

Track and Field



Ruth Fuchs



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A Complete Sportswoman

"It can't imagine a life without sport", said Ruth Fuchs. It would be equally difficult to imagine javelin throwing without her. A committed sportswoman, an enthusiastic and able hunter, Ruth Fuchs began to practise throwing the javelin in 1961 at the age of 15 (she threw 35.67 m). Four years later she threw over 50 m (51.77 m). Playing handball in the winter, she incurred several injuries, and did not take part in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico due to a torn muscle. Two more years of intensive training and then the 1970 European Cup final in Budapest, where Ruth won a historic victory for East Germany by throwing the javelin over 60 m for the first time (60.60 m). Since they dominated the world in women's throwing events, the Soviet women accepted the defeat with equanimity. The record set by one of them at the Olympic Games in Tokyo was still standing. By throwing the javelin 62.40 m, Elena Gorchakova had achieved a feat which at the time seemed unbeatable.

Ruth could not rest until she had beaten that record. She managed it on 11 June 1972 in Potsdam. Since then, when she threw 65.06 m, the East

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German girl has improved on her performance several times, and has steadily approached the 70 m mark. The American Kathy Schmidt, who threw 69.32 m in 1977, is also chasing the 70 m barrier, but Kathy's style is nowhere near as pure as Ruth's. Twice beaten in the Olympic Games, Kathy Schmidt is in fact younger and physically more imposing. Ruth Fuchs has for her part determination and a competitive spirit that her good humor outside the stadium belies.

She is the first woman to have won the Olympic javelin title twice in succession. Ruth Fuchs (born Gamm) is a complete sportswoman. She has cleared, in particular, over 1.58 m in the high jump and 5.88 m in the long jump.

RUTH FUCHS

Born on Dec. 14, 1946, in Egeln, East Germany

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1972 OG: gold medal with 63.88 m
1976 OG: gold medal with 65.94 m
1971 ECH: bronze medal with 59.16 m
1974 ECH: gold medal with 67.22 m
World records:

65.06 m on 11 June, 1972, in Potsdam
66.10 m on 7 Sept. 1973, in Edinburgh
67.22 m on 3 Sept., 1974, in Rome
69.12 m on 12 July, 1976, in East Berlin

Ruth Fuchs: the purest style