

# YURI SEDYKH ON AND OFF THE FIELD



*"Narrow shoulders and a fine, ruddy complexion"—that was the first impression Yuri Sedykh made on his future trainer*

*Anatoly Bondarchuk when they met in October 1972. The trainer,*

*however, who had just won the title of Olympic champion, produced a far stronger impression.*

*"How big and—bald. What a man!" went through the head of the 17-year-old boy who had come to Kiev from Nikopol a month previously to really learn how to hammer-throw.*

**A**s we can see, if either of the two were impressed at their first meeting, it wasn't Bondarchuk. Nonetheless, they got together at a training session a month later and haven't parted since. Yuri has bested his teacher, emerging victorious at not one, but two Olympic tournaments in a row—in Montreal and Moscow. Today he's thinking about a third... The American John Flanagan is the only athlete to date who has won the hammer-throw three times running. Incidentally, this occurred at the turn of the century, between 1900 and 1908, and the winner's results ranged from 49.73 to 51.92m—ridiculous dis-



tances by today's standards.

Let's get back to the "narrow shoulders" for a moment. Looking at Sedykh today (186 cm tall, weight 110 kg) you'd never believe what was said about him. "How'd I get so big?" queries this descendant of the Zaporozhye Cossacks praised by Gogol, recalling his childhood in a village of Zaporozhye Region. "My mother is short and my father is only 170

cm." Apparently sport has broadened his shoulders and put power into his muscles, although, to tell the truth, Bondarchuk put the stress on speed development in working with Yuri. This seemingly heavy giant runs the 100 m in under 12 sec, and his ace in the throwing sector has always been, as Bondarchuk puts it: "the high speed with which he executes his turns and final effort".

Yuri Sedykh himself ad-

mits that he wound up in this sector by chance. He had always been allured by water, the Dnieper in particular; in summer he and his friends used to spend their spare time in the river. If there had been an indoor swimming pool in Nikopol, where the Sedykh family moved when Yuri was a schoolboy, he would have most likely become a swimmer. Incidentally, neither did the absence of a pool definitely have to lead

him to the track and field stadium. Here, too, chance played a role in his life.

Once, while he was kicking the football around with his friends, the ball flew over the fence. Yuri instantly jumped over it and—almost banged into a hammer which had just been thrown by Vladimir Volovik, who was conducting a training session at a city children's sports school. His heart nearly skipped a beat, and the tow-haired boy, submissively taking a well-deserved chewing out, could not tear his eyes from the unfamiliar object consisting of a sphere, wire and handle. The dressing-down was interrupted by a question by the guilty party: "What kind of iron block is that?" "Try it yourself," the trainer suggested. Attempting to make a turn in the sector the 12-year-old shamefully fell to the ground, tripping over his own feet. Then vanity took over, and a newcomer appeared in Vol-

Autographs for seamen; the hammer thrower handles the smith's hammer with respect.

Photographs by R. MAXIMOV



ovik's group, one who proved to be a rather assiduous pupil.

Sedykh is in favour of such elements of chance. "Today," he says, "I look derisively upon some parents who drag their children by the hand to the prestigious figure skating or hockey sections. In sport you can't tell ahead of time, say, ten years, that your kid will turn into the likes of a Tretyak, a Rodnina or a Pakhomova. You can't force a child into sport. Let the boy or girl test out one sport, then another, and still another. If, of course, they have an inclination to sport in the first place. Then others will most likely find something in them." Yuri Sedykh found himself in Volovik's group. It was in hammer-throwing that he was able to reveal and use qualities which set him apart from many others: industry, purposefulness, and a desire for creativity. During his years of training—first under Volovik and then under Bondarchuk—he did not miss (if he was well, of course) a single session. And his choice was logical: to enter the Kiev Institute of Physical Education upon graduating secondary school.

...Yuri Sedykh's wife once noted that she would like her four-year-old daughter to be like her father: it is a rare person, in the competent opinion of Sedykh's spouse, who has so many qualities, especially zeal and propriety.

Character-wise, Yuri did not seem to me to be the typical hammer-thrower. From the sidelines this sport appears to be geared to people who are not only courageous, but also quick-tempered, emotional and yet very serious and introverted. I remember that Mikhail Krivonosov, Romuald Kilm and Anatoly Bondarchuk were not what you would call sociable, at least from a journalist's standpoint. Yuri Sedykh is a good soul. He is polite, bordering on shy. He's the ultimate host, and he does

not shun invitations to meet with sports fans, even though post-graduate courses and workouts take up a great deal of his time. There is little left for his family. What he likes best of all is to play with his daughter or take her and his wife into the forest near the Dnieper...

In the sector he does not get himself psyched up against opponents, as many like to do ("I never get mad," Sedykh notes). He knows for sure what result he is capable of at the moment, which is why he does not require additional emotional stimulants. It is these qualities of the Olympic champion that account for his special popularity among track and field fans.

Anatoly Bondarchuk, Candidate of Science (Education), who once was the model athlete for Yuri and then opened the way to top honours for him, also introduced him to the world of learning. The Effectiveness of Strength-Building Means in Hammer-Throwing was the title of Sedykh's Candidate's dissertation. (Yuri himself had placed the emphasis on building up speed in his own training programme.) "But not to the detriment of strength," Sedykh is quick to point out, explaining why one should not search for a paradox in the variety of one's theoretical explorations and practice.

Defending his dissertation figures in the plans of Sedykh the scholar. And in sport? He holds the world record of 81.80 m, but he is certain that the hammer can be hurled 83 m. It is with this goal in mind that Yuri Sedykh the athlete is structuring his training programme for the Olympic year of 1984. Important tests will be the European championship slated for this September in Athens and the world championship next season in Helsinki, the first in track and field history to be held in the Finnish capital.

A. SREBNITSKY



## Gunsmith From Tula

The guns and pistols of Tula gunsmiths have since olden times astounded experts for their originality, reliability, technical perfection and beauty. Military and hunting guns, show pieces and gift sets created by the Tula craftsmen of the 18th and 19th centuries are on display at museums in Moscow, Leningrad, London, Paris, Dresden, Vienna, Prague and Istanbul.

Today, too, the Tula armory has craftsmen who carry on the fine traditions of the famous gunsmiths. One of them is Anatoly Rudnev, an assembler of experimental sporting and hunting models.

"Rudnev," relates Vladimir Kluchnikov, chief of a bureau of the head designer's section, "stands out in that he prefers to work without relying on the allowed tolerance, fitting all the parts just so."

In gunsmithing, as in any other art, one can hardly envisage everything in advance. A wealth of nuances and subtleties arise the moment the first mock-up is assembled. Anatoly Rudnev, following his unerring inner sense, makes the mechanism correspond exactly to the engineers' scheme. The designers call him their co-author. And this is not flattery. The economic effect from introducing Rudnev's proposals aimed at upgrading the design and technology of sporting and hunting guns amount to 18,000 rubles.

...At the 1980 Moscow Olympics first place in the free pistol was taken by Alexander Melentyev (USSR), followed by Harald Vollmer (GDR), and Lubcho Diekov (Bulgaria). All three used Tula pistols crafted by gunsmith Anatoly Rudnev.

A. BATASHEV

Photographs by S. KIVVIN