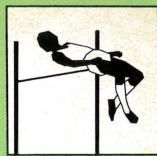


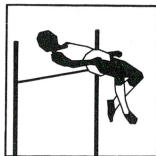
Track and Field



Wilma Bardauskiene



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The First Woman to Clear 7 m

Since the day in 1977 when she had taken the Soviet long jump record to 6.82 m, W. Bardauskiene could nurture the legitimate ambition to be the first woman to clear the 7-m "barrier". On that day, in fact, Igor Ter-Ovanessian, who was already preparing her for the day when she would make her international debut, measured one of her no jumps and found there was 7.04 m between the take-off and the landing point. The historical event officially took place on 18 August 1978 in Kishinev, the capital of Moldavia.

Profiting from a wind blowing at a speed of 1.80 m/s, Wilma jumped 7.07 m. She was to confirm this achievement splendidly a few days later in Prague at the European Championships: 7.09 m with no wind in the heats and 6.88 m on the following day, in especially difficult weather conditions, for the title. There was no longer any doubt that a very great star had just been born.

If it has taken some time for people to perceive its brightness, this was because Wilma, who began her career in 1967 (5.46 m at the age of 14) and was the Soviet junior women's record-holder in 1971 (6.37 m), had got married in 1972

and had interrupted her career in 1974 and 1975 to give birth to a son, Thomas. Her studies at the Vilnius Faculty, where she read geography, as well as an injury in 1976, had for a time interrupted her progress.

Being fast (she does 11.4 sec in the 100 m), tall and powerfully built at 5 ft 8 in and 141 lb, this lovely young woman, who is as charming as she is a good athlete, has her run-up as her trump card. "She runs like a man," her rivals could say about her. However, her style could still be greatly improved. This was what doubtless authorized Ter-Ovanessian, whose double scissors she copied, to predict that it would not be long before she would jump 7.50 m.

WILMA BARDAUSKIENE

Born June 15, 1953, in Pokrouois, Lithuania, USSR

AWARDS AND RECORDS

1978 ECH: gold medal in the long jump, 6.88 m, Prague

World records:

7.07 m on Aug. 18, 1978, in Kishinev

7.09 m on Aug. 29, 1978, in Prague

Wilma Bardauskiene: she thinks that she has not yet reached her "ceiling"