

# Track and Field



*Geoff Capes*



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## Geoff Capes

### *High and mighty*

In a world of big men, frail specimens cannot win and the shot is no game for babies. Geoff Capes is 6 ft 5½ in (1.97 m) tall and weighs about 21 stones (136 kg).

The size of Capes was a governing factor in Geoff's early career in the police force. If there was rough work to do, somebody was sure to say 'Send for big Geoff.'

Then he decided to show them that his strength was not just for crowd control. Patiently, he developed the skill of shot-putting, slowly developing from the raw state a semblance of technique. His place in the Commonwealth Games team in 1970 was a start and he finished fourth.

It took another two years to equal Arthur Rowe's British mark of 64 ft 2¼ in (19.56 m) and Rowe had been the big name in British shot-putting ever since 1957. The real breakthrough came just three months after that equalizer—a throw of 66 ft 2½ in (20.18 m) which put him way out on his own in the domestic rankings.

Still a relative novice in the big Games arena, Capes went to Munich for the Olympics in 1972 but was not ready for that class of combat. He had to wait

until 1974 for the next plateau of his career which was to bring him gold medals in the European indoor championships, and the Commonwealth Games in Christchurch, and a bronze medal in the full European Championships in Rome. That season he hefted the British record onward in seven giant instalments, joining the world elite with a throw of exactly 21 metres in June and surpassing even that barrier with 70 ft 1½ in (21.37 m).

Unhappy with long journeys, Capes was not on his mettle for his second Olympic appearance in Montreal, but had lesser consolations in 1976, regaining his European indoor title and edging on his national record a few inches.

The knowledge that big men can get stronger well into their thirties means that Geoff will be on top of British shot-putting for a long time.

#### **GEOFF CAPES**

Born Aug. 23, 1949, in Holbeach, Lancs GB.

#### **AWARDS AND RECORDS**

1974 CG gold medal: shot, 68 ft 0½ in (20.74 m), in Christchurch

1974 ECH bronze medal: shot 66 ft 3¾ in (20.21 m), in Rome

Also won gold medals in European indoor championships 1974, 1976.

*Big Geoff—strong yet amazingly agile*