

No cruise, but Passaic's Cruz rallies to win

By **PAUL SCHWARTZ**
STAFF WRITER

HACKENSACK - Ricchard Carter continues to contribute to the Passaic High School track program more than a decade after he earned six Passaic County sprint and long jump championships and the 1992 State Group 4 100-meter title.

Two years ago, as an assistant coach for the Passaic football team and a volunteer assistant with the track team, he convinced a freshman football prospect to go out for winter track. Hayrol Cruz has since become the crown jewel of the Indians' boys track program.

Friday night at the Rothman Center, the versatile junior continued his development, coming from behind three times to finally overtake DaQuan Huffin of Palisades Park at the finish line to win the 600 meters at the Ridgewood Winter Games 1.

"I thought I was going to lose the race when I tried to pass him two times and I couldn't," said Cruz. "Then I saw him peek back at me and I knew he was scared I was going to catch him, so I just tried to run even faster."

The result was a win in 1:27.5, the same time as Huffin, a State Group 1 medalist at 400 meters last year and a very good time on the slow Fairleigh Dickinson track.

"I know I'm getting better because I'm

INDOOR TRACK RIDGEWOOD GAMES 1

practicing harder and listening to my coaches more," said Cruz, an All-Passaic selection in winter and spring track last year and the fourth-place finisher in last fall's Passaic cross-country championship. "I'm doing a lot of distance work."

Cruz also had a 2:03 split for 800 in the 3,200 relay and almost brought the Indians from eighth place to a win in that event Friday.

David Anthony was a member of the Wayne Valley cross-country team that

won the Passaic County championship in the fall and earned the Indians' their only State sectional title. And the senior distance runner also contributed to the Indians' five girls team when he convinced his sister, Erin, a freshman volleyball player last fall, to go out for indoor track.

A year later, Anthony, the winner of the girls 600 meters at the Ridgewood Winter Games 1, is becoming as versatile and as promising as Cruz.

Erin Anthony was All-Passaic last spring as part of the 1,600 relay team and was sixth in the Passaic County girls cross-country championship, earning All-Passaic honors in the fall.

"David was always trying to get me to

run because he thought I was always quick," said Anthony. "But when I did it, it took me a while to get the hang of it, and when I did, I just started to get better."

Erin Anthony ran a 2:37 800 split Friday, helping the Indians win the 3,200 title before winning her individual race. Wayne Valley distance coach Conan Ward seems to think the sky is the limit for his talented soph.

"By the spring she'll be running the 1,600, I think," Ward said, "but she's still a vital member of our 4 by 400 relay that we want to break four minutes this spring. That's versatility."

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TRACK 1-12-2004

RIDGEWOOD WINTER GAMES 1

AT ROTHMAN CENTER,
HACKENSACK

Girls

55 - 1. Adaku Ezeonwuka, Neptune, 7.2; 2. Alison DiDomenico, Passaic Valley, 7.3; 3. Michelle Losey, Piscataway, 7.3; 4. Ronnay Parham, Piscataway, 7.7; 5. Azhia Goode, Roselle, 7.8.

55HH - 1. Tremaine Shaw, Piscataway, 8.7; 2. Kara Sims, Neptune, 8.9; 3. Julianne Wiggins, River Dell, 9.4; 4. Irene Frimpong, Piscataway, 9.6; 5. Annie Sorbrin, Freehold Boro, 9.9.

400 - 1. Alison DiDomenico, Passaic Valley, 1:01.4; 2. Adaku Ezeonwuka, Neptune, 1:01.8; 3. LaVonne Ellerbe, Wayne Valley, 1:02.9; 4. Kristin Bircsak, Hightstown, 1:04.9; 5. Colleen Cumberbatch, Piscataway, 1:05.2.

600 - 1. Erin Anthony, Wayne Valley, 1:50.2; 2. Awinna Martinez, Passaic, 1:50.7; 3. Elise Tagatac, Freehold Borough, 1:51.1; 4. Zacara Adams, Roselle, 1:51.7; 5. Megan Quall, Pearl River, 1:52.5.

1,600 - 1. Lisa Miller, West Windsor Plainsboro-South, 5:34.5; 2. Lauren Kopecki, Watchung Hills, 5:34.6; 3. Jacquol Carroll, Wayne Valley, 5:42.3; 4. Gina Ferretti, Piscataway, 5:42.3; 5. Lourdes Fabian, Kennedy, 5:47.3.

1,600 relay - 1. Neptune (Adaku Ezeonwuka, Kara Sims, Kelly Bushe, Lauren Jones) 4:29.3; 2. Watchung Hills, 4:33.0; 3. Freehold Boro, 4:33.7; 4. Roselle, 4:36.6; 5. Sayreville, 4:36.7.

3,200 relay - 1. Wayne Valley (Katie Storbeck, Jacquol Carroll, Erin Anthony, Stephanie Herrick), 10:27.9; 2. Freehold Boro, 10:29.2; 3. West Windsor Plainsboro-South, 10:30.5; 4. Memorial, 10:35.7; 5. Holy Angels, 10:36.4.

Boys

55 - 1. Mike Demko, Hightstown, 6.5; 2. Eric Blount, West Side, 6.6; 3. Derrick Wilborn, Passaic Tech, 6.7; 4. Brad Ottino, Passaic Valley, 6.9; 5. Nana Asare, Roselle, 6.9.

55HH - 1. Jean Gentili, Roselle, 7.6; 2. Chris Nelms, Neptune, 7.6; 3. Anthony Gaugler, Passaic Tech, 8.1; 4. Carlos Lopez, Perth Amboy, 8.1; 5. Marlon Samuels, Toms River East, 8.3.

400 - 1. Corey Wright, Neptune, 53.4; 2. Akeem Younge, Passaic Tech, 53.5; 3. Ted Mavraganis, West Windsor Plainsboro-South, 54.4; 4. Jimmy Principe, Toms River East, 54.5; 5. Carlos Lopez, Perth Amboy, 54.6.

600 - 1. Hayrol Cruz, Passaic, 1:27.5; 2. DaQuan Huffin, Palisades Park, 1:27.5; 3. Adam Cannelisse, Watchung Hills, 1:32.0; 4. Randolph Dorsent, Roselle, 1:35.8; 5. Jamar Rouse, Passaic Tech, 1:36.3.

1,600 - 1. Mohamed Khadraoui, Kennedy, 4:33.4; 2. Steve Kinney, Watchung Hills, 4:41.4; 3. Joe Ennis, West Windsor Plainsboro-South, 4:44.2; 4. Andrei Olifer, Fort Lee, 4:48.7; 5. Mike O'Flaherty, Freehold Borough, 4:49.1.

1,600 relay - 1. Passaic Tech (Hallstock, Derrick Wilborn, Akeem Younge, Anthony Gaugler) 3:40.2; 2. Roselle, 3:42.7; 3. Watchung Hills, 3:44.0; 4. Fort Lee, 3:44.6; 5. Neptune, 3:45.3.

3,200 relay - 1. Fort Lee (Anton Revenkov, Ilya Tipikly, Andrei Olifer, Eugene Reshetov) 8:48.3; 2. Passaic, 8:49.9; 3. Watchung Hills, 8:52.7; 4. Passaic Tech, 8:59.5; 5. Sayreville, 9:00.1.