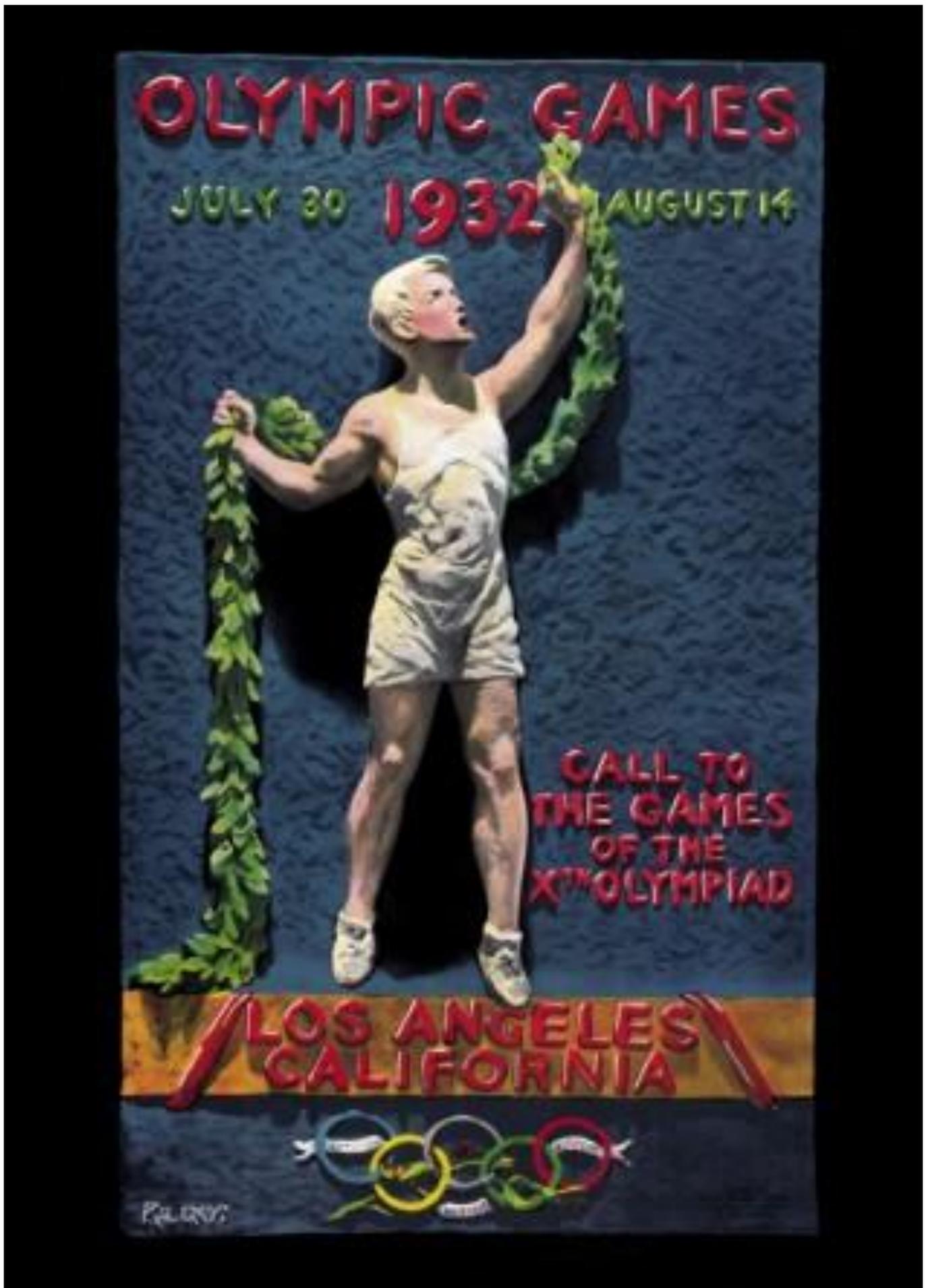


History of equestrian events at the Games of the X Olympiad



Games of the X Olympiad Los Angeles (USA), 30 July – 14 August 1932

SPORT IN THE TIME OF DEPRESSION

Because the 1932 Olympic Games were held in the middle of the Great Depression and in the comparatively remote city of Los Angeles – a trip to the West Coast of the USA was a long one for Europeans – half as many athletes took part compared to 1928. The economic crisis had also affected equestrian sport. Aachen in Germany, already one of the greatest shows, had only three nations in their 1931 and 1932 Nations Cups.

The great absentee from the equestrian competitions in Los Angeles was Germany. Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Poland and Czechoslovakia – all medal winners four years previously in Amsterdam also stayed away. France only sent a Dressage team; The Netherlands only its strong Eventers. Sweden was fully represented, but to save money, the Eventing riders also had to take part in the Jumping competition. The US had full representation. In addition there were Mexicans – who had the shortest journey – and an Eventer and a Jumping rider from Japan.

The equestrian events were run by the US Cavalry Association, then the National Federation of the USA, affiliated to the FEI. Its president was Guy Henry, Olympic rider in 1912, now chief of the US Cavalry and, since 1931, FEI President.

BY EARTH AND BY SEA

It is interesting how the teams travelled to Los Angeles. The Japanese team came by ship from Yokohama to Los Angeles. The Dutch sailed through the Panama Canal directly to Los Angeles, France and Sweden took a ship to New York, then travelled by railroad across the USA, as did the Mexicans.

The most interesting arrangements were those of the Dutch. They remembered that the US equestrian team, travelling by ship to Amsterdam in 1928, had kept their horses fit by hiring the treadmill used during the filming of Ben Hur with its chariot races. The Dutch constructed their own treadmill and kept their horses busy during the voyage.

Games facts & figures

- **37** nations
- **1,332** athletes (126 women; 1,206 men)
- **14** sports
- **100,000** people who attended the Opening Ceremony
- The 1932 Olympics were the first to last **16 days**. The duration of the Olympics has remained between 15 and 18 days ever since. Between 1900 and 1928, no Summer Olympic Games were shorter than 79 days.
- The 1932 Olympic Games probably had the first real press service – it began operating in 1929 – and did an intensive promotion campaign. They became a huge public success.
- At the victory ceremonies, the medal winners stood on a victory stand and the flag of the winner was raised.
- Official automatic timing was introduced for the track events, as was the photo-finish camera.

FRENCH HORSES

The amazing thing about these otherwise rather irrelevant Olympic equestrian events of 1932 in Los Angeles is the fact that all three individual gold medal horses were French-bred: Taine (Dressage) – Marcroix (Eventing) – Uranus (Jumping).

Equestrian facts & figures

- **6** nations (France, Japan, Mexico, Netherland, Sweden, USA). This was the lowest ever participation in the Olympic Games.
- **35** entries (11 in Jumping; 10 in Dressage; 14 in Eventing)
- There were **25,000** spectators watching Dressage on the polo field of the Riviera Country Club. There were **100,000** spectators in the Olympic Stadium (the Coliseum) for the Jumping and the closing ceremony.

JUMPING (11 riders from 4 nations)

The Jumping competition of 1932 was a disaster. The first known Olympic course designer, John A. Barry (who rode for the USA in the 1920 and 1924 Olympics) supported by Sloan Doak (also a multi Olympic rider) built a course that was much more difficult than 1928. It had 18 obstacles and 20 jumping efforts over a length of 1,060m.

Considering the weak starting field, with probably only six top riders – as compared with 20-25 in Lucerne, Dublin or Rome at that time – the two 1.60m fences, the wall and the five-meter wide water jump were far too much. No team finished the competition and the team medals remained unclaimed.

Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Takeichi Nishi (JPN)	Uranus
2. Silver	Harry D. Chamberlin (USA)	Show Girl
3. Bronze	Clarence von Rosen (SWE)	Empire

Medallists – Team - no team finished the competition

DRESSAGE (10 riders from 4 nations)

Dressage was overshadowed by a strange incident. During the ride of Bertil Sandström of Sweden an unofficial side-judge, posted there by the US, reported that the rider had clicked with his tongue, which was forbidden by FEI rules. Sandström claimed it was just the squeak of his new saddle. The matter was referred to the highly respected Appeals Committee, composed of Guy Henry, Olympic Rider 1912, Chief of the US Cavalry, and FEI President; Clarence von Rosen of Sweden, organiser of the first Equestrian Olympic Games of 1912, FEI Vice President; Georges Hector of France, FEI Secretary General since 1921.

They came to the surprising conclusion that Sandström, who would have won individual silver, was to be placed last individually. This gave individual silver to a French rider and bronze to an American. But Sandström's score was to count for the team competition - it did not endanger the gold medal of the French and kept the US in a nice bronze medal position.

For the first time, piaffe and passage were asked for and the test took 16 minutes.

Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Xavier F. Lesage (FRA)	Taine
2. Silver	Pierre Marion (FRA)	Linon
3. Bronze	Hiram E. Tuttle (USA)	Olympic

Medallists – Team

1. Gold	France	Pierre MARION (Linon), Xavier F. LESAGE (Taine), André JOUSSEAUME (Sorelta)
2. Silver	Sweden	Thomas BYSTRÖM (Gulliver), Gustaf A. BOLTENSTERN (Ingo), Bertil SANDSTRÖM (Kreta)
3. Bronze	USA	Hiram E. TUTTLE (Olympic), Isaac L. KITTS (American Lady), Alvin H. MOORE (Water Pat)

EVENTING (14 riders from 5 nations)

The most serious contenders were the three riders from the US, The Netherlands and Sweden. The latter two got their three riders to the finish line – Arne Francke of Sweden was eliminated on the cross country. While Pahud de Mortanges repeated his victory of 1928, the US took the team gold medal. Their best rider Earl Foster (Tommy) Thomson was second on Jenny Camp - a feat he was to repeat four years later in Berlin. Clarence von Rosen junior was third – as he was a day later in the Jumping competition.

Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Charles Pahud de Mortanges (NED)	Marcroix
2. Silver	Earl F. Thomson (USA)	Jenny Camp
3. Bronze	Clarence von Rosen (SWE)	Sunnyside Maid

Medallists – Team

1. Gold	USA	Harry D. CHAMBERLIN (Pleasant Smiles), Edwin Y. ARGO (Honolulu Tomboy), Earl F. THOMSON (Jenny Camp)
2. Silver	Netherlands	Charles F. PAHUD DE MORTAGES (Marcroix), Karel J. SCHUMMELKETEL (Duiveltje), Aernout VAN LENNEP (Henk)
3. Bronze		Only two teams finished the competition