

Track and Field



Klaus Wolfermann



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Strength and Speed

The West German Klaus Wolfermann lived in total anonymity and did not emerge from it even when he took 6th place in the javelin at the European Championships in Helsinki in 1971. It was not until a few days before the opening of the Olympic Games in Munich that for the first time in his life he made a throw of more than 90 m (295' 3"). Wanting very much to distinguish himself before his public and sustained by an iron will, he had worked enormously hard during the months which preceded the Olympic javelin finals. Having won the gold medal which he so much wanted, he revealed that he had mixed 280 tons of cast iron a month and thrown the javelin some 500 to 600 times a week. Ian Lulis announced that he himself had stuck to 120 tons a month and made 300 to 400 throws a week. Despite this enormous difference in the volume of training, the German's victory hung by a thread, or rather by 2 centimeters: 90.48 m (296' 10") against 90.46 m (296' 9") for the Soviet competitor. It remained for Wolfermann to achieve his second goal: the world record in his event. This came on 5 May 1973. As

was often noticed, Klaus benefited from his important work of the previous year and that day threw 94.08 m. (308' 8").

Throwing in the Swedish style—that is to say, keeping the javelin at eye level during the course of the throw—his swiftness and strength of arm wrought a miracle. This performance is all the more remarkable in that on that day, 5 May 1973, at Leverkusen, Wolfermann was competing in his first meeting for eight months following an injury. Since then the career of this bald and stoutish physical education teacher's career has gone into decline. So much hard work has taken its toll of his joints. Because of a knee injury Wolfermann could not defend his title at the Montreal Olympic Games.

KLAUS WOLFERMANN

Born March 31, 1946, at Altdorf, Nürnberg, West Germany

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1972 OG: Gold medal with a throw of 90.48 m
1971 ECH: 6th with 80.82 m
1974 ECH: 5th with 83.36 m
World record:
94.08 m, 5 May, 1973 at Leverkusen, West Germany

Klaus Wolfermann: On his reappearance, a world record