

Track and Field



Daniel Bautista



Track and Field



Daniel Bautista

The Lure of the Road

Daniel Bautista is a phenomenon among international walkers. It took this Mexican athlete less than two years to learn the necessary technique and to win the gold medal at the 1976 Montreal Olympics. A 25-year-old policeman, he is the undoubted successor to the Russian Vladimir Golubnichy. He was trained by the Pole Jerzy Haus Leber, and his style is a model of what a walker's should be.

Of average height (5 ft 7 in), broad and muscular, the Mexican champion first came to fame during 1976 when he consolidated his performances of the previous year. In particular he won the international event at Bydgoszcz in 1 h 23 min 39.8 sec, the best performance in the world ever over 20 km. His first appearances on international scenes were particularly brilliant. In Mexico City, before his home crowd, he won the gold medal in the Pan-American Games in a time of 1 h 33 min 5.87 sec. On this occasion, he dominated his rivals who included his countryman D. Colin (disqualified in Montreal) and the American Larry Young. Because of his size, Bautista has always been more suited to the road than to the race track and for this reason he

has had to make his name outside Mexico, chiefly in Canada and in Europe. His only failure occurred during the Mexican Championships (50 km) when he was overcome by the burning sun. He collapsed and had to be content with fourth place and a mediocre performance of 4 h 18 min 39 sec, hardly in keeping with the expectations of a future Olympic champion.

In Montreal, during the 20-km walk, D. Bautista put in a remarkably consistent performance. After the West German O. Kannenberg had dropped out of the race, Bautista ploughed through the rest of the field and successively eliminated the three East Germans K. A. Stadmuller, Hans Reimann and Peter Frenkel.

DANIEL BAUTISTA

Born Aug. 4, 1952, in Mexico City

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1975: gold medal in Panamerican Games
1976 OG: gold medal in 20 km (Olympic record of 1 h 24:40.8)
Records:
1975: 10 km on race track: 40:51.6
1976: one hour on race track: 13.857 km
1977: 20 km road: 1 h 23:31.9

1976 Olympics: D. Bautista (13) leading his fellow Mexican L. Gonzalez in the 20-km walk