

PRESS RELEASE

March 19, 2015

ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR THE WEEQUAHIC H. S. GIRLS INDOOR TRACK TEAM 2014-2015 New Jersey Group 1 Relays and Group 1 Track & Field Team State Champions

(Newark, NJ) – The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders the Weequahic H. S. Girls Indoor Track Team for winning both the 2014-2015 New Jersey Group 1 Relays and Group 1 Track & Field Team State Championships during its Wednesday, March 18, 2015, meeting held at the Hall of Records. The Board’s Commendation was co-sponsored and presented to the team by Freeholder At-Large Rufus I. Johnson and District 2 Freeholder Wayne L. Richardson, both of Newark.



The State Champion Weequahic H. S. Girls Indoor Track Team was honored by the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders during a ceremony held at the Hall of Records on Wednesday, March 18th. Pictured above with their team are Head Coach Kcyied Zahir (center), Volunteer Coach Eddie Green and Athletic Director Elizabeth Aranjo (2nd row, far right). Also pictured are Freeholder President Britnee N. Timberlake (2nd row, 3rd from left), Freeholder Rufus I. Johnson (2nd row, 4th from left), and Freeholder Wayne L. Richardson (2nd row, 2nd from right). Photo by Glen Frieson

Freeholder Johnson, who has been a member of the management team with USA Youth Track & Field for seven years, congratulated the team for its outstanding season saying, “I am very, very proud of you”, and spoke about Newark’s proud track and field tradition saying, “it’s time we let our Newark talent shine in national Junior Olympics-qualifying events across the country again.”

After applauding the team and recounting its long list of successes, Freeholder Richardson congratulated Head Coach Kcyied Zahir saying, “On behalf of the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, it is our honor and our pleasure to present you with this commendation celebrating the accomplishments of your state champion Weequahic Girls Track Team, and for bringing immense pride to all the residents of the City of Newark.”

Coach Kcyied Zahir thanked the freeholders for the recognition, saying “It means a lot.” He also spoke of the team getting together during the summer and deciding “this is what we are going to do...we are going to be *unreasonable* and come up with no reasons to fail in our goal to win the state championship.” He also expressed his thanks to Coach Eddie Green, who he described as “the missing piece who got us to the championship.” He also spoke fondly of Freeholder Johnson, saying “He was my Little League baseball coach, and Freeholder, I’m just glad I had a chance to make you proud.”

Saborrah Cooper spoke on behalf of the team saying, “We’re really proud to be recognized for our achievements, and we will always be able to look back on this time and know that we will be able to reach any goal we have in life.”

The Indians, won the 2014-2015 New Jersey Group 1 Relay State Championship and the Group 1 Track & Field Team State Championship, both for the first time in school history. They won the Group 1 Relay State Championship on January 17th at the Bennett Center in Toms River, edging defending champion Haddonfield H. S, 56-52, to become the first girls relay team from Newark in 18 years to win a State Relays Championship in any Group. At the Group 1 Track & Field Team State Championships held on February 14th, also at the Bennett Center, the team placed second in the 4x400 Relay to secure its Championship with a 52-49 victory, also over defending champion Haddonfield.

The 2014-2015 Winter Track Season was the greatest in school history. In addition to winning its Group 1 Relay and Group 1 Team Track & Field State Championships, the team also won the North Jersey Championships, the Super Essex Conference Championship and the Essex County Track & Field Championship, all for the first time ever, as well as the Group 1 Central Jersey Sectional Team Championship for the second time. The team achieved its landmark season under the leadership of Head Coach Kcyied Zahir, who was named the New Jersey Girls Track “Coach of the Year” as well as the Essex County Girls Track “Coach of the Year” for the third time in the last five years.

Senior Yaminah Smith posted a remarkable season with national implications. On December 29, 2014, she smashed the meet record at the 15th Annual Marine Corps Invitational by posting a time of 5:36.94 at the New Balance Track and Field Center in New York. Weeks later, she led the whole way as she dropped her #1 U. S. time down to 5:29.76 in a very impressive victory in the girls One Mile Steeplechase at the New Balance Games on Saturday January 24, 2015. Earlier this season she was the biggest individual winner at the Super Essex Conference meet, finishing first in the 1,600 (5:20.35), the 800 (2:26.70) and the 3,200 (11:35.46), as Weequahic rolled to a 115-33 victory over runner-up Newark Tech. In addition to Smith’s successes, teammates Chevelle Hunte and Kellyanne James were also Group 1 State Champions in their respective events (high jump, and 55m hurdles).

The team was comprised of the following members: Yaminah Smith, Saborrah Cooper, Chevelle Hunte, Kellyanne James, Rebecca Cadet, Macarla Hines, Dominique Jarrell, Laquanda Vincent, Krissantonia Kerr, Jasmine Bruton, Aminah Choudury, and Desja Lee. It was coached by Head Coach Kcyied Zahir and Volunteer Coaches Eddie Green and Mahdi Sumter.

Freeholder At-Large Rufus I. Johnson of Newark is currently serving his third term on the Board. Freeholder Wayne L. Richardson was elected to his first term as District 2 Freeholder in November of 2014, and represents Irvington, Maplewood, and parts of Newark’s South and West Wards.

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