

## OBITUARIES

**Ursula Happe, née Krey (FRG)**, \*20 October 1926 in Danzig (now Gdansk, POL); †26 March 2021 in Dortmund. She grew up near a swimming pool, where her father was employed as a lifeguard. He fell as a soldier in Stalingrad in 1943. During the Second World War, after leaving school, she served in the Female Labour Service and in the War Auxiliary Service, including as a tram conductor in Berlin. At the end of the war, her mother and two sisters fled to northern Germany, where the rest of the family reunited.

Ursel, as she was called, was a farm labourer until she found a job as a laboratory assistant in a dairy.

At the suggestion of her brother, who lived in Kiel, the 1.78 m tall and overly slim young woman joined the Neptun Kiel swimming club in 1949. That same year she won the first of what would later be 14 national championship titles in the 100 m breaststroke. As the 1950 champion over both breaststroke distances, she was invited to the inauguration of a swimming hall in Dortmund – a visit that would change her life. She met the tax official Heinz Günter Happe, whom she married later that year. From then on, he was her trainer at the swimming club Westfalen Dortmund.

Happe took part in the 1952 Olympic Games, where she was eliminated in the semi-finals of the 200 m breaststroke and ended up taking seventh place. The next year, she gave birth to a daughter. But in 1954, she was once again at the starting block. In Turin, she became European champion in the 200 m breast and placed third in the 100 m butterfly. Another baby year followed in 1955 – her first son was born.

Although already 30 years old, the mother of two was able to qualify for the all-German Olympic team in 1956 with best times – but without having any hopes of winning a



medal. However, it was to her advantage that Ada den Haan of the Netherlands, who had set a world record (2:46.40 min) in the 200 m breaststroke shortly before, was prevented from participating by her NOC's decision to boycott the Olympic Games because of the suppression of the Hungarian uprising by Soviet troops. In Melbourne, 2:53.1 min was enough for Happe to win the gold medal ahead of the favoured Hungarian Éva Székely (1927–2020), who had won in Helsinki in 1952.

After Melbourne, Happe's sports career ended, but her family grew. In 1958, son Thomas was born, followed by another boy in 1966. Thomas Happe became a handball player and won three German championships with TuSEM Essen. He played 56 times for the national team with which he won Olympic silver in Los Angeles in 1984. His mother remained faithful to swimming until the end of her life. Until the COVID-19 pandemic put a stop to it, the oldest Olympic swimming champion could be found almost daily in the indoor or outdoor pools in Dortmund-Wellinghofen. (VK)

**Paola Pigni (ITA)**, \*30 December 1945 in Milan; †11 June 2021 in Rome. Paola Pigni was the best Italian woman middle-distance runner of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Born in Milan, she began with Sport Club Italia. After winning the 1966 Italian cross-country championship, she became Italy's No. 1 in the 400 and 800 m. In 1967, she began working with Bruno Cacchi (1939–2019), who later became her husband.

Pigni had difficulty with injuries in 1967–68 and was eliminated in the semi-finals of the 1968 Olympics in the 800 m. In July 1969, she ran 1,500 m in 4:12.4 min, a world record that took 3.2 s off the previous mark. She was favoured at the 1969 European Championships, but placed third in the 1,500 m. In March 1970, she won her nation's cross-country, an event that in 1973 became an official World Championship.

After the birth of her daughter, Chiara, in March 1971, Pigni returned in 1972. The event had significantly improved in recent years, and her time of 4:02.85 min in the final at the 1972 München Olympics brought her only a bronze medal, although she broke the Italian record in all three rounds. She finished her active career in 1977, as multiple tendon injuries and surgeries took their toll. Pigni set 29 Italian records and won 19 Italian titles. (OM)

**John Konrads (AUS)**, \*21 May 1942 in Riva, Latvia; †25 April 2021 in Noosa Heads, Queensland. John emigrated via Germany with family to Germany in 1944 to escape the Russians, then to Sydney in 1949.

Selected in the swimming squad for the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games at age 14, he did not swim in any event, much to the disappointment of his young coach, Don Talbot.

After dominating swimming over the next four years, breaking every world freestyle record from 200 to 1,500 m in 1958, he was favourite at the 1960 Rome Olympics for both the 400 and 1,500 m. He won a bronze medal against rivals Tsuyoshi Yamanaka (Japan) and Murray Rose (Australia) in the 400 m but recovered from a disappointing swim to defeat Rose and George Breen (USA) and won gold over the longer distance (17:19.6).

John studied at the University of Southern California in the early 1960s and retired soon after the 1964 Tokyo Olympics to become a coach, and later a successful businessman. (Ian)



**Anatoly Chukanov (URS)**, \*10 May 1954 in Novospasovka/RUS; †12 June 2021. Chukanov became Olympic cycling champion in the team time trial with the selection of the Soviet Union in 1976. At the Road World Championships in 1977 he also won the team time trial title with the same team. In 1976, he won the national championships in the team time trial. He was also able to win the title in the individual time trial. After retirement he taught sport-related subjects at the East Ukraine Volodymyr Dahl National University. (WR)



**Lee Evans (USA)**, \*25 February 1947 in Madera, California; †19 May 2021 in Ilishan-Remo/NGR. At the 1968 Final Trials in the 400 m, Evans set a world record of 44.0 (44.06). He then reduced the world mark to 43.86 s in the Olympic final for the gold medal. He won a second gold, helping to set another world record plaque in the 4x400 m relay. His 400 m mark of 43.86 stood as a world record until broken by Butch Reynolds in 1988.

After his 400 m gold, when he led a USA medal sweep with Larry James and Ron Freeman, all three wore berets representing themselves as Black Panthers, although they removed the berets and did not raise a fist during the playing of the national anthem. A mini-protest, it did not receive the same ire from the IOC as had the protest of Tommie Smith and John Carlos after the 200 m.

Evans won the last of his five AAU titles in 1972 and, after placing fifth at the Final Trials, went to Munich as a member of the 4x400 m relay. However, because of the ouster of

Vince Matthews and Wayne Collett, due to their actions on the medal podium, and the injury to John Smith, the USA could not field a team in this event. At the end of the 1972 season, Evans joined the professional ranks, running in the short-lived International Track Association until 1974.

Later he became a coach, noted especially for his international teaching, when he coached track in Cameroon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Nigeria. He was an assistant coach at University of Washington in 2000 and 2001 and then head coach at University of South Alabama until 2008, when he returned to Nigeria. (BM)

**Tamara Natanovna Press (URS)**, \*10 May 1937 in Kharkiv; †26 April 2021 in Moscow. Born in Ukraine, Tamara Press was evacuated to Samarkand/Uzbekistan during the Second World War after the German invasion in the summer of 1941, together with her mother and younger sister Irina (1939–2004). Her Jewish father, Natan Press, was killed in the battle for Leningrad in 1942.

His eldest daughter became the Uzbek youth champion in shot put and discus in 1954. She then came to the attention of throwing coach Viktor Alekseyev (1914–1977), who had produced Olympic shot put champions Galina Zybina (1952) and Tamara Tyshkevich (1956). He convinced her to move to Leningrad, where she finished secondary school and began studying at the civil engineering school in 1956. One year later, she was followed by sister Irina, who had meanwhile developed into a talented pentathlete and began studying at the Institute of Railway Transport.

Tamara first became Soviet champion in the shot put (16.54 m) in Tallinn in 1958. However, she lost to Earlene Brown and Zybina in the international competition against the US and then to Marianne Werner (GER) and Tyshkevich at the European



Championships. Surprisingly, however, she won the discus title in Stockholm, which she defended in Belgrade in 1962. There she also won the shot put in which she set six world records between 1959 and 1965. She was the first woman to throw over 17 and 18 metres.

She won the shot put at the 1960 Olympics as well as in Tokyo in 1964, where she also won gold in the discus. In Rome, she had to cede the gold in discus to her teammate Nina Ponomaryeva, who defeated her by a margin of 2.5 m. Seven days later, at a post-Olympic meeting in Rome's Stadium della Terme, she managed to beat the eight-year-old world record of Georgia's Nina Dumbadze (57.04 m) by 11 cm. By 1965, Press had set five more discus world records – she was only 30 cm short of the 60 m mark.

During the Cold War, the Western media belittled the achievements of the 1.80 m tall and 102 kg athlete and questions were raised about her sex. However, there was no evidence for this. She and her sister Irina, who became Olympic champion in the 80 m hurdles in 1960 and in the pentathlon in 1964, were dubbed the "Press brothers". The rumours were fuelled by the fact that both of them, along with other Eastern Bloc female athletes, resigned at the very moment the IAAF introduced the sex controls adopted in 1964 at the 1966 European Championships in Budapest.

**Correction, JOH 1/2021, 74:  
Dr. Margitta Gummel (GDR)**

ISOH member Ralf Regnitter drew attention to the fact that the 1968 Olympic shot put champion died on 26 January 2021 and not 13 February.

Tamara tried her hand at coaching and then became head of the cultural department of the Soviet trade unions council in Moscow and chair of the Public Health Association. She published several reference books and an autobiography entitled *Tsena Pobody* (Price of Victory) in 1977. She was awarded a doctorate – as was her sister, who received a professorship in Kiev. (VK)

**Valentina Sidorova (URS)**, \*4 May 1954 in Moscow; †9 June 2021 in Moscow. The Russian fencer was world champion twice in individual foil and seven times in team competitions. In 1977, in Buenos Aires and 1978 in Hamburg she won her singles foil titles.

She took part in the Olympics twice: in 1976, in Montreal she reached the team foil final unbeaten, in which France was also defeated 9–2. She finished the individual foil in seventh place. At the Olympics in 1980, she finished 13<sup>th</sup> in the individual event, while she again moved into the battle for the gold medal with the Soviet team. This time they were defeated by France 9–6. (WR)

**Sergey Novikov (URS)**, \*15 December 1949 in Moscow; †16 April 2021. Novikov was one of the most successful Soviet judokas of the 1970s. Besides his 1976 Olympic heavyweight gold, he also won the World Championships heavyweight silver in 1975 and heavyweight bronze in 1973. He was European open-class champion in 1973 and 1974 and heavyweight champion in 1976.

He also won heavyweight silver in 1975, open class bronzes in 1970, 1972, and 1980 and heavyweight bronze in 1978 at the European Championships. In addition, Novikov won the European title in sambo (a Soviet wrestling style similar to judo) half-heavyweight in 1972. Domestically, Novikov was Soviet half-heavyweight sambo champion in 1971 and 1972, judo heavyweight

champion in 1974–79, and open class champion in 1977.

After finishing his sporting career, he worked as a sambo and judo coach. In 1996 he became president of the Federation International Amateur Unifight (a combat sport). (TK)

**Ekkehard Fasser (SUI)**, \*3 September 1952 in Glarus; †8 April 2021 in Rieden, St Gallen. Bobsledder Fasser's original athletic pursuit was track and field, and he specialised in the high jump, long jump, and shot put. By 1978, however, he had taken up bobsledding and was the junior world runner-up in the two-man with Ralph Pichler.

Fasser made the reserve squad of the Swiss national team in 1981 and, the following year, participated in his first World Cup events. In 1983, he won the European Championships in the four-man and the World Championships as well. This earned the quartet a trip to the 1984 Winter Olympics, where they were expected to battle for the gold medal with the Swiss 1982 World Champions, Rico Freiermuth, Silvio Giobellina, Urs Salzmann, and Heinz Stettler. The two East German teams, however, had other plans, and took first and second in every run, while the 1982 world champions were consistently third, leaving Fasser's squad in fourth position and off the podium.

He continued to compete and, in 1986, earned the title of World Cup champion with his crew. He returned to the Olympics in 1988 and pulled off a surprising victory in the four-man, taking advantage of a disastrous third run from defending Olympic champion Wolfgang Hoppe's team and won by a margin of 0.07 s. Gold medal in hand, he retired from active competition after the Games. (OM)

**Markis Kido (INA)**, \*11 August 1984 in Jakarta; †14 June 2021 in Tangerang. In 2005 Kido won the Asian Badminton Championship and the Indonesia Open together with Hendra Setiawan. They also

won the Jakarta Satellite, Hong Kong Open, and China Open in 2006. At the Badminton World Cup in 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, they advanced to the finals and defeated South Korea with 21–19 and 21–19. They also won the China Open Super Series in 2007. In July 2007 they were defeated at the China Masters Super Series by the Chinese world no. 1 pairing of Cai Yun and Fu Haifeng in the final with 15–21 and 16–21. In the last tournament in 2007 they won the final of the Hong Kong Open Super Series. Most recently they won the Malaysia Super Series in 2008.

The highlight of his career: Kido and his partner Hendra Setiawan won the men's doubles final of the 2008 Olympic tournament in Beijing against the Chinese pairing Cai Yun and Fu Haifeng. Kido died from a heart attack. (WR)

**Tormod Knutsen (NOR)**, \*7 January 1932 in Eidsvoll; †23 February 2021 in Eidsvoll. Knutsen was a promising ski jumper as a teenager, winning the 1949 Norwegian Youth Championships and the 1951 Junior Championship. In 1954, he switched his concentration to Nordic combined, and won the bronze medal in his first national championships in the event, in 1955. He went to the 1956 Winter Olympics as a substitute, but Gunder Gundersen injured his arm two days before the competition and Knutsen was placed on the team. He finished sixth.

In 1958, Knutsen won at Holmenkollen, and after winning national championship gold medals in both 1959 and 1960, he was highly favoured for the Olympic gold. Before leaving for Squaw Valley, Knutsen surprised everybody by winning a silver medal at the Norwegian Championships in ski jumping.

In Squaw Valley, a newcomer from West Germany, Georg Thoma, led the jumping, but the Norwegians considered him a weak cross-country skier and reckoned Knutsen for a gold medal. However, Thoma surprised



everybody in the cross-country, skiing 7.2 s faster than Knutsen and was a clear winner, with the Norwegian taking silver.

Thoma dominated the international scene in Nordic combined in the following years, but Knutsen continued to compete, placing fourth at the 1962 World Championships. After winning two more national championships (1963 and 1964), he felt well prepared for the 1964 Innsbruck Olympics. He placed second in the jumping section, only 2.2 points behind Thoma, but Knutsen was over 1½ minutes better than Thoma in cross-country and won the gold medal comfortably. Thoma got revenge over Knutsen by winning at Holmenkollen later in the season, where Knutsen was a distant sixth, after which the Norwegian ended his career, with his dream of an Olympic gold having come true. *(OM)*



**Gillian Sheen, married Donaldson (GBR)**, \*21 August 1928 in Willesden, London; †5 July 2021 Auburn, New York. The London-based dental surgeon from University College Hospital began her fencing career in Kent. In 1945, she became a student champion and, in 1949, she won her first junior title. She was British champion ten times.

Gillian Sheen made her Olympic debut in 1952, when she was eliminated in the second round. Four years later, at the Games in Melbourne, she won the only gold medal that Great Britain has ever earned in fencing. With six wins in the final round, she prevailed in the subsequent barrage, scoring 4–2 against the Romanian Olga Orbán.

After finishing second in the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Vancouver in 1954, she was victorious in Cardiff in 1958. In 1960, she took part in her third Olympic Games, but was eliminated in the second round. She ended her career in 1963. She married and settled in New York, where her husband ran a dental practice. *(VK)*

**Viktor Kurentsov (URS)**, \*5 April 1941 in Tukhinka/BLR; †7 April 2021 Odintsovo/RUS. Kurentsov took up weightlifting in 1959 while serving with the Soviet Army in the Russian Far East and soon rose to be the world's best middleweight lifter during the late 1960s, being nearly unbeatable. During his career he won Olympic gold in 1968 and silver in 1964. He was world champion five times (1965–66, 1968–70) and European champion seven times (1964–66, 1968–71). He also won silver at the 1964 World Championships and 1972 European Championships and bronze at the 1974 European Championships.

Domestically, Kurentsov was also unbeatable, winning the Soviet title nine times (1964–70, 1972, 1974). He set 24 world records in 1964 to 1968: six in the press, eight in the clean & jerk, and ten in the total. After finishing his sporting career, he continued to serve with the Soviet Army, retiring in 1990 as a colonel.

After his retirement Kurentsov went into local politics. In 1990 he was elected to the Odintsovo city council, being the deputy chairman in 1991–93. From 1993 to 1998, he worked with the Russian Embassy in Italy. After returning home, Kurentsov moved back to Odintsovo and from 1999 to 2003 worked as an international relations consultant with the district government. *(TK)*

**Jeannette Altwegg, married Wirz (GBR)**, \*8 September 1930 in Bombay (IND); †18 June 2021 in Zollikofen (SUI). The British figure skater was born in India, but grew up in her mother's homeland of England. She strapped on her skates for the first time at the age of six, in Liverpool. She was ten years old when she began to concentrate on figure skating, and perfected her technique in Switzerland, where her father had opened a textile factory. Jack Gerschwiler, uncle of the 1947 world champion Hans Gerschwiler, trained her.



Jeannette Altwegg was no glamour girl who could sweep the audience away. However, since she worked her magic and attained the required numbers on the ice with mathematical precision, a place on the podium was always reserved for her: after winning bronze at the Winter Olympics in St Moritz, she won the 1951 World Championship. In that same year, and in 1952, she earned the title of European champion.

At the Winter Games in Oslo in 1952, eight of the nine judges put Altwegg in first place. In the free skating, she defended a lead of over 40 points against the American Tenley Albright. This was halved, but her Olympic victory was unequivocal. After that, she was offered a show contract that was to bring in £8,000 a month for her. However, she turned it down. She decided to take a post in the Pestalozzi Children's Village in Trogen, in the Swiss canton of Appenzell, caring for war orphans. Her monthly wage: 120 Swiss francs. The IOC awarded her the Olympic diploma for this in 1953.

In autumn 1954, she married the Swiss engineer Marc Wirz; the couple divorced in 1973. She was mother of four children. One of them, Cristina Lestander-Wirz, became world curling champion in 1983. *(VK)*

**Diana Igaly (HUN)**, \*31 January 1965 in Budapest; †8 April 2021 in Budapest. Diána Igaly's father and mother were sport shooters, so it was no surprise

that their daughter took her first shot at the age of six and became a shooter by the age of 13. Within the sport, she specialised in skeet and double trap. Between 1982 and 2007, she was a 22-time Hungarian champion. Internationally, Igaly won four World Championship and six European Championships, earning 32 medals at world competitions.

Igaly competed in four Olympics, finishing 42<sup>nd</sup> in open skeet at Barcelona, 3<sup>rd</sup> at the inaugural women's skeet competition in Sydney, became Olympic champion in Athens (with perfect shot of 25/25 in the final), and finished 11<sup>th</sup> in Beijing.

Following her career as an athlete, she founded a shooting club in Törökbalint in 2007, where the goal was to educate young people in skeet shooting. Between 2013 and 2016 Igaly was a member of the Hungarian Olympic Committee, and actively participated in the work of the Athletes' Committee. In 2013, she was elected vice-president of the Hungarian Shooting Association and sport director of skeet and trap shooting. She died from complications after contracting the COVID-19 virus. (RL)

**Viktor Shuvalov (URS)**, \*15 December 1923 in Nabornye Syresi/MDA; † 19 April 2021 in Moscow. Like many other early Soviet ice hockey players, Shuvalov excelled in football in the summer and ice hockey in the winter. Shuvalov started his career in 1947 with Dzerzhinets Chelyabinsk (now Traktor Chelyabinsk), where he played both football and ice hockey. In 1949 he joined VVS Moskva, where he played until 1953. He then joined CSKA Moskva and he ended his career in 1957–58, playing with SKA Kalinin (now Tver).

Shuvalov won five Soviet Championships (1951–53, and 1955–56) and was the best goal scorer in 1950 (31 goals) and 1953 (44 goals, with Aleksey Guryshv). Internationally, he was considered one of the best

lines in the mid-50s. Besides his Olympic gold in 1956, Shuvalov was world champion in 1954 and 1956 and second in 1955. He also won European Championships in 1954–56.

After retirement in 1958, he coached SKA Kalinin until 1964. Then he was head coach of Kristall Elektrostal and an assistant coach of Spartak Moscow in 1969–70. After that he worked with the Soviet Committee for Physical Culture and Sports and was also a children's hockey coach in Spartak Moscow. He died in 2021 from complications after contracting the COVID-19 virus. (TK)

**Aleksandr Privalov (URS)**, \*6 August 1933 in Pyatnitsa/RUS; † 19 May 2021 in Moscow. Military patrol was a standard practice in the Soviet Army and Privalov soon became interested in the biathlon. But unlike other early Soviet biathletes he was not a fast skier, so he concentrated on shooting, which brought him success at the international level. At the 1960 Winter Olympics, his time was only third among the Soviet biathletes, but with relatively clean shooting he managed to rise to a bronze medal position. At the 1964 Olympics, Privalov's skiing time was only 16<sup>th</sup>, but with clean shooting he rose to second place.

Besides his two Olympic medals, he won one silver in the relay at the 1961 World Championships and was a five-time Soviet champion (1960, 1961, 1964, 1965 in the 20 km and in 1966 in the relay).

After his retirement, he worked from 1966 to 1994 as coach of the Soviet and Russian national teams. He was the head coach of the Olympic squad from 1968 to 1980 and the 1994 Russian Olympic women team. (TK)

**Christa Stubnick, née Seliger (GDR)**, \*12 December 1933 in Gardelegen; †13 May 2021 in Borken. "What do you think of her shorts?" asked an Australian newspaper (photo) during



the Olympic Games in Melbourne in 1956, when the East German won two silver medals in the 100 and 200 m, coming in behind Betty Cuthbert (AUS). The background to this question was the protest by the Vatican due to her allegedly offensive clothing.

Christa Seliger was the first world-class East German sprinter. In 1954, she equalled the 19-year-old European record for 200 m of Pole Stanislaw Walasiewicz in Budapest with 23.6 s. Since the GDR Athletics Association was not yet recognised by the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), she was absent from the 1954 European Championships, where she would have had good prospects of a medal.

The trained stenographer married the East German heavyweight boxing champion Erich Stubnick, but the marriage was not a happy one. She married a second time, taking the name Fischer. She lived for many years in Magdeburg, where, as a major in the police force, she was in charge of a reporting office. (VK)

BM = Bill Mallon, IanJ = Ian Jobling,  
OM = OlyMADMen, RL = Rudolf Laky,  
TK = Taavi Kalju, VK = Volker Kluge,  
WR = Wolf Reinhardt

**The ISOH offers the families of the deceased its sincere condolences.**