

Track and Field



Valeri Borzov



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A Scientific Sprinter

The sprinter Valeri Borzov became known throughout the sporting world on Aug. 19, 1969; on that day in Kiev, he equalled the European 100 m record of 10.0 (manual timekeeping). From then on the Russian dominated the international élite of sprinters, including the Americans, until the Montreal olympics where he had to make do with a bronze medal in the 100 m in 10.14 (as in Munich) behind Crawford and Quarrie, and where he eventually decided not to run in the 200 m.

The consistency of Borzov's results is truly astonishing, for in something as specialized as the sprint, athletes do not generally remain long at the top. But Borzov seemed to go on for ever. How? Obviously, he was talented but he was also expert at making the best use of favorable conditions and of his training; in other words, he applied science to sprinting. A marked man once he had won his first important race (the final of the Ukrainian schools championships), Borzov became a laboratory product. Under the direction of coach Valentin Petrovski, a biology teacher, systematic research was carried out

to determine what qualities were necessary to produce a top-class sprinter. Films of the world's top sprinters were scrutinized, the angle of thrust and the inclination of the body at the start were calculated, running movements were studied, and so on.

Borzov was a powerfully-built sprinter (6' 1", 172 lbs) and his training schedule was intensive but short; he never went in for intensive muscle-building sessions. He was a phenomenon.

VALERI BORZOV

Born Oct. 20, 1949, in Novaya Kakhovka, Ukraine, USSR

PE diploma and Dr in biology

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1969: European 100 m champion, in Athens

1971: European 100 m and 200 m champion, in Helsinki

1973: European 100 m champion, in Rome

1972 OG: gold medal in 100 m and 200 m

1976 OG: bronze medal in 100 m

Best results (electronic timekeeping):

10.07 over 100 m

1972 OG: quarter-final; (10.14 in the final)

20.00 over 200 m (finals of 1972 OG)

On Nov. 20, 1976, these were existing European records for both the 100 m and 200 m

1972 Olympic Games: Borzov wins the 100 m and 200 m