

Track and Field



The 9.9 Club



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The First Nine Members of an Exclusive Club

June 20, 1968, is a date to remember in the history of international athletics. On that day in Sacramento, during the American selections for the next olympic games, three men ran the 100 m in under 10 seconds; in fact manual timing gave them each 9.9. Thanks to a stunningly good start, Jim Hines, (born 1946, 5' 11½, 172 lbs) was the first member of a new and exclusive club. He won the first semi-final ahead of Ronnie Ray Smith (born 1948, 5' 11½, 132 lbs) although the latter was given the same time. The third athlete to break 10.0 was Charlie Greene (born 1945, 5' 6", 132 lbs) who won the second semi-final. In both races the following wind was measured at 1.80 m/sec. The maximum permitted wind is 2 m/sec, which is why the 9.9 run by the Jamaican Lennox Miller (2.75 m/sec) and Jim Hines's 9.8 in Sacramento (2.75 m/sec) could not be allowed.

Running 100 m in under 10.0 was such a feat that it was four years before two more athletes equalled this time of 9.9. At Eugene on July 1, 1972, once again during American

selections, Eddie Hart (born 1949, 5' 11", 154 lbs) and Rey Robinson (born 1952, 6', 150 lbs) won their tickets to the Munich olympics.

On June 21, 1974, in Los Angeles, the American Steve Williams was the fifth athlete to join this exclusive gathering of super-sprinters. He repeated the performance four times: July 16, 1975, in Sienna; Aug. 22, 1975, in Berlin; Apr. 28, 1976, in Gainesville; May 22, 1976, in Modesto.

On the track at Ostrava on June 7, 1975, Silvio Leonard was the first non-American to break 10.0. Under the watchful eyes of Valeri Borzov, the Cuban exploded from the starting-blocks. At twenty metres he was visibly ahead of his rivals. With a burst of speed full of strength and suppleness, he finished powerfully and clocked up 9.9 (5 timekeepers).

In Columbia (Apr. 3, 1976) and also at Baton Rouge (May 1, 1976) Harvey Glance, the black American with plaited hair, became the eighth member of the club. The ninth was the Jamaican Don Quarrie, who broke 10.0 on May 22, 1976, in Atlanta.

Jim Hines (right) the first athlete to have officially crossed the 10.0 barrier