STEVE GOSS

 In an amateur sports career that included three national championships, a Gold Medal in the Pan American Games and a national Athlete of the Year award, one highlight stands out for Steve Goss.

 “Walking into that Olympic Stadium in L.A. and looking up into the stands and seeing my parents . . . so cool. Something I’ll always remember,” said Goss, a 1978 Castro Valley High graduate.

 Goss was referring to the Opening Ceremonies of the 1984 Olympic Games at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, where 90,000 spectators greeted him and other Olympic athletes from around the world. He was there representing the United States as a member of the Team Handball squad.

 Goss was introduced to team handball in Sweden while an exchange student there following his high school graduation. Upon returning home and entering Cal State University Hayward (now Cal State East Bay), he learned that the sport was offered as a physical education class. He took the class and also joined the school’s club team. He soon was hooked.

 By 1980, Goss was traveling all over the Western Hemisphere and in Europe, competing in the sport’s National Championships, Sports Festivals, Pan American Games and European tournaments for several different clubs. He led his team to first place in the Nationals three straight years: 1983, ’84 and ’85.

 In the Pan American Games, Goss won a Gold Medal in 1987 after finishing second the two previous times. In 1988, he was named team handball Male Athlete of the Year.

 Goss’s prowess in athletics is even more remarkable considering his academic load during those years. He entered veterinary school at U.C. Davis in the fall of 1984, immediately after the Los Angeles Olympics, and managed to complete vet school while competing at the highest level of his sport.

 He received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in the spring of ’88 and competed in the Summer Olympics in Seoul, Korea, a few months later.

 Goss played one year of professional team handball in Spain. Since 1990, he has been caring for large animals at South Coast Equine in Santa Barbara.