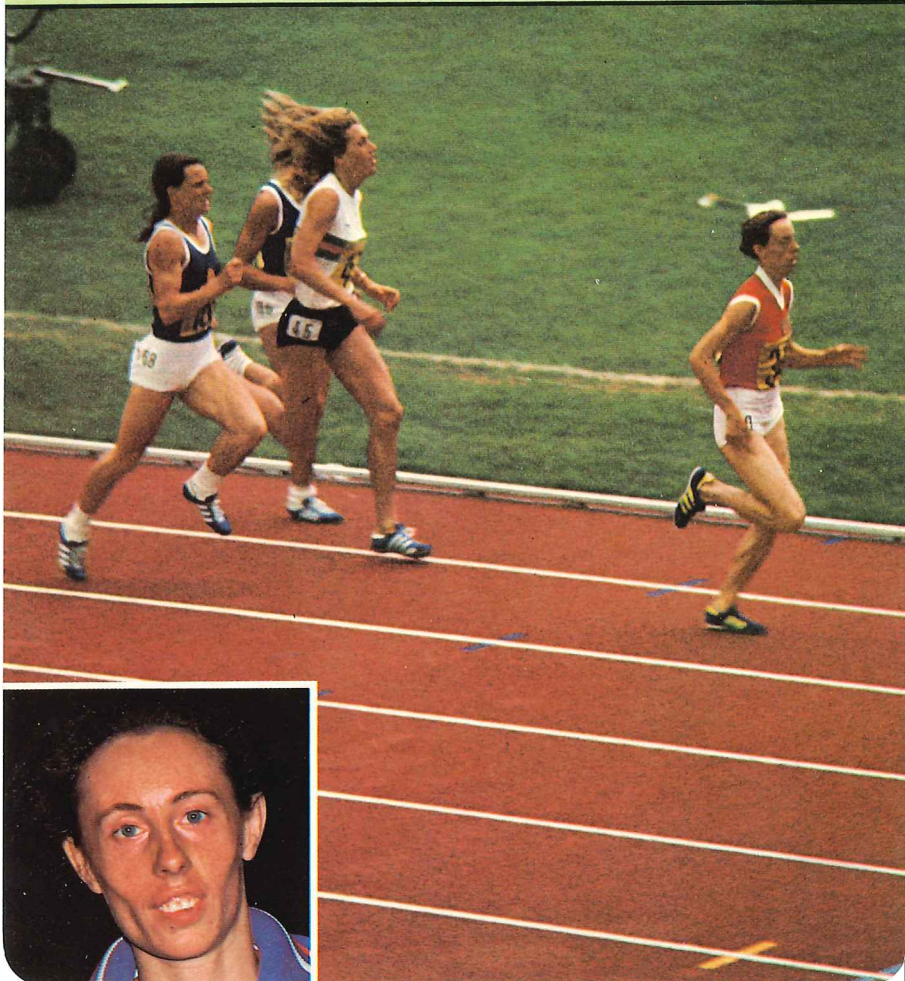


Track and Field



Tatiana Kazankina



Track and Field



Tatiana Kazankina

An historic 1,500 m

Even if she had not come back from the Montreal Olympics with two gold medals, little Tatiana Kazankina would still have been a Soviet athletics heroine for her historic performance in the 1,500 m on 28 June 1976 at Podolsk (near Moscow). Her time was 3 min 56 sec, toppling the world record set by her compatriot Ludmilla Bragina in the 1,500 m final at the Munich Olympics in 1972 (4 min 1.4 sec). She thus became the first woman athlete to break the four-minute barrier in the 1,500 m. The girl who came second on that memorable day in Podolsk, Raisa Katjukova, also broke the four-minute barrier with a time of 3 min 59.8 sec. Naturally Tatiana (height 5 ft 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ in, weight 91 lb) was hot favourite for the 1,500 m at Montreal. She won the event comfortably, beating Gunhild Hoffmeister of East Germany, but her time was well below her best (4 min 5.48 sec). She also won the 800 m, making up for the lapse on the part of Valentina Gerassimova (USSR). Diminutive and terribly determined, she accelerated out of the last bend, pulling away from the squad and overtaking all her rivals, among them the Bulgarian favourite Nikolina Chtereva. This time

it was the 800 m in 1 min 55 sec barrier which she swept aside with a time of 1 min 54.94 sec, a whole 1.06 sec better than the then existing world record. At the age of 18, Tatiana Kazankina was advised by her doctor to give up competition running. She followed his advice to the extent of dropping the 100 m hurdles (which she ran in 13.3 sec) and concentrated on middle-distance running, which requires less strenuous effort.

Tatiana Kazankina is married and lives in Leningrad with her student husband. She too is studying and somehow finds the time and energy to be a student, athlete and housewife.

TATIANA KAZANKINA

Born Dec. 17, 1951, in Leningrad, USSR

AWARDS AND RECORDS

OG 1976: gold medal in 800 m and 1,500 m

EC 1974: 4th in 1,500 m

1975: USSR women's 1,500 m champion

World records:

800 m in 1 min 54.94 sec, 26 July 1976, in Montreal
1500 m in 3 min 56 sec, 28 June 1976 in Podolsk

Progress:

1974: 800 m in 2 min 5.2 sec; 1,500 m in 4 min 5.94 sec

1975: 800 m in 2 min 1.7 sec; 1,500 m in 4 min 7.9 sec

1976: 800 m in 1 min 54.94 sec (WR); 1,500 m in 3 min 56 sec (WR)

Winning the 800 m in Montreal, she also won the 1,500 m