

Fanny Blankers-Koen Google doodle honors Olympic runner who broke records & shattered stereotypes

Today's Google doodle marks what would have been the 100th birthday of Olympic athlete Fanny Blankers-Koen, the first woman to win four gold medals in a single Olympics.

The Dutch-born runner's first Olympic competition was during the 1936 Berlin games, when she was 18. Twelve years later,

Blankers-Koen would shatter records and tear down false assumptions about female athletes when she took home the gold in four different races as a 30-year old mother of two at the 1948 Olympic games in London.

“After the 1940 and 1944 Olympics were canceled, many thought Blankers-Koen would never make another Olympics. When she declared her intentions to compete in the 1948 London Games, she received letters from many criticizing her for continuing to race despite being a mother and insisting she stay home,” writes Google in its Google Doodle blog post about the Olympian.

Blankers-Koen’s refusal to fall in line, or be bullied by people who believed a woman couldn’t be both a mother and an Olympian, earned her the nickname “The Flying Housewife” when she took home gold for the 100 meter, 80 meter hurdles, 200 meter and 4×100 meter relay during the London Olympics.

The doodle leads to a search for “Fanny Blankers-Koen” and is being shared on Google’s home pages in the US, the Netherlands, Iceland, Ireland, the UK, Sweden, Greece, Australia and New Zealand (The “692” detail on Blankers-Koen’s shirt in the illustration reflects her bib number when she broke the record during the 200 meter race).

In addition to being the first woman to win four gold medals in a single Olympics, Blankers-Koen also set a record that still stands today, winning the women's 200 meter by 0.7 seconds – the highest margin in Olympics 200 meter history.

About The Author

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