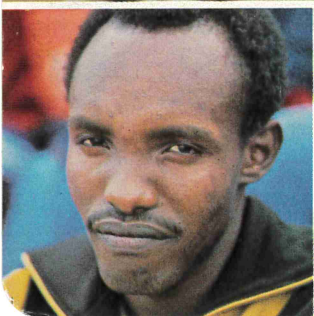
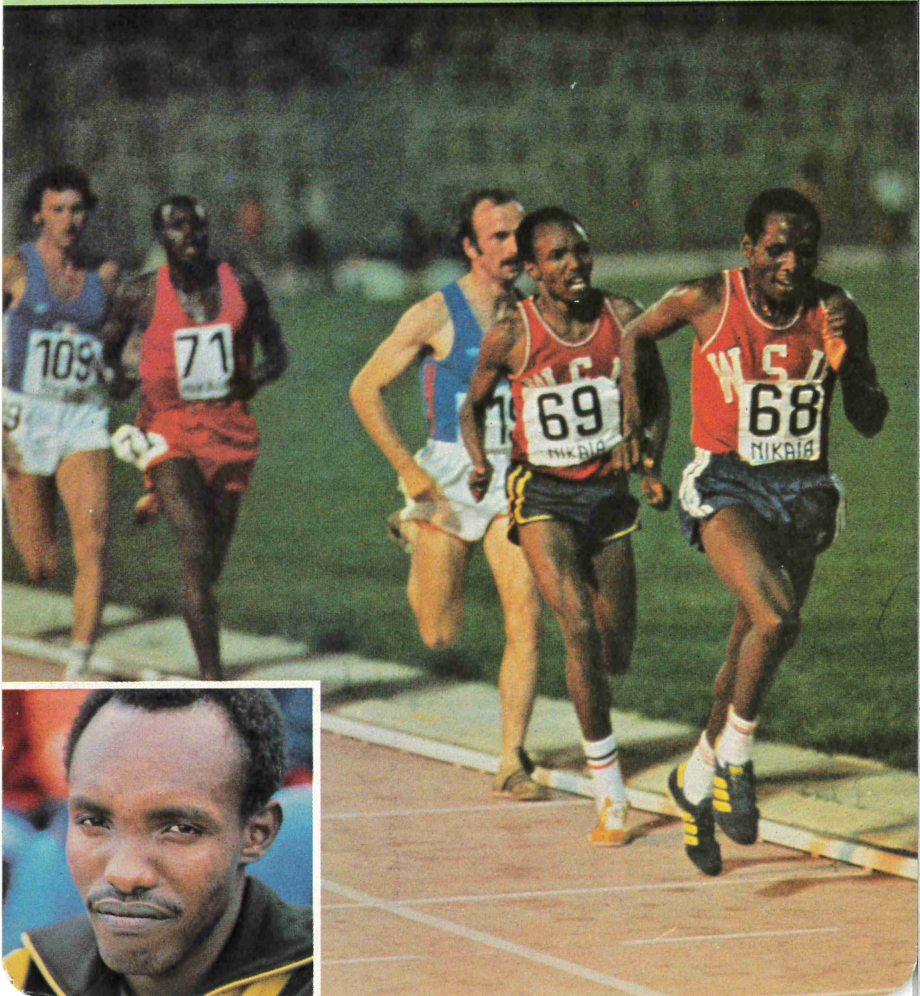


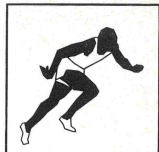
Track and Field



Samson Kimobwa



Track and Field



Samson Kimobwa

Record-holder by Chance

Samson Kimobwa had not the slightest intention of beating the world 10,000 m record when, on 30 June 1977, he launched himself on the Helsinki track. Certainly the fresh air pleasant to the lungs was quite favorable to performance, but what did he know of that? On this occasion he benefited from the pace set up to the 6,200 m mark by the British athlete Tony Simmons.

Urged on by the shouts of encouragement from the crowd, who had a better idea than he of the lap times, he forced the pace considerably after the eighth kilometer. As a result, he finished in 27 min 30.5 sec and beat by three tenths of a second the time established by Dave Bedford in 1973, ... and by 39.8 sec his own personal record! Never had such progress been recorded. At the same time, Kimobwa became the youngest 10 000 m record-holder the world had seen.

For a long time he had been in Seattle, where he had been only the third or fourth Kenyan of Washington State University. It was in 1975 that his compatriot Jen Jipcho had warmly recommended him to the trainer John Chaplin. At the age of 19,

Samson thus left his native Kenyan high plains and found himself suddenly promoted to being a student of agricultural economics in the United States. All the information he gave on his previous performances was that at the age of four he was already running 2 miles to go to school and as far to come home again. His début on American soil was hardly brilliant. Regularly, in the last laps, the frail Kimobwa lost his grip and was beaten by his friends John Ngeno, Josh Kimeto, and then Henry Rono. However, he continued to train seriously, over not too excessive distances (75 miles a week) and very hard. His efforts were finally and suddenly to be crowned with success, as he had only just become American universities champion (28 min 10.3 sec, a personal record) when he beat his world record.

SAMSON KIMOBWA

Born in 1956 in Kenya

AWARDS AND RECORDS

World record-holder in the 10,000 m in 27 min 30.5 sec on 30 June, 1977, in Helsinki, Finland

Samson Kimobwa (No. 69) led by his fellow Kenyan Kimoto at the Nice meeting in 1977