

ALL-TIME GREATS

Take a look back in our history and you'll find plenty of outstanding athletes. These particular stars all brought something extra-special to their sports.



CHANTAL PETITCLERC (BORN 1969)

SAINT-MARC-DES-CARRIÈRES, QUE.

When an accident at age 13 left her paraplegic — unable to use her legs — Petitclerc started swimming to keep fit and get stronger. At 17, she discovered wheelchair racing, the sport where she would excel. Petitclerc won five gold medals and broke three world records at the 2004 Paralympics in Greece, and repeated that astonishing feat at the 2008 Paralympics in China. In total, she won 21 medals at five Paralympic Games. She still holds the world records in the 200- and 400-metre events. In 2016, she was named to the Canadian Senate.



WILLIE O'REE (BORN 1935)

FREDERICTON, N.B.

It was known as the colour barrier — a sort of unofficial, unwritten agreement among owners of professional sports teams that only white athletes should be allowed to play. (The amazing Jackie Robinson broke baseball's colour barrier in 1946 when he played a season with the Montreal Royals, the Brooklyn Dodgers' minor league team.) It took more than a decade for the same thing to happen in the NHL. The player was Willie O'Ree, a speedy skater who had played all over New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario before the Boston Bruins put him on the ice in 1958. He retired from the game in the late 1970s.

BOBBIE ROSENFELD (1904-1969)

EKATERINOSLAV, RUSSIA

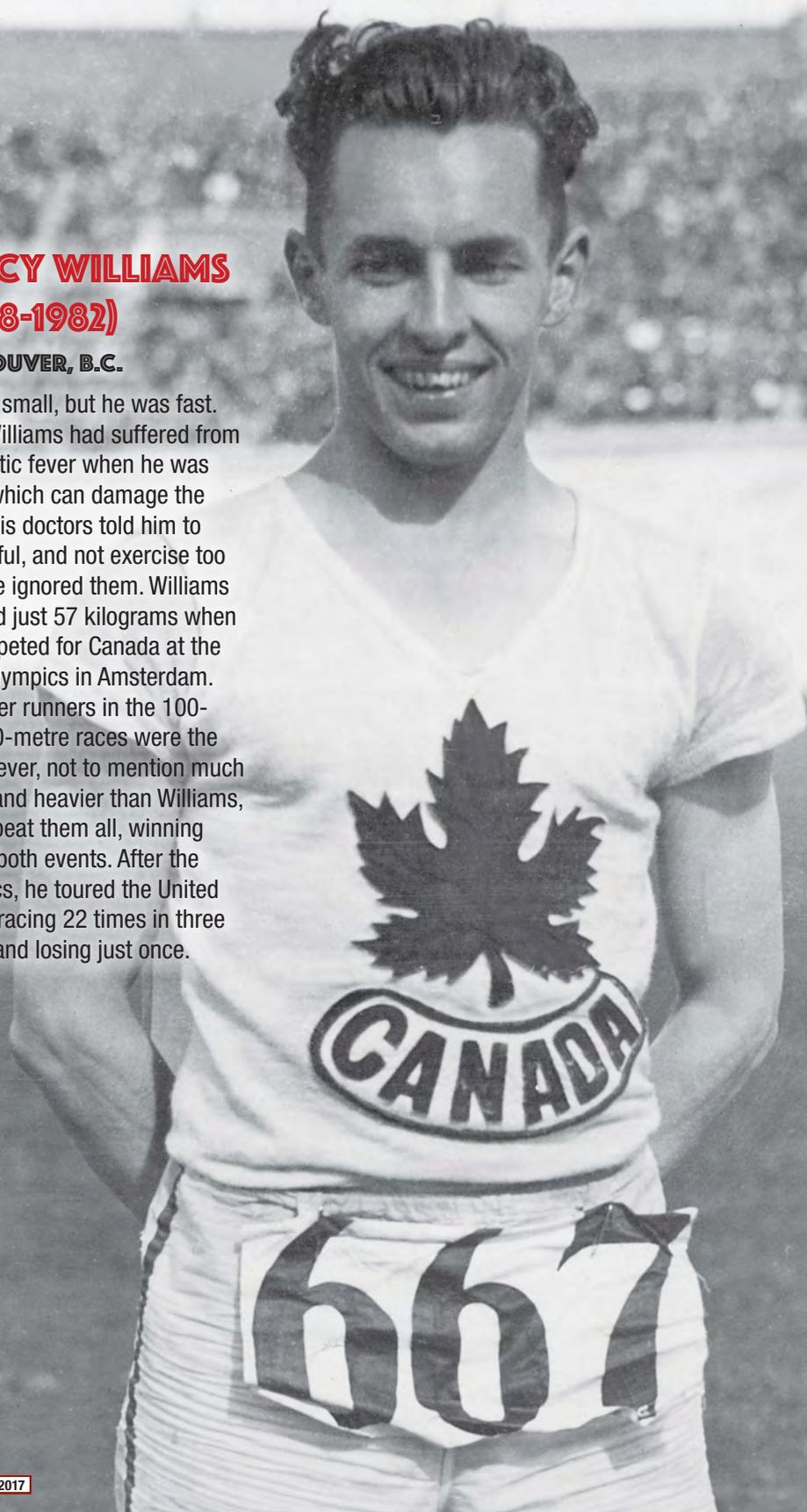
Although her real name was Fanny, this athlete was known by everyone as Bobbie because of her bobbed (cut short) hair. She was great at pretty much every sport she tried: hockey, tennis, basketball, softball and especially track and field. At the 1925 Ontario women's championships, she won five events and placed second in two more. In 1928 Rosenfeld was part of The Matchless Six, the first group of Canadian women to compete in the Olympics. There was a tight finish in the 100-metre race between her and an American. Some judges insisted the American broke the tape illegally, but eventually decided Rosenfeld would have to settle for second place. When teammate Jean Thompson hurt herself before the 800-metre race, Rosenfeld was added even though she hadn't trained for it. She ran beside Thompson to encourage her. Thompson finished fourth; Rosenfeld was fifth. With Rosenfeld as the first runner, the Canadian women won gold and set a new world record in the 400-metre relay race. She later became a sports journalist and in 1949 was named Canadian Woman Athlete for the Half-Century.



PERCY WILLIAMS (1908-1982)

VANCOUVER, B.C.

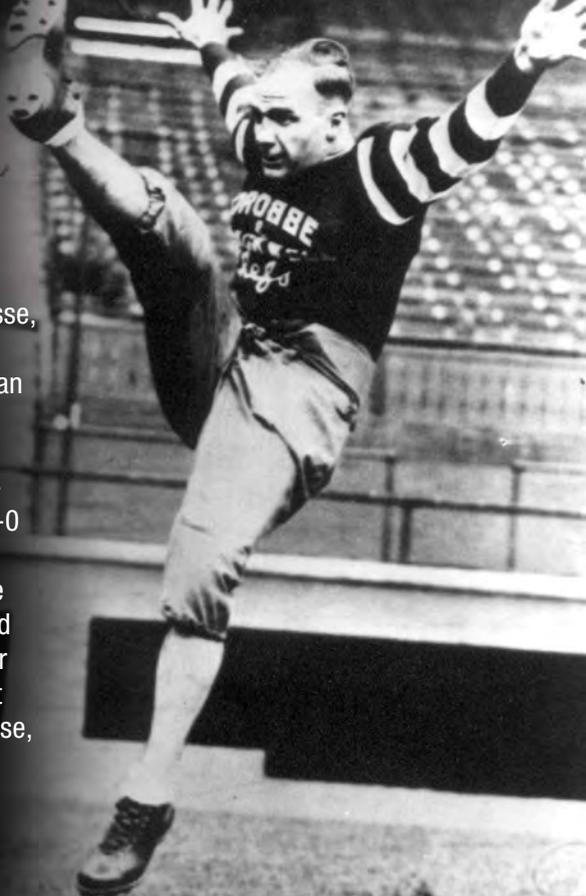
He was small, but he was fast. Percy Williams had suffered from rheumatic fever when he was a boy, which can damage the heart. His doctors told him to be careful, and not exercise too hard. He ignored them. Williams weighed just 57 kilograms when he competed for Canada at the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam. The other runners in the 100- and 200-metre races were the fastest ever, not to mention much bigger and heavier than Williams, but he beat them all, winning gold in both events. After the Olympics, he toured the United States, racing 22 times in three weeks and losing just once.



LIONEL CONACHER (1902-1954)

TORONTO, ONT.

The term “all-around athlete” barely begins to describe Conacher. In high school, he was unbelievably good at everything he played: lacrosse, track and field, hockey, baseball, boxing, football and wrestling. He went on to become the Canadian light-heavyweight boxing champion in 1920, the first time he'd entered a non-school boxing competition. In 1921, he played on the Grey Cup-winning Toronto Argonauts, leading them to a 23-0 win. (He left the game early to play in a hockey game the same night.) In 1922, his team won the Ontario lacrosse championship. In 1925 he turned to pro hockey, playing for several NHL teams over the years. Conacher is a member of — wait for it — three Canadian sports halls of fame for lacrosse, football and hockey. Big, brawny and not afraid to brawl, he earned one of the best nicknames in sports, “The Big Train.”



CLARA HUGHES (BORN 1972)

WINNIPEG, MAN.

It's great to have something you love to do outside in both winter and summer — just ask Clara Hughes. Okay, maybe she takes it to extremes. Hughes is a champion speed skater and a champion cyclist. She is the only person ever to win more than one medal at both the summer and winter Olympic Games. She has won medals in the world championships of both events. Hughes helps other people by volunteering for sports charities and talking openly about the hard times she has had with her mental health, especially depression.

