

History of equestrian events at the Games of the VIII Olympiad



PARIS - 1924



Games of the VIII Olympiad Paris (FRA), 4 May – 27 July 1924

FIRST OLYMPIC APPEARANCE FOR ... THE FEI

The Games of the VIII Olympiad returned to Paris – the home country of the founder of the Modern Olympic Games, Baron de Coubertin. After 28 years of existence, the recognition and appreciation of the Olympic Games had drastically improved. After two World Fair side-shows, 1900 in Paris and 1904 in St Louis, organisational professionalism, especially as demonstrated at the 1912 Games in Stockholm, had taken over. The shortcomings of the 1920 Olympics in war-torn Antwerp were resolved, when at an extraordinary meeting in 1921 in Lausanne, several International Federations were founded, including the FEI.

The FEI, although with only 14 National member Federations, had, in the two years since its founding, evaluated the Olympic programme. This task was helped by the fact that the FEI Secretary General, Cmdt. Georges Hector, was also the Secretary General of the French Federation and became the President of the technical committee for the equestrian events at the 1924 Games.

Games facts & figures

- **44** nations
- **3,089** athletes (135 women; 2,954 men)
- **17** sports
- Approx. **1,000** journalists
- the Olympic motto, "**Citius, Altius, Fortius**", (**Swifter, Higher, Stronger**) was introduced

For the first time, the closing ceremony included the raising three flags: the flag of the International Olympic Committee, the flag of the host nation and the flag of the next host nation. This would also be the first time the athletes were accommodated in an Olympic Village, in a group of wood cabins.

Equestrian facts & figures

- **17** nations (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Italy, Netherland, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, USA, Yugoslavia). Germany, still undesired after the debacle of World War I, was not invited, and Hungary chose not to be represented.
- **Five** countries (France, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia) sent full teams in all three disciplines.
- There were **126** horses stabled.
- **111** entries (43 in Jumping; 24 in Dressage; 44 in Eventing).
- The total income from the equestrian ticket sales was **FF 96,365**.
- **75kg (165lb)** was the minimum weight required for all competitions except for Dressage, which was free.
- Harness: bits were free except for Dressage, where a plain snaffle and split bit were obligatory.
- Medals: each rider who participated in the team competitions had a right to the medal won by the team.

JUMPING (43 riders from 11 nations)

The course measured 1,060m, the obstacles were up to 1.40m – speed 400m/min. Thirty-four (34) riders finished the competition, but 17 had time faults (1/4 point per second). It was a difficult course, with many oxers and a lot of sand on the ground. With the exception of Czechoslovakia, all countries had four riders.

The individual winner was Swiss militia officer, Lt. Alphonse Gemuseus on the eight-year old Irish-bred mare Lucette, who had been bought for £48 as an army remount horse in 1922. Switzerland won team silver, behind Sweden. Portugal took team bronze with two army riders and two civilians.

Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Alphonse Gemuseus (SUI)	Lucette
2. Silver	Tommaso Lequio di Assaba (ITA)	Trebecco
3. Bronze	Adam Krolikiewicz (POL)	Picador

Medallists – Team

1. Gold	Sweden	Axel STAHL (Cecil), Georg VON BRAUN (Diana), G. Age LUNDSTRÖM (Anvers), Ake THELNING (Loke)
2. Silver	Switzerland	Alphonse GEMUSEUS (Lucette), Werner STUBER (Girandole), Hans E. BÜHLER (Sailor Boy), Henri VON DER WEID (Admiral)
3. Bronze	Portugal	Anibal BORGES DE ALMEIDA (Reginald), Helder DE SOUZA MARTINS (Avro), Jose MOUZINHO DE ALBUQUERQUE (Hetrugo), Luiz DE MENEZES MARGARIDE (Profond)

DRESSAGE (24 riders from 9 nations)

A 56-year old retired Swedish General, Ernst von Linder, riding in a red coat, won the Grand Prix de Dressage on the Trakehner Piccolomini, less than a point ahead of his countryman Bertil Sandstrom on Sabel, the combination who had taken silver four years previously. In third place came Capt. Xavier Lesage of France on Plumarol, who took Olympic gold eight years later in Los Angeles.

The time allowed of 10.5 minutes was too short. This meant big point deductions for the first riders while those going later raced through the test, cutting corners.

The arena of 60 x 20 m was in the centre of the huge Stade de Colombes, at least 60 meters away from the public. The five judges sat, with their assistants, on a long table together on a short side.

Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Ernst von Linder (SWE)	Piccolomini
2. Silver	Bertil Sandström (SWE)	Sabel
3. Bronze	Xavier F. Lesage (FRA)	Plumarol

Medallists – Team In 1912, 1920, 1924 no team medals were distributed

EVENTING (44 riders from 13 countries)

Of the 44 starters, 32 finished the competition. Eight were eliminated on endurance day, three did not compete in the jumping, and one was eliminated there.

The format introduced in 1924 would go on to be used for many decades to come:

- A: 7km Road and Tracks in the Bois de Boulogne
240m/min = 29min. 10 sec.
- B: 4km Steeplechase on the racetrack of Auteuil
550m/min = 7min. 2 sec.
- C: 15km Roads and Tracks in the Bois de Boulogne
240m/min = 1h. 2min. 30 sec.
- D: 8km Cross country in the Bois de Meudon
450m/min = 17min. 46sec / 36 obstacles up to 1.15m high, 3.50m wide
- E: 2km free gallop in Villacoublay
333m/min = 6min

Total: 36km in 2h 2min.

The Dutch Eventing riders began in Paris their dominance which was to last 10 years. Sweden, the winners in 1912 and 1920, took silver, and Italy came in third.

Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Adolph van der Voort van Zijp (NED)	Silver Piece
2. Silver	Frode Kirkebjerg (DEN)	Metoo
3. Bronze	Sloan Doak (USA)	Pathfinder xx

Medallists – Team

1. Gold	The Netherlands	Adolph D.C. VAN DER VOORT VAN ZIJP (Silver Piece), Charles F. PAHUD DE MORTANGES (Johnny Walker), Gerard P. DE KRUYFF (Addio), Anton T. COLENBRANDER (King-of-Hearts)
2. Silver	Sweden	Claes de KÖNIG (Bojar), Torsten SYLVAN (Anita), Gustaf HAGELIN (Varius), Carl Gustaf LEWENHAUPT (Canter)
3. Bronze	Italy	Alberto LOMBARDI (Pimplo), Alessandro ALVISI (Capiligio), Emmanuele Beraudio DI PRALERMO (Mount Felix), Tommaso LEQUIO DI ASSABA (Torena)