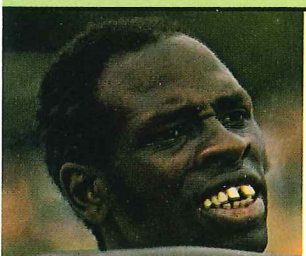


# Track and Field



*Mike Boit*



# Track and Field



## Mike Boit

### *As Good as Juantorena?*

In Kenya, a country which seems to produce top-class runners by the dozen, Mike Boit never really made much impression. He found it even more difficult to do well against his compatriots than he did in major international competitions. All the same, it would have been extremely interesting to find out how he compared against the Cuban Juantorena during the Montreal Olympics. For the year preceding the Games had been a remarkable one for Boit.

Out of fourteen races over 800 m, he was beaten only twice, and left behind him a string of losers who included the European champion Luciano Susani, the Belgian Ivo Van Damme, winner of the silver medal in Montreal, and the American Rick Wohlhuter, the bronze medalist. Even better, his time of 1 min 43.79 sec in Zurich was the second best time ever over the distance. Only Marcello Fiasconaro had run faster in the whole history of athletics—and then promptly sank into oblivion. There is no doubt about it: the sudden decision taken by Kenya to abstain from Montreal was a great shame.

Because he was fast at the start, Boit started off by competing in the 400 m. Then, whenever he was allowed time off from working on the family farm, he began practising the 800 m. He was then 18 years old and achieved a performance of 1 min 48.5 sec. By the age of 21, he was having a go at the 400-m hurdles, but after injuring a knee on a hurdle during training, he quickly returned to his specialty. Despite a slightly hesitant tactical sense, he rapidly became unbeatable over the distance. After running the 1,500 m in 3 min 36.84 sec in 1974 and the mile in 3 min 54.88 sec in 1975, he even had a chance in the 1,500 in Montreal.

#### MIKE BOIT

Born Jan. 16, 1949

#### AWARDS AND RECORDS

1972 OG: bronze medal in 800 m with 1:46.0  
4th in 1,500 m with 3:38.4

World Cup 1977: 2nd of the 800 m behind Juantorena

Commonwealth Games 1978: Gold medal in 800 m with 1:46.39

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1972 OG: M. Boit (573), 4th over 1,500 m, behind P. Vasala (1st), R. Dixon and K. Keino