



BC SPORTS
HALL OF FAME
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BC SPORTS HALL OF FAME In Memoriam: Jack Harrison (1909-2008)

On September 19, 2008, Jack Harrison, one of Canada's top sprinters of the 1930s and one of the driving forces behind British Columbian track and field following his retirement, passed away at the age of 98. Harrison, nicknamed "Ten Second Harrison" and "The Flying Cop" represented Canada at the 1938 British Empire Games running the 220 yards, while also defeating many of Canada's top sprinters of the period including Howie McPhee. A long-time Vancouver policeman, Harrison coached, officiated, and organized the annual Police Force Benevolent Association Meet for nearly 25 years, while at the same time was largely responsible for developing a strong track and field program in

BC following the Second World War.

Born on December 23, 1909 in Departure Bay, near Nanaimo, Harrison had been a foundry worker and truck driver in his teens working towards his goal of becoming a commercial airline pilot. The stock market crash of 1929 forced him to change those plans and he entered the police force. A relative late-comer to sprinting, he only began training at the age of 22 after joining the Vancouver police department. He had never competed before because he didn't think he was fast enough, but after seeing his first police track and field meet, he decided to try running himself.

The first man he ever raced was one Percy Williams, Vancouver's world-famous double Olympic gold medallist from 1928. Although Williams took this first race easily, he often trained with Williams and by decade's end Harrison would develop into a sprinter of some repute himself regularly defeating the fastest men in Canada. His best time in the 100 yards was a blistering 9.8 seconds in 1936. His athleticism would regularly come in handy for his day job as a cop. One time in 1958, Harrison grabbed front page headlines for running down a thief: "Ex-Track Star Chases, Arrests Bank Suspect."

After 1945, he devoted himself to the coaching and administration of track and field in British Columbia. From 1945-48, he served as president of the BC Track and Field Association. In 1947, he formed the Arctic Club Track and Field Team and a few years later the Harrison Flyers Track Club. In 1948, 1952, and 1956 he organized BC teams to the Canadian Olympic trials and helped numerous athletes win a place to represent Canada internationally. In 1954, he played a prominent role in the organization of the British Empire and Commonwealth Games track and field events held in Vancouver.

In ensuing years, he continued to coach and officiate at numerous meets and events annually, even helping coach young athlete for the Richmond Kajaks Club into his nineties. In 1985, Harrison set a world record at the age of 76 in Victoria as he ran 100m in 18.0 seconds in the transplant disabled persons category. Amazingly, Harrison had had a hip replacement just a few years earlier.

In 1982, he was inducted into the BC Athletics Hall of Fame and, in 2000, Jack Harrison was inducted in the Pioneer category into the BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum.