

Track and Field



Noël Tijou



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The most titled

Noël Tijou is the greatest French specialist of all time in cross-country running. Seven times national champion in this field, he is today on the Honor Roll in front of Ragueneau, Pujazon and Alain Mimoun, all of them with six titles. He owes this distinction to his quite exceptional will-power, because since his unsuccessful attempt on the existing French record in the hour race and the 20 km in May 1974, this man from the Vosges has experienced every possible disappointment. Victim of a strained tendon in the right knee, compelled to look after a gravely ill wife, he faced all life's obstacles to surface again in the French Championships at Fontainebleau in 1977. In his fourteenth national Championship, he won his seventh victory, at the age of 35.

A runner with an effortless stride, he became talked about by winning an historic hour race and the 20 km race (on Oct. 14, 1972, at Colombes). That evening, he achieved the fourth best world performance of all time (20,285 km and 59:11.8) behind the Belgian Gaston Roelants (20.784 km), the

Englishman Trevor Wright (20.340 km) and the Finn S. Touminen (20.292 km). In 1977, he is still among the ten best world performers (8th), preceding even the renowned Australian Ron Clark (20.232 km).

Noël Tijou has been participating in athletics for 20 years and has retained, despite his national fame, much simplicity, which one could wish to see ratified by a higher international level of achievement.

NOËL TIJOU

Born on Dec. 12, 1941, in La Soubandière, France

AWARDS AND RECORDS

7 times cross-country champion of France: 1967, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1977

International cross-country championships: 65th in 1965, 11th in 1966, 8th in 1967, 9th in 1968, 5th in 1969, 5th in 1970, 5th in 1971, 46th in 1972, 10th in 1973, 8th in 1974, 19th in 1975, absent in 1976, 17th in 1977

Selected 51 times

Best performances:

5,000 m: 13:37.4 at Bourges, on June 24, 1972
10,000 m: 28:14.2 at Saint-Maur, on June 21, 1971
Hour: 20.285 km at Colombes, on Oct. 1, 1972
20 km: 59:12 at Colombes, the same day

Noël Tijou: one more national title than Mimoun and Pujazon