

Track and Field



Ron Clarke



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Jack Clarke's Brother

The holder of eighteen world records between 1963 and 1967, the Australian Ron Clarke must surely rank as one of the all-time greatest runners. Not that he was not often beaten both in the Olympics and in the Commonwealth Games, where he frequently met opponents capable of a sudden burst of speed at the finish, sufficient to put them ahead just when it mattered.

Despite (or perhaps because of) rigorous training, Ron Clarke was never able to improve on his finishing speed. Summer and winter, no matter what the weather or the running conditions, he used to undergo three training sessions every day, clocking up between 170 and 195 km per week.

He was not a brilliant technician and ran best against the clock; in many ways, his first world record set the style for his future career. On 18 December 1963 in Melbourne, Clarke was one of a handful of competitors before a small audience when he beat the existing 10,000 m record then held by the Russian Piotr Bolotnikov (28:18.2) by 2.6, thus bringing it down to 28:15.6.

His failure to win Olympic gold meant that he never became as famous in his own country as his brother Jack, who was an exceptional football player.

RON CLARKE

Born Feb. 21, 1937, in Melbourne, AUS

AWARDS AND RECORDS

World records:

2 miles (3,218 m):

8:19.8 in Västerås (SWE) June 27, 1967

8:19.6 in London, Aug. 24, 1968

3 miles (4,828 m):

13:07.6 in Melbourne Dec. 3, 1964

13:00.4 in Compton (USA) June 4, 1965

12:52.4 in London July 10, 1965

12:50.4 in Stockholm July 5, 1966

5,000 m:

13:34.8 in Hobart (AUS) Jan. 17, 1965

13:33.6 in Auckland (NZL) Feb. 1, 1965

13:25.8 in Compton June 4, 1965

13:16.6 in Stockholm July 5, 1966

6 miles (9,656 m):

27:17.8 in Melbourne Dec. 8, 1963

26:47.0 in Oslo July 14, 1965

10,000 m:

28:15.6 in Melbourne Dec. 18, 1963

28:14.0 in Turku (FIN) June 16, 1965

27:39.4 in Oslo July 14, 1965

10 miles (16,090 m):

47:12.8 in Melbourne March 2, 1965

20 km:

59:22.8 in Geelong (AUS) Oct. 27, 1965

1 hour:

20.232 km in Geelong Oct. 27, 1965

1964 OG: bronze medal in 10,000 m

Eighteen world records, but only one olympic medal in the 10,000 m in Tokyo in 1964