

Track and Field



The Women's 400 m



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East Germany Currently Rule

Twice European champion, the Russian Maria Itkina saw her record smashed in 1962 by the North Korean Sim Kim Dan who was given 51.9 sec in Pyongyang. This unknown Asian was to clock 51.2 sec in 1964, but her performance, as with those she achieved over 800 m, was not ratified. This is why Nicole Duclos and Colette Besson of France figure on the world record listing. Colette Besson, the surprise 1968 Olympic Champion in Mexico, when she beat England's tragic Lilian Board, was beaten into second place by her compatriot Nicole Duclos in the European Championships in Athens a year later. The two were given the same time of 51.7 sec, which became the new world record.

However, it was not until 1970 that the Korean girl's time was improved on, when Marilyn Neufville from Jamaica ran 51 sec. It was over 400 m that Irena Szewinska from Poland ran some of her best races. In 1974 she became the first woman under 50 sec over the distance. She then dominated 400-m running until the appearance of an even more astound-

ing athlete, the East German Marita Koch who, like Irena, is equally at home over 200 m and 400 m.

WOMEN'S 400 M WORLD RECORDS

57.0 sec	M. Matthews	AUS	Jan. 6, 1957
	M. Chamberlain	NZL	Feb. 16, 1957
56.3 sec	N. Boyle	AUS	Feb. 24, 1957
55.2 sec	P. Lazareva	USSR	May 10, 1957
54 sec	M. Itkina	USSR	June 8, 1957
53.6 sec	M. Itkina	USSR	July 6, 1957
53.4 sec	M. Itkina	USSR	Sept. 12, 1959
	M. Itkina	USSR	Sept. 14, 1962
51.9 sec	Sim Kim Dan	KOR	Oct. 23, 1962
51.7 sec	N. Duclos	FRA	Sept. 18, 1969
	C. Besson	FRA	Sept. 18, 1969
51 sec	M. Neufville	JAM	July 23, 1970
	M. Zehrt	EGE	July 4, 1972
49.9 sec	I. Szewinska	POL	June 22, 1974
Electronic timing			
50.14 sec	R. Salin	FIN	Sept. 4, 1974
49.77 sec	C. Brehmer	EGE	May 9, 1976
49.75 sec	I. Szewinska	POL	June 22, 1976
49.29 sec	I. Szewinska	POL	July 29, 1976
49.19 sec	M. Koch	EGE	July 2, 1978
49.02 sec	M. Koch	EGE	Aug. 19, 1978
48.94 sec	M. Koch	EGE	Aug. 31, 1978
48.60 sec	M. Koch	EGE	Aug. 4, 1979

Marita Koch: even more outstanding than Irena Szewinska!