NSA Photosequences 6 and 7
3000 m Steeplechase:
Francesco Panetta (ITA)

Born January 10th 1963; 1,75 m; 65 Kg.
Best: 8:08,57 (1987), 10.000 m: 27:26,95 (1987)

The first of the two photo sequences was take during the final of the 3000 Metres Steeplechase at the European Championships in Stuttgart in 1986 where, after a long mid-race surge, Panetta finished second. The 29 frame sequence shows him clearing the water jump on one of the last laps. In frames 1 to 11 we can see a normal running action as the athlete approaches the barrier. I do not believe there are any special technical details to be pointed out here. Frame 12 shows Panetta, taking off with his left leg, placing his right foot on the barrier (frames 13 and 14) then putting his weight on it (frames 15 and 16). Up to this point everything is quite normal. However, in frames 17 through 19 we see the beginning of a technical error which becomes even more evident later on. Instead of pushing completely on the barrier with his right leg and stretching his left leg out towards the water, Panetta, possibly due to fatigue or lack of coordination, lands in the water with a low level of impulse. In addition, the movement of the legs is too swift in frames 20 through 23. His shoulders are very far forward causing...
NSA Photosequence 6 - 3000 m Steeplechase: Water Jump
Francesco Panetta (ITA)
Sequence by Gabriele Hommel (Hommel AVS 1988)

The sequence shows him during the final stage of the European Championships in Stuttgart with a final time of 8:16.85
NSA Photosequence 7 - 3000 m Steeplechase: Hurdle
Francesco Panetta (ITA)

The sequence shows the final stage of the race at the 11th World Championships 1987 in Rome; he won with a time of 8:08.57.
a strong compression (frame 24). In frames 25 to 27, and even more so in 28 and 29 we can see that Panetta's action is very close to that of a sprinter as he recovers from the bad clearance.

The impulse in the final stages of this clearance are such that I would exclude fatigue as the main cause of the technical errors and blame instead lack of coordination in the take off, pushing off the top of the barrier and failing to land with outstretched legs.

The second of the two sequences was taken in the finals at the II World Championships in Athletics in Rome where Panetta placed first in a new Championship Record of 8:08.57. Frames 1 through 12 show a normal running action in the approach to the barrier. The first interesting detail can be observed in frames 13 through 15. Note the action of the foot of the take off leg — touchdown with the heel first, then the whole foot and then the take off. This movement raises the athlete's centre of gravity and facilitates a close and deep clearance. Panetta's centre of gravity is very high over the barrier in frames 16 to 20.

Frame 21 shows the beginning of another technical error which continues through frame 24. The return of the left leg is anticipated and frames 25 to 27 show Panetta trying to recover his normal running rhythm by lengthening his stride. However, this involves a muscular stress and a great compression in the lumbar region. Frames 28 to 32 show a constant acceleration indicating Panetta's excellent muscular and physical condition.

The development of better technique would certainly be an advantage to Panetta, but knowing him, I believe that his strong competitive spirit would continue to hinder his technical proficiency. This is because, in spite of having mastered the required movements, Panetta tends to become so involved in the race that he sometimes forgets to perform then correctly.