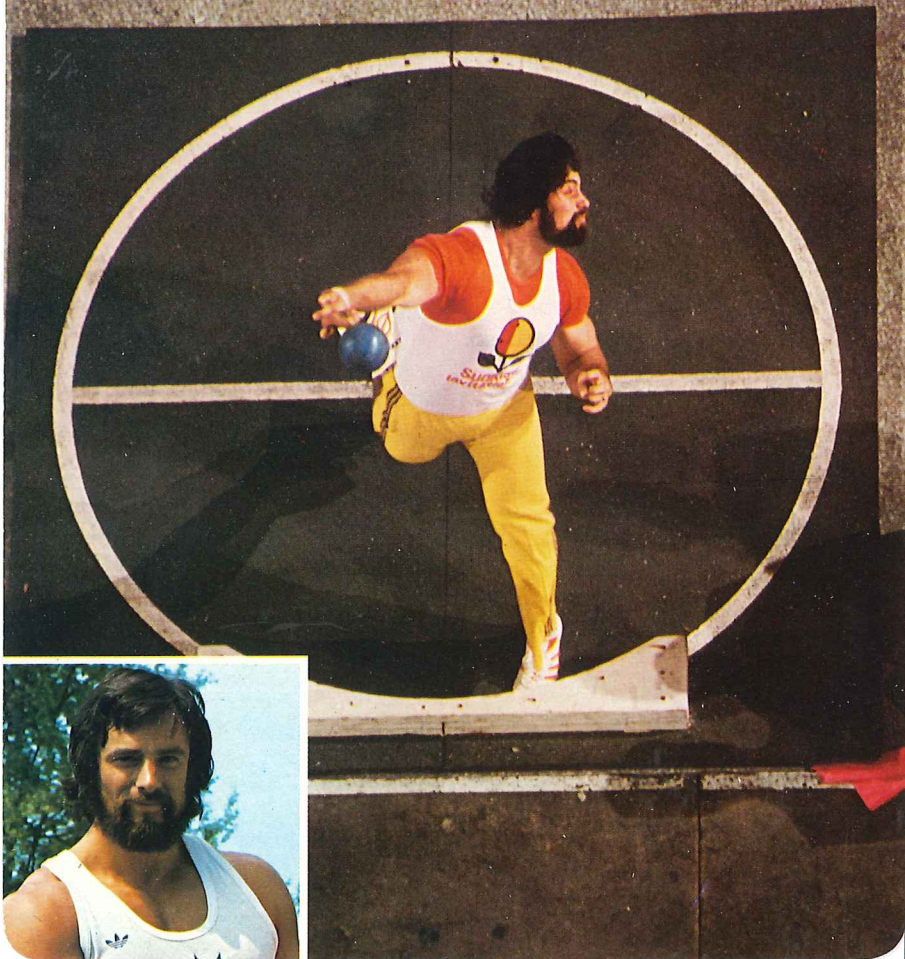


Track and Field



Mac Wilkins



Track and Field



Mac Wilkins

The Fastest

Only one thrower proved himself worthy of his reputation as favorite in the 1976 Olympics in Montreal: the American discus thrower Mac Wilkins who, although he felt he was not on form, beat the East German Wolfgang Schmidt for the gold medal by a clear margin (67.50 m as against 66.22 m). So it was that this giant from Oregon (1.93 m tall, weighing 116 kg) nicknamed "Multiple Mac" because he is also a world-class thrower of the javelin, the shot and even the hammer, restored to the United States an Olympic title which had been taken from them by the Czech Ludvik Danek in 1972 in Munich.

Mac Wilkins owed his success (he was the first man past the 70 m barrier) to his turning speed and his sense of balance in the circle. Without a shadow of a doubt he is the fastest discus thrower of all time.

US champion in 1973, second in 1974 and 1975 behind John Powell, Mac Wilkins raised his throwing to world class only in 1976, after putting on more than 15 kilos in a year. To prepare himself for the Montreal Games, he gave up his job as a high-school teach-

er, and went to San Jose in California. And, in fact, it was there, on 1 May 1976, that he passed 70 m for the first time, stretching the world record to 70.86 m.

Mac Wilkins nearly missed out on the United States' first athletics gold medal of the Montreal Games. He only arrived at the Olympic village five days before the discus event, and the American team managers thought about banning him from participating in the Olympics. Despite his intensive training at the Pacific Coast Club in San Jose, with his American colleagues John Powell and Al Feuerbach, he was way off form in Montreal, which explains why the throw which won him the gold medal was only mediocre.

MAC WILKINS

Born Nov. 15, 1950, in Eugene, Oreg.

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1976 OG: gold medal, discus
1973: United States champion

His world records:

69.16 m, Apr. 24, 1976, Walnut
69.50 m, May 1, 1976, San Jose
70.86 m, May 1, 1976, San Jose