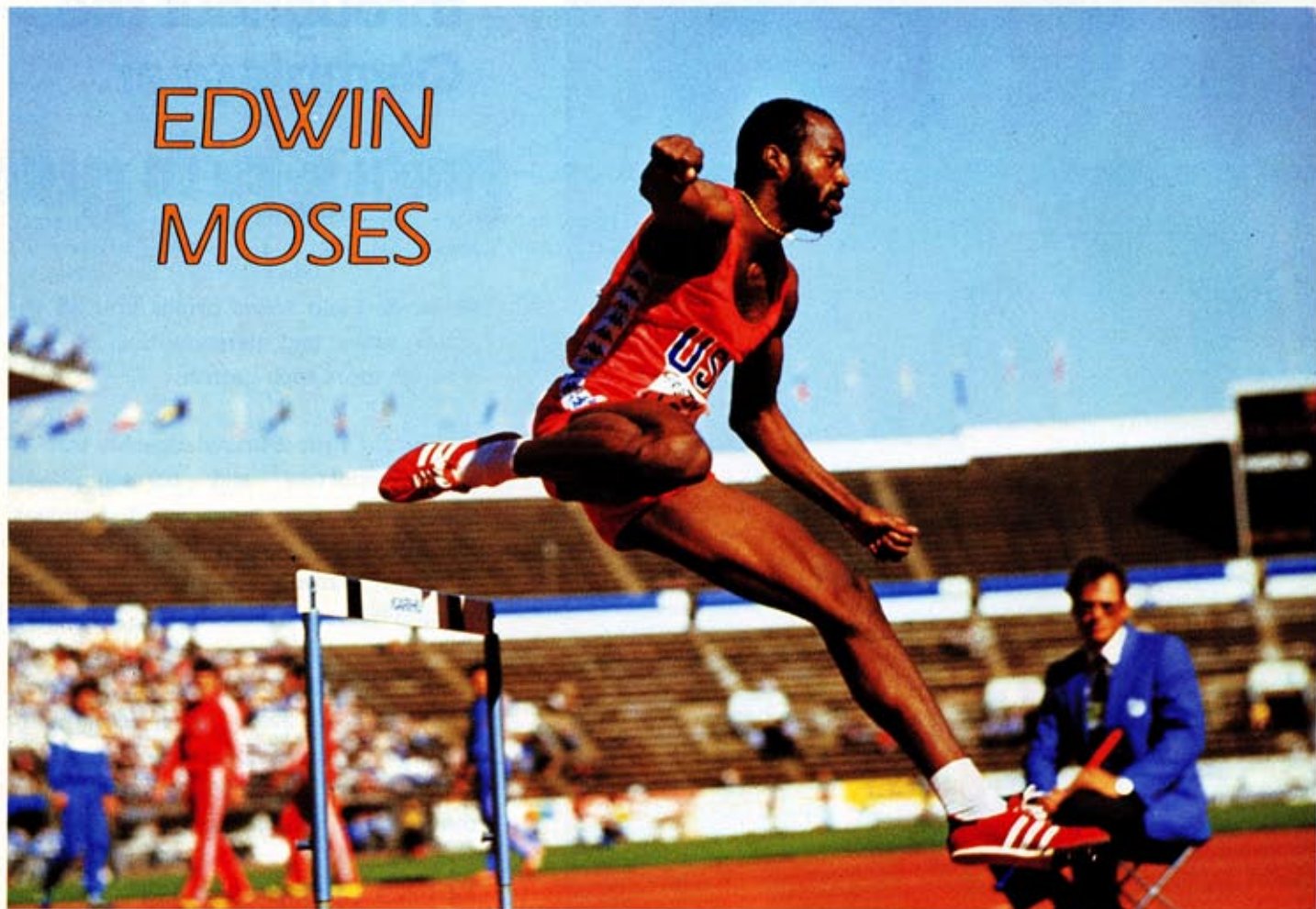


EDWIN
MOSES

Tony Duffy

Back at the start of 1980, Edwin Moses was acknowledged as history's greatest 400 hurdler. Since then, he has reduced his own WR twice more, by almost 0.4, to 47.02, was T&FN's Athlete Of The Year in 1980, was boycotted out of an Olympics he surely would have won, and became the first in his event to win a non-Olympic World Championship.

Despite these honors, despite having ranked No. 1 in the world each of the 7 years he has seriously run the event, he is best known now as the holder of The Streak. The winning streak, now at 87 finals in his favorite event, sets him apart to people who know little of the sport.

The streak, one of the great feats of contemporary athletics, is a result of his overwhelming dominance. Only 4 runners have ever broken 48.00 in the event. Only one other has accomplished it twice. Moses has done it 25 times.

Caught in the midst of a media blitz, after an interview session with People Magazine and a television filming for Eye on Los Angeles and multitudinous photo sessions, an exhausted Edwin snuck in one more interview before dinner:

T&FN: What do you think now of the 400 hurdles?

Moses: Well, aside from myself it's improved a hell of a lot. It's better than ever. The event has really gone through a total transformation in terms of the guys that come into the event. All the top guys have really taken it seriously as well as myself.

T&FN: Do you feel the athletic ability of 400 hurdlers before was lacking; that it was less than that of athletes in other events?

Moses: I don't think that challenge was there. Just the same as, for example, in the mile. It was quite stagnant for a long time. And then all of a sudden one guy broke the record and other guys started following, and then they got tired of following, so someone else breaks the record. And that develops more competition.

T&FN: What were your career aspirations 10 years ago and how far from

them are you now?

Moses: Back then, I was strictly academic. I had no visions of being a sportsman. Of course [having a career in sports] was nowhere near the level it is now in terms of being a professional and making money, which is exactly what can happen now. I'm totally removed from what I thought I would be doing. More than likely I probably would have gone to medical school or been an engineer.

T&FN: What did sitting out last year do?

Moses: I think it gave me a chance to recharge my batteries. Simply that.

T&FN: When you're on the track you seem to be very machinelike, everything seems very well planned. What is it in you that proves you're not?

Moses: I have a heart and a brain [laughs].

I don't know, maybe that's just a perception that I never even thought of. I don't think of myself as machinelike. As a

matter of fact, I was talking to someone today about computers and technology and had to come to the conclusion that there was no machine possible that could do what I do.

You can get someone to follow directions: the East German women sprinters are a good example. They're very mechanical in that sense of the word and I don't think that I'm machinelike in any way compared to them.

T&FN: *How much more do you think is in you?*

Moses: I don't know; don't even think about it. I try not to quantify myself. If you believe that there's only so much left in you, there will only be that much left. Because when you get to the point where you think that you've reached that point you give it up. Maybe that's why guys who've been through it give it up and have those short careers. Maybe they felt that that's all they could do.

T&FN: *How do you want to be remembered when you do retire?*

Moses: I don't even want to answer that. It's up to the people to remember me in whichever manner they would like to. My record will stand for itself.

T&FN: *Do you want to see your last record so far out there that it's unattainable for a long time?*

Moses: Well, I think everyone in track & field wants to set a record that no one else can break. I think that's pretty clear. No one wants their record to be broken.

T&FN: *Can you get it that far out there?*

Moses: I don't know. I don't know how fast I can run. I don't know how fast anyone else can run. Maybe it's that far already.

T&FN: *Do you feel the hurdles will stagnate after you leave, the way the long jump did after Beamon?*

Moses: Stagnant in terms of someone else running a World Record, I don't know. I guess that would be the only measure. There are guys who have been able to run very good races: Harald Schmid, Andre Phillips, Akii-Bua. Regardless of what I do, I don't think the event will ever stagnate. I think the competition will always be at world class level as well as any other event.

T&FN: *Do you ever look at your record as being a pure one compared to the middle distance races which have often been paced races?*

Moses: Absolutely! My personal feeling is that with all the emphasis on altitude I think that someone ought to look at it objectively and come to the same conclusion as to paced races.

Who's to say that altitude is any more of an aid that having rabbits in the race? That's not true competition. The guy in the 100m is not having anyone pace him at any point in time.

When you have someone in the race not to win I think that's it's not true track & field. And I think that the records are not at the same level as an event where it's straight competition. I think that rabbits aid considerably more than altitude. I think it's unfair, really.

T&FN: *Have you ever thought about going up to altitude to run a major race?*

Moses: No, not really.

T&FN: *How would you have felt if you'd gone to the Sports Festival this year at Colorado Springs and run 46.90?*

Moses: Well, I would have felt it was a legitimate World Record, as legitimate as any other World Record. The same as all the altitude-aided records, most of the ones that are broken are broken again at high altitudes. So, basically it's the same.

T&FN: *Would you have felt that suddenly you had to chase a record that was unfairly aided when you run 95% of your races at sea level?*

Moses: No, I don't feel like that at all. If the IAAF gives a sanction to a meet, it's a legitimate meet. It's just the same as the rules having been changed in terms of having rabbits in the race. As a matter of fact, the rule probably is still on the books. But everyone tends to overlook it. So in that case it is definitely against the rules and it's stated. But there's nothing in the books about altitude.

T&FN: *What about the steroid issue that's been raised, in part, by you?*

Moses: It's a very serious problem that no one is willing to approach. It's just like the money under the table used to be. I feel that I'm working at a disadvantage by having to run against people who use steroids or whatever else they may be using. I think there have been people in and around the sport that have been saying it for years, but no one has really taken notice.

T&FN: *How prevalent do you think steroid users are in your event?*

Moses: I don't know. That's why I'm for testing. Everyone knows that it's happening. It's not my job to say that some guy is doing it or some guy is not.

I'm not going to make any statement to cause any animosity. But the problem does exist and everyone knows it. Why try to deny it? A lot of individuals are more concerned about winning, making money, than they are about doing it by the rules.

At the TAC Convention, very few of the athletes wanted random testing. The fear was that a person could get caught. My personal feeling is that there's a certain element that wants it to be as easy as possible to continue with the possibility of getting caught being as small as possible.

T&FN: *Could you be better?*

Moses: I don't even think about that. I don't want to be better if that's what it takes.

T&FN: *What do people who don't know much about track think of when they hear "Edwin Moses?"*

Moses: Well, even the people who don't follow track as closely know that I've won a lot of races. I think that's the thing that comes to mind first of all, as well as my winning a medal in '76.

T&FN: *What does the streak mean to you?*

Moses: It means that those races are in the past, and I'm training to win more races. Really, from an athletic point of view, it's all in the past. It really doesn't have anything to do with what's going to happen in the season of 1984. I'm very careful not to let it interfere with my training or start taking my competitors for granted or anything else.

T&FN: *Is maintaining the streak a goal, or is it just incidental to the real goals?*

Moses: I think it's a by-product more than anything else. My main goal now is, of course, to win the Olympic medal, produce more World Records, keep from getting injured. Those are the three things that I think about the most. But the most important thing is being healthy and doing the proper training. And I figure that everything else will take care of itself.

T&FN: *Is there a certain point at which you might not be able to reset goals?*

Moses: Of course, but the goals that I set are really concrete enough. Going out there every day and training is a goal that I have to fulfill. The main thing is not to worry about it. I don't worry about breaking the World Record. Most guys who say they do, never do. Most predictions in terms of World Records never happen. I don't think I really get caught up in that to the point where I'm just saying I'm going to have a World Record just for television's sake.

T&FN: *At what point do you think you might have difficulty setting goals?*

Moses: I hope never. After I finish track & field, life is still going to go on and I'll still have to set goals no matter what they are. Whether you're able to achieve a particular goal doesn't keep you from having a goal and trying to achieve it. □

Edwin Corley Moses was born August 31, 1955, in Dayton, Ohio, and is 6'1 1/2". Has set 4 WRs, beginning with 47.63 to win '76 Olympics. Other PRs: 400-45.60 (8th ranked U.S. '77); 110H-13.64 (7th ranked U.S. '77 & '78); 800-1:48.98. His progression (with World and U.S. Rankings in parentheses), plus major meet finishes:

| Year | Age | Affil | Class | 400H | Major Meets |
|------|-----|---------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1975 | 19 | Morehouse | So | 52.0y | |
| 1976 | 20 | " | Jr | 47.63 (1, 1) | 11OG 11OT 41TAC |
| 1977 | 21 | " | Sr | 47.45 (1, 1) | 11W Cup 11TAC |
| 1978 | 22 | Ath In Action | | 47.94 (1, 1) | |
| 1979 | 23 | unattached | | 47.53 (1, 1) | 11W Cup 11TAC |
| 1980 | 24 | Utopia Int'l | | 47.13 (1, 1) | 11OT |
| 1981 | 25 | " | | 47.14 (1, 1) | 11W Cup 11TAC |
| 1982 | 26 | " | | did not compete | |
| 1983 | 27 | unattached | | 47.02 (1, 1) | 11W Ch 11TAC |