

OWEN "SONORA" SMAULDING

Owen "Sonora" Smaulding was described by many in the pre-World War II era as the greatest high school athlete in the state's history.

On Oct. 23, 1916, Smaulding scored seven touchdowns for Albuquerque High in one football game against Santa Fe (AHS won 101-0). During the season, he went on to score a school record 14 touchdowns and 84 points.

He played on seven state championship teams; two in football (1916-17), three in basketball (1916, 1917, 1919) and two in track (1917, 1918). Individually, he won two state boxing titles.

The late Dr. Eldred Harrington, who nominated Smaulding for Albuquerque Sports Hall of Fame honors, was one of the most thorough of early historians in Albuquerque Public Schools annals. He played on the same team with Smaulding for two years and Harrington wrote that Smaulding was sensational in winning two state high school track titles all by himself.

In 1917 he amassed 43 of Albuquerque High's 63 points and won an incredible eight of 15 events in the State High School Track Championships.

As a freshman, when he broke four state records (he won five events), he established a 100-yard dash mark of 10.2 seconds that

wasn't broken again until 31 years later in 1947.

Smaulding was injured in the preliminaries of the 1918 state meet, but still scored 35 points and tied his 100-yard dash record. Albuquerque High finished second in the meet. The school did not compete in the 1919 state meet, Smaulding's senior year.

Smaulding's historic afternoon in 1917 included the following winning marks:

100-yard dash, 10.4 seconds; 220-yard low hurdles, 27.4 seconds; 110-yard high hurdles, 17.4 seconds; shot put, 44 feet 7 1/2 inches; pole vault, 10 feet 5 inches; high jump, 5 feet 5 inches; broad jump, 20 feet 8 inches; triple jump, 39 feet 4 inches.

He later played outfield and pitched for the Kansas City Monarchs and the Homestead Grays in the Negro Baseball Leagues. He played with the best, including Satchel Paige.

Smaulding was born in Albuquerque. After graduation here he played professional baseball until enrolling at the University of Idaho in 1928, where he played varsity basketball, graduating in 1931.

He coached one year at Piney Woods School in Mississippi and owned his own printing plant in Chicago when he died in 1961. He was honored by the Albuquerque High student body during his last visit here earlier that year.