

# Hall of Fame next for area star runner

By DICK BOYD

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A young man from Phillipsburg kept running, running, running and running some more.

Where did it all end?  
When John Mason was selected this year for the prestigious honor of being a member of the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame!

John will officially be inducted along with 13 other honorees in the 2009 Class during special ceremonies on Sunday, Oct. 4 at the Sports Hall of Fame in Wichita.

Other inductees scheduled to be present are Don Calhoun, Janell (Smith) Carson, Steve Henson, Ken Mahoney, Ted Owens, Harold Patterson, Eddie Sutton and Ken Swenson. Being inducted posthumously will be Jesse Barnes, Orlis Cox, Paul Endacott, Gwinn Henry and Ken Roberts.

"We are thrilled to introduce this accomplished class of new inductees, whose impact resonates across our state and beyond," said Ted Hayes, President/CEO of the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame. "For many Kansans, sports is a true passion and is engrained in our society. The Kansas Sports Hall of Fame is dedicated to honoring sports heroes like these inductees and preserving the history of sports for the state to serve as a source of education and inspiration."

John Mason is one of those individuals who is definitely an inspiration. Despite suffering from polio in the fifth grade, breaking a toe so he could not run his freshman year at Phillipsburg High School, almost dying from drinking polluted water after running during his freshman year at Fort Hays State University and missing the Olympics due to an illness, John Mason was one of the top runners in the world during his prime.

An All-American eight times in track and cross country while running for legendary coach Alex Francis at Fort Hays, John Mason ran the equivalent of sub-four-minute miles an amazing 32 times!

A prep state champion for Phillipsburg High School in the mile run and 880 yard run, he had a streak of 21 straight victories while at Fort Hays, winning the Missouri Valley AAU Cross Country Meet, the NAIA National Meet and the CIC League Championships.

John's best time in the 1,500 meter run is 3:37, which is the same as a 3:54 mile.

One of his major accomplishments was beating Kip Keino of Kenya in the 1968 World Games in Stockholm, Sweden on July

19, 1968 with a 1500 meters time of 3:40.5. Also in that race was Mohammed Gammoudi, Tunisia. Both Keino and Gammoudi won 1968 Olympic gold medals later that year in Mexico City. Keino defeated another Kansan, Jim Ryun, to win the 1968 Olympic 1,500 meter run.

John also defeated Keino on July 2, 1968 in Oslo, Norway with a 3:42.9 time for 1500 meters.

After his successful European tour in 1968, John became very sick and was hospitalized. After getting back on his feet, John was not in top shape but tried out for the U.S. Olympic team. He made the 1500 meter finals but finished sixth and did not make the team.

The next year, John competed in the 800 and 1500 meters for the USA National Team on a six-week overseas tour and returned unbeaten!

After his senior season, while running for the Pacific Coast Track Club, John won the prestigious Wanamaker Mile at the Milrose Games in Madison Square Garden in New York City.

John Mason credits his Fort Hays coach Alex Francis and good training partners for his success.

His daily college workouts included a six-mile run in the morning followed by windsprints. Up to 25 repeat quarter-miles at the golf course, preceded and followed by at least a three mile warmup and cool down, were part of his afternoon training which also included up to 25 quarter-mile repeats on the track with a 220 recovery jog in between!

If you total all these daily miles, you come up with around 27 miles a day, not including the wind sprints!  
John Mason has been quoted as saying that he figures he ran around 70,000 miles including grade school to after college. That's almost three times around the world!

#### Other inductees

Jesse Barnes (deceased), Circleville

A major league baseball player for 12 years from 1915-27. Pitched a no-hitter for the New York Giants in 1922. Pitched in four World Series games. Set a National League record in 1924 for most innings pitched without a wild pitch or hit batsman.

Don Calhoun, Wichita North High School (1970) and Kansas State University (1974)

National Football League running back for nine seasons. Was All-State in high school before becoming a standout for K-State where he rushed for 1,300 yards.

Ended NFL career with over 4,000 yards rushing and receiving with 25 touchdowns.

Orlis Cox, Ottawa

Teacher and coach at Ottawa High school from 1926 to 1966. At his own expense, he took his 1933 track team to Chicago where they won the national championship, including winning the 880 yard relay against Jesse Owens and his Cleveland prep team. Was a giant in the sports and recreation community at Ottawa and throughout the state.

Paul Endacott (deceased), Lawrence High School and Kansas University

A Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame inductee, Endacott led K.U. to mythical national championships in 1922 and 1923. Named to Helms Foundation all-time All-America second team in 1943 and to Phog Allen's all-time College Team in 1951. Received Sportsmen's World Award for basketball in 1969.

Gwinn Henry, Southwestern College and College of Emporia/Kansas University

World record holder in track (75 yards, 100 yards, 125 yards), AAU national champion and was selected to the U.S. Olympic team without a tryout in 1912. Playing for Southwestern College in Winfield, scored all 11 points versus Texas Longhorns in 11-9 football victory. Was a successful coach at College of Emporia and Missouri University, was athletic director at Kansas University in 1937 and coached football and track at KU during World War II.

Steve Henson, McPherson High School (1986), Kansas State University (1990)

First Team All-Big 8 point guard for K-State basketball team. Set 11 conference and 21 K-State records. Scored 1,655 points, fourth in KSU history. Named to KSU all-century team. Was All-State basketball player for McPherson High School. Won "Mr. Kansas Basketball" award in 1986.

Ken Mahoney, Dorrance High School, Kansas State University  
Mahoney invented "Tossback" training device used throughout the world to train players at all levels. He developed "breakaway" rims for the National Basketball Association and his "snap-back" rims are used universally for basketball.

Ted Owens, Kansas University

K.U. head basketball coach 19 seasons from 1964-83, won six Big-8 conference titles, nine Big-8 tournament titles and advanced to the NCAA tournament seven

times. His 1971 and 1974 teams reached the Final Four. Five times he was named Big-8 Coach of the Year and he was 1978 National Coach of the Year.

Harold Patterson, Rozel High School (1950), Kansas University (1954)

Canadian Football League Hall of Fame inductee. Most Valuable Player in CFL in 1956. KU letterman in football and baseball; All-Big 7 first team in basketball in 1954. Scored 75 career touchdowns in CFL and set CFL career receiving record with 9,473 yards and 64 touchdowns. Named to CFL All-Century team.

Ken Roberts (deceased), Strong City

Three-time world champion bull rider. Charter inductee in Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame. Brother of Kansas Sports Hall of Fame inductee Gerald Roberts. Ken's career spanned four decades, starting with a 1936 bull riding win in Chicago at age 18. He repeated in Chicago in 1937 and 1938. At age 48, he won the national bull riding championship by riding a bull which had not been ridden in two years.

Janell Smith, Fredonia High School (1964)

U.S. Olympian in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics as a high school junior from Fredonia. Two-time AAU 440 yard dash champion, Pan American Games participant. Before Kansas held official state high school championships for girls, she was a two-time National AAU 440 yard and 400 meter dash champion in 1964 and 1965.

Her time of 54.5 seconds in the 400 meters still ranks among the fastest in state history, 45 years later.

Eddie Sutton, Bucklin High School (1954), Oklahoma State University, 1958

One of the nation's all-time basketball coaching greats, won 798 games, fifth all-time at retirement. Coached three final four teams (Arkansas 1978, Oklahoma State 1995 and 2004). First to coach four different schools in NCAA tourney (Creighton, Arkansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma State). His teams reached NCAA tourney 26 times in 36-year career.

Ken Swenson, Clay Center High School (1966), Kansas State University (1970)

U.S. Olympian in 1972 and American record-holder in the 880 yard run with a time of 1:44.8. Three-time Big-8 champion in 880 yard run. Anchored four K-State relay teams to world records, two NCAA championships and one additional American record.



John Mason, former Fort Hays State University and Phillipsburg High School track star, is shown here defeating Kip Keino of Kenya with a time of 3:40.5 in the 1500 meter run in the 1968 World Games in Stockholm, Sweden on July 19, 1968. Keino won the gold medal in the Olympics in Mexico City later that year when he defeated another Kansan, Jim Ryun, in the 1500 meters.

- Photo courtesy of John Mason

Undefeated high school state 880 yard champion at Clay Center High School in 1966. Enshrined in the K-State Sports Hall of Fame in 1995.

**Kansas Sports Hall of Fame**  
The Kansas Sports Hall of Fame was founded by the Kansas Legislature in 1961 as part of the state's Centennial Celebration.

Criterion for induction is that honored individuals have brought pride to the state of Kansas through their involvement in sports. Nominations for selection are accepted from all Kansans.

A selection committee consisting of statewide sportswriters,

radio/TV announcers, coaches, administrators, former athletes and sports historians vote in a screening process to narrow the nominations list. The final selection is made by the Board of Trustees/Directors.

The Hall is operated by Kansas Sports Hall of Fame, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation. For more information, visit [www.kshof.org](http://www.kshof.org).

#### REPORTER'S NOTE:

This sportswriter had the privilege of covering John Mason for the Phillips County Review in the 1960s when he was running for Phillipsburg High School.

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## Legion 1-1 against Nebraska team

By DICK BOYD

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After a week off, the Norton American Legion baseball team traveled to Curtis, Neb., on Tuesday, June 30 where they defeated Frontier County 10-9 in the opener and lost a hard fought 7-4 nightcap contest.

The score of the opener was tied 1-1 after the first inning. Norton's run came when Jake Riedel walked, Landon Hamel singled and Brian Spooner got on via a fielder's choice. Hamel scored.

The Blue Jays took a 2-1 lead with another run in the second inning when Matt Stanley walked, stole two bases and scored. Four more runs by Norton compared to one in the third inning by Frontier County put the Jays ahead 6-2. Tye Nickell and Riedel both walked and Hamel got on base with a single. Spooner came up to the plate and hit a grand slam home run!

Frontier County scored three runs and Norton tallied one in the fourth inning to make the score 7-5. Norton's score came when Riedel singled, Hamel walked, Spooner advanced when hit by a pitch and Runnion walked. Riedel scored for the Jays.

A three-run fifth inning by Norton extended the lead to 10-6. Kaenon Keiswetter was hit by a pitch, Casey Temmel and Riedel both walked, Hamel was hit by a pitch and Spooner and Runnion both singled in the inning. Keiswetter, Temmel and Riedel crossed home plate for the Blue Jays.

Neither team scored in the sixth stanza. Curtis rallied in the seventh with three runs but fell one run short of tying the Kansas visitors and Norton won 10-9!

Norton had nine hits, 11 walks and seven strike outs. Leading hitters for the Jays were Hamel, 2 for 2, Spooner, 2 for 3 and Runnion, 2 for 3.

Losing pitcher was Anthony Chancellor.

Hamel went all the way on the mound for Norton, giving up 11 hits, walking six and striking out 11 batters.

"Thanks to our fans who come out to our games," said Norton head coach Steve Jeltz. "One thing I hope our fans notice is the way our young men are improving and not making the same mistakes.

Landon threw the best game he has thrown all year, recording 11 strike outs, our defense made some clutch plays when we needed them and, then, the grand slam by Brian Spooner made the difference in the game. Brian is in his last year of Legion ball and the improvement he continues to make is amazing."

"What made Brian's home run so special is that he listened to Steve and didn't try to kill the ball but swung easy and connected and the ball easily cleared the fence," said general manager Joe Durham.

"Our players continue to improve and, as long as they improve, I am happy," said coach Jeltz.

In the nightcap, Frontier County took a 3-1 lead in the first inning. "Matt Stanley made one of the best

catches of the year in center field, diving and catching the ball or the score might have been worse," said Norton coach Jeltz.

Norton's run came when lead-off batter Nickell singled to center field, stole two bases and scored on a passed ball.

The visiting Norton squad scored again in the second stanza when Stanley walked, stole second and third and scored on a wild pitch to cut the Frontier County lead to 3-2.

Norton tallied their last two runs in the fifth inning but four more Frontier County runs made the final 7-4 in favor of the home team. The Blue Jays' final two scores came when Skyler Harris hit a line drive to the right field fence for a triple, Nickell doubled to center, Hamel singled and Spooner walked and Harris and Hamel both scored.

Frontier County had only nine players and one of them was ejected in the fifth inning. "Give credit where credit is due," said Norton coach Steve Jeltz.

"Those young men didn't hang their heads and complain about being a player short but played inspired ball and made the plays when it counted," he said.

Norton had six hits, six walks and five strike outs. Nickell was leading hitter for Norton with a single and double in four times at the plate.

Winning pitcher was Trevor Wells.

Kaenon Keiswetter pitched the entire game for the Blue Jays. He gave up seven hits, walked six and

struck out five batters.

"Sadly, we will be losing one of our leaders as he prepares to play college football," said general manager Durham.

"Many thanks to Matt Stanley for all he has done for our team, playing any position we ask of him and batting anywhere from first to last in our batting order," said coach Jeltz. "Matt is a young man who loves the game of baseball and it shows in the way he plays the game."

"I have really enjoyed playing for Steve and Joe and my hope is that our team will continue to improve and get more and more players out every year," said Stanley.

#### Played at Ellis

On July 2, the Norton Legion traveled to Ellis to play a more experienced Railroader team despite the fact the Blue Jays were short of players due to harvest and other work.

Norton lost the first game 12-2. Tye Nickell started pitching for Norton but was relieved in the second inning by Logan Runnion.

Norton scored one run in the second inning when Hamel singled and Stanley doubled him home.

In the fourth inning, the Jays scored again when Hamel, Harris and Carlos Galloway all walked and Harris scored.

Only two innings were played in the second game, which was won 22-0 by Ellis. Runnion started the second game on the mound but was relieved by Riedel and Colby Poage.