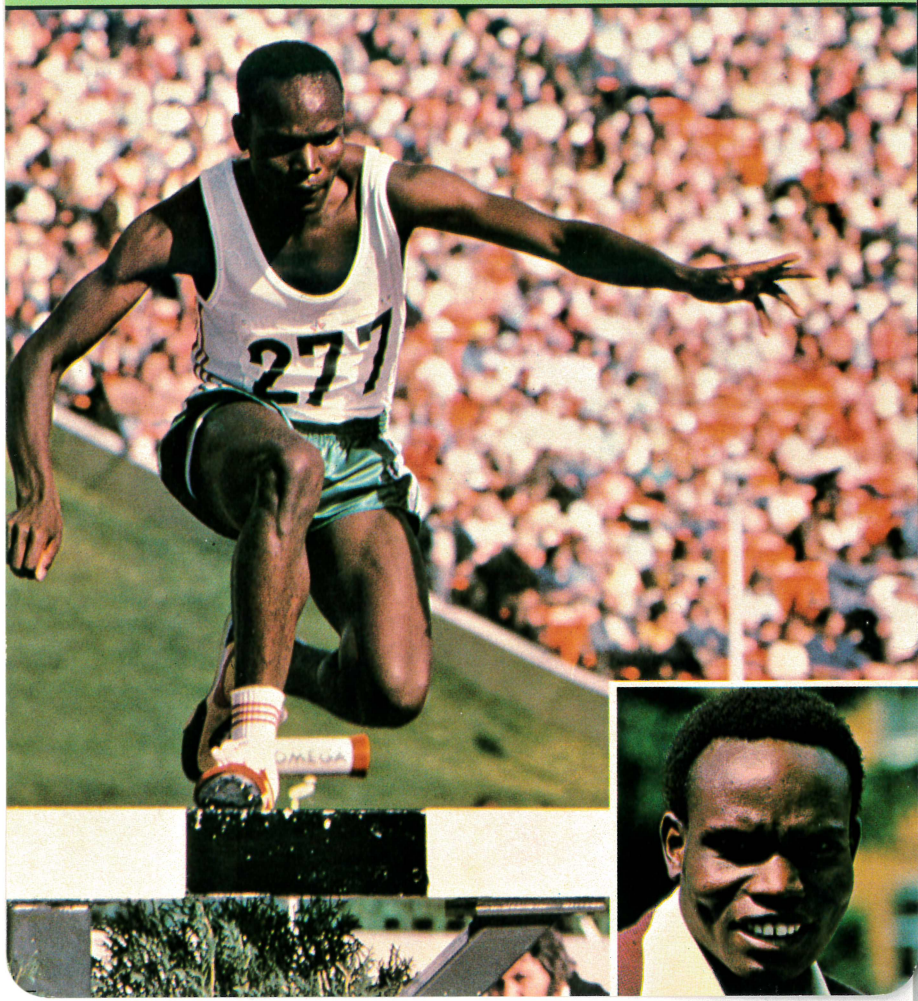


# Track and Field



*Henry Rono*



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## Henry Rono

### *After You, Henry...*

Among those who might have made their mark in Montreal in 1976 had the African Olympic boycott not taken place was a relatively little-known steeplechaser named Henry Rono. To his good fortune he had been discovered by the great Kip Keino who recommended him to John Chaplin, coach at Washington State University. Within two months of arriving at WSU, Rono dominated the National Collegiate cross-country title, in December 1976. And there, it might be said, his elevation into world class began.

Really it began a long way back, for Rono is yet another member of the now famous Nandi tribe, from Kenya's Rift Valley. Like so many of those durable tribesmen, he started to run not long after learning to walk.

In 1977 Rono made a name for himself on the American indoor circuit by such exploits as running a mile in 4 min 00.7 sec and 3 miles in 12 min. 56.1 sec within the same afternoon. However, a stomach ulcer prevented him from reaching a true peak for the outdoor season and although he ran some respectable races in Europe, he failed to qualify for the African team at the World Cup.

His assault on the record book flabbergasted the track world. In the space of 80

days between April and June he drastically modernized four records regarded as among the toughest on the books. In the States he pulverized the 5,000 m mark held by the New Zealander Dick Quax. Next came the steeplechase record, and then on his tour of Europe he tackled the 10,000 metres, taking that from his countryman, Kimombwa. Finally the 3,000 meters held by Britain's Brendan Foster was shattered. In each case huge margins ranging from three to eight seconds were lopped off. Never in track history had any man held those four world records, let alone broken four distance records in so short a space of time.

#### HENRY RONO

Born Feb. 12, 1952, in Kiptaragon, Kenya

#### AWARDS AND RECORDS

1978 African Games: gold medal, 10,000 m, 27 min 58.9 sec

gold medal, 3,000-m steeplechase, 8 min 15.8 sec

1978 CG: gold medal, 5,000 m, 13 min 23.4 sec  
gold medal, 3,000-m steeplechase, 8 min 26.5 sec

World records:

5,000 m: 13 min 08.4 sec, Berkeley, 8 April 1978  
3,000 m steeplechase: 8 min 04.5 sec, Seattle, 13 May 1978

10,000 m: 27 min 22.5 sec, Vienna, 11 June 1978  
3,000 m: 7 min 32.1 sec, Oslo, 27 June 1978

*Henry Rono: four world records in 80 days*