

Sports

THE DECATUR DAILY

TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 1999

Owens chosen state's top athlete

BIRMINGHAM — Picking Alabama's greatest athlete of the 20th century is sure to be a daunting task worthy of endless debate.

The Birmingham Post-Herald didn't find it so difficult. The newspaper found that the hard part was settling on 99 other athletes to round out its list of Alabama's 100 greatest athletes of the 20th century.

Track and field great Jesse Owens led the newspaper's list, released Monday.

Born in 1913 in Oakville, Owens became the most famous athlete in track and field history. He won four of America's 11 individual gold medals in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, setting records in the



Jesse Owens

200 meter run, as part of the 400-meter relay team and in the broad jump and tying the 100-meter record.

Owens was followed by baseball player Satchel Paige, who was born in Mobile. Next came heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis, who was born on Buckalew Mountain, near Lafayette.

Aaron ranks fourth

After Louis came home-run king Hank Aaron, also of Mobile. Fifth on the list

was Birmingham native Willie Mays. John Hannah, a two-time All-America offensive lineman for Alabama and a member of the NFL Hall of Fame, was sixth. Hannah was born in Canton, Ga., but lived in Albertville.

Seventh on the list was Heisman Trophy winner Bo Jackson, a Bessemer native, followed by Charles Barkley of Leeds. Track and field star Carl Lewis, born in Birmingham, was ninth and Kirk Newell, a former Auburn great, rounded out the Top 10.

To be eligible for the Post-Herald's list, the athlete had to be a native, a resident from childhood, or a resident during his athletic career.