

Marco Martini ci ha preparato un nuovo interessante capitolo che contribuirà ad accrescere la nostra conoscenza dell'atletica, con un accostamento, frequente in questi suoi "pezzi" storici, di campioni italiani e di Oltre Oceano, statunitensi soprattutto. Il "risvolto" italiano è sempre il nostro obiettivo primario, che ci consente comunque di spaziare su altri mondi atletici. Marco ha puntato la sua lente di ingrandimento sui confronti fra un discobolo americano, Bob Fitch, e i nostri grandi Adolfo Consolini e Beppe Tosi. Stiamo parlando degli anni 1946 e 1947. Cosa successe in quel biennio ve lo lasciamo scoprire nell'articolo, anzi negli articoli - in italiano e in inglese - che pubblicheremo nei prossimi giorni. Oggi la prima parte di un "collage" dedicato alla figura singolare di questo atleta statunitense.

La curiosità ci ha spinto a conoscere qualcosa di più della vita di Bob Fitch e così ci siamo messi alla ricerca attraverso quegli strumenti che la tecnologia ci mette oggi a disposizione, "tartufando" specialmente nei siti delle Università americane, vere e proprie miniere di informazioni.

Sulla vita di Fitch facciamo riferimento a quanto pubblicato da **Wikipedia**, che ci pare il ritratto più completo dopo averlo confrontato con altri. È doveroso ringraziare e citare la fonte dell'articolo che segue.



Born in Audubon, Iowa, Fitch was the son of a veterinarian and spent the first ten years of his

life in Audubon before moving with his family to Minneapolis. He went on to study at the University of Minnesota. He was part of the college football team as an end for the Minnesota Golden Gophers at a time when the team ranked first in the nation and overseen by coach **Bernie Bierman**. Greater success came in the discus throw with the track and field team. He won the NCAA Championship title in 1942 – Minnesota's first such champion. He also won the AAU national championship meet that year. After graduating college, he was drafted in the seventh round of the 1942 NFL Draft by the Washington Redskins, but chose not to pursue professional football.

After graduating he worked for the United States Coast Guard for several years before returning to education at Minnesota, starting a master's degree in physiology. It was in this second stint at the university that his discus throwing reached its peak. Under the guidance of Jim Kelly, Minnesota's track coach, he began experimenting with technique to find a better way of throwing the discus. Kelly credited Fitch with inventing a method of throwing called the "Minnesota Whip", which is now the accepted style worldwide. This was a development for the sport, which frequently still had rough earth in throwing circles. It was Fitch that mastered the technique first – on June 8, 1946 he threw a discus throw world record of 54.93 m (180 ft 2 3/4 in), bettering the mark of Adolfo Consolini by seventy centimeters. He secured the United States discus title for a second time that year.

<sup>1</sup> Gordien went on to follow in Fitch's footsteps by winning the NCAA title, and had three straight wins at the competition from 1946 to 1948. Fitch was unable to start international competition – amateur athletes were self-funded at the time and he needed a job to live – but Gordien went on to win the Pan American Games title in 1955 and two Olympic Games medals in 1948 and 1956. The younger Gordien became the more decorated of the two, winning seven national titles between 1947 and 1954, and broke the world record on four occasions, his best being 59.28 m (194 ft 53 4/100 in).

<sup>2</sup> Working with Gordien while coaching his studies, Fitch produced the modern "Bear". Historical analysis of the "Bear" Fitch, in 1961, he was named as an assistant college football coach for Indiana University. He joined the Indiana athletic director's staff and began coaching to focus on the discus athletes. The discus coach offered him a position to manage the school's golf course, which was becoming a financial drain. Fitch accepted the position, becoming the Indiana Hoosiers head coach for golf in the process.

<sup>3</sup> As the head of Hoosiers golf, he transformed both the team and the facilities and facilities. He led the Hoosiers to the Big Ten Conference tournament in 1950 and they won the title for the first time in 1952. Then again in 1958. The team topped the Big Ten championship four times in the 1970s. On top of his as conference title, he also led the Hoosiers to the national tournament for three times between 1958 and 1968. He led the previously undefeated Hoosiers into NCAA Division I men's golf championships competition on twelve occasions, with the team's best placing being sixth in 1974. Despite strong results in sporting achievements, Fitch emphasized academic help and honored for student athletes. His strength development was among the best for physical and academic. The right of the position and the Hoosiers. After he returned in 1988, "The Bear returned". He highly praised his "10 straight years to get them out of games, more in number, a game plan and only three players with possible in the 20 years' coaching golf". He 20 years as Hoosiers' golf head coach made him the longest tenured coach in Indiana University history.

<sup>4</sup> Fitch was inducted into the Indiana University Hall of Fame. Fitch was an innovator in golf as well. In the 1960s, he developed "The Coach" to help his players develop a solid, powerful, and repeatable swing. Newer versions of The Coach continue to be used as a golf training aid. Fitch has been inducted into the Golf Coaches Association of America Hall of Fame, the Iowa Sports Hall of Fame and is a lifetime member of St. Louis Park High School's Athletic Hall of Fame.

<sup>5</sup> In January 19 April 2020, a Birmingham, Indiana, source told me.

<sup>6</sup> Fitch and his coaches were often credited for his personality. His ability, coaches and his Hoosiers' staff were described by "Bear" as a "great individual and extremely hard worker". The one thing about Coach is that he always had positive energy, optimism and a positive attitude. There was not a sign and never using individual Bear Coach. He gave us all jobs at the golf course, but he was always there even when we combined. He was there before we got up and there long after we did. I know the highest admiration of Coach. He was a great coach, a great coach, and a great man. The team's greatest achievement was that it was a great and an athlete around. I cannot recall more of Hoosiers University than money spending. My hope. Coach Fitch is present upon the team for a total support value. His ability, integrity, and honesty, all being together.

<sup>7</sup> Sports Illustrated also in its 1960s guide with one of the Hoosiers' players (golfers), Adolfo Consolini (Hoosiers' Team), who appeared on the list of all of Hoosiers' players, Hoosiers in a team.

<sup>8</sup> [update]