

# Track and Field



*Houston McTear*



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### High School Zipper

It was just a qualifying heat in the Florida State Class AA High School Track and Field Championships. Most observers expected Houston McTear to easily qualify for the finals and set up a showdown with Mike Roberson of Winter Park High. The two were co-holders of the national high school 100-yard dash record of 9.2 seconds. Roberson had run a 9.2-second hundred the previous week in a regional meet. The 18-year-old McTear, a native of Milligan who attended Baker HS in Okaloosa County in the Florida panhandle, had also run a 9.2 hundred in his regional meet. The stage was set for the two fastest schoolboys in the nation to meet face to face.

The date was May 9, 1975, and as the gun cracked to start McTear's trial heat, the youngster blasted out of the blocks and zipped down the straightaway, pumping his arms and legs for all he was worth. He was never headed as he widened his lead all the way to the tape, where the stopwatches clicked off. The timers could not believe their eyes. The watches showed a time of 9.0 seconds. If that was right, it meant that a high school junior had just tied the world record established just a year

earlier by Ivory Crockett. The judges checked the wind gauge, and it read 2 miles per hour, well under the allowable backwind of 4.75 mph. They were prepared to submit the time for certification as equalling the world record. It took officials six months to act, since there had been some concern that McTear's time had been recorded on a high school track with old-fashioned hand stopwatches rather than electronic timers. But in November of McTear's senior year in high school, the word came through that his time of 9.0 had been accepted by the International Amateur Athletic Federation as equalling the world record.

McTear's mark may well stay unbroken, since the IAAF has refused to recognize any more records for imperial distances, choosing only those set at metric distances. This means, of course, that the 100-yard dash will be run less and less, making it less likely that someone will be timed in less than 9.0 seconds for the distance.

**HOUSTON MCTEAR**

WR 100-yards 9.0 (ties Ivory Crockett)

*Houston McTear the nation's fastest schoolboy*