Slaney, Mary Decker (1958-) Encyclopedia Article

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Mary Decker Slaney, the first woman to win the prestigious Jesse Owens track and field award, is considered to be America's greatest mid-distance runner. Slaney won both the 1,500 and 3,000 meters at the 1983 World Championships in Helsinki, has set 36 American and 17 world records, and still holds four American records, all set between 1983 and 1985. In a career that began at age 11, Slaney, who set her first world record at age 14, has established herself as a world-class runner despite a series of painful injuries and remarkable recoveries (19 operations) as well as exercise-induced asthma. After four Olympic tries, Slaney has yet to win a medal. After a successful comeback in 1997 at age 39, however, she made plans to run in the year 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Further Reading:

Kardong, Don. "Bright Speed." *Runner's World.* July, 1997, 86-90.