

Track and Field



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What Price Edmonton?

After David Hemery and Alan Pascoe it took a good high hurdler to wear the British vest and attract attention. And when Hemery retired and Pascoe went on to greater honours over the 400-metres hurdles, it fell to Berwyn Price to continue in their footsteps as Britain's fastest high hurdler. He had already marked himself out as a likely successor when winning the 1970 European junior title at Paris in 14.1 sec, and indeed while still a junior he reached the semi-final of the Commonwealth Games 110 metres in Edinburgh that year.

Taller than either Hemery or Pascoe at 6 ft 3 in (1.90 m) Price had to work hard to contain his lanky frame within the close-striding pattern demanded by 10-yard intervals. But he smoothed out his technical problems and, apart from a notoriously hesitant start, he showed fine controlled form and often came through over the last three hurdles when other hurdlers begin to get ragged.

In 1973 Price lowered the United Kingdom record, which for eight years had belonged to either Hemery or Pascoe, to 13.69 sec. That year he won the World Student Games in 13.7 sec.

Joint favourite for the Commonwealth title in New Zealand, Price was pipped by

Kenya's Fatwell Kimaiyo, whose time of 13.69 sec equalled Price's year-old Commonwealth record.

At home Berwyn's appearances at the Crystal Palace produced a long string of victories in international matches. In the AAA championships there he won six consecutive titles (1973-78), a sequence only bettered among British hurdlers by Donald Finlay's seven (1932-38). Second in the European indoor 60-metres hurdles in 1976, Price did not achieve his Olympic ambitions at Montreal that year.

So it was that he had to wait until 1978 to claim his first gold medal in a major event, the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton. With the holder, Kimaiyo, beaten into fourth place, Price raced to within a hundredth of a second of his best for a most popular win. He was the first Welshman in 40 years to win a track event at the Commonwealth Games.

BERWYN PRICE

Born 15 Aug, 1951 in Tredegar, Wales

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1974 CG: silver medal, 110 m hurdles, 13.84 sec, Christchurch

1978 CG: gold medal, 110 m hurdles, 13.70 sec, Edmonton

Berwyn showing fine form over the high hurdles