

Track and Field



Maryvonne Dupureur



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A Great Lady

Maryvonne Dupureur is considered to have been the great lady of French athletics between 1960 and 1970. Gentle and strong, with an unexceptional physique which became a miracle of balance and beauty when she was running, this Breton lady from Saint-Brieuc had a forceful personality. Hardly known under her maiden name (Samson), she forged through to the forefront of French athletics after her marriage to Gérard Dupureur, a physical education teacher who became her coach, and also after the birth of her first child.

In the year 1964 she asserted herself on the international scene. Several great victories and three French records over 800 m preceded her participation in the Tokyo Olympic Games. She was well aware of her limited chances in the sprint, so she ran nearly the whole race at top speed, left all her rivals behind for a moment, but the British girl Ann Packer caught her up 60 m from the tape and beat her. Maryvonne Dupureur still managed to set a new French record.

She left the track again to give birth to a second child, but managed to regain a sufficiently good form to get through to the final in the Mexico Olympic Games. However, she only managed to come eighth. She was then encouraged to change her distance, considering her poor starting speed, and try the 1,500 m, an event which she did not much like. She finally opted for the 800 m, but was discreetly eliminated from the series in the 1969 European Championships in Athens, still behaving with as much dignity in adversity as she had done in her 1964 defeat. This was the end of her career. Mme Dupureur eventually became member of the Directing Committee of the French Federation.

MARYVONNE DUPUREUR

Born on May 24, 1937, in Saint-Brieuc, France

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1964 OG: silver medal in the 800 m in 2:01.9
Final French records:
2:01.9 in the 800 m
4:27.9 in the 1500 m
8 times French champion in the 400 m, 800 m
and 1500 m

Maryvonne Dupureur (in blue): racing ahead