

Robert Harrell

Athlete: Track & Field

Santa Ana HS – Class of 1972

1972 graduate Robert Harrell is considered one of Santa Ana's most successful track stars, compiling 34 first place finishes over his three-year career at Santa Ana High School. As a 9th grader at Smedley Junior High, Harrell was running an incredible 9.9 100-yard dash, but Santa Ana's Coach Engman had different plans for him, moving him to the relay team and the 440-yard dash his first year at Santa Ana. Harrell quickly became an integral part of the 1970 and 1972 track teams that brought home the Los Angeles Tribune Perpetual Trophy for the Southern California Track and Field Championship, a trophy you'll see permanently displayed at Santa Ana High School.

In 1970, Harrell's first year in high school, his 4 x 110 relay team took 1st place at all but one competition. Along the way they set three meet records, won the Southern California CIF Finals with a time of 41.6, and became State Champions in tying the State Finals meet record with a time of 41.4. Harrell also ran the 440-yard dash that year, finishing first at the Chaffey Invitational and the Sunset League Finals, before placing fifth at the Southern California CIF Finals, by the way, this would be the lowest finish in any race of his career.

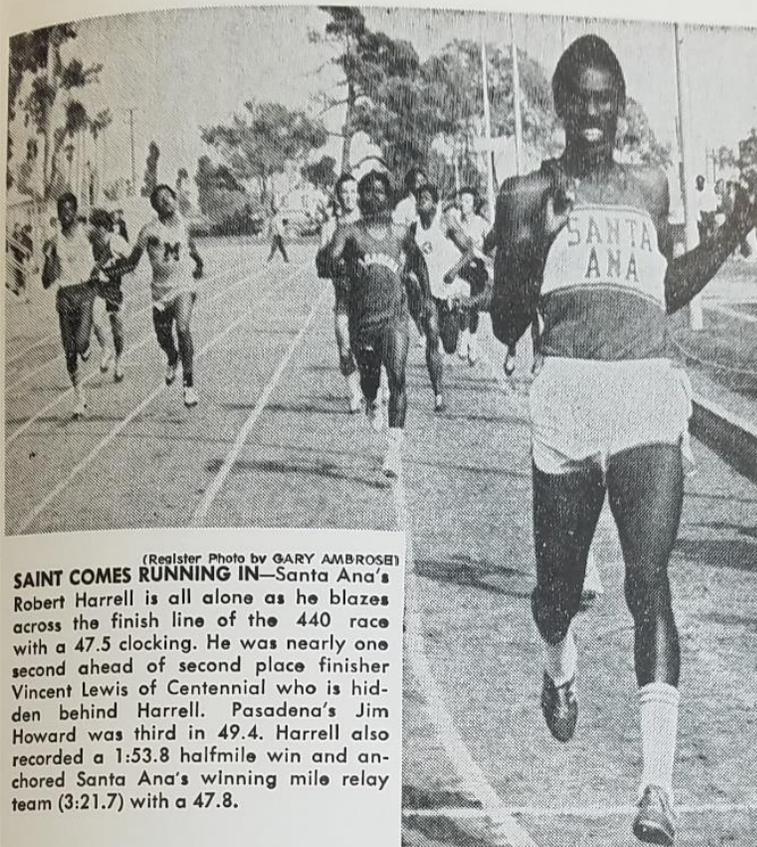
1971 saw him double the number of events he competed in to four, and he continued to rise to the top with first place finishes in the 440-yard dash, the 8 x 220 Mile Relay, the 4 x 110 Relay, and the 4 x 440 Relay. He again qualified for the Southern California CIF Finals, placing third in the 440-yard dash with a time of 47.8, which qualified him for the CIF State Finals where he placed 4th in the 440.

Harrell was absolutely dominant his senior year of 1972. He was named the "Outstanding Athlete of the Meet" at the Southern Counties Meet as he led Santa Ana High to an overall first place meet finish by anchoring the 4 x 440 Relay team to their own first place finish, as well as personally finishing first in both the 440 and 880. Through the season, his 4 x 440 Relay team finished first in all four of their competitions, setting a meet record at Arcadia and a Sunset League record in the league finals. He also had a perfect run in every one of his 440-yard dash races, setting a meet record at Arcadia with a 47.5, and a Sunset League record. He went on to win the 440 at the Southern California CIF Finals, and he finished the season as State Champion, running the 440 in 47.4. He didn't miss a beat in the 880, winning every race but the CIF Finals, where he placed 2nd. He set the Arcadia meet 880 record with a time of 1.51, as well as a Sunset League Finals record of 1.52. He capped off his stellar high school career as a 440-Yard Dash All-American Athlete after being invited to Nationals where he took 2nd at the US Track & Field Championship at Louisiana State University.



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Harrell Of Saints



(Register Photo by GARY AMBROSE)
SAINT COMES RUNNING IN—Santa Ana's Robert Harrell is all alone as he blazes across the finish line of the 440 race with a 47.5 clocking. He was nearly one second ahead of second place finisher Vincent Lewis of Centennial who is hidden behind Harrell. Pasadena's Jim Howard was third in 49.4. Harrell also recorded a 1:53.8 halfmile win and anchored Santa Ana's winning mile relay team (3:21.7) with a 47.8.

Upstages Prep Field

Santa Anan Jets 47.5; 1:53.8