

Track and Field



Frank Shorter



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The Marathon Man

The Olympic marathon—26 miles of pure torture—was about to begin at the 1972 Games in Munich, Germany. No American runner had finished first in the event since 1908, but skinny, 5' 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " Frank Shorter was determined to win for the U.S.

For the first 20 miles Shorter glided along at his steady, ground-eating pace, leaving the rest of the field spread out behind him. Then the tough grind of the last 6 miles began. Fatigue hit him—his legs felt stiff and heavy, numbness crept over his body and brain until he reached the Stadium. There he was greeted by a thunderous ovation, which told him victory was in sight and buoyed him up to travel the remaining distance on the oval track. Feeling as if he was floating on air, Frank Shorter crossed the finish line in the second-fastest time in Olympic history—2 hours, 12 minutes, and 19,7 seconds.

The 1972 Olympic gold medal was a prize Shorter had coveted for many years, even as he was working his way through school to earn a law degree. Studying and running made up his life, and while he persevered to become a lawyer he also ran on to

capture track titles at every distance from 3 miles to the marathon. Shorter's long run on the road of success stretched on. More meets, more top-level competition, and the lure of the 1976 Olympic marathon kept his track shoes eating up thousands of miles a year. But finally, on a miserably rainy day in Montreal, Canada, Shorter had to settle for the silver medal in the event he had won 4 years earlier.

But he wasn't through. Not long after the 1976 Games he was back in training, back in competition, running on and on at the sport he loved more than anything in the world.

FRANK SHORTER

Born Oct. 31, 1947, Munich, GER

AWARDS AND RECORDS

NCAA Outdoor champion, 6-miles, 1969
AAU Outdoor champion, 3-miles, 1970
Pan-American Games, gold medal, marathon (set Pan-Am record), 1971
Sullivan Award, AAU Athlete of the Year, 1972
Olympic gold medal, Marathon, 1972
AAU Cross-Country, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974
AAU Outdoor champion, 10,000 meters, 1975
Olympic silver medal, marathon, 1976