

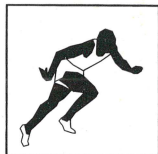
Track and Field



Mohamed Gammoudi



Track and Field



Mohamed Gammoudi

The Man Who Beat Keino

If one had to remember only one thing about Gammoudi's long career, it would be that he beat the Kenyan Kip Keino in the 5,000 m in the Olympic Games in Mexico. Keino was then at the peak of his universal glory. He was also a man of the high plains, and the Games took place at altitude. At the end of an extremely close final straight, however, he was beaten by 2 tenths of a second by the Tunisian.

Gammoudi discovered his talent for running when he did his military service. Every morning his troop set off at 6 a.m. for a cross-country run, and Mohamed was always the first back at the barracks. His reward was to run for his regiment and later for his country when, having become a professional soldier in order to enjoy the good training facilities, he represented Tunisia in international competitions. In 1963, in Naples, he won the 5,000 m and the 10,000 m in the Mediterranean Games. But hardly any attention was paid to him. In 1964 he put the final touches on his preparation under the direction of Jo Malléjac, the former trainer of Jazy, who developed the muscles of Gammoudi's extremely well-endowed body for running. This was to be very useful to him at the Tokyo Olympics.

Penetrating between the American Billy Mills and the Australian Ron Clarke, two giants, he was caught by the former in the final straight but beat the latter who was the clear favorite. He could not take part in the final of the 5,000 m due to injury.

Four years later, he won the gold medal in the 5,000 m, after a defeat in the 10,000 m against the "men of the mountains" Naftali Temu (Kenya) and Mamo Wolde (Ethiopia). Contrary to all the forecasts, he was not to stop there. He was brought to the ground by the fall of the Finn Lasse Viren in the 10,000 m at the Munich Olympics, but he finished second in the 5,000 m at the age of 34.

MOHAMED GAMMOUDI

Born April 3, 1938, at Sidi-Aïch, South Tunisia

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1964 OG: silver medal in the 10,000 m in 28 min 24.8 sec

1968 OG: gold medal in the 5,000 m in 14 min 05.0 sec

bronze medal in the 10,000 m in 29 min 34.2 sec

1972 OG: silver medal in the 5,000 m in 13 min 27.4 sec

Winner of the International Cross Country race in 1968 at Tunis

Mohamed Gammoudi (No. 904) in the 5,000 m at the 1972 OG in Munich