

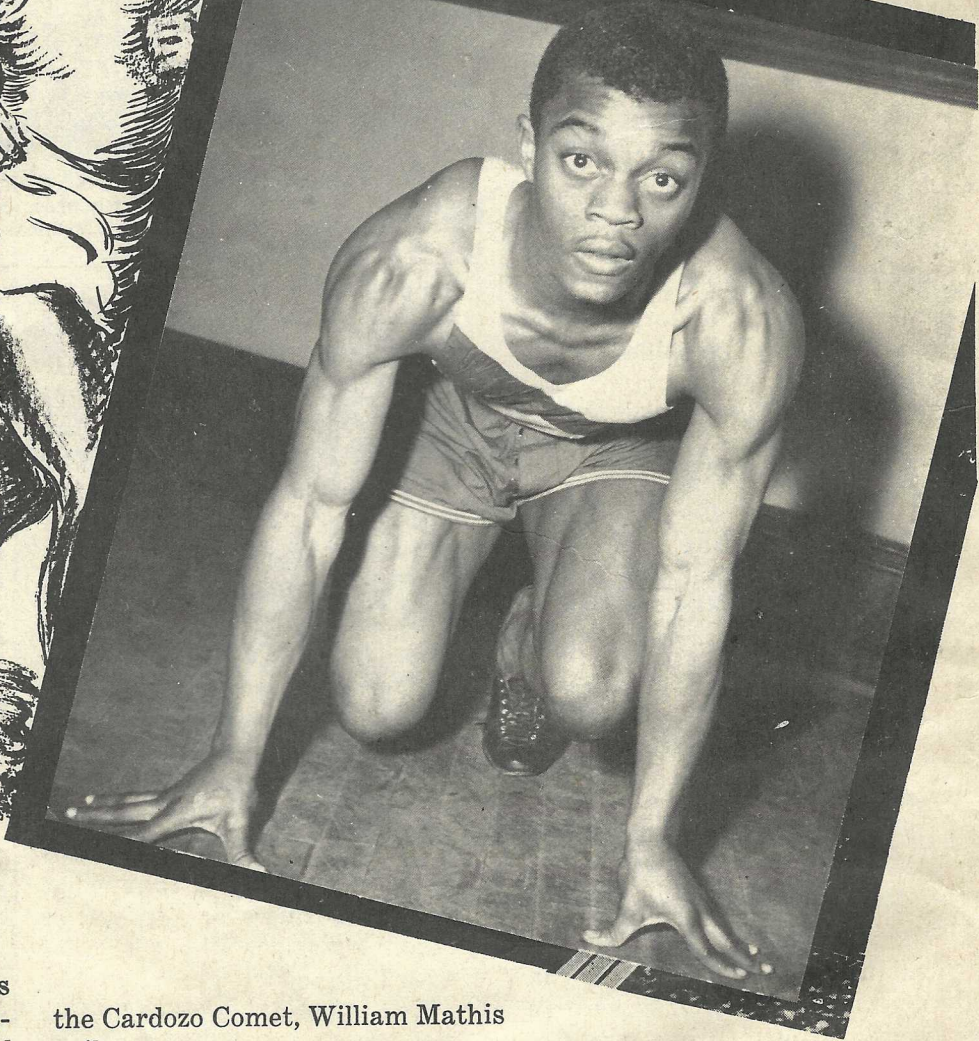
# Out in Front...

by Al Sweeney

Sports Editor  
Washington Tribune



William Mathis



**E**VERY TOWN have sections where the youth has a reputation of being able fighters and challenge all newcomers and visitors. Home town residents respect their territory, and newcomers and visitors quickly learn. In New York, they call the sector "Dead End;" in Detroit, "Bucket of Blood;" in St. Louis, "Gas House District;" and in Washington, it's "Foggy Bottom."

It is from "Foggy Bottom" that

the Cardozo Comet, William Mathis hails.

When Mathis first entered Washington's Cardozo High School, back in the fall of '42, he was considered typical of the youngsters from "Foggy Bottom." He was slovenly attired, what with his unpressed trousers, open collar, unruly hair and unshined shoes, he exhibited a complacent disregard for personal appearances.

At that time Mathis was more or less an introvert, devoid of friends. About the only time that he would come in contact with his schoolmates was through brawls.

But, time has changed things.

As we write this, the name of William Mathis has become immortalized at Cardozo High. Bill has become a very friendly fellow, he



is considered one of the neatest appearing youngsters in the school and his friends are countless.

Credit for the change can be attributed to Bill's track prowess that has earned him the title of being the number one scholastic sprinter in the nation.

Mathis hit the headlines on February 26, 1944, when, in New York's Madison Square Gardens, he sped over the boards to win the National Junior A.A.U. 60 yard sprint crown.

He went on from his Madison Square Garden's triumph to win the Mid-Atlantic A.A.U. dash crown along with taking several invitational meets along the eastern seaboard.

Mathis suffered two defeats during 1944. One of them was in the outdoor Jr. A.A.U. 100 meter competitions held at Randall's Island Stadium in June, where he was defeated by Texas' sensational school-boy ace, Charlie Parker.

The other loss was suffered on Fourth of July at Banneker Field in Washington, where Arthur Smith, an Armstrong speedster, edged him in a disputed 60 yd. dash.

The Comet, as we sportswriters tag him, has been the sensation of the indoor track season during 1945. He has set two records thus far this season.

He shattered the 60 yd. Jr. A.A.U. record in Madison Square Garden recently by streaking over the distance in 06.3 secs.

In Camden, N. J., Public Auditorium on March 17 of this year

he set a 50 yd. Mid-Atlantic A.A.U. record of 05.5 secs.

Sylvester "Sal" Hall, Mathis coach at Cardozo, claims that the whiz kid of the cinderpaths holds ten records. In spite of his record breaking feats, Hall states, Mathis remains very modest.

Coach Hall says that unlike many other kids, who have made headlines, Mathis doesn't keep a scrapbook and isn't interested in seeing his name in print.

To illustrate, Hall tells the following story.

It seems that Mathis has a newsstand at the Munitions Building of War Department at 21st and Constitution Avenue. Every morning before classes he is found at his stand and in the evening after school.

Well, last spring, according to Hall, a sportswriter from the Evening Star interviewed him and made a picture of him.

A few days later, he noticed that one of his customers after purchasing his usual Star, returned to buy five more copies of the paper.

Mathis, curious, inquired "There must be something interesting in there, huh?"

The customer laughed and said, "G'wan, you know that your picture is in there."

Mathis countered, "No. Is it, let me see."

That's typical of the Mathis. He never sees the stories of his feats until Coach Hall shows them to him in print.

Mathis weighs about 150 pounds

and stands 5 ft. 6 in. tall. Because of his slight stature he is a favorite of the New York track fans.

The records that he holds are:  
Jr. A.A.U. 60 yd. dash—time, 06:3 secs.

Mid-Atlantic 50 yd. dash—time, 05.5 secs.

Schenectady (NY) Interscholastic Carnival 100 yd. dash—time, 09:9 secs.

Eastern Interscholastic Meet (Providence, R. I.) 22 yd. dash—time, 22.2 secs.

District 220 yd. dash—time, 22.3 secs.

District 100 yd. dash—09:9.

South Atlantic 220 yd. dash—22.2 secs.

Eastern Interscholastic (Providence, R. I.) 100 yd. dash—09:9 secs.

As a member of Cardozo's relay team, Mathis participated in the following records made by the relay men:

Schenectady Half Mile Relay—time, 1 min. 8 secs.

Eastern Interscholastic (Prov., R. I.) Half Mile Relay—time, 1 min. 34.2 secs.

The amazing thing about Mathis setting the indoor records is the fact that he made them, even though he hasn't any indoor track facilities at Cardozo.

"Sal" Hall had Mathis go through his preliminary paces by running up and down Cardozo's corridors.

On March 14, 1945, Cardozo's student body paid tribute to the track prowess of the Comet. On that day, designated as "William Mathis Day" by Cardozo's principal, R. N. Mattingly, elaborate assembly exercises were held, the climax of which saw a huge full-sized picture of Mathis in track togs unveiled.

The photo is to hang in the main corridor of Cardozo along with many other celebrities, both living and dead, white and Negro, all of whom have made their place in various fields in the Hall of Fame.

Which is quite a distinction for a 17-year-old kid out of "Foggy Bottom." Or any other place

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