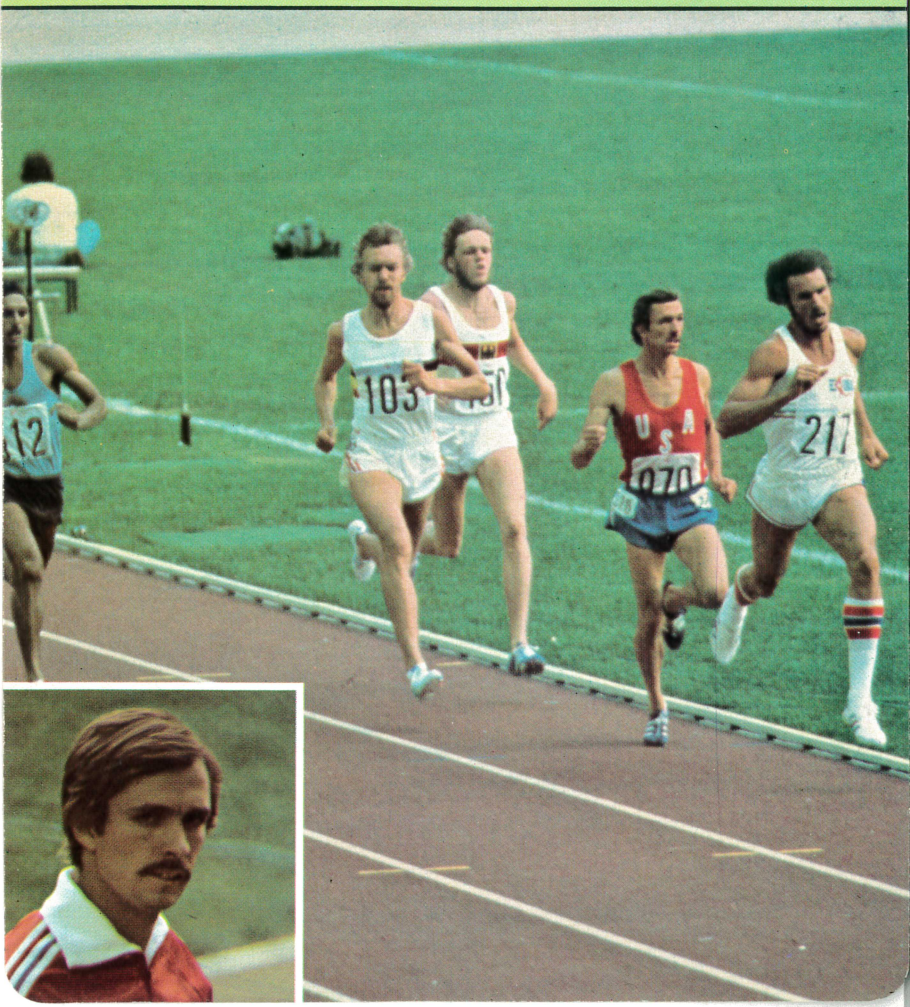


Track and Field



Rick Wohlhuter



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Rick Wohlhuter

Man for One Season

The American Rick Wohlhuter was already outstanding in 1973. But finally he was only to be the man for a single season: 1974. In that year he was successful at everything, absolutely everything. Unbeaten over two laps of the track at the end of the twelve meetings in which he took part, he broke the US record three times (1 min 44 sec and twice 1 min 43.9 sec), took the world 880 yards record to an unheard-of time of 1 min 44.1 sec, considerably bettered the world 1,000 m record (2 min 16 sec by the South African Dannie Malan) and, along the way, beat the New Zealanders John Walker and Rod Dixon, as well as the Kenyan Mike Boit, in a mile that he won in 3 min 54.4 sec.

If the 880 yards is thought of as 804.67 m and it is agreed to knock seven-tenths off times taken over this distance in order to establish the worst equivalent times over 800 m, it must be concluded that when he was clocked at 1 min 44.1 sec, Wohlhuter covered the 800 m in no more than 1 min 43.4 sec. This time would be better than the world record then held by the Italian Marcello Fiasconaro (1 min 43.7 sec). It would also be better than the world record established by the Cuban Alberto Juan-

torena in the Montreal Olympics (1 min 43.5 sec). Unhappily, Wohlhuter's running time at 800 m was not officially recorded.

From 1975 the American was beaten six times by Boit, while he only beat the Kenyan twice and yielded victory four times to the Yugoslav Luciano Susanj, rising star of the middle distances. At the Montreal Games, this extremely fast runner twice had to acknowledge defeat, both in the 800 m and the 1,500 m, before champions who, like Juantorena or the Belgian Ivo Van Damme, stood a head taller than him.

Four years previously, in the Munich Olympics, he fell and was eliminated from the heats.

RICK WOHLHUTER

Born Dec. 23, 1948, in Geneva, Illinois, USA

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1976 OG: 800 m, bronze medal in 1 min 44.12 sec;
6th in the 1,500 m in 3 min 40.6 sec

World records:

880 yards in 1 min 44.6 sec on 27 May 1973 in Los Angeles, then in 1 min 44.1 sec on 8 June 1974 in Eugene

1,000 m in 2 min 13.9 sec on 30 July 1974 in Oslo

Rick Wohlhuter side by side with the Cuban Alberto Juantorena