

Don Finlay



In 16 international dual meets, Don Finlay only lost two hurdles races: to Lord Burghley in 1931 (vs. Italy) and to John Thornton in 1937 (vs. Germany). He won a bronze medal at the 1932 Olympics, a silver in 1936, but fell in the heats at his third Olympics in 1948. He won the British Empire Games high hurdles in 1934 and the European Championships in 1938. In 1949, at the age of 40, he won his eighth AAA title (1932-38, 1949) and he was the AAA indoor champion in 1937 and 1938. After placing fourth at the 1950 British Empire Games, he finally retired from international competition. His 14.4 for 120yH in 1949 remained a British masters record throughout the century. Don Finlay set numerous UK records in the high hurdles but was also an accomplished performer in other events. He was the Inter-Services champion in the long jump and made his international début in that event. He ran the 4x100 relay at the 1932 and 1936 Olympic Games and was the RAF champion in the high jump. He was a useful shot putter and could undoubtedly have been the leading British decathlete of his era. His 23 appearances for Great Britain stood as a record until beaten by Peter Hildreth in 1957. Finlay had a distinguished career in the Royal Air Force, winning the DFC and AFC as a fighter pilot and retiring with the rank of Group Captain. He was severely injured in a motor vehicle accident which led to his death.

Personal Bests: 110H – 14.1w (1937), 14.3 (1938); HJ – 1.83 (6-0) (1938); LJ – 6.96 (22-10¼) (1938); SP – 11.68 (38-3¾) (1937); JT – 43.23 (141-10) (1937).

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