

# Track and Field



*Mildred "Babe"  
Zaharias*



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## Mildred "Babe" Zaharias



### *An All-rounder of Genius*

Twice Olympic champion in athletics, twice selected for the United States women's basketball team, three victories in the US Open and four in the Ladies' World Golf Championship: this extract from the table of honors of Mildred "Babe" Zaharias (nee Didrikson) explains the title of "No. 1 Sportswoman of the first half of the 29th century" which was awarded to her in 1950 by a jury of American sportswriters.

"Babe" was successful at baseball, diving, hockey and even billiards, but it was in athletics and golf that she reached the heights. At the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1932, at the age of 18, she had won the 80 m hurdles in 11.7 sec (world record) and the javelin with 43.62 m (equalling the world record). In the high jump, she had established a third world record with 1.65 m. Her victorious jump was, however, invalidated for, a partisan of the Western Roll style, she had cleared the bar head first, which was not allowed at the time. She had to be content with second place. In 1932 too, in the United States Championships, she had taken part in eight competitions in the space of 2 1/2 hours. She had won

five of them, which enabled her to gain a total of 30 points and thus beat, on her own, a 22-strong team of Illinois athletes.

She began playing golf in 1940. There again, she was to amass achievements, thanks to her innate skill and her strength, but also to five or six hours training a day. Thus her career as a golfer was marked in 1947 by a series of 17 consecutive victories and, in 1954, by a third success in the US Open obtained less than a year after having undergone a first operation against cancer.

#### MILDRED "BABE" ZAHARIAS

Born June 26, 1914, in Port Arthur, Texas  
Died Sept. 27, 1956, in Galveston, Texas

#### AWARDS AND RECORDS

##### *Athletics:*

1932 OG: gold medal in the 80 m hurdles (WR)  
gold medal in the javelin (WR)  
silver medal in the high jump

Suffered only two defeats in more than 600 races or contests.

##### *Golf:*

Won at least once all the great ladies' tournaments.

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*Mildred "Babe" Zaharias: world records (in the hurdles in particular) before golf*