

Superstars rules and events

Heats consist of eight events with each competitor taking part in six. The final is decided over nine events with each competitor taking part in seven.

Programme-makers determine one event each competitor has to withdraw from (usually that closest to their own sport, where applicable) and each competitor chooses the second.

The Events

100m

- Run 100m from starting blocks on paved esplanade.

Kayak

- Open kayaking with standard paddles over course of approx 120m.
- Heats of two competitors with fastest two progressing to the final.

800m

- Run 800m.

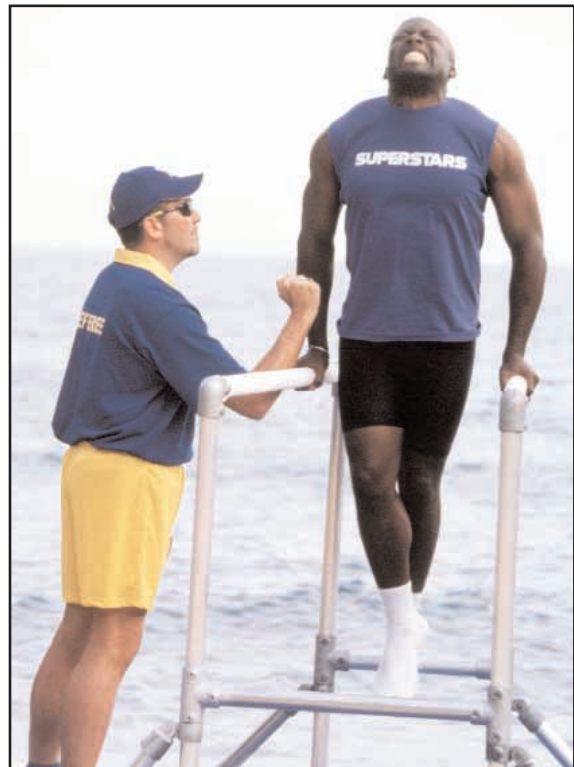
Swim

- Two lengths, any stroke, of 25m pool.

Mountain bike

- Race over 600m course up a gravel road.

Gym tests



John Regis competes in the gruelling gym tests at La Manga

- Two disciplines – dips and squat thrusts.
- Dips performed individually on parallel bars are counted when competitor, from straight-arm position, bends arm to 90 degrees at elbow to contact judge's hand and then returns to straight-arm position.
- Squat thrusts will be counted when competitor, from "press up" position, moves legs forward over 30cm strip and then back to starting position. Arms must be kept straight. Sliding of feet is allowed.
- One minute for each discipline and score calculated on the total of both disciplines.



Superstars rules and events

Target golf

- Three shots each hit from tee to green 50m away.
- Green is ringed at 1m intervals from a central flag with points awarded at 5:4:3:2:1 (5 being closest).
- 10 points for a hole in one.

Football

- Starting from point 36m from goal, competitors dribble between posts before attempting a shot on goal. They have to beat the goalkeeper then return to the start point to repeat the exercise (three times in total).
- Winner is competitor who scores most goals in the quickest time. Time is taken when competitor returns to the start point after the third shot.
- Goalkeeper must stay inside 6m “D” area. Players may not enter “D”. If they do, the goal will be disallowed.

Tennis

- Challenge is one of volleying across the net into areas where points are scored.
- There are three scoring zones – the closer to the base line the higher the score.
- Balls are fed manually – forehand then backhand.
- Between shots, competitor returns to seat on service line.

Archery

- Three warm-up arrows, followed by five competitive shots fired at a 122cm ringed target set at 15m from shooting platform.
- Highest total wins.

Superstars history and top facts

UK and European

1973

Crystal Palace National Sports Centre

The first *Superstars* took place in 1973 at Crystal Palace, London. It was presented by David Vine, with commentary and technical explanations by Ron Pickering. The programme featured the “Magnificent 7” – Bobby Moore, Jackie Stewart, Barry John, Roger Taylor, Joe Bugner, Tony Jacklin and David Hemery. Joe Bugner beat Olympic-shot Jackie Stewart in the pistol shooting, but Hemery went on to impress in most events and win. He was the 1968 Olympic hurdles champion, retired from athletics the year before, just after the Munich Olympics, and had made *Superstars* his goal beyond athletics.

1974

Crystal Palace National Sports Centre

This year saw boxer John Conteh win *Superstars* as well as his World light heavyweight title. He beat reigning *Superstars* champion David Hemery, who was the first to congratulate him.

1975

Malmo, Sweden

The *Superstars* concept spread to the rest of Europe, and England football striker Malcolm Macdonald represented Great Britain in the European event. In the 100m, there was a false

start by Johansson of Sweden, but no one stopped the race. “SuperMac” still beat him and in a record 11 seconds. Commentator and judge Ron Pickering was not happy and said the race had to be re-run. No one believed that Macdonald would be able to run that fast again straight away. He ran the race, won it again, and beat his own record with an amazing 10.9 seconds. He held the European record for seven years until Des Drummond ran the 100m in 10.85 seconds in the 1982 International *Superstars* in Hong Kong. Macdonald still holds the UK record at 11 seconds.

European Final, Rotterdam, Holland

Malcolm Macdonald and David Hemery represented Great Britain. Hemery was made to start 40m behind the rest of the field in the steeplechase as the event was deemed to be very close to his own speciality of hurdles. He caught the field and was in the lead when he suffered a horrific landing at the waterjump. Hemery picked himself up and carried on to finish third in the race. At the finish, his ankle had already swollen badly and he was out of action for the rest of the competition.

Aldershot

The gym tests were always a controversial event, and squash player Jonah Barrington stormed out after disagreeing with his score and the way he was judged in the squats. The judge awarded him a third of the amount he thought he got. He came back the next year and joked that he would stay in the competition and not walk out.

1976

European Final, Vichy, France

Welsh rugby star Gareth Edwards represented Britain and ended up playing table tennis against new Wimbledon champion Bjorn Borg. Edwards managed to take four points from him! Borg won the event, and that, coupled with wins in canoeing, football and the steeplechase, ensured that Borg won.

1976

Bracknell



Kevin Keegan gets on his bike

Kevin Keegan came off his bike on a cinder track, and most of the skin came off his back and arms. Keegan was racing against the Belgian football captain. They both went off at a cracking speed but, suddenly, Keegan's bike touched the back wheel of his opponent's on the first bend and he came off, sliding across the track for what seemed like an eternity. Keegan wasn't worried as he was the only man in the stadium who couldn't see his back. He raced again, won, then went on to win the steeplechase and the whole event. Literally from the ashes, Keegan was champion.

Aldershot

Stan Bowles and Malcolm Macdonald both sank during the canoeing. During the pistol shooting event (held at Bisley) Stan Bowles took a shot and, as he rested his pistol on the table, another shot went off, firing through the table. Everyone dived for cover, no one was hurt, but half the table was missing!

Cwmbran

Cwmbran in Wales was a favourite venue for *Superstars*. It was the scene of Brian Jacks's debut in 1978. He trained every day for five weeks, doing a minimum of 400 squats and dips. Jacks went on to become the master of the gym tests, constantly smashing his own records.

Commentator Ron Pickering referred to the gym as the "Emporium of fitness" or the "Muscle Factory". In later years, racing driver Jody Scheckter created the most controversy in the squats by smearing his shoes in engine oil and using a sliding technique. Brian Jacks saw this and had special shoes made with plastic toe caps so he could slide without hurting his feet.

In 1980 Daley Thompson believed he was the man to beat Brian Jacks. He won weightlifting and, during the squats, placed his wristwatch in front of him to try to psyche Jacks out. Jacks was unmoved and, when Thompson had finished, he walked over and replaced the wristwatch with one of his trademark oranges! He beat Thompson, and got a Jaffa orange advert out of it.

Cwmbran was also where former Olympic long jumper Lynn Davies made his *Superstars* debut in 1979. He lifted 8.3kg over his own bodyweight in the weightlifting and set the tone for the rest of the programme. He won other events, won the whole competition and later represented Great Britain in the World finals.

World Superstars

1977

Georgia, USA

Superstars went world-wide! John Conteh and Gareth Edwards were the British representatives. Edwards had to score five goals out of five in the football to win. He scored four and needed the fifth goal to go past goalkeeper Paul Hammond. Edwards struck the ball and Hammond saved it! Edwards was gutted.

1978

Bahamas

Keith Fielding represented Britain in the Bahamas. He was a rugby league player, and the competition became rugby league versus American football. In the 100m sprint a Canadian player got a great start but Fielding caught him and dipped on the line. Replays showed that Fielding appeared to have got it, but the result went the Canadian's way. During the 800m in the 96-degree heat, Fielding collapsed from heat exhaustion and was whisked away in an ambulance. Following ice baths and treatment, he came back to continue competing. Canadian Brian Budd won, and went on to win three *World Superstars* in a row.

1982

Florida

British pole-vaulter Brian Hooper wanted to break Budd's run and competed in *World Superstars* in Florida. Hooper was boxed in on the cycle event by five Americans and he managed to take the two leaders on the inside, leading the Americans to complain that he'd gone off the track and therefore had cheated. Video evidence showed Hooper's manoeuvre was legal and his win stood. He beat the Americans in their own back yard and was the only Briton to win *World Superstars*.

Top facts

Top appearances

David Hemery appeared in nine *Superstars* programmes. He won three times, including the first-ever *Superstars*, and was second three times. He was a great competitor but suffered two bad falls at the steeplechase water jump (Aldershot 1975, and in the European final in Holland, 1975).

Highest score

Lynn Davies scored a maximum 70 points (seven of nine events) in the UK Past Masters programme at Oxford in 1982.

Most programme wins

Brian Hooper came first in six programmes. He was also the one UK competitor to win *World Superstars* in America.

UK male competitors

161

UK female competitors

37

Countries where UK *Superstars* competed

UK
Sweden
Holland
Belgium
France
Switzerland
Spain
Israel
Hong Kong
New Zealand
Cyprus
USA