

# Track and Field



## *The 4 x 400 m Relay*



*Herman Frazier*

*Benjamin Brown*

*Fred Newhouse*

*Maxie Parks*

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### The Achievement of the Jamaicans

The 4 x 400 relay has in its record books one of the greatest achievements in the history of athletics. At the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki, the USA, which up to then had always held the world record, had to be satisfied with the silver medal behind Jamaica, whose team, composed of Arthur Wint, Leslie Laing, George Rhoden and Herbert McKenley, won in 3 min 3.9 (45.975-second average), beating the world record by more than 4 seconds. This performance was all the more remarkable as Laing's time was just under 48 sec after a faulty start. But the Americans were far from being embarrassed, as they lost to this legendary team by only one tenth of a second. On their team were Ollie Matson, Eugene Cole, Charles Moore and Mal Whitfield.

The USA regained the world record in 1960 at the OG in Rome and has held it since. The Americans have won the Olympic title since 1956, with the exception of 1972 at the Munich Games, where they did not compete in the event. In the presentation ceremony for the 400 m, the behavior of Vince

Matthews and Wayne Collett, who had taken the first two places, was judged so reprehensible by American officials that both were excluded on the spot. The gold medal went to Kenya in front of Great Britain and France.

#### CHRONOLOGY OF THE WORLD RECORD

- 3:18.2, USA, Sept. 4, 1911, New York (H. Schaaf, M. W. Sheppard, H. Gissing, J. M. Rosenberger)
- 3:16.6, USA, July 15, 1912, Stockholm (M. W. Sheppard, C. Reidpath, J. Meredith, F. Lindberg)
- 3:16.0, USA, July 13, 1924, Paris (C. Cochrane, A. Helffrich, J. McDonald, E. Stevenson)
- 3:14.2, USA, Aug. 5, 1928, Amsterdam (G. Baird, F. Alderman, E. Spencer, R. Barbuti)
- 3:13.4, USA, Aug 11, 1928, London (G. Baird, F. Taylor, R. Barbuti, E. Spencer)
- 3:12.6, Stanford University, USA, May 8, 1931, Fresno (M. Shore, A. Hables, L. Hables, B. Eastman)
- 3:08.2, USA, Aug. 7, 1932, Los Angeles (I. Fuqua, A. Ablowich, K. Warner, W. Carr)
- 3:03.9, Jamaica, July 27, 1952, Helsinki (A. Wint, L. Laing, H. McKenley, G. Rhoden)
- 3:02.2, USA, Sept. 8, 1960, Rome (J. Yerman, E. Young, G. Davis, O. Davis)
- 3:00.7, USA, Oct. 21, 1964, Tokyo (O. Cassell, M. Larrabee, U. Williams, H. Carr)
- 2:59.6, USA, July 24, 1966, Los Angeles (B. Frey, L. Evans, T. Smith, T. Lewis)
- 2:56.1, USA, Oct. 20, 1968, Mexico (V. Matthews, R. Freeman, L. James, L. Evans)

H. Frazier, B. Brown, F. Newhouse and M. Parks: the gold medal, but no record at Montreal