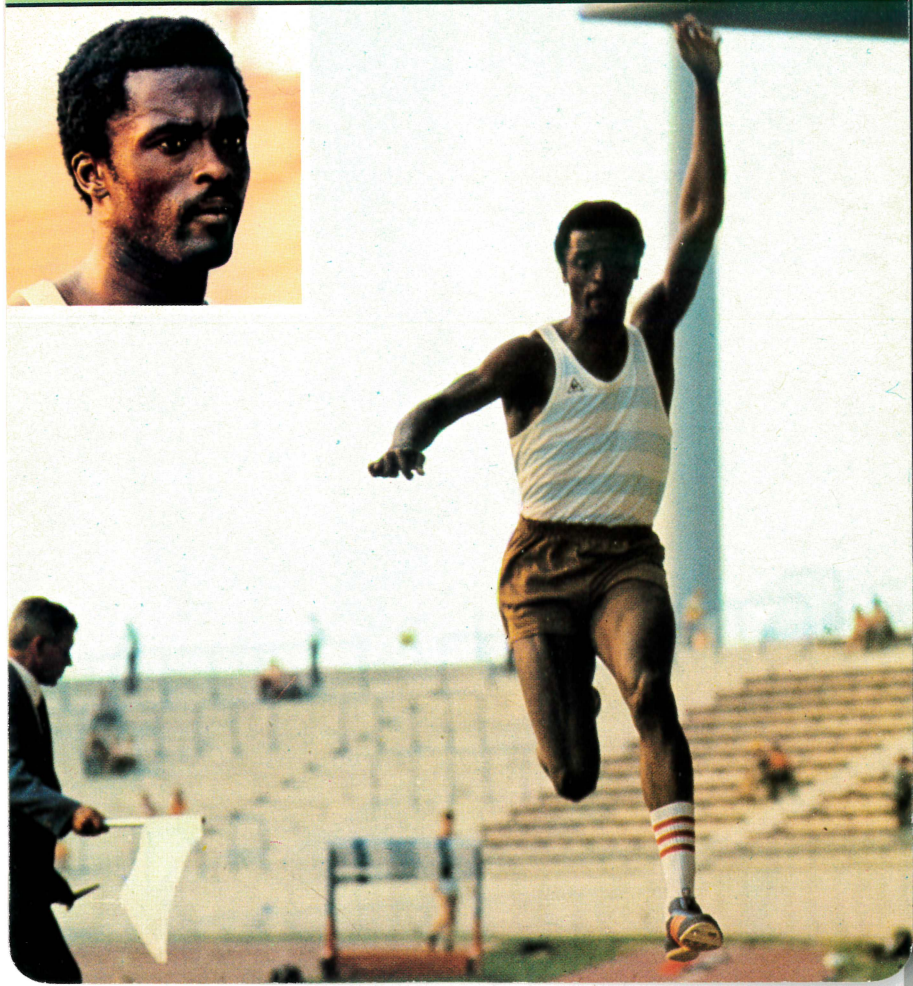


Track and Field



Jacques Rousseau



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Jacques Rousseau

Gold for France in 1978

Jacques Rousseau from Guadeloupe is, in a way, the French Bob Beamon. His talent is almost as dazzling as that of the American. He is also psychologically fragile, and was for a long time held back by a somewhat unpolished technique. He was unable to time his run-up, and therefore got only to tenth place at the Munich Olympics. However, everyone says that one fine day he will jump 8.50 m or more, since his muscular quality has been well known for a long time.

He made his athletics debut in 1966, at the age of 15. Without any warming up, he did some trials. These resulted in 1.75 m in the high jump, 9 secs in the 80 m, and 5.82 m in the long jump. After a year's complete break, he recorded over 6 m in the long jump at the first attempt. His future had been decided. Training began in earnest. Two months later, he jumped 6.70 m. In May 1968, still training by himself, he crossed the 7 m mark for the first time. He was unquestionably a great hope. He was therefore given a grant to attend the Mexico Olympic Games. Jacques Rousseau has obviously retained a dazzling memory of Beamon's astronomical winning jump. However

his main profit from the trip was derived from carefully watching the performance and movements of Ralph Boston, the athlete whom he had made his idol.

In France, his refined technique has become more and more certain over the past few years. He missed winning the bronze at the Montreal Olympic Games by 2 cm only. He achieved his best jump in the year of the Games, but it was in 1977 that he began to show his class: two jumps over 8 m and several victories over the Olympic champion Arnie Robinson, as well as over the European record-holder Nenad Stekic.

At the 1978 European Championships, with a jump of 8.18 m, Rousseau won the gold medal for France.

JACQUES ROUSSEAU

Born March 10, 1951, in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1972 OG: 10th with 7.65 m

1976 OG: 4th with 8 m

1978 ECH: gold medal with 8.18 m

European indoor champion: 1975 and 1976

French record: 8.26 m on 26 June 1976 in Lille

Jacques Rousseau: the example of Ralph Boston and the memory of Bob Beamon