

Track and Field



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Lean and Fiery

Great sprinters tend to be power runners. Power generates momentum and short races go to the athlete possessing this commodity. Peter Radford never looked a sprinter until he began to move. Then his lean, almost attenuated frame developed astonishing thrust and fire.

Students of sprint history were not ready for surprises when Radford sprang to fame. Not since Willie Apple-garth broke the 220 yards record in 1914 had an Englishman cracked a world sprint record. Talk about Olympic medals and memories usually went back to Harold Abrahams in 1924. But it was Radford, who had been confined with a kidney ailment to a wheelchair in childhood who was to make British sprinting respectable again.

Radford clocked 10 seconds for 100 yards at the age 16 and within two years had captured the British record at 9.6 sec. That was in 1958, when he placed fourth in the Commonwealth Games 100 yards in Cardiff and third in the European 100 metres in Stockholm. The following month in Paris he clocked the then sensational times for a teenager of 10.3 and 20.8 for the metric sprints. His exact time for the

100 metres was 10.29 seconds, which until 1977 was still the fastest time, with automatic time keeping, ever accomplished by a British sprinter; this was before the days of synthetic tracks. In 1960, Radford came to his fullest sprint maturity. In May, on his home track at Wolverhampton, he broke the world record for 220 yards with 20.5 sec and this also stood as the world mark for the shorter 200 metres. Then at the OG in Rome, after a poor start, he ripped through the field to snatch the 100 metres bronze medal behind Germany's Armin Hary and the American Dave Sime. Many onlookers thought Radford was closing fast at the line, and lost the race only by his slow pick-up at the start.

PETER RADFORD

Born Sept. 20, 1938, in Walsall, Staffs., GB

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1960 OG: bronze medal: 100 metres, 10.3 sec.
bronze medal: 4 x 100 metres, 40.2 sec
1958 CG: gold medal: 4 x 110 yards relay, 40.7 sec
1972 CG: gold medal: 4 x 110 yards relay, 40.6 sec
1958 ECH: bronze medal: 100 metres, 10.4 sec
silver medal: 4 x 100 metres relay, 40.2 sec
World records:
200 metres: 20.5 sec (1960)
220 yards: 20.5 sec (1960)
4 x 110 yards relay: 40 sec, (1963)

Radford flashes in first at Hornchurch, May 15, 1959