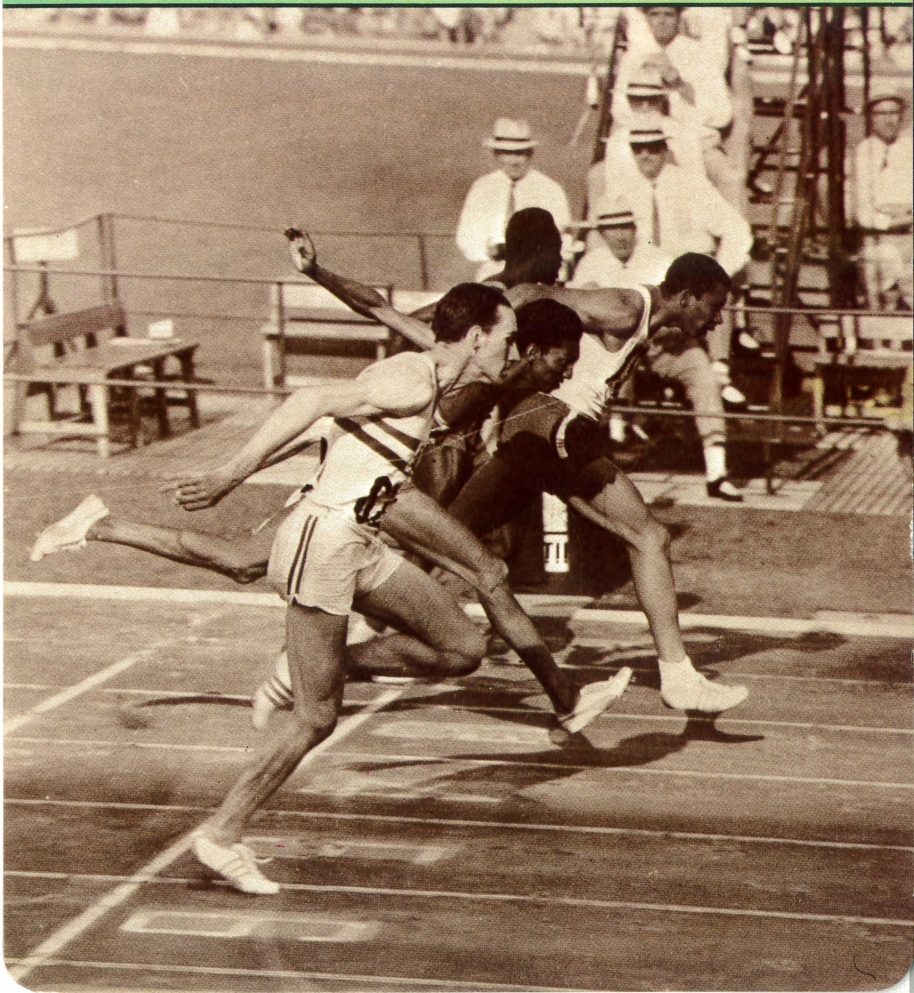


Track and Field



Serafino Antao



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Kenya's Spearhead

Since Serafino Antao won gold at Perth in 1962, the first Kenyan to win a medal in the Commonwealth Games, Kenyan athletes have never been out of the medals either in the Commonwealth or the Olympic Games. So it was that this lithe speedster with the elastic stride, an immigrant to the East African plateau, started a tradition which has adorned Kenyan athletics with growing lustre ever since.

Born in the Portuguese enclave of Goa on the east coast of the Indian sub-continent, Antao was fired by the ambition to become a footballer. His form earned him the nickname 'Kelly' after an army footballer whose action some thought he resembled. Luckily, he transferred his drive to the running track and by 1960 was fast enough to make the Kenyan team to the Rome Olympics. Lack of experience prevented him doing justice to his hopes, but a berth in the 100 metres semi-final was the springboard from which his future plans could take off.

In 1962 Antao staked out his claim as one of the world's top sprinters. In London he collected an AAA double in the 100 and 220 yards. In Milan he whipped a star-studded international field of sprinters, including American

Dave James and Olympic gold medallist Livio Berruti with metric times of 10.3 and 20.7 sec. Finally he climaxed late in the year with a dazzling double in the Commonwealth Games. In addition he reeled off some lively times including 9.3 sec twice for the 100 yards and wind-assisted marks of 9.2 for the 100 and 20.1 sec for 220 yards, the latter well inside the then world record. The year's sprinting earned him the coveted US Helm Award for the outstanding sportsman from the continent of Africa. Antao never relived the rapture of 1962 although he made a second Olympic appearance in Tokyo in 1964. Now settled in a business career in London he is a frequent spectator at Crystal Palace with his English wife, Janet. Among the athletes he has seen there are Kenyan medal-winners and world record holders like Kip Keino and Henry Rono. Antao can reflect that he led the great upsurge in Kenyan athletics.

SERAFINO ANTAO

Born Oct. 30, 1937, in Goa

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1962 CG: gold medal in 100 yards in 9.5 sec,
Perth

1962 CG: gold medal in 220 yards in 21.1 sec,
Perth

Olympic 100-m quarter-final, 1960: Antao (centre) third to Jerome (Canada) and Radford (GB)