Tolan, Eddie,


While attending high school in Detroit, Mich., Tolan was a city and state champion in the 100- and 200-yard dashes. At the University of Michigan, he attracted national attention in 1929 when he set a record in the 100-yard dash (9.5 seconds) and tied the record of 10.4 seconds in the 100-metre dash. The 5 foot 7 inch Tolan, who raced with his spectacles taped to his head, won the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) championship in the 200- and 220-yard dashes and the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) championship in the 100- and 220-yard events between 1929 and 1931. He finished second to Ralph Metcalfe in the 100- and 200-metre dashes in the trials for the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. In the Games themselves, however, Tolan set an Olympic record by handily winning the 200-metre in 21.2 seconds, and he eked out a narrow photo-finish victory over Metcalfe in the 100-metre in 10.3 seconds, setting a world record. Subsequently, Tolan had a brief career as a vaudeville performer with Bill "Bojangles" Robinson and later became a schoolteacher.