Athletics Today (videotape series)
Produced by Halle-Film
Distributed by TransTel/Deutsche Welle

In 1989 Halle-Film produced a series of videotapes entitled Athletics Today for TransTel/Deutsche Welle. The series consists of 26 films, each lasting approximately 27 minutes. The material was produced for the television stations of about 80 countries in Africa, Asia, Central and South America: it aims to describe the sport of athletics and its component events; to detail various training methods; and to discuss issues raised by participation in the sport such as injury treatment and doping. The series' predecessor, a set of 13 films with the general title Faster, Further, Higher was produced in 1978 in co-operation with the German Athletics Federation (DLV). It has been widely distributed and has been used as a learning aid in coach education courses in several countries.

The series starts with a look at the education and certification of coaches from developing countries during a 2-term study course at the Foreign Coaches School in Mainz, Germany, which is run by the DLV in conjunction with the Department of Sport at the University of Mainz. It shows the lifestyle of the student coaches, the facilities available to them and extracts from lectures on the theory and practice of athletics.

Each of the next 19 videos covers one or more of the individual events of athletics by showing world-class performances supplemented by historical and statistical information, interviews with top athletes, information on training methods, sample training sessions, tactics, facilities and equipment. They feature competition shots from IAAF Grand Prix meetings, as well as at the Xllth European Championships in Athletics, Stuttgart, 1986 and the II World Championships in Athletics, Rome, 1987. Technical studies in slow motion and 'trick' photography such as animation are also included. The events covered are as follows:

Part 2 - The 100 and 200 metres
Part 3 - The 400 metres
Part 4 - The 800 metres
Part 5 - 1500 metres and the Mile
Part 6 - 3,000, 5,000 and 10,000 metres
Part 7 - The High Hurdles
Part 8 - 400 metres Hurdles
Part 9 - 3,000 metres Steeplechase and Cross-country
Part 10 - The Marathon
Part 11 - The Walking Events
Part 12 - The Long Jump
Part 13 - The Triple Jump
Part 14 - The High Jump
Part 15 - The Pole Vault
Part 16 - The Shot Put and the Javelin
Part 17 - The Discus and the Hammer Throws
Part 18 - The Relay Races
Part 19 - The Decathlon
Part 20 - The Heptathlon

Part 21 - Strength Training and Fitness Training - highlights the basic parameters of athletic performance: speed, strength and endurance. Weight training sessions are used to illustrate how strength may be developed, while the improvement of speed and endurance through track sessions and cross-country runs are also covered. This video also contains sequences showing various types of precompetition warm-up.

Part 22 - The Athlete on the Test Bench: Diagnosis - Training - Control Therapy - focuses on the athlete on the test bench: diagnosis, training control and therapy. Shots of advanced sports medicine facilities are used to demonstrate the large variety of medical help available in some countries. This video also covers diagnostics and prevention; ergonomics on treadmill and bicycle; ECG and EEG monitoring; reaction and jumping tests; anthropometry; and, of course, physiotherapy.

In the next three parts the world's top male and female athletes are profiled. They are shown in action (both at normal speed and in slow motion) at numerous international venues; they discuss their training in interviews and data on their careers are given. The titles of these videos are as follows:

Part 23 - Stars of today 1: Women
Part 24 - Stars of today 2: Men - Field events
Part 25 - Stars of today 3: Men - Track events

The final video in the series - Focus on Athletics - focuses some of the critical issues in modern athletics. The risk of injury and injury prevention; limits of biological load tolerance; doping; the role of biomechanics in athletics; inter-relationships between mass and top-level sports; the role of women in sport; and the increase in commercialization of athletics are all covered. The discussions are supported by statements from athletes, physicians, scientists and officials.

Athletics Today demonstrates the wide spectrum and the beauty of athletics. It also offers important information on specific events, training methods and historical data. The material is instructive, informative and entertaining. It is useful both for athletes and as a supplementary aid for basic level coaches courses. The IAAF has purchased a full set of the series for each of its 8 Regional Development Centres around the world.

Athletics Today is available with sound tracks in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, and in various formats and colour systems (PAL, NTSC and SECAM).

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