

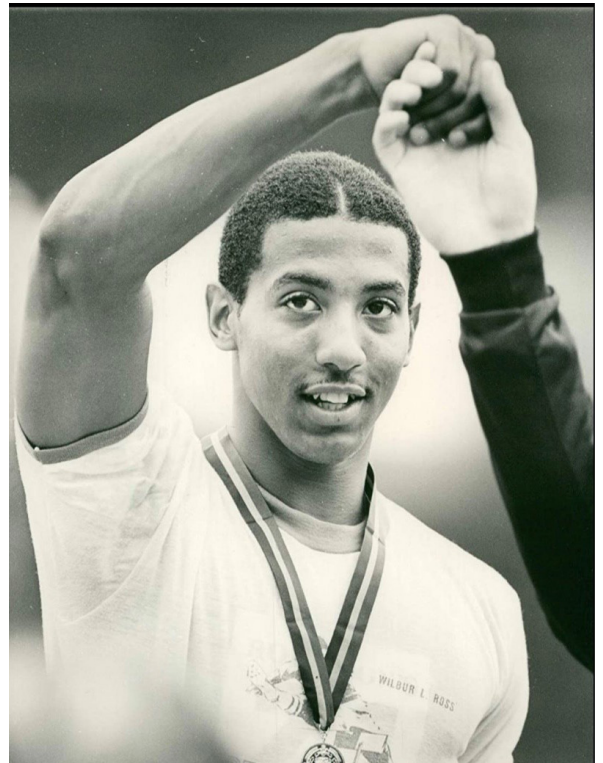
## RENALDO NEHEMIAH OF SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD HS

When Renaldo Nehemiah competed in a track and field event for Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School and beyond, a record-setting victory typically followed.

Nehemiah was a hurdling specialist, and became a legendary competitor in those events and others during his days at the Union County school, where he graduated in 1977.

He began his high school sports career by quarterbacking the football team and participating in track. But once he suffered an injury on the gridiron, he became a full-time track athlete.

Known as "Skeets," because he was a fast crawler as a baby, Nehemiah didn't just set national records, he shattered them in many events, including the intermediate and 120 yard high hurdles. He also broke a long jump state record set by all-time great Eulace Peacock that stood for an amazing 44 years.



When Nehemiah set the national standard in the 120 high hurdles with a 12.9 clocking at the 1977 Eastern States championships, he won the race by a whopping seven yards. That race came two days after he set a national record in the 330 yard intermediate hurdles at the NJSIAA sectionals. He became the first high schooler to set national marks in those two events. For that and much more, he was named the national high school Athlete of the Year by Track and Field News.

More and more records followed during his time at the University of Maryland, where he won three NCAA championships. He became the top 110 meter hurdler in the world, breaking the world record several times, and would have been a prohibitive favorite to win Gold at the 1980 Olympics, if the United States had not boycotted those games in Moscow.

As it was, he was ranked No. 1 in the world for four straight years, and in 1981, became the first person to run the 110 meter hurdles in under 13 seconds.



During his career, he set world records eight times, in the 50, 55 and 60 meter hurdles, in addition to the 110.



His sporting excellence extended beyond track. He competed in "The Superstars," a popular television series in the 1970s and '80s that brought together athletes from different sports to compete in a multi-event competition. Nehemiah was the only four-time champion, winning it in 1981, '82, '83 and '86.

His biggest move however, was becoming a professional football player. After working out for a number of teams, he signed in 1982 with the San Francisco 49ers, and played three years with the team as a wide receiver. He caught 43 passes for 754 yards (17.5 per catch) and scored four touchdowns.

He was also a Super Bowl champion, as part of the 1984 team that beat the Miami Dolphins for the NFL title. In doing so, he became one of the very few players to have ever been a Super Bowl winner without playing college football.

He then returned to track, where he competed several more years before retiring.

Nehemiah has been inducted into numerous Hall of Fames for his incredible achievements, including the NJ SIAA Hall of Fame.

