

# Track and Field



*Jacek Wszola*



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### *Conqueror of Stones and Better than Brumel*

Top favorite for the Montreal Olympic Games, the American Dwight Stones had said that he could only be beaten by rain. And, in fact, that day it did rain. Stones stopped at 2.21 m (7 ft 3 in), and the young Pole Jacek Wszola, staking more on suppleness than on strength, which made his take-off runs less precarious, took advantage of this and seized the gold medal. This was a tremendous surprise for the general public. As for the experts, they knew what to make of it since Jacek had cleared 2.20 m at the age of 18, in 1974, and had become Junior European champion the following year.

Wszola demolished another idol a little more than a month later, improving by one centimeter the European record of the Russian Valeri Brumel. Fast (he has run 60 m in 6.5 sec), supple, obviously possessing a rare agility, he had just shown twice in a few weeks that his main quality was not to be overawed by the superstars.

There is nothing to suggest such strength of character in this young romantic-looking man who is not at all hard on himself in training. The fact that he does not

become agitated on great occasions doubtless comes from the atmosphere of sport surrounding his childhood. Son of a physical education teacher who was 44 at the time of his Olympic victory and who is his trainer, Jacek has always frequented the sports arenas. So much so that we know that he cleared 3.30 m (10 ft 10 in) in the long-jump when he was 6 years old and 1.56 m (5 ft 2 in) in the high-jump at the age of 14. Having never done anything other than the Fosbury flop, he nearly changed direction towards the triple jump in 1974 when he achieved 15.08 m (49 ft 6 in) at the age of 18.

#### JACEK WSZOLA

Born Dec. 30, 1946, in Warsaw, Poland

#### AWARDS AND RECORDS

1974 ECH seniors: 5th, with 2.19 m  
1975 ECH juniors: gold medal, with 2.22 m  
1976 OG: gold medal, with 2.25 m  
1978 ECH: 6th with 2.21 m  
1980 OG: silver medal, with 2.31 m  
European record:  
2.29 m on 8 Sept. 1976 in Coblenz

*Jacek Wszola in the competition he won at the 1976 OG in Montreal*