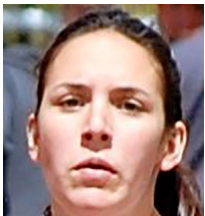


## 'Celebrate the Intensity'

Written by Photos and story by Tom Hartsock Sun Correspondent  
Thursday, 30 April 2015 10:56

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I love sports! I especially like the high school variety, though I have no aversions to T-Ball, TDFL or GYBL games.

I have discovered over the years that this interest is not always about the quality of play, but rather about the intensity these players utilize on the field, court, or pitch. I know the same intensity is also with them as they build LEGOS, play computer games, or when they study, but those are more private moments, whereas sports is open for everyone to see.

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The looks on their faces as they strive to do their best is one that never gets old and has been ageless for centuries. Their particular expression, usually a grimace, seems to light up their face. Even if they are cool enough not to make these gestures with their mouths, the eyes can tell the story. There is a ray of hope in them at the starting line, a final desperate effort at the finish, that cannot be denied.

The accompanying pictures to this article were all taken at the Inaugural Angelo DiPaolo Invitational Track and Field Meet, held April 18, at Public School Stadium. They are not full representations of the schools involved, but are a sample of different athletes trying their best.

What the next few years holds for any of them is a large unknown. That doesn't really matter, for who among us can foretell the future.

I have very little kinship with any of these athletes; what little there is stems more from the fact that I've seen their mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers participate in some of these same events, in a different time and place. It may be *deja vu*, but it is different at the same time. It is more a sense of the circle of life that surrounds us all.

Some of these young people will go on to compete at the college level, though there is a world of difference between Division 1 schools and the NAIA. It doesn't really matter; it is the joy they experience from their endeavors, not the esteem of the school they work for in their own way.

Many, and probably most of these athletes will accept this level of talent and never attempt the next level, for a variety of reasons. Pick the one you prefer: marriage, babies, work, a lack of academics or the lack of wanting to continue.

The story gets much sadder when you throw in the number of these kids, regardless of what they try upon completion of high school, that will not see their thirtieth birthday without severe injuries or succumbing to the call of sudden, unexpected death.

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But for today, their intensity is still alive and should be acknowledged and recognized. Celebrate their efforts, their desires, and their dedication. Time is forever running out of everyone's hour glass.