

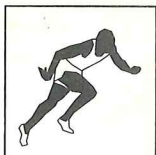
Track and Field



Brendan Foster



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Big Bren

Any football fan will tell you that County Durham has sent some fine players trotting out to the world's soccer pitches. Athletics fans are grateful that the best legs trotting around that part of the world are not all employed kicking a ball. One highly durable pair belongs to Brendan Foster.

Forster's career has been characterized by that special capacity for producing a big effort on the big occasion. In 1970, he made the England team in Edinburgh and finished up with a bronze medal in the 1,500 metres. A similar result, but with a faster time, rewarded his appearance in Helsinki in the European Championships. Still over the same distance, he placed fifth in the Olympic final in Munich. After that, Foster moved upward and onward. His metric mile speed was proven, but not of gold medal calibre. That finer brilliance was to be shown when he took like a champion to the 5,000 metres, and simply romped away with the European Cup final in Edinburgh in 1973.

The Commonwealth Games in Christchurch was out of season for English athletes, but Brendan, also a great cross-country runner, made the

January trip to New Zealand in fine fettle. A most impressive second to Kenya's Ben Jipcho in the 5,000 metres, he updated the British records for both that distance and for 1,500 metres where he finished seventh. In September, in Rome, he walloped Europe's 5,000 metres talent by half the length of the straight in what has been so far his most convincing big Games victory. A few weeks earlier, he had stunned the track world with his sensational 3,000 metres record, clocking consecutive 1,500 metres times of 3 min 49 sec and 3 min 46.2 sec.

Again European Cup Final winner in 1975, Brendan did not satisfy his aspiration in the Montreal olympics though he was the only British athletics medallist. Still in his prime, he is planning further 5,000 and 10,000 metres honours in 1978.

BRENDAN FOSTER

Born Jan. 12, 1948, in Hebburn, County Durham. GB

AWARDS AND RECORDS

OG 1976 bronze medal: 10,000 m, 27:54.9
ECH 1971 bronze medal: 1,500 m, 3:39.2
ECH 1974 gold medal: 5,000 m, 13:17.2
CG 1970 bronze medal: 1,500 m, 3:40.6
CG 1974 silver medal: 5,000 m, 13:14.6
World records: 2 miles, 8:13.8 (1973)
3,000 m, 7:35.2 (1974)

Another victory for Gateshead's pride, Brendan Foster