

Track and Field



Arthur Rowe



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Barnsley Brawn

The old adage that smiths were mighty men stopped short of the truth where the Barnsley blacksmith Arthur Rowe was concerned. He was not only strong, but also fast, agile and physically clever. He turned down an offer to play professional soccer when he was 17, and discovered that he could put the shot only by accident when waiting to bat in a cricket match. With his pads on and without any idea of technique he hurled a junior shot 43 ft (13.10 m). The next year he won the Yorkshire junior title.

His encounter with Geoff Dyson, the man who coached the then British record holder, John Savidge, was good fortune indeed. Dyson coached Rowe so well that he became an international, defeated Savidge in his farewell international appearance in 1957, and then went on to improve the British record no less than 13 times between 1957 and 1961.

Rowe was still, as it were, on his way up in 1958 when he collected within a month the Commonwealth and European titles. At home, he was competing for much of his career against himself and the tape measure. In 1959, he captured the European record, with a

throw of exactly 61 ft (18.60 m) and seemed set for Olympic honours in 1960.

Just a few weeks before the Games, Rowe landed an exhibition throw of 64 ft 6 in (19.66 m), which placed him second in the world list. But at Rome he wilted in the heat and humidity and suffering a weight loss of 10 lb, was eliminated in the qualifying round.

In 1961, Rowe reached his official lifetime best of 64 ft 2 in (19.56 m) and in training hurled 66 ft 1½ in (20.15 m) which was better than the existing world record.

However, he decided to turn professional in 1962 and after a short career in Rugby League, went on for several years to star in Highland Games events in Scotland. At the Pitlochry Games in 1966, he was awarded a "monster bottle of whisky" for being the "best of the Highland heavies".

ARTHUR ROWE

Born Aug. 17, 1936, in Barnsley, Yorkshire

AWARDS AND RECORDS

- 1958 CG gold medal
shot 57 ft 8 in (17.57 m) Cardiff
- 1958 ECH gold medal
shot 58 ft 4 in (17.78 m) Stockholm

Arthur Rowe putting the 16-lb ball at the Braemar Highland Gathering in 1965