

# Track and Field



*Fanny Blankers-Koen*



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## Fanny Blankers-Koen



### *The Flying Dutchwoman*

It took a mother of two from the Netherlands to match Jesse Owens' amazing exploits at the 1936 Olympics. Twelve years later, in London during the first postwar Olympics, Fanny Blankers-Koen won four gold medals—in the 100 m and 200 m dashes, the 80 m hurdles and the relay. She could have done even better, since she was among the world's best in the high jump (fifth place in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin) and the broad jump. But Jon Blankers, a former triple-jump champion, who was her husband as well as her coach, convinced Fanny to limit herself to the running events to conserve her energy. She had eleven wins out of eleven appearances at Wembley Stadium during the London Games—in the qualifying, the semi-finals, and the finals of the four events she entered.

In 1946, two months after giving birth to a daughter also named Fanny, she resumed her training. She would take the baby carriage with her to the stadium, which was near her home, and periodically interrupt her training

to run over to the carriage and check on the infant.

In 1950 at the European Championships in Brussels, Blankers-Koen, now known as "the Flying Dutchwoman", nearly repeated her London triumph. She won the 100 m and 200 m dashes and the 80 m hurdles, but her relay team was edged out by Great Britain by a few thousandths of a second in the finals of the 4 x 100 relay.

#### FANNY BLANKERS-KOEN

Born April 26, 1918, in Hoofddorp, near Amsterdam, HOL

#### AWARDS AND RECORDS

1948 OG: gold medals in the 100 m, 200 m, 80 m hurdles, and the 4 x 100 m relay

1946 and 1950 European Championships: five gold medals

#### World Records:

High jump, 1.88 yards (1.71 m), 1943

Broad jump, 6.875 yards (6.25 m), 1943

100 yards, 10.8, 1944

4 x 100 yards, 47.4, 1944

4 x 200 yards, 1:41, 1944

100 m, 11.5, 1948

80 m hurdles, 11.0, 1948

220 yards, 24.2, 1950

Pentathlon, 4,692 points, 1951

*Unchallenged winner* — Inset: a relaxed and happy champion