

Track and Field



The Mile



Track and Field



The Mile

The Most Representative Standard

In athletics, there are few races which have been of such great interest to the general public as the mile, and not only in the Anglo-Saxon countries. However, since Roger Bannister became the first man to run the four laps of the track in under four minutes (3 min 59.4 sec), the mile has lost some of its attraction. Even though the four-minute barrier has been broken hundreds of times since Bannister, it has remained a significant standard in athletics.

The first great mile specialist (one mile = 1609.35 m) was Walter George of Great Britain who, in 1884, as an amateur, ran the distance in 4 min 18.4 sec, and then two years later set a professional record in 4 min 12.7 sec.

It was not until 1931 that the mile was run in under 4 min 10 sec by Jules Ladoumègue of France (4 min 09.2 sec).

The four-minute barrier should logically have been broken as early as 1945 by Gunder Haegg and Arne Andersson of Sweden. The two Scandinavians reduced the record time from 4 min 06.4 sec to 4 min 01.3 sec

between 1942 and 1945, before becoming professionals in 1945.

The fact that the mile does not now appear in the program of the great international competitions has not prevented the most famous of world middle-distance names from being included in the record tables.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE WORLD RECORD

4:14.4 J.P. Jones USA	May 31, 13	Cambridge
4:12.6 N. Taber USA	July 6, 15	Cambridge
4:10.4 P. Nurmi FIN	Aug. 23, 23	Stockholm
4:09.2 Ladoumègue FRA	Oct. 4, 31	Paris
4:07.6 J. Lovelock NZL	July 15, 33	Princeton
4:06.8 Cunningham USA	June 16, 34	Princeton
4:06.4 S. Wooderson GB	Aug 28, 37	Motspur Park
4:06.2 G. Haegg SWE	July 1, 42	Göteborg
A. Andersson SWE	July 10, 42	Stockholm
4:04.6 G. Haeg SWE	Sept 4, 42	Stockholm
4:02.6 A. Andersson SWE	July 1, 43	Göteborg
4:01.6 A. Andersson SWE	July 18, 44	Malmö
4:01.3 G. Haeg SWE	July 17, 45	Malmö
3:59.4 R. Bannister GB	May 6, 54	Oxford
3:58.0 J. Landy AUS	June 21, 54	Turku
3:57.2 D. Ibbotson GB	July 19, 57	London
3:54.5 H. Elliott AUS	Aug. 6, 58	Dublin
3:54.4 P. Snell NZL	Jan. 27, 62	Wanganui
3:54.1 P. Snell NZL	Nov. 17, 64	Auckland
3:56.6 M. Jazy FRA	June 9, 65	Rennes
3:51.3 J. Ryun USA	July 17, 66	Berkeley
3:51.1 J. Ryun USA	June 23, 67	Bakersfield
3:51.0 F. Bayi TAN	May 17, 75	Kingston
3:49.4 J. Walker NZL	Aug. 12, 75	Göteborg

John Walker (694) in front of Frank Clement (357) and Francis Gonzales (320)