



Whitfield has been able to surmount political barriers to exercise his unique skills as a trainer and coach.

Whitfield has organized several visits a year for the past decade or more to Africa by American sports specialists at no cost to the U.S. Government. This year, he predicts some 43 nations of the 52 countries in the Organization of African States (OAS) will participate in the Olympics at Los Angeles.



Mal Whitfield winning the 800 meter run at Helsinki in 1962.

Although Black athletes dominated the track and field events in high schools, colleges, AAU meets and the Olympics, there was one event that the public under some form of psychosis seemed to disassociate with a Black competitor—the backbreaking Decathlon.

The one individual who cracked this myth was a high school track and field athlete from Plainfield, New Jersey, named Milton Campbell, who could perform with excellence in just about all of the required ten events of the decathlon. Although he had not heard about the decathlon previously, he made the 1952 Olympic Team at the age of 17 and placed 2nd to fellow

American Bob Mathias. Campbell recalls that prior to participating in the Olympic trials he researched the exploits of the great Carlyle, Pa., Institute Indian, Jim Thorpe.

Four years later Campbell made headlines when he captured the Decathlon with a blazing score of 7,887 points at the 1956 games.

If Campbell's victory in Melbourne, Australia, had any significant meaning to anyone, it came in the person of another Black youth, Rafer Johnson, who won the decathlon in the 1960 Olympics in Rome, Italy, with a staggering score of 8,392 points. Rafer had been runner up in 1956.

The fact that he was the first Black athlete to win the decathlon has followed Campbell these past 31 years. During all pre-Olympic games, programs, news, and TV airings, they will find Milton Campbell and he, like others, will invariably be asked, what changes a long ago victory has meant in life. Seldom has the spectre of financial success surfaced.

In recent years one of the most visible faces on television in both interviews, commercials and specials, is one of the more recent decathlon Olympic champs, Bruce Jenner, the 1976 winner at Montreal.



Milton Campbell, a gold medalist in the decathlon in 1956, shown as a member of the Cleveland Browns football team.



George Rhoden, left, setting an Olympic record of 45.9 in the 400 meters at the 1962 games. Herb McKinley, his teammate from Jamaica on right placed second. Ollie Matson, U.S.A. not shown was third.

For Milt Campbell it has been a see-saw existence that included a short stint as a pro-football player with the Cleveland Browns, plus 15 years of professional football in Canada. At one time he was part of a "traveling panel" of prominent Black athletes sponsored by a large corporation, that talked with students and youth groups.

Several years ago, Milton chose to do something on his own. With his focus on the troubled youth of Newark, New Jersey, he acquired a huge three-story vacant building at 201 Bergen St., near South Orange Ave. While much of the focus was on athletics, boxing, karate, track and field, he put together a general youth program of special interest groups.

But the need of heavy funding which he could not acquire brought about the demise of the Milt Campbell Youth Center, but the facility with improvements has lived on. It is now the Parent Child Center, Inc., handling several hundred children daily along with organized parent participation.

Likewise, Rafer Johnson has not hit the "jackpot" but he has not been by-passed. He has had several lucrative movie appearances in his post-Olympic career.



Bob Hayes

Bob Hayes, known as the "world's fastest human", set the world record for the 100-yard dash of 9.1 seconds, on June 21, 1963. At the 1964 Olympics, he won two gold medals for the 100-meter dash and the 400-meter relay.

Born on December 20, 1942, in Jacksonville, Florida, Hayes played football in high school and at Florida A.&M. In 1961, he captured the track spotlight by equalling the 100-yard dash world record of 9.3 seconds. Two years later, he set the new record at the National AAU championships in St. Louis.

After graduating, Hayes played football with the Dallas Cowboys where, in 1965, he led the league in TD pass receptions (12) and average yards per reception (21.8). He was leading TD pass receiver in 1966 and punt yardage return leader in 1967. After playing in the 1971 and 1972 Superbowls, he retired from sports.




Fred Meyer

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