

Track and Field



Dwight Stones



Track and Field



Dwight Stones

Just Two Bronze Medals

Dwight Stones, of Glendale, Calif., is a proud, talented, and supremely self-confident athlete whose braggadocio has caused him to be compared with boxing's Muhammad Ali. On Jan. 22, 1977, the 23-year-old high jumper, who had already set a slew of records, showed up at the Philadelphia Track Classic with a home-made banner proclaiming: "Dwight + Philly = World Record". That night he made three attempts to clear 7' 7", which would have been a new world indoor record, but failed each time. He did, however, manage to set a meet record of 7' 5 1/4" and was voted the event's outstanding athlete. Stones had already set the world outdoor record—more than once. On June 5, 1976, also in Philadelphia, he raised the standard to 7' 7". Afterwards Stones boasted that he would win a gold medal at the upcoming Olympics. But almost immediately he hedged that bet, saying, "I'm glad to have broken the world record before the Olympics. In Montreal the battle will be much too long and the record won't be in jeopardy." And then he added, "Rain could spoil everything, anyway."

Stones' words turned out to be prophetic. Rainy weather was a definite factor in the jumping events at Montreal, making the playing field slick and treacherous. A double threat for Dwight: first, because his use of the Fosbury Flop (a head-first, backwards style) requires more traction at the takeoff than the barrel-roll style used by most competitors; and second, because it slowed down his lightning-quick approach run. Dwight had to settle for a bronze medal, behind Jacek Wszola of Poland and Greg Joy of Canada. Still, Stones managed to get in the last word. Four days later, on Aug. 4, 1976, he broke his own world outdoor record, clearing 7' 7 1/4", in Philadelphia.

DWIGHT STONES

Born Dec. 6, 1953, in Glendale, Calif.
Student at the University of Long Beach

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1972 OG: bronze medal
1976 OG: bronze medal

World Records:
7' 6 1/2", Jul. 11, 1973, in Munich
7' 7", Jun. 5, 1976, in Philadelphia
7' 7 1/4", Aug. 4, 1976, in Philadelphia