

Obituaries



Margarethe "Gretel" Bergmann, aka Margaret Lambert (GER/USA), *12 April 1914 Laupheim (GER), †25 July 2017 New York, N.Y. The German high jumper would have had a good chance of winning a medal at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. A month before the start of the Games she equalled the German record with 1.60 m. With this performance she shared third place in the world rankings along with the German "Dora" Ratjen, later declared to be a man, behind the Briton Dorothy Odam (1.62 m) and the Hungarian Ibolya Csák (1.61 m).

As Gretel Bergmann was Jewish, she was, however, not nominated for the German Olympic team. To her teammates it was explained that she was injured. To make this lie believable, the possible third place was left vacant. Three weeks later Csák became Olympic champion

with 1.60 m in front of Odam and the German Elfriede Kaun, who both also cleared 1.60 m.

Shortly after Hitler's "Seizure of Power" Bergmann had been excluded from her sports club in Ulm. She then joined the newly founded sports group of the Reich League of Jewish front soldiers (RjF). In the autumn of 1933, she went to London to study at the Polytechnic there. On 30th June 1934 she took part in the British championships, in which she won the high jump with 1.55 m from Mary Milne. In early August 1934 Milne was second in the Women's World Games.

As the IOC demanded equal treatment of the Jewish athletes by the Germans and the USA threatened a boycott, the Nazi leadership undertook to include the best Jewish sportspeople in the Olympic preparations. Thereupon Bergmann, who would have liked to take part in the Games on the British team, returned to Germany. She began her studies in Stuttgart to become a sports teacher.

To deceive the IOC and other countries, she received along with other Jewish athletes the opportunity to take part in the Olympic preparation courses and to compete in different meetings with the exception of the German championships.

After she was not considered for the Olympic team, Bergmann decided to emigrate to the USA.

After receiving a visa in February 1937, she left Germany on 8th May. In the USA she continued her sports career. In the same year she became US champion in high jump and shot putt, followed by a further high jump title in 1938.

Also in 1938, Gretel Bergmann married Dr. Bruno Lambert (1910–2013). She had met him during one of the Olympic training sessions. They lived in Queens in New York, where both died aged 103. Not until after the death of those responsible for her deception did the fate of Gretel Bergmann become known to a wide public. In 1983, the plaque of honour of the German Athletics Association given to her, joined with the admission that she had been treated unjustly. However, it took until 2009 before the retrospective recognition of her German record. The Lamberts were invited to the Olympic Games in 1996 in Atlanta as honorary guests of the NOC for Germany.

From the 1990s, Bergmann visited Germany three times, where some stadia, sports halls, streets and paths bear her name, among others in her home town and in the Berlin Olympic Stadium. In 2012 she was nominated to the Hall of Fame of German Sport. (VK)

Paavo Lonkila (FIN), *11 January 1923 in Kiuruvesi, †22 September 2017 in Kiuruvesi. Lonkila never won a Finnish cross-country championship, but won two silver medals (1949, 1950) and two bronze medals (1952, 1955) at the Finnish Championships, all in 18 km. He made his international debut at the 1950 World Championships, where he was fifth at 18 km and won a silver as a member of the Finnish relay team. In 1951 he won the 18 km at Holmenkollen. At the 1952 Olympics Lonkila got a bronze medal in the 18 km, 11 seconds behind his teammate Tapio Mäkelä. He also was a member of the gold medal winning relay team. After his competitive career ended Lonkila was a farmer. (BM/WR)

Bep van Houdt, *7 July 1940 in Rotterdam; †19 July 2017 in Amstelveen. Van Houdt, ISOH Member with a remarkable kingsize moustache, worked more than fifty years as a sports journalist. He started his career in 1962 as a football reporter for the leading Dutch newspapers *NRC*, *Het Parool* and *Het Vrije Volk*, but he was later also very interested in athletics, hockey and sailing. As a reporter he was at the Olympics from 1972 till 1988. But he will most of all be remembered for his work as a radio reporter for the NOS, the National Broadcasting Company, with tennis as his speciality. He developed an encyclopedic knowledge of the game, its people and its history. Wimbledon, Roland Garros and the U.S. Open, he was always there with his personal views, comments and humour. Bep van Houdt was a kind person and popular among his colleagues. He died as a result of lung problems. (RP)

Antonio Spallino (ITA), *1 April 1925 in Como, †27 September 2017 in Carimate. Spallino was considered one of the best Italian fencers of the 1950s. After winning the national individual épée and the world team title in 1949 he switched to the foil in 1950, with which he won three Olympic medals and five team medals at the World Championships between 1953–58, with gold medals in 1954–55. After retiring from competition, Spallino worked as a lawyer along with a political career, similar to his father, Lorenzo, who was a senator and twice an Italian minister. He also was Mayor of Como from 1970–1985 with the Christian Democrats Party.

In 1988 he was elected world president of Panathlon International and two years later he became president of Gazzetta srl, the proprietary company of the well-known Italian sporting newspaper *La Gazzetta dello Sport*. (GM)

Hans Gerschwiler (SUI), *20 June 1921 in Winterthur, †27 September 2017 in Pinehurst, North Carolina. In his youth, Gerschwiler was fortunate enough to have two professional figure skaters and coaches at his disposal: his uncles Arnold and Jacques Gerschwiler. While living in Great Britain, Arnold had trained, among others, Olympians Cecilia Colledge, Sjoukje Dijkstra, Ede Király, László and Marianna Nagy, Megan Taylor, and Ája Vrzáňová, while Jacques was responsible for Colledge and the 1952 Olympic champion Jeannette Altwegg.

Hans got his start with Arnold in Switzerland and won the singles category at the 1938 and 1939 national championships, in addition to coming in fifth at the 1939 European Championships. By the outbreak of Second World War he was living in England with Jacques and spent the conflict working in a factory, rarely able to train.

Gerschwiler returned in full force after the war, however, and won

the Swiss national championships from 1946 to 1948. In 1947 he was also European and world champion, while in 1948 he was runner-up in both of those tournaments, as well as the Winter Olympics. Each of these times he lost to the great American Dick Button, even at the European Championships, which became closed to Canada and the United States the following year. This was irrelevant to Gerschwiler, however, who turned professional after the 1948 Games. He later moved to Canada, and then the USA, to work as a teacher and coach.

He is one of only three Swiss Olympic medallists in figure skating (along with Georges Gautschi, bronze in 1924, and Stéphane Lambiel, silver in 2006, both in the singles) and one of only two males (the other being Lambiel) to earn the title of world champion. (BM/WR)

Dirk Hafemeister (GER), *17 April 1958 in Berlin, †31 August 2017 Hanau. When Hafemeister was 30-years-old, he won the gold medal with the West German show jumping team at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, while finishing 19th in the individual event with his horse *Orchidee*. His second major event was the 1994 World Equestrian Games at Den Haag, when he again claimed a team gold medal, this time with *PS Priamos*. He also won five West German team championships and was on the podium twice individually (silver in 1988 and bronze in 1991).

After his career Hafemeister was engaged as a riding coach for show jumpers. He was a close friend of Paul Schöckemöhle and started his riding career in Schöckemöhle's stable where he trained horses. (WR)

Elizabeth "Betty" Cuthbert (AUS), *20 April 1938 in Merrylands, NSW, †6 August 2017 in Mandurah, WA. The Australian 18-year-old won two gold medals in the individual sprints (100 and 200 metres) and a third gold in the 4x100 metres relay at the

1956 Melbourne Olympics. She was instantly acclaimed as a national heroine by the home Australian crowd, and was nicknamed the "Golden Girl".

Injury prevented her from doing well at the 1960 Games but she came back to win the 400 metres in 1964 at Tokyo (photo) and claimed her fourth Olympic gold medal, which she regarded as her greatest win. She is the only Olympic sprinter, man or woman, to have won gold medals in the 100, 200 and 400 metres.



At the British Empire and Commonwealth Games she won a gold medal in the 4x110 yards relay in 1962 and a silver in the 220 yards as well as in the 4x110 yards relay in 1958. In the 1958 British Empire and Commonwealth Games 100 yards Cuthbert finished fourth and in the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games 220 yards she finished fifth, but in the 100 yards she was eliminated in the semi-finals. She set or equalled 18 world records between 1956 and 1964. In 1964 she was the recipient of the prestigious Helms Award for her contributions to sport.

Sadly for such a fine athlete, she later was afflicted with multiple sclerosis, having first been diagnosed with that disease in 1969. At the 2000 Sydney Olympics, aided by a wheelchair, she was one of several Australian women who carried the Olympic Flag at the Opening Ceremony. (BM)

Ernest Willem 'Ernst' Veenemans (NED), *8 March 1940 in Haarlem, †2 October 2017 in Haarlem. With Steven Blaisse, who died in 2001 at 60, Veenemans, they formed a very strong coxless pair. Both were members of the Amsterdam students rowing club, Nereus, a source of many Olympic rowers. Veenemans was a rather light rower (1.84 m, 72 kg), but with an excellent technique. He and Blaisse represented the Netherlands at the 1960 and 1964 Olympics. Their debut in Rome proved unsuccessful, but four years later in Tokyo they were at their top. Earlier in 1964 they had captured the European title after a terrific fight with the Germans. The final in Tokyo gave cause for a lot of bitterness. It should not have taken place at the conditions of that moment. There was a very strong wind and the buoy differences were large. The FISA wanted to proceed in spite of a protest by the Dutch Chef de Mission.

Veenemans and Blaisse finished in second place just after a Canadian pair who had by far the least wash of the waves. After the coxless pair final the races were postponed. Blaisse, the more emotional of the two, never forgave the FISA. Years later he was still very angry when there was discussion about the final in Tokyo. Veenemans had no frustrations, he was satisfied with the silver medal. 'In fair conditions we were perhaps beaten by the Germans and in that case we also would have won the silver medal'.

In later years Veenemans coached a young Nereus eight. He was a dentist by profession. (RP)

Lyudmila Belousova (URS), *22 November 1935 in Ulyanovsk (RUS), †26 September 2017 in Interlaken (SUI). The husband-and-wife team of Lyudmila Belousova and Oleg Protopopov were the first Soviet pair skaters to achieve international acclaim and provided the stimulus which ultimately led to the many successes by future pairs skaters.

They began skating as a pair in 1954 and married in 1957. They won a bronze (1955) and four silvers (1957–59, 1961) behind Nina and Stanislav Zhuk, before winning six titles (1962–64, 1966–68) at the Soviet championships. After finishing second three times at both the World and European Championships in 1962–64, behind the West German pair of Marika Kilius and Hans-Jürgen Bäumler, they upset them to win the gold medal at Innsbruck in 1964 (photo), repeating their Olympic victory in 1968 at Grenoble.



In addition to their two Olympic golds, they were World and European champions four times (1965–68). After finishing second at the Soviet and European Championships and third at the World Championships in 1969, each time losing to Irina Rodnina and Aleksey Ulyanov, the Soviet skating authorities "eased" them out of competition, claiming they were too old to continue at the top-levels of international skating. They won their last medals (bronze) at the Soviet championships in 1972, before finally retiring from competition.

In 1979 they eventually defected to Switzerland and settled to live in Grindelwald, obtaining Swiss citizenship in 1995. They have since spent many years competing in professional ice shows. (TK)

Hansje Bunschoten (NED), *3 May 1958 in Hilversum, †1 October 2017 in Almere. Her mother was the famous coach Wil Bunschoten-van Breukelen, who had trained many Dutch stars, among them Olympic champion Ada Kok and European champion Adrie Lasterie. At her childhood she had already noted that Hansje could be a great swimmer 'because she has no bum'. A remarkable and correct observation. As a 13 year old in 1971, Bunschoten had already broken European records on 400 m and 800 m freestyle. A year later, at the Munich Games, she reached the finals of the 200 m freestyle (6th), 400 m (7th), 800 m (7th) and two relays (5th).

She was the first Dutch swimmer that swam the 100 m freestyle in under one minute. Because of illness she missed the 1973 World Championships and then her mother got seriously ill and in 1976 died at age 54. It meant the end of Hansje's swimming career. 'No way that I would swim without my mother'.

Later she started working in radio and television. She commented on swimming at the Olympic Games of 1992 and 1996. As presenter, editor and director, she was successful with various programmes. Her last one was about life, love and death. Just as her mother, Hansje died of cancer. (RP)

Željko Perušić (YUG), *23 March 1936 in Duga Resa (CRO), †28 September 2017 in Sankt Gallen (SUI). The Croatian started his football career in his youth for Duga Resa, but moved to Dinamo Zagreb when he was 20. He then won the Yugoslavian Cup four times and the national championship in 1958, also becoming runner-up in 1960 and 1963. He earned 27 international caps with Yugoslavia. At the Europeans, Yugoslavia was only beaten 2–1 by the Soviet Union in the extra time of the final. At the Olympics the same year he earned the gold medal with his team beating Denmark 3–1.

Perušić in 1965 then moved to West Germany, playing with TSV 1860 Munich winning the national title in his first season. After 138 games for Munich he switched to FC St. Gallen in Switzerland in 1970, where he also became coach of the team, leading them back to National League A in 1971. He later coached youth teams in St. Gallen. (WR)

Ted Hibberd (CAN), *22 April 1926 in Ottawa, Ontario, †10 May 2017 in Ottawa, Ontario. Ice hockey forward Ted Hibberd's early career fluctuated between teams in Ottawa's junior and senior hockey leagues from 1942 through nearly his entire career. Up until 1948 he played with the Ottawa New Edinburghs (junior and senior), St. Pats (junior), Montagnards (junior and senior), Navy Bluejackets (Ottawa National Defense Hockey League), Hull Volants (junior) and the Ottawa Senators (senior). It was as a player with the Burghs, however, that he was recruited to join the RCAF Flyers, Canada's delegation to the 1948 Winter Olympic tournament.

Hibberd, a civilian at the time, was quickly instated as an aircraftsman and sent to Switzerland, where he played in eight games, scored three goals (all of them in the 21-1 match against Italy), and took home a gold medal. He spent the next three seasons with the Flyers until retiring from active play in 1951. As a member of his gold medal-winning Olympic team, he was inducted into the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame in 2008. He spent his entire business career with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (PT).

Ronald Bontemps (USA), *11 August 1926 in Taylorville, Illinois, †13 May 2017 in Morton, Illinois. After playing for tiny Beloit College and graduating from there in 1951, Ron Bontemps qualified for the golden 1952 Olympic team as a member of the Peoria Caterpillars AAU basketball team.

Bontemps never played professional basketball, but instead opted

for the AAU leagues where he starred for three years with the Caterpillars.

It also worked out to be a fine career move as he took a job with the Caterpillar Tractor Co. in 1951 and worked for them during his entire business career. Bontemps also served in the US Army from 1944-46. (BM)

Nasser Givehchi (IRI), *12 November 1932 in Tehran, †16 May 2017 in Tehran. Givehchi competed as a wrestler at the 1952 and 1956 Olympic Games, winning a silver medal in featherweight freestyle in 1952 at Helsinki. He won a bronze medal in the same class at the 1958 Asian Games.

Givehchi competed at the 1954 World Championships, finishing fifth. He later worked as a wrestling coach, serving as coach of the Iranian national wrestling team in 1966 and 1967 (BM).

Katalin Szöke (HUN), *17 August 1935 in Budapest, †27 October 2017 in Los Angeles, Cal. The Hungarian swimmer became Olympic champion in 1952 over 100 m freestyle and in the 4x100 m freestyle relay. She repeated this success two years later at the European Championships in Turin.

Her father, Márton Homonnay (1906-1969), was a well-known water polo player who won silver at the 1928 and gold at 1932 and 1936 Olympics. Homonnay became a policeman and member of the Fascist Arrow-Cross-Party (NYKP-HM), which took over power in Hungary in 1944 and collaborated with the NS regime. After the end of the Second World War he fled to Argentina where he was active for 20 years as a water polo coach in Buenos Aires. In Hungary he had been sentenced to death in his absence because of his participation in war crimes.

His daughter, who had taken the name of her mother, married the two-time water polo Olympic



champion Kálmán Markovits (1931-2009), but after a short time the couple divorced. The teammate Árpád Domjan took Markovits' place.

When Domjan was not nominated for the 1956 Olympic team, Szöke arranged for her fiancé to travel to Melbourne with her as reserve. As there were no more seats in the aircraft of the French airline TAI, which took off from Prague because of the Hungarian rebellion, Domjan was allowed to travel in the toilet as far as Istanbul. He covered the rest of the journey in a wooden box.

At the 1956 Olympics Katalin Szöke was unsuccessful: she was eliminated in the heat of the 100 m freestyle; in the relay the Hungarian team was seventh. After the Games she emigrated together with Domjan to the USA, where they married and anglicised their name. Katherine Domyan got a job in a bank in Beverly Hills, her husband was a draughtsman in an architectural office. Later he was active in the property business. (VK)

BM = Bill Mallon, GM = George Masin,
PT = Paul Tchir, RP = Ruud Pauw,
TK = Taavi Kalju, VK = Volker Kluge,
WR = Wolf Reinhardt

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