

# Track and Field



*Brian Hewson*



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## Brian Hewson

### *The Wrong Event, the Right Man*

In the wake of the first four-minute mile in 1954, Britain produced a crop of good middle distance runners. Few, if any, were as consistent as Brian Hewson. He was just 20 when he won the first of six AAA titles in 1953 and earned his first full international vest. In 1954 he won a silver medal in the Commonwealth Games 880 yards in Vancouver, finishing second to Derek Johnson. The following year he became only the third Englishman to break four minutes for the mile when he and Chris Chataway clocked 3 min 59.8 sec behind Hungary's Laszlo Tabori at White City. Selected for the 1,500 metres at Melbourne, Hewson finished fifth in the Olympic final, and though he was the first Englishman home was disappointed not to be in the medals.

The problem of deciding which was his optimum distance was already exercising Hewson. In 1957 he seemed well into his rhythm when beating both Tabori and Derek Ibbotson in a much-publicised mile in Los Angeles, losing the race by a short head to Australia's Merv Lincoln. But with Ibbotson shortly becoming world record holder for the mile, Hewson's choice for 1958 had to be the two-lap event, and he started the season with a

startling new European record for 880 yards of 1 min 47.5 sec. Soon he won the AAA title, defeating in the process Australia's Herb Elliott. The way seemed open for Hewson to attempt an 880 yards/800 metres double at the forthcoming Commonwealth and European Championships. At Cardiff, however, a slow first lap found him edged out of a gold medal by a fast-finishing Elliott while the selectors, contrary to all apparent logic, named him, not for the 800 metres, but the 1,500 metres in the European Championships in Stockholm. His team-mate Mike Rawson took the 800 metres gold medal, and this was no doubt enough to fire Hewson when his turn came. Setting a new UK record of 3 min 41.1 sec in his heat, he switched on a burst of speed in the last 50 metres of the final which left behind a class field including the Olympic champion, Ron Delany of Ireland.

#### BRIAN HEWSON

Born April 4, 1933, in Croydon, England

#### AWARDS AND RECORDS

- 1954 CG: 880 yards, silver medal, 1 min 51.2 sec, Vancouver
- 1958 CG: 880 yards, silver medal, 1 min 49.5 sec, Cardiff
- 1958 ECH: 1,500 metres, gold medal, 3 min 41.9 sec, Stockholm

*A 1,000-yard Invitation Race win for Brian Hewson, White City, 1958*