



Bob Beamon ...at a glance



Track & Field

Career Highlights

- 1968 Olympic Gold Medalist (Long Jump)
- Olympic Record Holder (29 ft. 2.5 inches)
- ESPN Top 100 Athletes of the 20th Century
- U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame Member Class of 1983
- USA Track and Field Hall of Fame Class of 1977

Community Involvement

Bob Beamon Organization for Youth

Personal Quotes

"What ever you do, don't do it halfway."

Vital Statistics

- Born:** August 29, 1946
- Hometown:** Jamaica, New York
- Resides:** Chicago, IL
- Height:** 6' 3
- Education:** Adelphi 1972

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getting to know...

Bob Beamon

Biography

The Jump Heard Around the World

It only took Bob Beamon one jump to leap into record books, stardom and immortality. His legendary leap has been cited as athletic perfection and has left all future great athletic feats to be deemed "Beamon-esque."

Born in Jamaica, New York, Beamon lost his mother to tuberculosis as an infant. Surrounded by a world of drugs and violence, Beamon became engulfed by the culture of the time. By the age of fourteen he was a rarity at school and visible in gang life, eventually becoming a gang leader. With the help of positive goals developed through sports, Beamon turned his life around.

While he developed a passion for basketball, he was a star in track. A Junior Olympic and New York state record holder, Beamon made the shift from living on the corner to attending college. An ailing maternal grandmother led him to North Carolina A&T, but once his grandmother passed he moved on to the University of Texas El-Paso, an emerging track powerhouse. While competing at UTEP, Beamon proved to be a man of unparalleled principle. As a college student living in the civil rights movement, Beamon and fellow African-Americans protested a track meet held by a University with insensitive racial practices by not competing. This very stand cost his track scholarship and his coach, just months before the Olympic Team Trials.

Rising above all issues, Beamon went on to cement himself as one of the great American athletes at the Mexico City Games. Beamon's gold medal victory at the 1968 Olympic Games came close to never happening after he fouled on his first two jumps at Trials. Catching his composure, he showed the skill and poise that led him to victories in 22 of his last 23 events that year. Nothing less than gold was expected of Beamon in Mexico and his jump was nothing short of miraculous. Just twenty-two years old, he landed a jump of 29 ft. 2 inches, besting his personal record by over 10 inches.

Truly transcending the times, Beamon was the first athlete to jump not only over 28 feet, but over 29 feet as well. His Olympic Record still stands today, forty years later. The legendary Olympian has translated his athletic success into a career of positively impacting other's lives, traveling the country giving motivational and educational talks to universities and business that focus on overcoming obstacles and a will towards greatness.

Media outlets across the country have covered Beamon's timeless jump decades after the event. Legendary sports writer Dick Schaap wrote a book entitled *The Perfect Jump*. Since leaving the track Beamon has continued to excel in life. Following his uncharted success, he went back to school to receive his degree, graduating from Adelphi University in 1972 with a degree in Sociology. Now, Beamon takes lessons from his own life to positively affect American youth. In 1997 he developed the Bob Beamon Organization for Youth, which has raised over two million dollars for disadvantaged scholar athletes.

Beamon, who was diagnosed with Type-2 diabetes in 2006, is part of Medco's "Tour of Champions", helping promote mail-order pharmacy. As a diabetic he continues to live and promote a healthy lifestyle by eating right and exercising regularly. Beamon was also featured in a commercial by Visa leading into the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.