

Back in 1980, when he was a sophomore at Southern Cal, Tonie Campbell surprised the track world by making the U.S. Olympic team in the 110 hurdles. He made his first appearances in Europe and gained the nickname "The Happy Kid," thanks to his smiling, outgoing, happy-go-lucky manner.

Today, Campbell still is one of the smilingest athletes in track; a warm, friendly man, he is one of the original "nice guys." Plus, he is hurdling better than ever.

World Ranked every year of this decade, Campbell is enjoying his finest year yet, with the inaugural World Indoor gold medal over the 60m barriers and a PR 13.19 at Modesto to become No. 5 on the all-time list.

But Campbell also knows he is fighting a battle for recognition. He is a champion who suffers from a reputation as an also-ran—a top-class athlete, but an also-ran nonetheless. That struggle for deserved renown occupies one side of Campbell.

The other side of the scholarly appearing Californian is phenomenally multifaceted. Campbell clearly is a man in love with life, determined to experience and share all he can. He speaks freely, and insightfully, of himself.

Sitting around a hotel swimming pool in Modesto, Campbell first commented on—what else?—his place in the hurdling world:

T&FN: *In his opinion, is Tonie Campbell the most underrated hurdler in the world?*

Campbell: Oh, by far! People just seem to have little respect for me, and my abilities and talents. I hope that after I finish running, people will look back and realize, "Hey, that Tonie Campbell guy: he was good."

I've been on just about every major team: Olympics, Pan-Ams, World Cup, World Indoor. The outdoor Worlds I'll take care of this year. I've beaten everybody there is to beat. And I've run fast times. My career is in the books.

Yet I do feel that I am overlooked. Partly that's because I try to lead my life as a humble athlete. I try to be softspoken, easygoing and not make a lot of waves.

But that manner is also the way I am. I don't feel I have to be controversial to get attention—but maybe I do. Really, it used to annoy me to be underrated and it still does sometimes, I guess. But in a way I have accepted it, and it has caused me to want to go out and do more. It is a motivator, to a degree.

T&FN: *It sounds like you have reached a comfortable point within yourself about your own ability.*

TONIE CAMPBELL



Art-Spoo/Tony Duffy

Campbell: I feel I have. When I first got into running, all I wanted to do was do my best and go as far as I possibly could.

Then I wanted people to wake up to me every morning on the cereal box. But I woke up to reality; people are going to know me on the track circuit and maybe that's all.

My sister gave me my car license as a present and it means, "2-Time Olympian." I've had people follow me around, trying to get a peek inside to see who it is. Or people have come up to me and said, "You're... you're not who I think you are." I said, "Well, who do you think I am?" And they say, "Willie Banks" or "Edwin Moses." I will always be known as someone else.

T&FN: *Does this frustrate you?*

Campbell: There have been times when I have said things that could be interpreted as critical of other athletes. There just are times I get so frustrated that my comments come out in a negative way. But I don't mean anything malicious toward anyone else.

I'm one person who can't stand to have someone not like me. That probably works against me in races. But, hey, we're all on this same boat together.

I mean, this career is so short, you don't have time for bad feelings. These people are some of the closest I know on this planet. We all know what we go through, so we have a common bond. I intend to have long-term friendships with these people—like in the phone company ad, when I'm 70 years old, I want to call up somebody from my rocking chair and say, "Hey, remember that time..."

T&FN: *Yet, contrasting with your easygoing manner is the fact you compete in a very violent event. The World Indoor final showed people how violent the hurdles can be. Do the hurdles tap some alter ego in you, the darker side of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Campbell?*

Campbell: They very definitely do. There is a very important reason I have stayed in the sport, instead of trying football or baseball, or even pursuing my career and doing research in marine biology. But I put off all that.

And the reason is that the hurdles have allowed me to channel much of my frustration. I'm a very emotional person, very sensitive. Things in life affect me pretty easily, but I channel the negative feelings into my running.

T&FN: *Negative feelings?*

Campbell: Track has allowed me to have an alter ego. I'm very aggressive in the hurdles. I'm still friendly, but I also know I have a job to do, a goal to accomplish and go out there and give all I have to do that.

Some of my friends have told me, "Oh, you're a typical Gemini; you have two personalities." I used to tell them,

"Aw, get outta here with that stuff." But I have seen it sometimes—a photographer will show me a picture of myself in a race and I'll say, "That isn't me." I'll look really evil. It's hard to believe that person is supposedly nice and easy going.

"I'll Run Until I Make The Cover Of T&FN"

T&FN: *Were both sides of you in Indianapolis?*

Campbell: I know that the World Indoor win brought out all sorts of sides: from excitement and fear beforehand to total exhilaration after I had finally won something that I had been chasing for so long. Then I was tremendously hurt by the general reaction that again I had "lucked into a win"; then I was tremendously depressed and insulted.

Even at my press conference, the writers wanted to know about the fall. I got mad and told them if they didn't want to hear about the fastest race of my life, then I had nothing to say. I won the race, and that was the bottom line.

Then I said something I now wish I hadn't. Earlier in the winter, I had said that I was like a scavenger; I reaped some wins after other people's kills. I won after others suffered some misfortune. So at Indy, I said I was like a hyena: "My belly is full, but today it's lined with gold."

T&FN: *Maybe you had bought the line that you did win because someone else faltered. Maybe you needed Indy to help turn around your attitude toward your own ability?*

Campbell: I never was honest with myself or gave myself credit. I always was this happy kid, enjoying the ride as it went along. Like I never, ever expected to make an Olympic team. It's been a kind of personal joke with me: "Here I am again, going farther than I ever thought I could." I mean, I was the slowest kid on my block and on my football team in high school. Yet now I'm a world-class track athlete and there are few others in the world who can beat me.

T&FN: *Off the track, you have an incredibly wide range of interests: scuba diving, skiing, animals, outdoor life, motorcycling. But the big thing we have to nail down is, did you really jump off the roof of your house when you were a kid?*

Campbell [hearty laughter]: Oh, you heard about that? Yeah, I've always had an obsession with flying. I admit it—I saw *Mary Poppins* and I knew we had this big

beach umbrella in the garage.

I knew I would fall, even if I had a much bigger umbrella than she did in the movies. But I wanted to experience the sensation of being suspended in the air, even for just a second. It was a real windy day, but I climbed up on the roof and jumped—the umbrella folded right up and I hit the ground pretty hard. But just for a moment, I felt myself held up in the air.

Ever since then, I've been fascinated with flying. I'm working on getting my private pilot's license right now. Sometimes I fly with Edwin Moses in his plane. We have gotten to be very good friends. He works out at UC Irvine, where I do. So did Daley Thompson before he went back to England.

T&FN: *Does working out with such media heroes help you?*

Campbell: In fact, my new outlook toward my abilities is because of them. After Indy, they helped me get out of my depression. They basically installed the confidence I now have within myself.

They said, "Tonie, you *are* good. You're not just lucky." I really respect them for their honesty because they approached me and said, "You're a nice guy, but you're underrating yourself. You can get more out of the sport than ever before if you just don't doubt yourself."

T&FN: *What can you get out of it?*

Campbell: One thing they have gotten me to thinking about: staying around until the 1992 Olympics. Daley is 29 this year. Edwin is 31 and he says, "I'm just getting started." I'm going to turn 27 in June. Those guys are talking about carrying on, but I've thought about retiring.

You know, as we have sat here, I realized that I'll run until 1992—or until I make the cover of *T&FN*. I even have a spot on a wall at home already saved for that cover. A frame is up there, just waiting.

Yeah, that's it: '92 or the cover. Whichever comes last. □

Anthony Eugene Campbell was born June 14, 1960, in Los Angeles and is 6-3/165. Graduated from Banning High School in Wilmington, California, in 1978. Ran for the next 3 years at USC (ran for a club his senior year) and now competes for the Diadora TC. He won the first indoor World Championship this year in the 60m hurdles.

His PRs (with positions on the World and U.S. all-time lists in parentheses): 110H—13.19 '87 (5, 5); 400H—50.28 '81. His progression (with World and U.S. Rankings in parentheses), including placings in major meets:

Year	Age	110H	Major Meets
1978	17/18	13.8By (39")	
1979	18/19	14.31	
1980	19/20	13.44 (7, 5)	4)NCAA 3)TAC 3)OT
1981	20/21	13.44 (5, 5)	3)TAC 4)OF
1982	21/22	13.48 (8, 7)	
1983	22/23	13.32 (5, 4)	5)TAC 3)Pan-Am
1984	23/24	13.23 (3, 3)	1)TAC 2)OT 5)OG
1985	24/25	13.27 (4, 4)	3h)TAC 6)OF 1)WCP
1986	25/26	13.39 (6, 4)	dn)TAC 1)OF
1987	26/27	13.19	

by Jon Hendershott