

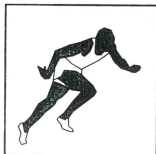
Track and Field



Arthur Wint



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Gone with the Wint

Perhaps the most spectacular and improbable sight to be seen on British running tracks 30 years ago or indeed ever since was the fantastic stride of Arthur Wint. The 6 ft 4½ in Jamaican made the crowds gasp in disbelief as he devoured the laps, making both the opposition and the distance look small. One of the greatest assets ever to join the British team from a Commonwealth country, Wint rightly chose to run for Jamaica in the Olympic Games and at Wembley in 1948 he had cheering for him a British crowd who knew he had served in the R.A.F. in World War II and had seen him win for Britain in two-way international matches at White City. Wint's target at Wembley was the 800 metres where he had to concede first place to the American Mal Whitfield, still regarded as one of the all-time greats of the two-lap event. In the 400 metres, Wint faced his fellow-Jamaican Herb McKenley, world record holder and favourite for the gold medal. But after Wint had won his semi-final in 46.3 sec, only 0.1 sec outside the Olympic record, his chances looked brighter. In the final, McKenley covered the first 200 metres at a suicidal pace, making him vul-

nerable to Wint's unfaltering rhythm. As the pair round into the straight, McKenley faded and Wint, with giant strides, went on to equal the Olympic record and take the gold medal. His breakdown in the 4 x 400 metres relay final thwarted Jamaica's chances of winning that event.

Four years later, the story of Wembley was to be repeated in Helsinki, with important differences. Again runner-up to Whitfield in the 800 metres, Wint was relegated to fifth place in the 400 metres. But this time his genius was conserved for the unfinished business of the 4 x 400 metres relay, where the same Jamaican team which had started at Wembley made good its disappointment with a magnificent world record.

Wint stayed in England to qualify as a doctor, returning to Jamaica for a very full professional life.

ARTHUR WINT

Born May 25, 1920, in Manchester, Jamaica

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1948 OG: Gold medal, 400 m, 46.2
Silver medal, 800 m, 1:49.5
1952 OG: Silver medal, 800 m 1:49.4
Gold medal 4 x 400 m, 3:03.9
World record: 4 x 400 m relay 3:03.9 (1952)