



## 2008 Volleyball Hall of Fame

# YURI MIKHAILOVICH POYARKOV

## Inducted as a Player

When men's volleyball took center stage in its Olympic debut in 1964 in Tokyo, Yuri Mikhailovich Poyarkov and the Soviet Union National Team were the main characters. And as it had been for many years leading up to the main event, Poyarkov and his comrades were the ones standing on the top podium wearing the Gold Medals. A three-time Olympian, Poyarkov would add to his impressive resume another Olympic Gold Medal four years later in Mexico City and an Olympic Bronze Medal in 1972 at Munich.

Poyarkov was playing for his native Ukraine in 1959 when the invitation to join the combined USSR National team came. His first experience as part of the Soviet team in a large tournament came in Games of the Three Continents in Paris that same year, and the Soviets emerged as the unofficial champions of the world. However, the unofficial became official in 1960 as Poyarkov and his Soviet teammates won the FIVB World Championship at Rio de Janeiro. Highly regarded as a power hitter, Poyarkov so exited the Brazilian fans that they named him the "catapult."

The FIVB World Championship Gold Medal sent a message to the rest of the world that Poyarkov and the Soviet team was for real, but they still continued to make their point in building toward the sport's much-anticipated Olympic debut. In 1962, Poyarkov traveled to Prague and won the FIVB World Championship again. The Soviet team had a final tune up for the Olympics by winning the 1963 World University Games at Porto Alegre, Brazil.

The Olympic debut was everything it was expected to be with Poyarkov earning the first Olympic Gold Medal, but the Soviet domination did not stop there. In 1965, Poyarkov added a FIVB World Cup title in Warsaw and another World University Games title at Budapest. In 1967, he won the Gold Medal at the European Championships in Istanbul. Poyarkov won his second Olympic Gold Medal at the XIX Olympiad in 1968 at Mexico City. Four years later at the Olympic Games in Munich, Poyarkov added a Bronze Medal after winning another European Championship in Milan the year before.

While a true team player, Poyarkov has received several individual awards. He was recognized for his distinguished sporting achievements with the "Sign of Honour" in 1965 and 1989, and twice awarded the "Order of Merit" by the President of Ukraine. Poyarkov has also been listed in the Guinness Book of Records for unsurpassed sporting achievements in volleyball.

A member of the Executive Committee of the Ukrainian Volleyball Federation and Deputy Chief of the Olympic Committee in the Kharkiv Region, Poyarkov also serves as the Chief of the Sports Games Department of the State Educational University of Kharkiv.

And so we welcome Yuri Poyarkov as a 2008 Inductee to the Volleyball Hall of Fame.

