

Track and Field



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Small Only in Size

Little Markus Ryffel, 5 ft 5 in (1.66 m) in height and 146 lb (56 kg) in weight, took his place among the best of current middle distance runners in February 1977 in Milan by becoming European indoor champion in the 3,000 m. In September 1978 at the ECH in Prague, he made the mistake of attacking too early, 150 m from the finish, in the final of the 5,000 m. His spurt enabled him to take by surprise two of the favorites, the Finn Martti Vainio and the Rumanian Ilie Floroiu, but not the Italian Venanzio Ortis, who succeeded in passing him in the final straight, nor the Russian Alexander Fedotkin, with whom he had to share second place in the end. A few days later in Frankfurt, he inflicted on the Kenyan Henry Rono his first defeat of the season (over 3,000 m).

At Vienna, in February 1979, he kept his European indoor 3,000 m title in imperial style. His final spurt going into the last turn was decisive this time.

Markus Ryffel had been able to prepare himself for the European indoor competitions in the best conditions possible. For ten months, he had benefited from a scheme undertaken by the Swiss Sports Aid Association in association with a commercial company who gave him

temporary work so that he could organize his time to allow for the needs of a rational training program. Ryffel had in addition the opportunity to complete a long tour of preparation in the Antipodes.

Markus Ryffel left his native town of Uster, near Zurich, in 1975 for Basle where, at the local athletics club, he could pursue his training in more favorable surroundings with, above all, teammates able to offer him good enough competition.

On a national level, he has not had any rivals since 1977, the year when, having obtained the bronze medal in the 3,000 m at the European indoor championships, he was Swiss cross-country and 5,000 m champion, before winning for the second time the commemorative Morat-Fribourg Race (10 miles).

MARKUS RYFFEL

Born Feb. 5, 1955, at Uster, Switzerland

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1978 ECH: silver medal in the 5,000 m in Prague
European indoor championships: gold medal in the 3,000 m in 1978 and 1979 (bronze medal in 1977)
7 Swiss Championship titles

Markus Ryffel (680) at the start of a heat of the 5,000 m at the ECH in Prague in 1978