

Dan  
Hruby



5-3-88

## SJS may lose track program

**W**HAT — no track and field at San Jose State?

No chance for a return of Speed City, as they used to call SJS when Lee Evans, Tommie Smith and John Carlos were blazing their way across the track-and-field map?

No more John Powells, Mark Schillings, Felix Bohnis or Fred Schumachers?

Surely this can't be allowed to happen.

But track and field, and possibly men's gymnastics and women's field hockey, are in serious jeopardy. For financial reasons, they could be eliminated.

The SJS Athletics Board already has interviewed track coach Marshall Clark and field hockey coach Carolyn Lewis about the crisis. It plans to talk next with men's gymnastics coach Doug Van Everen.

"We're looking very closely at our entire athletic program," Dr. Charles Whitcomb, the board chairman and NCAA faculty representative, said Monday. "The question is whether we can afford all the sports we have. We're talking to the coaches and evaluating their programs. We will make recommendations to the president (Dr. Gail Fullerton) — we can only hope they'll be the right ones."

The board will meet again today and will try to come up with its recommendations within a week or two, Whitcomb said.

Rumors have circulated for weeks that SJS will drop track.

"Bud Winter (who coached the program to international fame) would turn over in his grave," said Michael O'Kane, an ex-Spartan runner. "He probably already is. I'm crushed we might lose track. That would be terrible. It's not just a program — it's a heritage; it's part of the spirit of San Jose State."

**T**RACK at SJS has been on a slow decline since Winter retired in 1970. Ernie Bullard coached the team until 1984, when he moved to Southern Cal. Clark, an assistant, was promoted to the head position.

The money crunch on campuses has been especially hard on track because of the large number of athletes involved. Dual meets have all but disappeared. High school programs also suffered from a lack of funds.

The normally mild-mannered Clark, 55, said he won't go quietly if the decision is no on track.

"I think I covered our bases pretty well (addressing the board), being professional, not getting emotional," he said. "But I did leave it with, 'OK, you've marched us out onto the pier, but that's as far as we will go. We won't just fall in — we're going to fight, because there is too much at stake here.'"

The deterioration of the artificial track at Bud Winter Field is a critical issue, Clark said. It was installed 21 years ago and gradually has become an embarrassment.

Some of Winter's friends threaten to dig up the plaque carrying his name and haul it away.

"I couldn't support that idea," said Ed Burke, a former SJS athlete who carried the U.S. flag in the '84 Olympics. "That is hallowed ground."

The State of California has earmarked \$240,000 to repair the track, Whitcomb said, but despite its high priority the money could be lost because the state has its own financial pinch.

**I**F track is dropped, presumably the allocation would go elsewhere.

Clark said he has been notifying parents of recently recruited athletes the program could be in trouble.

"It's one of the hardest things I've ever had to do," he said.

One alumni source hinted this is all a ploy to get rid of Clark in favor of someone more dynamic, someone who could excite the community to support the program with big dollars. But Whitcomb strongly denied the report, adding: "I've never heard that rumor, and I wouldn't support such a thing. I feel Marshall has done an extremely fine job under the circumstances."

Clark is a non-tenured employee with a \$50,000 annual salary. He has two quarter-time assistants. His operating budget is about \$28,000.

Clark conceded he is no Bud Winter.

"If there is a place where I could be criticized, it's that I am not good at the Rotary Club," he said. "I've tried it, but there wasn't the interest — I'm not going to beat my head against the wall."

Athletic Director Randy Hoffman, who will make his recommendations to the board, said the school needs an academic monitor for its 18 sports programs. It is the only school in the Pacific Coast Athletic Association without such a person. And it also needs a conditioning coach.

"We're committed to improving these two areas," he said.

They are important, no doubt. But track, somehow, has to survive.



**Mark Purdy**  
Sports Editor

## SJS is forced to make choices

5-13-88

**S**AN JOSE STATE has pulled the plug on four varsity sports. A sadness? Yes. A tragedy? Hardly.

The knee-jerk reaction is to ask why the school could be so cruel and so dastardly. Wrong question. A better one: Why do wrestlers and runners have the right to receive scholarships in the first place? It is odd how, amid all the teeth-gnashing and wailing over pink slips, nobody stops to consider that fundamental issue.

I assume we all agree that, compared to the biology and sociology departments, varsity sports aren't crucial to a university. Why, then, are more scholarships awarded in sports than in chemistry?

You know why. It's because nobody holds tailgate picnics at chemistry exams. Alumni like to cheer and support sports more than they like to cheer and support psychology experiments.

The catch is, alums don't support all sports equally. For whatever reasons, U.S. civilians in large numbers will pay to watch just two college sports: football and basketball. Maybe that's not right. Maybe that's not fair. But it is the marketplace.

You can think of college sports at a major institution as a huge farm. Football and basketball are the cash crops. They help keep the rest of the farm solvent. Sports such as field hockey and wrestling are IOU crops. They lose money. The only way they stay alive is through subsidies (from the university) or by living off the profits from the cash crops.

**A**ND right now, San Jose State is not the healthiest of farms. The school's athletic budget is roughly \$4.5 million. Roughly \$2.2 million of that is a subsidy from the school's general fund. That is a significantly higher percentage than at most universities.

Basically, San Jose State would have no athletic money problems if Spartan Stadium was full at every home football game. But, as we all know, the stadium is not full. So the school has been forced to make tough choices. Including this one.

"It hasn't been a fun day," sighed Randy Hoffman, the school's athletic director. He spent Thursday fending off angry phone calls and student protests.

He is willing to take the heat, he says, because the money being saved by this week's cuts will be spent wisely. Part of it will be used on, of all things, education. A full-time academic counselor will be hired for all Spartan athletes, men and women.

When Hoffman was hired last May — after an ugly period in which SJS churned through three athletic directors in four years — he was surprised to find that the athletic department had no full-time academic adviser. Every other school in the Spartans' league had at least one. Fresno State had five.

Hoffman says the new counselor will make SJS a better place to play sports and earn a diploma. What he won't say is that in the past, far too many SJS athletes have left the school with bitter tastes in their mouths because the university used up their eligibility and dumped them into the real world with no degree.

**“M**Y whole standpoint,” he said, “is that I don't want any student who comes to San Jose State on an athletic scholarship to feel used or abused or feel that no one cared for them while they were here. If that has happened in the past, it is clearly from our lack of putting resources into our academic support staff.”

This is an especially interesting point, considering the most common theme in the aftermath of this week's cuts. What a shame, people are saying, that a track and field program with such a fine heritage has to be axed. How awful that “Speed City” will be no more.

Ask yourself one question, however. When all of those “Speed City” people left SJS, where did they go? Did they contribute financially — or otherwise — to keep the program afloat? Some did. But most didn't. Was it because they didn't leave the school with glowing memories?

Compare that to what happened at Stanford two years ago. The school planned to drop four varsity sports. But the coaches were given the chance to raise alumni funds that would underwrite their programs. Three of the four sports succeeded in doing this and were saved.

Yes, I feel for the SJS coaches who will lose their jobs. I don't feel as much for the athletes. They'll be able to keep their scholarships for the entire four-year term, if they wish.

It's a rotten break to have a team yanked out from beneath you. But nowhere in the rules of life is it written that wrestlers and runners are entitled to a free education. If they think they're unlucky, they should talk with the students who are working one or two part-time jobs just to pay their tuitions. Those are the real heroes.

# SJS lost more than just four sports

5-22-88

I was disheartened to learn that San Jose State is eliminating several sports (track and field, cross-country, wrestling and field hockey) from its collegiate roster. As an educator, businessman and athlete, I feel that the eradication of any sport is a loss that will have far-reaching consequences.

Participants in the so-called minor sports benefit in ways that go beyond scholarships and athletic recognition. The camaraderie, hard work and discipline required by athletes striving for excellence carries a lifelong influence. Benefits like this cannot be found in a balance sheet or in gate receipts. Instead, all one has to do is look with pride at the athletic graduates of SJS.

— Stacy H. Geiken

Los Gatos

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The recent decision by San Jose State to cut four sports was wrong, absolutely wrong, and should be reconsidered.

It would be nice if everything a college or university did made money, but their charter is to educate, not make money, something that should extend into the athletic department. By cutting these sports, SJS is sending out a message that the monetary benefits provided by a program are more important than any educational benefits that program might provide.

If the sole object of college athletics is to make money, then we should pay the athletes rather than just give them scholarships. Would SJS like to be the first university to do just that?

— June E. Cooley

San Jose

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The axing of four sports at San Jose State is very hard to accept and very difficult to understand. Before the four sports were axed, I wonder if all the alternatives were adequately considered and discussed.

I think the elimination of the sports could have been avoided. Not enough imagination was used

# Judge defers action on suit to restore four SJS sports

By Tom Philp  
Mercury News Staff Writer

8-24-88

A group of San Jose State students seeking immediate reinstatement of four athletic programs left a San Jose courtroom disappointed Tuesday when a county superior court judge deferred action on their lawsuit.

Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Leslie Nichols took the students' suit under advisement, saying he would issue his decision in writing at some unspecified future date.

The students were seeking a preliminary injunction to stop the university from putting into effect its decision to eliminate the men's track and field, wrestling, men's cross-country and women's field hockey programs.

Despite the disappointment, student leaders remained optimistic.

"I'm very confident that it will go our way, because we spent so many hundreds of hours this summer preparing our case," said Terry McCarthy, president of the Associated Students, the student governing board.

SJS President Gail Fullerton on May 12 eliminated the four sports programs on the recommendation of an athletics advisory board.

The sports were dropped to

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— Terry McCarthy,  
SJS student president

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make more than \$200,000 available to pay for two academic advisers, a strength coach and a drug counselor, according to Athletic Director Randy Hoffman.

In the lawsuit, filed Aug. 5, the students maintained that the university ignored its own policy by terminating the athletic programs abruptly.

In addition, the lawsuit alleges that the university broke state open-meeting laws by excluding Associated Students representatives from some athletics board meetings and failing to inform them of others. And it charges that the university allowed incoming freshmen in the four sports to sign letters-of-intent without informing them of discussions to drop their sports.

Attorneys representing the university said the students waited too long to file their lawsuit.