

Track and Field



Bernhard Kannenberg



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A Late Talent

This one-time locksmith who was a wrestler before becoming a walking champion was brought up in Remscheid. He opted for a military career and was accepted by the West German army sports school at Sonthofen. His sporting talent and especially his Olympic medal at Munich earned him a promotion to the rank of chief adjutant.

Bernhard Kannenberg very quickly reached international level. Making his debut in a popular event at the age of 27, quite by chance—he entered to bring points to his team by agreeing to be the third man—he did not know that two years later he was to achieve his first success by winning the title of international military sports champion at Turku.

In fact one wonders how he could have been overtaken, so much did the crowd literally 'carry' him right through the race. Without doubt the fastest and most versatile walker of his generation, Bernhard Kannenberg, an athlete of style and breeding, got clear of the Russian Venjamin Soldatenko at the 35-km mark, after having tried more than 50 times to outstrip his rival. By putting in a final spurt, 15 km from the finish, the German soldier was able to smash (by

15 min 6 sec) the Olympic record held by the Italian Abdon Pamich.

He had begun a veritable blitz on world records a few months before Munich. But 27 May 1972 will remain a historic date, for the first walker to complete the 50-km road race in under 4 hours (3 hr 52 min 44.6 sec) was none other than this 30-year old German...

BERNHARD KANNENBERG

Born Aug. 20, 1942, at Remscheid, Germany

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1972 OG: gold medal in the 50 km
1974 ECH: silver medal in the 20 km
Wold records:
15 km: 1 hr 03 min 18 sec, 25 May, 1974, Hamburg
20 km: 1 hr 24 min 45 sec, 25 May, 1974, Hamburg
25 km: 1 hr 50 min 22 sec, 11 May, 1974, Kassel
30 km: 2 hr 12 min 58 sec, 11 May, 1974, Kassel
35 km: 2 hr 44 min 01.4 sec, 16 Nov., 1975, Nerviano
40 km: 3 hr 07 min 52.2 sec, 16 Nov., 1975, Nerviano
50 km: 3 hr 56 min 51.4 sec, 16 Nov., 1975, Nerviano
1 hour: 14,241 km, 25 May, 1974, Hamburg
2 hours: 27,154 km, 11 May, 1974, Kassel
10 miles: 1 hr 08 min 00.4 sec, 25 May, 1974, Hamburg
25 miles: 3 hr 08 min 53.4 sec, 16 Nov., 1975, Nerviano
30 miles: 3 hr 48 min 34.4 sec, 16 Nov., 1975, Nerviano

Bernhard Kannenberg (471): an historic feat