

Track and Field



Nick Rose



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By Any Other Name

Any runner who gets to the top in British distance running is aware that if he slips there will be another good one waiting to take his place. Nick Rose has been waiting for a few years now, years in which he has had his foot in the door without quite breaking through. His flowing locks and limber stride have been a feature of many stirring 3,000 and 5,000-metre clashes on both sides of the Atlantic but the breaks, generally, have not been in his favour. Disappointment, in fact, has been the spur which has kept Rose running. Unlucky to miss selection for the 1976 Olympics, he emerged in 1977 as the man most likely to unseat Brendan Foster as the nation's top 5,000-metre man. In 1978 he made the team for both the Commonwealth Games and European Championship, reaching the final in both only to finish near the back of the field. The first important turning point for Rose was after the Olympic letdown of 1976 when he left his factory job in Bristol to join the small band of Englishmen based in American colleges. At Western Kentucky his training stepped up and his confidence with it. Back at home in June he took the UK 5,000 metres by a walloping margin in 13 min 20.6 sec, giving his first demonstration of the hard

breakaway lap that kills the opposition. An even more crushing victory in the European Cup semi-final at Crystal Palace in July, followed by another resounding win over the Russian Enn Sellik at Helsinki in the European Cup Final proclaimed that a new man had arrived. It was too much to expect that he could sustain the peak for the World Cup barely three weeks later but with his gallant fourth place in a personal best of 13 min 20.4 sec he showed again his capacity for brave front running. Back in the States he won the AAU cross-country title at Houston and went on into the indoor season to record UK bests for 2 and 3 miles. The protracted strain of competing through the American Collegiate season may have prevented Rose from producing his best in Europe in 1978 but he is still young and hungry for honours, which could be waiting for him over the distance he has yet to tackle, the 10,000 metres.

NICK ROSE

Born Dec. 20, 1951, in Bristol, England

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1977 European Cup Final: 5,000 m winner in 13 min 27.8 sec, Helsinki

Nick Rose (746) in a challenging position on the bend