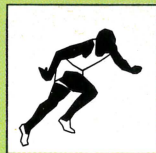


# Track and Field



*Vladimir Golubnichi*



# Track and Field



## Vladimir Golubnichi

### *The Walker with the Most Titles*

Of all the walkers, Vladimir Golubnichi of USSR has the most impressive honors list. He was 17 years old and was playing volleyball and basketball when the trainer Valentin Poliakov, with whom he has remained ever since, noticed his 'walking' ability. Their partnership rapidly produced splendid results, since, in 1955, Golubnichi captured the world record for the 20-km walk.

His career continued with a long collection of titles in his chosen distance. He was the 1960 Olympic champion in Rome, and also won another gold medal eight years later in Mexico. On that occasion he was first in the stadium, with his countryman Nicolai Smaga a few yards behind and José Pedraza of Mexico a little further behind him. The Mexican began by overtaking the second Russian. Then, with only 200 meters to go, he began to close in on Golubnichi, who constantly threw worried looks over his shoulder. Could José Pedraza still force the pace to close the three-or-four-meter gap separating him from a victory which would give Mexico its first gold medal

in its sporting history? Or would he have to be content with a silver medal? All those who were watching can testify that Pedraza was not walking but... running. But could the judges disqualify him without provoking a riot? In the end, Golubnichi retained his lead by 1.6 sec, and justice was done. Everyone thought that he was going to stop there. In fact, this tough competitor won his first European Championship title in 1974 in Rome, when the city was transformed into a Turkish bath (26°C and a humidity of 95 per cent). And he still finished in seventh place in the Montreal Olympic Games!

#### VLADIMIR GOLUBNICH

Born on June 2, 1936, in Sumi, Ukraine, USSR

#### AWARDS AND RECORDS

1960 OG: gold medal in 1 hr 34 min 07.2 sec.  
1964 OG: bronze medal in 1 hr 31 min 59.4 sec  
1968 OG: gold medal in 1 hr 33 min 58.4 sec  
1972 OG: silver medal in 1 hr 26 min 55.2 sec  
1962 ECH: bronze medal in 1 hr 36 min 37.5 sec  
1966 ECH: silver medal in 1 hr 30 min 06 sec  
1974 ECH: gold medal in 1 hr 29 min 30 sec  
World records:  
1 hr 30 min 02.8 sec on 2 Oct., 1955 in Kiev  
1 hr 27 min 05 sec on 23 Sept., 1958 in Simferopol  
1 hr 26 min 13.2 sec on 15 Sept., 1959 in Odessa

*Vladimir Golubnichi: a victorious finish in the 20-km walk in the 1968 OG in Mexico*