

Decision Shifted On Owens Statue

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MOULTON, Ala., Sept. 21— The Lawrence County Commission, reversing itself a second time, decided Tuesday not to allow a monument to the famed Olympian Jesse Owens to be placed on the courthouse lawn in Moulton, the county seat.

The action by the county, where Owens was born, led State Representative Roger Dutton to charge that the commissioners, all of whom are white, were afraid that white voters would object to a courthouse tribute to the black athlete. Mr. Dutton, who is white, has spearheaded efforts to build the monument.

He said after Tuesday's decision that he would proceed with an alternative plan to put the monument in tiny, mostly black Oakville, six miles away, the town of Owens's birth.

"I don't think there's any racism involved," said Clyde Cameron, the commission chairman.

The commissioners have contended that there are already too many monuments on the courthouse lawn.