

THE "VEGAS FOUR" WIN BOYS TRACK STATE TITLE

HOW DID THEY DO IT?

By ShaRhonda Ramos

It was a warm Saturday evening and the nearly 63 member Las Vegas High School track team was awaiting the final zone scores and the placements for the following week's state meet. As Las Vegas' men's team looked over their entries, they saw that they were only entered in seven of seventeen events. It would seem as though the cards were stacked against them. To make matters worse, they only had four men competing in the meet. The odds didn't appear to be in Las Vegas' favor, but the "Vegas Four" apparently didn't read the odds. The young men had nothing to lose and everything to gain. As long as they gave their all, their friends, families, and school would have been proud, and if by chance they pulled off the impossible, they would have a place etched in history forever. The hopes of a state championship rested on the shoulders of the teams only seniors, Jefferey Scott, Raymond Flowers, Eric Boykin and Donnie Davis.

Although the odds were numerically against them, the "Vegas Four" were confident in the fact that they were four of the fastest young men in the state. With only seven events, they were going to have to place high in every event to score enough points to win. This is quite a lot of pressure to place on the shoulders of four young men, but they took it in stride and along with their coach Tyrone Armstrong, they prepared for the state meet.

To capture the state title, the object is to qualify as many people in each event as possible. The more athletes in each event, the more chances to score points. Generally, the team with the most athletes would stand the better chance of winning. This would be evident in the fact that never before in Nevada state track history has a team with only four members won the title.

Not only were these young men under pressure because there was only 4 of them, but they are the last track team from the old Las Vegas High School. Las Vegas High School Boys track hadn't won a state title since 1973, and these four young men were the school's best chance of victory in a long while.

Coach Armstrong, having watched these men in both football and basketball, was well aware of their athletic ability and speed. He was confident in them all. Barring an unfortunate injury, he saw no reason why they wouldn't be in the running for the title. "The teams didn't do well in football or basketball, but this was an opportunity to come out on top," he said.

It would have been easy to get in the shadow of Eldorado High School who has won four of the last five titles or Cheyenne who was undefeated this season and qualified for nine events. Did the young men feel the heat of pressure? "Lots of pressure!" said Raymond Flowers. "Everyone said we had the best chance with four people, but that's a lot of pressure!" added Donnie Davis. Jefferey Scott said, "I didn't really think we had a chance in zone. I tried not to think about the pressure, we just did our best and came out on top in state."

The Las Vegas High School Boys track team literally ran their way into the spotlight. The team accumulated four first place finishers, two second place finishers, one third place finish, and two fourth place finishers.

Raymond Flowers was the defending state champion in the 100 meter dash but finished fourth this year with a time of 11.05 seconds. "I was a little disappointed in this finish because I should have finished better," said Flowers. Flowers can be proud of his other two individual performances because he is now the state cham-

panion in the 200 meter in 21.53 seconds and the 400 in 48.3 seconds. Raymond also ran an amazing 47.3 second 400 meter spit in the mile relay which brought his team from fourth place to second place and sealed the championship for Las Vegas High School. As a member of the Las Vegas High football and basketball team, Raymond had time to hone his skills to compete in the sport that would culminate his years of high school athletics. Ray has been approached by several colleges among which are the University of Nevada, Reno, Northern Arizona University, and Purdue.

Eric Boykin also competed in three individual events. He ran the 110 meter high hurdles and took second place with a time of 14.86 seconds. Boykin is the state champion long jumper and triple jumper. He took the long jump with a jump of 24 feet 1 inch. He won the triple jump with a jump of 47 feet 5 inches.

Donnie Davis competed in two individual events. He came in fourth place in the 110 meter high hurdles with a time of 15.0 seconds. He came in third place in the triple jump with a jump of 45 feet 9 inches. Davis said of his triple jump performance, "I was kind of disappointed because I expected to get second." Donnie was a four sport athlete as he played football, basketball, and baseball as well as track for Las Vegas High.

Jefferey Scott didn't compete in any individual events, but he had the difficult task of cheerleading on his teammates, watching from the sidelines, and praying that none of them got injured. Jefferey anxiously waited through two days of competition so he could be run his important leg of the mile relay, the final race of the state meet. As a member of the Las Vegas High School football and basketball team, Jefferey knows what it means to be a team player



High School Track Stars, (R-L) Ray Flowers, Jeff Scott and Eric Boykin of Las Vegas High School proudly hold the State Championship Trophy captured this past weekend with Coach Tyrone Armstrong. (Photos by Savoy/LVS-Voice)

and he filled this role. To fully understand the magnitude of this victory, you need to know that not only did these four young men win the Nevada State track title, but their times and distances make them nationally competitive. For example, Raymond Flowers with times of 21.53 seconds and 48.3 seconds in the 200 meter dash and the 400 meter dash respectively, is among the top 20 high school sprinters nationwide. Eric Boykin, with a long jump of 24 feet 1 inch is easily among the top 10 nationwide.

When a team wins, you give credit where it's due. The coach to the athletes: "They worked really hard to come out on top and they deserved it," said Coach Tyrone Armstrong. The athletes to the coach: "He was a great coach. He talked us through the races. He taught us never to make a nemesis of any other athlete so that someone unknown couldn't beat you," said Raymond Flowers. "Coach Armstrong is a nice, hardworking man. You really have to be ready to practice or just don't

show up," Jefferey Scott said. "Coach Armstrong is like a father figure more than a coach. He's very caring. He guides us and gives us good advice," added Donnie Davis.

These four young brothers have accomplished a feat worthy of praise. These young men will forever be remembered as the ones who brought honor, pride, respect, and a State

Championship to Las Vegas High School Track in 1993. As seniors, we would hope that Jefferey Scott, Raymond Flowers, Eric Boykin, and Donnie Davis will continue their education on the next level. As brother Malcolm X said,

"Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."

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Coach Major has been a Valley High School Physical Education Teacher for 15 years. She has been the Valley High School Head Girls' Basketball Coach 9 years. Of those 9 years her teams have gone to state playoffs 7 times. She was named coach of the year in 1985, '89 and '92, and coached the 1992 So. Nevada Girls' All-Star team.

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