with eight each from their fine all-around programs (Hawthorne scored in thirteen spots).

## Men's Division

1 Jesuit (Sacramento)	95
2 Muir (Pasadena)	91
3 Duarte	87½
4 Hawthorne	86
5 Taft (Woodland Hills)	84
6 Saugus	81
7 Independence (San Jose)	66½
8 Johnson (Sacramento)	65½
9 Madera	59

10 Loyola (L.A.)	54
11 Galileo (San Francisco)	52½
12 Locke (L.A.)	50
13 Silver Creek (San Jose)	49
14 Eisenhower (Rialto)	47½
15 American (Fremont)	47
16 Simi Valley	45
17 RJordan (San Francisco)	44
18 Katella (Anaheim)	43
Menlo Atherton (Atherton)	43
20 Grant (Sacramento)	42

In the Men's scoring it was the distance power of Jesuit that carried the Sacramento area school to a 95 point total and team victory. Acclaimed as among the top handful of Cross Country squads ever in California during the Fall harrier season the Jesuit trio of Eric and Mark Mastalir and Paul Thomas continued their fine running into the Spring. A National Distance Medley Relay Record of 9:56.3 and nation leading Mile and Two Mile marks by the Mastalirs along the way were season highlights for Coach Walt Lange's crew. Their scoring here lends ammo to the argument of some that doubling the Mastalirs at the State Meet could have brought Jesuit the first ever State Title for a team that did not score in the sprints, hurdles, or relays.

Muir of Pasadena encountered some late season problems with injuries and relay exchanges that removed them from contention for the State Meet scoring title, but the Mustang's 91 points edged

San Gabriel Valley rivals Duarte (87½) for second. Duarte, under young coach Mike Ramos has to be the program statewide that has come the longest distance in the shortest time, and will be heard from next year with some solid returnees. Hawthorne was fourth with 86 points, edging State Finals Champion Taft of Woodland Hills (84). Southern Section scoring leader from the last issue, Saugus, was sixth with 81. Muir, Duarte, Hawthorne, and Duarte all return quality speedsters, so 1987 should be an interesting year.

A special note of congratulations must go out to those schools who were able to place both their Men's and Women's programs in a high position statewide. Hawthorne, with a 239½ point total when programs are combined close to doubled anyone else's score. Coach Kye Courtney, "El Comandante," "The Legend," "The Great," or whatever you want to call him heads one heck of a program covered by a very capable assistant coaching staff. Coach Jimmy Lee (Locke, Los Angeles) had his teams in the seventh and twelfth positions and their points totals add up to 122½. Coach Eural Smothers had his Hiram Johnson of Sacramento group also able to total over 100 points with 104½ (his Women's group was just short of the top twenty with 39 points).

## The Legend of KYE COURTNEY

By Doug Speck

One week when you see this Coach he is walking purposefully in front of the bleachers at an invitational competition, mumbling something under his breath that you sense from his demeanor is not for publication. The next time you see him is at a Southern California Track Writers' Luncheon, where the Head Coach of one of the area's most academic Universities states that this High School Coach's athletes are the best counseled on classroom work that will lead to college that he has dealt with. One of this Coach's National Record Set-



photo by Burt Davis

ting Relay teams a couple of years back had its season interrupted with a week in 6th period study hall instead of workouts when they were not following through on directions just the way coach wanted. This

Coach's Track & Field team handbook starts with a discussion of academic preparation, team, and school responsibilities, then later gets around to a discussion of things on the track. Probably more news for his program this year than anything else had to do with the politics of tossing off the team the anchor runner for a National Record setting relay squad. Who is the Coach about whom the above information applies? Perhaps you already have a clue, because there is no one in recent Southern California prep Track & Field history who comes close to the aura that surrounds Hawthorne High School's Kye Courtney.

Four consecutive State Track & Field Championships in the most competitive area of the nation speak for themselves. Twenty athletes from a high school program who are currently still involved in the sport of Track & Field at the four year university level is a statistic that speaks for itself. In the past seven years eight Section Team Championships and twenty-five League Championships by the squads that make up the program are stats that need no explanation. The School Record Board at Hawthorne is headlined by three National Outdoor records and seven California State Outdoor records, all set in the last two

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## Prep Notes

years. Two National Indoor Relay Records and four California "under-cover" bests have been set during the winter indoor season by Cougar athletes competing "unattached". In the last five years forty-two athletes from Hawthorne have been accorded All-American status. Three members of the USA Junior Track & Field Championships in Greece this summer are former or current Hawthorne stars (that trio does not include Henry Thomas, as the super UCLA frosh). The statistics go on and on about this Coach's program.

Success at such a high level is no accident, and there is a method to the success that has been arrived at Hawthorne under Courtney. Head Coach for the last eight years Courtney is the first to credit Assistant Coaches Archie Amy, Alex Bravo, Pat Camaranesi, and Larry Reed, but there is more. A popular topic in dealing with the young people of today a few years back was "Tough Love," where some distinct limits and guidelines were coupled with a sincere caring for the individuals involved. This might be a way to describe the unique blend of love and discipline that makes up the Hawthorne High Track & Field program under Coach Kye Courtney. The success at Hawthorne is the result of a carefully thought out philosophy and guidelines, coupled with one heck of a lot of hard work. Coach Courtney can explain at great length the "why" behind what is done at any time of the year with his athletes, and his descriptions of training lead you to believe that no one is "under worked" at Hawthorne.

Yet there is a real humanity to Courtney. Kids today just plain quit on Coaches they do not feel respect and some affection for. In a strange way it seemed fitting that with the State Championship on the line at Sacramento a year back Sean Kelly joked about the 4x400 relay team having to walk back to LA if they lost. By the way Kelly anchored the team to victory and the team state title despite having what was soon diagnosed as mononucleosis. The intensity level shows through, but Courtney has been seen keeping his cool in situations where others would pull their hair out. No team has ever had a sprinter the quality of Henry Thomas (appendectomy) yanked away from a team shortly before the State Meet, as Hawthorne did in 1985, and come through to win the title. For each of the last two years Courtney has undertaken \$5000 fundraising projects to sponsor his teams to travel to the Texas Relays, where they established a National Record in the 4x400m relay for prep males with their 3:07.40 in 1985.

Courtney brings a "back east" orientation to the sport of Track & Field to his coaching at Hawthorne. A product of New York City area schools, he was a member of Manhattan College's record setting 4x880 yard relay teams in the early 1960's, and

twice placed second in the AAU Indoor Championships at 600y. The New York City environment and indoor season of running may have given Courtney a slightly different outlook on life and running. Hawthorne athletes are very aggressive and competitive, a reflection of their mentor's "Big Apple" approach to life. Cougar athletes are encouraged to compete unattached during the couple of month long winter all-comer schedule of meets in the greater Los Angeles area each year. Courtney's experience with the indoor season in the east seems to have blended with the Southern California sunshine during our winter all-comer's season to turn out athletes who can go fast for a number of months and remain relatively injury-free.

photo by Burt Davis



Travis Hanna - super Soph.

Any High School or University program that wins very, very big finds itself scrutinized very closely with the ever-present rumors that something special is going on to cause

the program to rise and remain at extra-successful heights. It is a fact that there have been a number of transfers to the Hawthorne program in the past few years. There is not a coach anywhere who would not put an athlete who is legally residing in the attendance area and fulfilling Section and School eligibility requirements out on the athletic field to compete. Be very assured that the Hawthorne School District has very close tabs on any student that transfers in. With many Southern California high school track programs nothing more than a couple of relay teams and extra sprinter of two it does not seem surprising that parents would want to see their children in the best program possible. Transfers to Hawthorne have often followed this basic right guaranteed American families under the Constitution where they can live where they wish to. The Hawthorne Track & Field Coaching staff is very supportive of the other activities that their athletes take part in, with Courtney and staff members present at the school's Cross Country meets, and Cougar tracksters forming the nucleus of a recently very successful football program.

Hawthorne does just fine with home-grown talent. Henry Thomas was a community product all the way, as was the majority of the twenty who are competing at the four-year level. Courtney is very, very excited about the future of the Cougar program. The 1986 Women's State Champion group was made up of a number of underclass athletes, with the Men's squad featuring mostly junior and sophomore stars. Travis Hanna, who as a soph anchored the all underclass Cougar 1600m relay group to victory in the State Meet with his patented flying final 100m, was as exciting a new star as there was to the sport in Southern California this spring. You can be assured that no California prep team has had an entire State Championship (national record setting) relay group graduate, then return to that competition the next June with an all underclass squad to win once again as Hawthorne did in the Men's 4x400m event. They must be doing something right in the preparation of athletes at Hawthorne. Credit goes where it is due, and lately there is no one in the Western United States who deserves more credit as the mentor of a Prep Track & Field program than Kye Courtney of Hawthorne High School.

Incidentally, the legend of Travis Hanna has also spread to the East Coast. One June 14th the State Champion 1600m relay group from Hawthorne competed unattached against the top relay squads from the Northeastern U.S. at the Jumbo Elliott Meet at Villanova. Curtis Conway, Yki Vallery, and Robert Carroll gave Hanna a narrow lead as he started his anchor leg, but after 300m of the final lap Travis had slipped to seventh place. On the homestretch the precocious Cougar anchor runner simply moved out into Lane 4 and blew by everyone on the way to a 47.8 anchor and 3:16.29 overall time. Hanna's performance left spectators gasping and was one of the highlights of the entire meet.