

The Flying Twins of North Texas

Jack Watson

University of North Texas

Led by Coach Charles C. "Choc" Sportsman, the North Texas State Teachers College of Denton, Texas fielded an outstanding intercollegiate track team in the late 1930s. With two sets of identical twins, Elmer and Delmer Brown and Wayne and Blaine Rideout, forming a nucleus, the North Texas thinly clad gained national prominence competing against the premier runners of the time at the winter indoor meets in the Northeastern United States and in the country's large track carnivals during the outdoor season.

Attention came to the North Texas runners when Blaine Rideout outran Don Lash of Indiana, the current world record holder, in the two mile run at the Sugar Bowl Sports Carnival in New Orleans January 1, 1937. The following indoor and outdoor seasons were successful enough to gain the Brown twins an invitation to the prestigious Princeton Invitation meet in June, 1937, where Dehner Brown upheld the honor by defeating the highly favored sensational South African runner, Denis Shore.

After a year's experience in the large track meets, three signal achievements were realized in the 1938 season. On February 5th at the Millrose Games in New York, Elmer and Dehner teamed with Wayne and Blaine to defeat Indiana University in a come-from-behind victory in the one and seven-eighths mile medley relay and establish a world indoor record for that distance. On March 5, the Rideouts, with teammates Henry Morgan and Alvin Chrisman, set a new world record in the distance medley relay at the Penn Relays. Then on June 18 at the Princeton Invitation meet, Wayne

Rideout defeated Glenn Cunningham in the three-quarter mile run and established a new world record of 3:00.3 for that distance.

The thinly clad runners from North Texas State Teachers College were, at the end of the 1938 season, an established entity in the track world. Although the Brown twins, Elmer and Delmer, graduated in 1938, Wayne and Blaine Rideout continued to run successfully in the 1939 and 1940 seasons. At the 1939 Seventh Regiment Armory Games, Blaine ran the fastest mile ever on flat boards in New York State. At the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco in March, 1939, the North Texas two man team, the Rideouts, placed second in team points behind Stanford University. And Blaine, as a member of a touring track team in Europe, ran as a member of the United States relay team that established a new world record for the two mile relay. Then in 1940 at the Kansas Relays, Blaine established a new meet record in a special mile run by outrunning both Archie San Romani and Glenn Cunningham.

The Rideouts graduated from college in 1940 ending five years of exciting track achievements in conjunction with the Brown twins. Interestingly, all four twins went on to establish notable careers as athletic trainers following their running days.

And those were the Flying Twins of North Texas—Elmer and Delmer Brown and Wayne and Blaine Rideout.