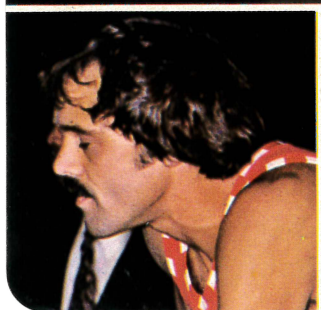
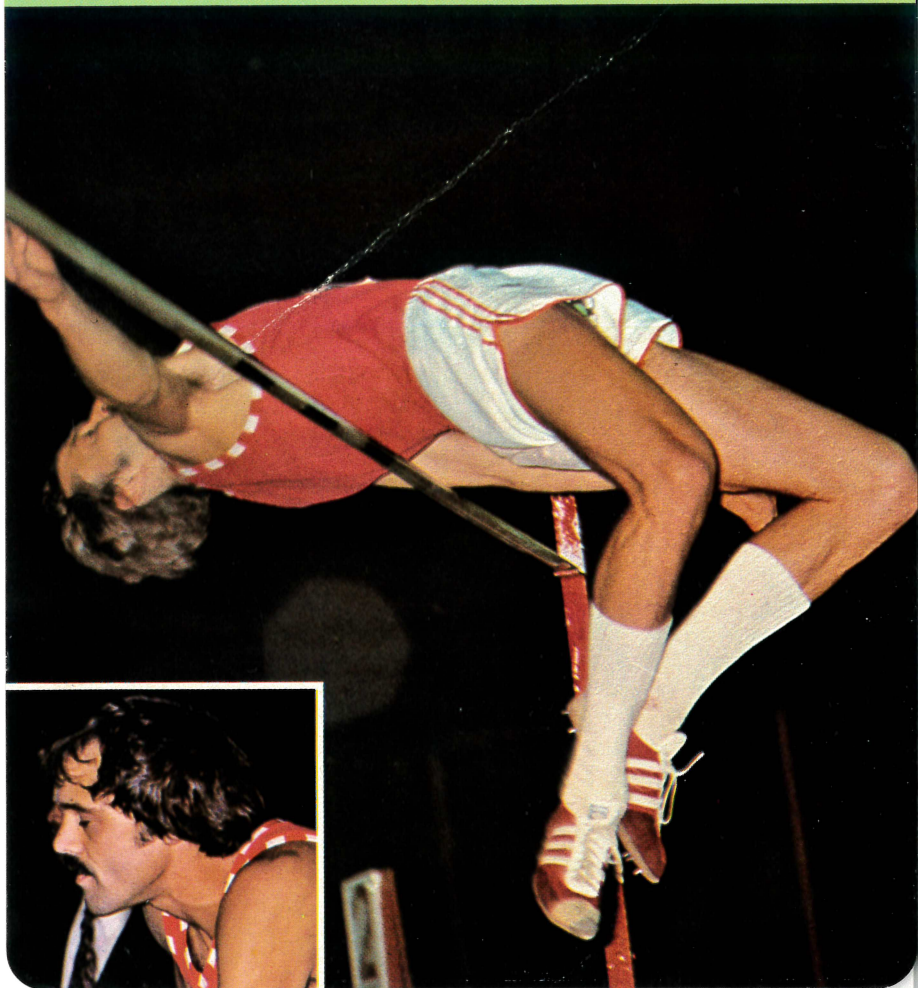


# Track and Field



*Pat Matzdorf*



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## Pat Matzdorf

### *The Man Who Overtook Brumel*

On 3 July 1971, at 2.25 pm, in the USA-USSR-Rest of the World match organized at Berkeley, Pat Matzdorf took a run-up at the high jump for the third time, having asked the bar to be put at 2.28 m. There was the nervous run-up, a vertical ascent, a kick towards the sky and then the fall. The bar shook for a long time, but did not fall. When measured, its height was 2.29 m. The world record set by the famous Valeri Brumel had just been beaten and Pat Matzdorf's name went down in athletics history.

The astonishing thing was that Matzdorf's personal best was only 2.18 m outdoors and 2.21 m indoors. People reflected on the infinite patience that Brumel of the USSR had needed to take the world record, centimeter by centimeter, up to 2.28 m, and how Ni Chih-Chin of China had achieved 2.29 m in a similar painstaking fashion without his record being taken into account! Being modest and quiet, the hero of the day said simply: "I have not beaten the world record but improved on my personal best."

Born into a poor family, Matzdorf learnt very early on what it meant to try hard

and gained an inflexible determination. For this event, he wore the United States vest for the first time. It became known that he had been training furiously for two years, and that he had played basketball for five years before that. As always happens when a newcomer beats the world record, the technical experts applied themselves to the examination of his style. It was not very elegant. In fact, Matzdorf jumped with his free leg bent, which made his "forward roll" look like a windmill or a frog, depending on your imagination. The Soviet trainers, great specialists in this style, declared that it had no future. Indeed Matzdorf, very inconsistent and injured as well, did not manage to qualify for the 1972 Olympic Games. Little more was heard of him after that.

#### PAT MATZDORF

Born on Dec. 26, 1949, in Sheboygan, Wisconsin

#### AWARDS AND RECORDS

World record:

2.29 m in the high jump on 3 July 1971 in Berkeley, California

*Pat Matzdorf: he never confirmed his achievement in Berkeley*