

Track and Field



Jim Hines



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The True World Record-holder

On 20 June 1968, at Sacramento (California), Jim Hines became the first man to run the 100 m in 9.9 sec. This was at the United States Championships, in the first semi-final, when the wind was blowing favorably at a speed of 0.80 m/sec. Already, in the first heat, Hines had achieved a major feat by being the first sprinter to stop the hands of the watch at 9.8 sec. But if the very high quality of the track (made of crushed brick) was not taken into account, the wind was unfortunately too strong: 2.80 m/sec. A few months later, helped by the fact that there was less air resistance at altitude, and also the appearance of synthetic tracks, Hines won the Olympic final in Mexico, which for the first time was run only by black competitors, in 9.9 sec. The electronic timer gave him a time of 9.95 sec. Ten years later no one had yet improved on this.

Is that to say that Jim Hines was a better athlete than Bob Hayes? No one would be so dogmatic. Tall and powerful, with a long, very rhythmic stride, Hines had a waddling style and ran in a slightly hunched position. Even if he was not very attractive to look at, he was indisputably

a very great sprinter. But he was not very assiduous at training and his coach, the 1956 Olympic champion Bobby Morrow, waited for him in vain several times at the stadium. By more hard work, Hines, according to the American experts, could have become the greatest sprinter of all time. In November 1968, that is a few weeks after his Olympic triumph, he joined the American football club, the Miami Dolphins. He did not do particularly brilliantly with them, however.

JIM HINES

Born Sept. 10, 1946, in Dumas, Arkansas, USA

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1968 OG: gold medal in the 100 m in 9.9 sec, gold medal in the 4 x 100-m in 38.2 sec

World records:

10 sec in the 100 m on 27 May 1967 at Modesto, California

9.9 sec in the 100 m on 20 June 1968 at Sacramento, California

38.2 sec in the 4 x 100 m on 20 Oct. 1968 in Mexico, in the last leg, with Charlie Greene, Mel Pender and Ray Smith

9.1 sec in the 100 yards on 13 May 1967 in Houston, Texas

The victorious finish of Jim Hines (279) in the final of the 100 m at the 1968 OG in Mexico