

History of equestrian events at the
Games of the IX Olympiad



Games of the IX Olympiad Amsterdam (NED), 17 May – 12 August 1928

PEACE AND HARMONY

The Games of the IX Olympiad were held in an atmosphere of peace and harmony that preceded twenty years of economic uncertainty and war. They were a success and contributed to the ever-increasing attraction of the Olympic Games.

AMATEURS vs PROFESSIONALS

By 1928 the IOC had clarified the definition of **an amateur** who

- must not be or knowingly have become a professional in the sport for which he is entered or in any other sport;
- must not have received re-imbusement or compensation for loss of salary;
- must sign a declaration that, on his honour, he is an amateur according to the Olympic rules of amateurism.

For equestrian sport, **an amateur** was:

- Every **professional officer** actively serving;
- Anyone riding solely for the sport and recognized by a national body as **a gentleman**;

On the other hand, was considered **a professional**

- Anyone who deals, hires, rides, trains or works with horses for money or lets these work for them for money;
- Owners, employees, riders, trainers, grooms of riding schools and circuses.

BETWEEN AMSTERDAM AND HILVERSUM

With the exception of the two Jumping competitions, which were held in the Amsterdam Olympic Stadium, all competitions took place in or around Hilversum, lying some 30 km south-east of Amsterdam. All the horses were stabled there and this meant elaborate transportation arrangements to Amsterdam.

In Hilversum during the four competition days, there were a total of 4,763 individual paying spectators. In addition there were 666 with four-day tickets. Assuming they attended all four days, this brings the total attendance to 7,427.

In the Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam there were 12,304 and 19,768 paying spectators on the two Jumping days (the second of which included the closing ceremony).

The income from the ticket sales in Hilversum was 11,140 florins and in Amsterdam 141,041 florins for an impressive total of over 150,000 florins, out of a total games ticket income of 1,435,000 florins.

THREE RIDER RULE

The major change was the FEI's decision to reduce the numbers of starters in each discipline from four to three. The FEI argued that the reduction would reduce the burden of participation for the National Federations. This three-rider rule remained in effect until the sixties.

PRESIDENT AND TECHNICAL DELEGATE

In charge of the equestrian events was Col. Maris, the President of the Dutch Equestrian Federation and FEI President since 1927. Technical Delegate was Col. D.J. Couvée. It is not known whether he also designed the courses. Olympic Course Designers are only known since 1932.

Games facts & figures

- **46** nations
- **2,883** athletes (277 women; 2,606 men)
- **14** sports
- For the first time, the **Olympic flame** was lit at the top of a tower placed inside the stadium and remained lit throughout the Games.
- At the Opening Ceremony, the team from Greece led the Parade of Nations and the host Dutch team marched in last. **Greece first, hosts last** would become a permanent part of the Olympic protocol.

Equestrian facts & figures

- **20** nations (Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Netherland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, USA).
- **New nations** were Hungary, Japan and Argentina-the latter with three civilian riders.
- Absent were Great Britain and the Chilean Jumping team which had competed in Europe the two previous years.
- The major return was Germany – not invited in 1920 and 1924 but now there in full force. In fact the Germans had begun their Olympic preparations in 1925 with a pre-Olympic Eventing test at Uncle Toms Hütte in Berlin Grunewald.
- **121** entries (46 in Jumping; 29 in Dressage; 46 in Eventing)

JUMPING (46 riders from 16 nations)

Two of the previous Olympic champions were among the starters. For the champions of 1920, Tommaso Lequio di Assaba on Trebecco, it was the third Olympic start: gold in Antwerp, silver in Paris, now 24th in Amsterdam. Alphonse Gemuseus on Lucette, the Olympic champions of 1924, finished 8th this time. They were the fastest with two penalty points behind seven riders who had gone clear.

The 720m course, with 16 obstacles at a height of 1.25m to 1.40m, was judged too easy. Two jump-offs were necessary to determine the individual medals. In the first one three riders went clear. In the second jump-off some obstacles were raised to 1.60m. Pepita ridden by the Swiss Major Kuhn had a knock-down with the front legs for 4 points; Papillon of Pierre Bertran de Balanda - grandfather to Gilles – had 2 points for a knock-down with the hind legs while Eliot with the Czechoslovakian Capt. Ventura was clear again to win gold. Equally surprising was the outcome for the team medals: Spain (with the Marqués de los Trujillos – the father of José Álvarez de Bohórquez) took gold ahead of Poland and Sweden, the champions of 1912, 1920 and 1924.

Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Frantisek Ventura (TCH)	Eliot
2. Silver	Pierre Bertran de Balanda (FRA)	Papillon XIV
3. Bronze	Charles Kuhn (SUI)	Pepita

Medallists – Team

1. Gold	Spain	José NAVARRO MORENES (Zapataso), Marquez DE LOS TRUJILLOS (Zalamero), Julio GARCIA FERNANDEZ (Revistado)
2. Silver	Poland	Kazimierz GZOWSKI (Mylord), Kazimierz SZOSLAND (Ali), Michael ANTONIEWICZ (Readgleadt)
3. Bronze	Sweden	Karl HANSEN (Gerold), Carl BJÖRNSTIERNA (Kornett), Ernst HALLBERG (Loke)

DRESSAGE (29 riders from 12 countries)

For the first time in Olympic history the top three dressage nations – France, Germany and Sweden – took part, as well as the middle group: the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Switzerland. Only Hungary was absent. The test was the same as four years previously but the 10-minute time limit, which had created so many problems in Paris, had been raised to 13 min.

The judging was uneven, both the result of nationalistic views, but also of fundamentally different opinions about Dressage by the three major powers.

At the discussions following the Games several proposals were made: not to count the highest and lowest score of each judge; to deduct 20 points from each score given to a countryman; to have only one judge from a neutral country. None was considered a serious alternative and, until after the judging scandal of 1956, things went on unchanged.

Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Carl-Friedrich von Langen (GER)	Draufgänger
2. Silver	Pierre Marion (FRA)	Linon
3. Bronze	Ragnar Olson (SWE)	Günstling

Medallists – Team

1. Gold	Germany	Carl Friedrich VON LANGEN (Draufgänger), Hermann LINKENBACH (Gimpel), Eugen VON LOTZBECK (Caracalla)
2. Silver	Sweden	Ragnar OLSON (Günstling), Carl BONDE (Ingo), Janne LUNDBLAD (Blackmar)
3. Bronze	Netherlands	Jan Hermannus VAN REEDE (Hans), Pierre M.R. VERSTEEGH (His Excellence), Gerhard W. LE HEUX (Valerine)

EVENTING (46 riders from 17 nations)

The Eventing programme of 1928 differed only slightly from that of 1924.

- the speed in the steeplechase was raised from 550m/min to 600m/min
- the time limit for Dressage was raised from 10 to 11min.
- the importance of Dressage was raised from 200 points to 300.

- The Jumping was accordingly reduced from 400 to 300.
- (The endurance kept the points of 1924: A-C-E = 200, steeple = 500, cross = 700).

All in all, Dressage was the most deciding factor in the final placings. Endurance day, mainly because of generous time limits, did not separate the field. The Dutch, already the winners in 1924, took again the two gold medals, along with an individual silver medal. Only three teams finished, mostly the result of eight eliminations on endurance day due to missing flags. The cross country course was so perfectly flagged out that, over flat land, it irritated the riders.

Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Charles Pahud de Mortanges (NED)	Marcroix
2. Silver	Gerard P. de Kruyff (NED)	Va-t-en
3. Bronze	Bruno Neumann (GER)	Ilja

Medallists – Team

1. Gold	The Netherlands	Adolph D.C. VAN DER VOORT VAN ZIJP (Silver Piece), Charles F. PAHUD DE MORTANGES (Marcroix), Gerard P. DE KRUYFF (Va-t-en)
2. Silver	Norway	Bjart ORDING (And Over), Arthur QUIST (Hidalgo), Eugen JOHANSEN (Baby)
3. Bronze	Poland	Michael ANTONIEWICZ (Moja Mila), Jozef TRENKWALD (Lwi Pazur), Karol VON ROMMEL (Doneuse)