

Obituaries



Iolanda Balaş, married Söter (ROU), *12 December 1936 in Timișoara, †11 March 2016 in Bucharest. The two-time Olympic champion in high jump of 1960 and 1964, whose father was Romanian, her mother Hungarian and a grandmother German, began with athletics in Timișoara and moved to Bucharest in 1951. There, the equally active high jumper Ion Söter (1927–1987) became her coach – to start with unofficially and from 1957 on a more formal basis. As a 17 year old, Balaş was runner-up in the European Championships behind Thelma Hopkins (GBR).

Extraordinarily slim and 1.85 m tall, she set the first of her 14 world records on 14th July 1956 with an old-fashioned-locking scissors technique and cleared 1.75 m in Bucharest. Her last and best performance (1.91 m in 1961) was not improved on until 1971 when the Austrian Ilona Gusenbauer bettered it by one centimetre.

Although she spent a good five weeks in Australia before the start of the 1956 Games, Balaş had to accept unexpected defeat and came only fifth. The absence of Ion Söter contributed to this. In 1952, he was sixth in the Helsinki Games, and despite setting a national record (2.055 m) in 1956, he was not

nominated for the Romanian team for political reasons.

In 1957, soon after Balaş had equalled the world record of the American Olympic champion Mildred McDaniel (1.76 m), she lost it to the Chinese Chen Feng-jung (1.77 m), whose performance she out-jumped the following year by a centimetre. From then on, she was regarded as unbeatable. During the next eight years, she won 140 competitions consecutively, as well as triumphing at the Olympic Games in Rome and Tokyo and the European Championships of 1958 and 1962.

Surprisingly, she was missing in 1966 at the European Championships in Budapest, having just become the Romanian champion with 1.84 m. The official reason given was a problem with her Achilles tendon. But as the IAAF introduced feminity checks at the same time, this gave rise to speculation, as in Budapest the coach and not Balaş had appeared before the medical commission, only to inform them that she would not compete. She competed for the last time on 10th June 1967 at the International Romanian Championships (1.68 m, second place).

Balaş, who had married Ion Söter in 1958, worked for a while as lecturer at Bucharest University. After that she was a sports teacher at a children's and youth sports school and from 1973 was a trainer with Steaua Bucharest. In 1970, her son Doru-Franky (in the photograph with his parents) was born. From 1988 to 2005 Iolanda Söter-Balaş was President of the Romanian Athletics Federation. (VK)

Klaus Siebert (GDR), *29 April 1955 in Schlettau; †24 April 2016 in Altenberg/Erzgebirge. "Sieb", as he was called, grew up in the Erzgebirge, where he was accepted into the biathlon training centre of the East German police. His first big year was 1975, when he came third in the World Championships over 10 km

and at the Olympic trial races in Seefeld where he defeated the entire world top class.

Siebert's time did not, however, come until the introduction of the small calibre rifle: in 1978 world champion in the relay, in 1978/79 winner in the composite world cup, in 1979 world champion over 20 km and in the relay. At the Olympic Winter Games in 1980 in Lake Placid, he achieved silver in the relay and was fourth over 10 km.

A mechanical engineer and later police officer, Siebert worked with young athletes from 1984. Among his protégés was Ricco Gross, winner of four Olympic gold, three silver and two bronze medals from 1992 to 2006.

From 1994 to 1998 he was trainer at the Federal Performance Centre of Altenberg and co-trainer of the men's national team from 1998 to 2002. Between 2002 and 2005, he was responsible for the shooting training of the Austrian biathletes.

After a period as chief coach in the People's Republic of China, he went to Belarus, where he coached Darya Domracheva, the triple Olympic champion of Sochi 2014. Shortly before his 61st birthday he succumbed to cancer. (VK)

Sarah Tait, née Outhwaite (AUS), *23 January 1983 in Perth, Western Australia (AUS), †3 March 2016 in Melbourne. She began rowing when only nine years old. She studied environmental science and agriculture at school, but continued to row, making her first international appearance at the 2000 World Juniors, where she won a silver in the junior women's coxless four.

She competed at three Olympics (2004–12), the first as Sarah Outhwaite, then as Sarah Tait, finally winning an Olympic medal at London with a silver in the coxless pairs. At the senior international level, her greatest victory came in winning a gold medal in the eights at the 2005 World Championships. She

added a silver medal in the coxless pairs at that event and returned to add a bronze in coxless pairs at the 2011 Worlds. During her second pregnancy she was diagnosed with cervical (uterine) cancer. Sandra Tait retired from rowing in February 2014 to concentrate on fighting the disease, but it took her life when she was only 33 years old. (BM)

Sándor Tarics (HUN), *23 September 1913 in Budapest; †21 May 2016 in Belvedere, California. Sándor, also called Alex Tarics, competed for Hungary in water polo at the 1936 Olympics, helping his team to a gold medal. He played on the national team through 1939, once scoring seven goals to help Hungary defeat Germany at the (unofficial) World Student Games in Vienna, which made him a national hero.

In 1948 he moved to the USA to teach engineering, moving to the Bay Area of California. There, he became a professor of architectural engineering. He was also an earthquake specialist, helping develop a revolutionary method of implementing seismic "base isolation" shock absorbers under large buildings, which was used on the city halls of both San Francisco and Oakland. He was the oldest living Olympic champion until his death at the age of 102 years. See also JOH, Vol. 20, No. 1/2013, pp. 70–72. (PT)

Vladimir Yumin (URS), *18 December 1951 in Omsk; †4 March 2016 in Kaspisk, Dagestan/RUS. The wrestler was considered one of the world's best bantamweight, and later featherweight, freestylers in the 1970s. As a bantamweight he won Olympic gold in 1976, was world champion in 1974 and European champion in 1975–76. He also won silver at the 1975 World Championships and bronze at the 1973 Worlds. After the 1976 Olympics, Yumin switched to featherweight and was world champion from 1977–79 and European champion in 1977.

Yumin also tried to qualify for the 1980 Soviet Olympic team, but finished only third at the 1980 Soviet Championships. After finishing his sporting career, he worked as a trainer, coaching the Turkish national team. He was inducted into the FILA International Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2009. (TK)

Clyde Lovellette (USA), *7 September 1929 in Petersburg, Indiana; †9 March 2016 in North Manchester, Indiana. Lovellette won championship basketball titles at every major level of competition – NCAA, Olympic and NBA. During 2016, he was the only college player to lead the nation in scoring while leading his team to the NCAA title.

After his Olympic success in 1952, he was drafted by the Minneapolis Lakers in 1953 and he had four good years for them. He subsequently played for both Cincinnati and St. Louis, playing in three NBA All-Star games and making second team All-NBA one year. He finished his career with the Boston Celtics, as a reserve center to Bill Russell, and it was with them, in 1963 and 1964, that he played on NBA championship teams.

Lovellette was a burly fellow on the court and was known as a bit of an enforcer. He apparently took the reputation with him after his playing days – he served several years as sheriff of his hometown. (BM/WR)

Paul Lange (FRG), *6 February 1931 in Oberhausen; †15 March 2016 in Oberhausen. Lange was a bricklayer by profession. In 1960 in Rome, he won Olympic gold in the K-1 4x500 m relay (held for the only time at these Olympics) with Dieter Krause and Günter Perleberg, who both came from East Germany, and the West German Friedhelm Wentzke. This was the only gold medal won by a truly unified Olympic team of the then separate two German states.

Even before the Olympics, Lange was K-1 4x500 m relay world champion and third in the K-2 500 m

(with Miltenberger) at the 1958 championships. In the 4x500 m relay, Lange also won European titles in 1959 and 1961 and a silver at the 1957. He ended his active career in 1963 and died after a long and serious illness. (RR)

Zoltán Szarka (HUN), *12 August 1942 in Csorna; †18 April 2016 in Szombathely. Goalie Szarka played most of his career from 1960–89 with one club, Szombathelyi Haladás, except for the last seasons of his career, when he played with Sabaria SE from 1983–85 and with SC Nikitsch in Austria in 1988–89. With Szombathelyi, Szarka won a runners-up medal in the 1975 Hungarian Cup.

He never earned a full international cap but was selected for the Olympic squad as a reserve to first choice keeper Károly Fatér. At the Olympics, Szarka played only 13 minutes, when he was subbed in during the semi-final match against Japan, which Hungary won 5–0. His team also won the final. After finishing his sporting career, Szarka worked as the long-time goalkeeping coach with Szombathelyi Haladás. (TK)

Andries Cornelis Dirk "André" Boerstra (NED), *11 December 1924 in Bandoerg, Dutch East Indies; †17 March 2016 in The Hague. Boerstra was a member of the four-times national championship team H.H.Y.C, which later became Klein Zwitserland in Wassenaar/The Hague. He qualified as an engineer and worked first for the Royal Dutch Shell Company, then for the Lucas Bols Company.

Boerstra played as inside right wing in the national team at the 1948 Games, where he won a bronze medal. The Dutch team beat Belgium (4–1), Denmark (4–1) and France (2–0). The last group game was lost to Pakistan (1–6). Nevertheless, the team made it to the semi-final against India but again lost, this time 1–2. For the the



bronze medal, the team had to play their former opponent, Pakistan. This match took place in the Empire Stadium, Wembley, and the Dutch team now knew their adversaries well and the final result was 1–1. This meant a replay was required, which took place at Lyons' Ground and the Dutch team emerged the winners with a score of 4–1. Boerstra scored one of the goals.

He was again part of the Dutch team at the 1952 Games. However, the International Federation had decided to change the competition schedule. The k.o. system meant the losing team was immediately eliminated (with exception of the bronze medal play-off, of course).

The Dutch team beat Germany (1–0) and won the semi-final against Pakistan (1–0). The final was won by India with 6–1; which brought the Netherlands a silver medal. (AB)

Tapio Mäkelä (FIN), *12 October 1926 in Nastola; †12 May 2016 in Jämsä. Mäkelä made his international debut at the 1950 World Championships, where he was 12th in the 18 km. At the 1952 Winter Olympics, he won gold with the Finnish relay team, but lost to Norwegian Hallgeir Brenden by 35 s in the 18 km and had to settle for a silver. At the 1954 World Championships, he again won a gold in the relay and was fifth at 15 km. Mäkelä was an office worker and was the President of the sports club Kaipolan Vire from 1965–70. (WR)

Luděk Macela (TCH), *3 October 1950 in Černolice/CZE; †16 June 2016 in Prague. Macela started his football career in his youth for SK Černolice and Tatra Všenory. At the age of 16, he moved to Dukla Prague, winning the national title in 1977, 1979, and 1982. In 1982, he moved to SV Darmstadt 98 to play in the German Bundesliga for three seasons, and then retired. He returned to Czechoslovakia and became a youth coach at SK Černolice. Internationally, he earned 17 caps

and scored one goal. At the 1980 Olympics he won the gold medal with Czechoslovakia.

Between 1997 and 2001 he was General Secretary of the Czech Football Association, and headed the Referee Commission. He was relieved from his duties in 2001 and took over the training center for Sparta Prague. (WR)

Müzahir Sille (TUR), *21 September 1931 in Istanbul; †17 May 2016 in Istanbul. Sille was a three-time Olympian Greco-Roman feather-weight wrestler, placing fourth in 1956, winning the gold medal in 1960, he also took part in 1964 but did not reach the third round. He also won silver at the 1955 and 1958 World Championships, and won a bronze at the 1959 Balkan Championships. In 1961, he moved to later German Bundesliga club KSV Witten 07.

After his wrestling career ended, he returned to Istanbul to start several non-profit organisations mainly targeted towards helping the homeless. (WR)

Anatoly Grishin (URS), *8 July 1939 †14 June 2016 in Moscow. Anatoly Grishin was a sprint canoeist, winning the gold medal with the Soviet K-4 in 1964. Two years later, he also became world champion with the K-4, and in 1963 he won a bronze with the K-2 over 1000 m. In 1967 he was European champion with the K-4, and also won a silver medal in 1961 and 1967, and a bronze in 1963, all with the K-4. He also earned 15 national titles. After his active career he became a canoeing, rowing and sailing coach, as well as an international referee. (WR)

Oh Se-jong (KOR), *9 October 1982 in Seoul; †27 June 2016 in Seoul. In 2006 this South Korean short track speed skater won Olympic gold in the 5000 m relay. He had also twice been world champion (in 2003 and 2006). He lost his life in a motorcycle accident.

Tommy Kono (USA), *27 June 1930 in Sacramento, California; †24 April 2016 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Pounding for pound, Kono (shown at the 1956 Games in the photo) is probably the greatest lifter produced by the USA. Between 1953 and 1959 he was undefeated in world and Olympic competition, adding six straight world titles to his two Olympic gold medals. He also won three consecutive gold medals at the Pan-American Games, in 1955, 1959, and 1963.

Kono was capable of lifting at almost any bodyweight, witnessed by his Olympic medals in three different classes. He is the only man to ever set world records in four different classes and won 11 AAU Championships – in three different weight classes. During his career he set 27 world records. Kono was a very rare weightlifter who also competed successfully as a body builder, winning the AAU Mr. Universe title in 1954, 1955, and 1957.

He later coached the national teams of Mexico and West Germany and was the USA weightlifting coach in the 1970s and at the 1976 Olympics. Kono was inducted into the Weightlifting Hall of Fame in 1993 and is a member of the US Olympic Hall of Fame and the Association of Oldtime Barbell and Strongmen Hall of Fame. (BM)

Markku Siukonen (FIN), *2 February 1948 in Helsinki; †14 May 2016 in Muurame. A long time member of ISOH, he was author or editor of more than 140 books on sports in a career spanning five decades, including the essential reference works on Finnish Olympic history. He was known as the Grand Old Man of Finnish Olympic literature.

Markku Siukonen graduated in sports sciences at the University of Jyväskylä in 1970. In 1971 he became an editor of *Urheilumekasvot (Faces of Our Sport)*, a compilation of biographical facts on Finnish sportspeople that grew into a series of 14 volumes. Before long Siukonen put his diligence and thorough



attention to detail to the service of Olympic history. The first two volumes of *Suuri Olympiateos* (*Great Olympic Book*) were published in 1978 and followed by a new volume after each Olympic Games until 2000. The 13th and last part of the series was published in 2012, bringing the story up to date up to and including the London Games. Editor-in-chief and later sole author of the monumental work, Siukonen became the leading interpreter of all things Olympic for generations of Finnish sports enthusiasts.

Writing on sports was not only Siukonen's passion but also his livelihood. He became a full-time author of sports books, the only one of his kind in Finland. In addition to *Suuri Olympiateos*, the cornerstone of his work was *Urheilunvuosikirja*, yearbook of Finnish sports inaugurated in 1979. He authored 35 editions of the yearbook before retiring from active duty in 2014.

Markku Siukonen was an active member and recognised Finnish correspondent of the international network of Olympic historians ever since his early correspondence with Erich Kamper in the 1970's. He became a member of ISOH in 1996. He received an Olympic Movement Unity award from the IOC in 1995.

Siukonen spent his retirement years at his home on the shore of Lake Päijänne in Central Finland, attending to music, nature, photography and to his family of five children and ten grandchildren. (VT)

Jacobus Adrianus "Jaco" Treurniet (NED), *8 Dec. 1933 in Rotterdam; †17 May 2016 in Ermelo. After his basic and further education, he joined the SHELL Company and worked his whole life for this company. He became famous for his collection of memorabilia from the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam.

He originally started with collecting books on sport, but later sold most of them. He then changed over to

collecting anything available about the Amsterdam 1928 Olympic Games. Visited flea markets, auctions and digital websites and bought anything available that fitted in his collection.

After his pension, he moved to a new house in Harderwijk, where he could show his collection in a special room; his private museum. A couple of years ago, Parkinson's disease was discovered, which made him think about what to do with his collection. From 2008 onwards, he tried to sell it to several Dutch organisations, including the Netherlands Olympic Committee, but not one of them was interested.

Last year, 2015, he finally decided to auction the collection by MPO Auctions in Nieuwegein. Many collectors attended the auction and most of the important items were

sold. Several Dutch organisations like the Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam, the City of Amsterdam, the Amsterdam Museum and NOC*NSF, combined to make a joined effort in securing important items, which indeed succeeded in attaining some of the most important items. Unfortunately, Jaco Treurniet himself did not have the benefit from this sale for long. We will remember him as a friend. (AB)

(AB = Anthony Th. Bijkerk, BM = Bill Mallon, PB = Philip Barker, PT = Paul Tchir, RR = Ralf Regnitter, TK = Taavi Kalju, VK = Volker Kluge, VT = Vesa Tikander, WR = Wolf Reinhardt)

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

Letters to the Editor

Re: *Journal of Olympic History*, Vol. 24, No. 1/2016

The last edition was one of the best you made so far. I really enjoyed the Herr Meyer-case. It was interesting as well as funny. It was a kind of cabaret! What a difficulty one had to overcome to make just a picture in those days. Compare that to what we can do today!

The story of Kahanamoku reminds us once again that there always was trouble with the amateur rules. I did not know that Duke almost missed the freestyle final in the 1920 Olympics. Life was simple then: he got a second chance in the semifinal. In the same circumstances the American sprinters Hart and Robinson were not so lucky in 1972! (Is this perhaps a story for one of the next volumes?)

It is amazing that so much could be found of the not very impressive 1900 Olympic football tournament. I noticed from Berlin ice with Black Forest Snow that perhaps we could have had Winter Games earlier than 1924 if the 1916 Berlin Games had not been cancelled because of the war. Xaxa' lost gold medal (never heard of him) and the Lost Artwork were also very interesting. The hypocrisy of politics appeared clearly from the Saarland Olympic team in 1952. The West Germans would not recognise the GDR but did not protest at all that Saarland under its own name participated in the Helsinki Games. All in all it was great reading.

As to the biographies of the IOC Members: About Jean Claude Ganga, Wallwork and some others it is mentioned that they were expelled. Geesink was not expelled but as far as I know got a warning for accepting 5000 dollars for his so-called Olympic Academy. But I did not find trace of it in his biography. He was a great athlete, one of the greatest we had in the Netherlands, but as an administrator he was a disaster. He had a row with everybody of the NOC and that went on for years.

Ruud Paauw, Leiden, Netherlands

The Editor reserves the right to abbreviate reader's letters.

Carlo Pedersoli (alias: Bud Spencer) (ITA), *31 October 1929 in Naples; †27 June 2016 in Rome. With his family Pedersoli went to South America after the Second World War, where among other things he worked as an assembly line worker in Rio de Janeiro. In 1948 he returned to Italy to study law. On 19th September 1950 he was the first Italian to swim the 100 m free in under a minute. After he had won a silver at the Mediterranean Games in 1951, he



took part in the Olympics in 1952 and 1956. Through his marriage to the daughter of a well-known Italian film producer, Pedersoli came into contact with showbusiness. After the death of

his father-in-law he founded his own production company. In 1967 he received an offer to act in a "spaghetti western". That was the birth of "Bud Spencer" (named after his favourite actor Spencer Tracy), a hardhitting, stubborn but good-hearted roughneck. Together with "Terence Hill" (also an Italian swimmer called Mario Girotti) he made up a congenial duo in 16 film comedies which celebrated triumphs. (VK)