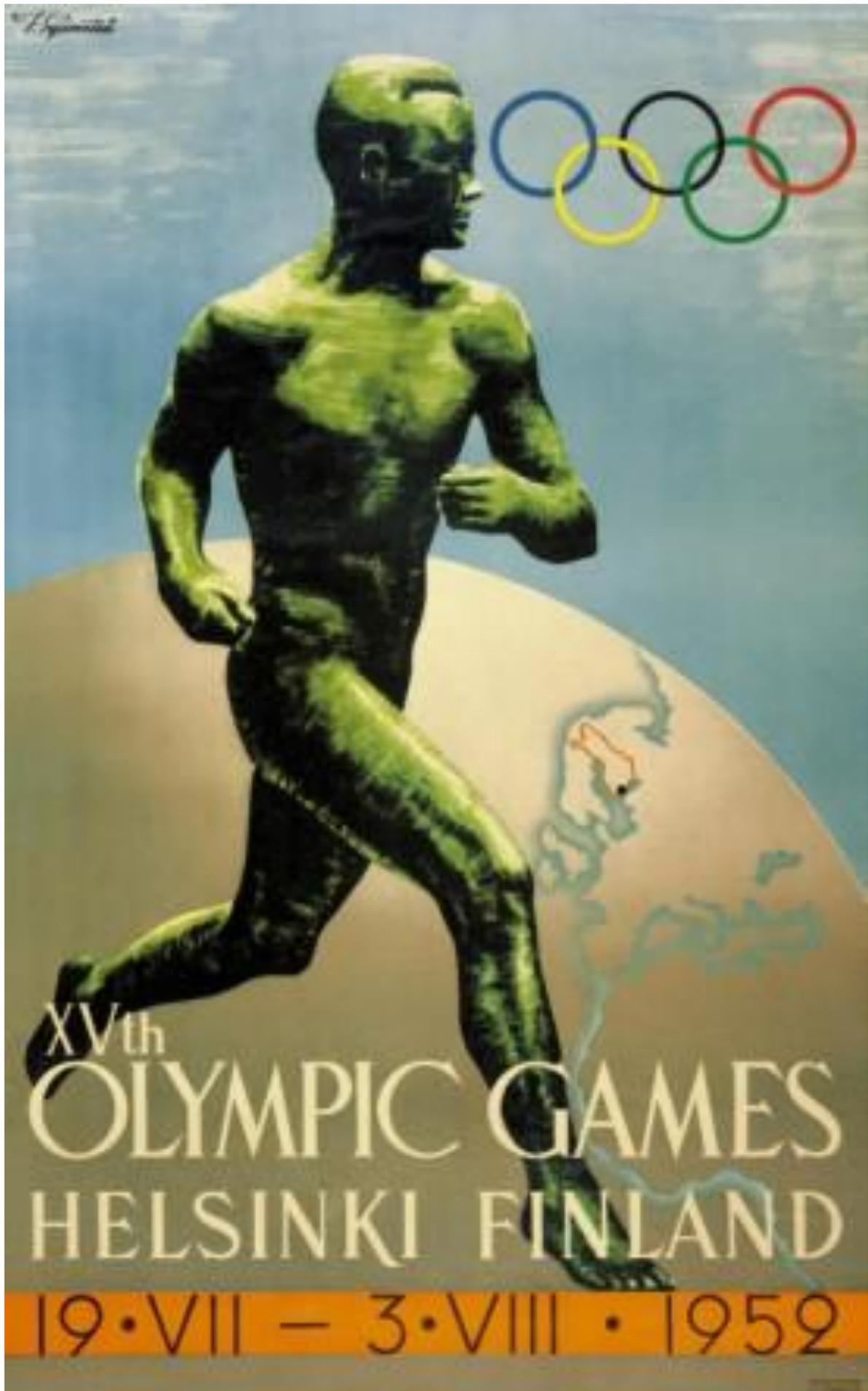


# History of equestrian events at the Games of the XV Olympiad



## Games of the XV Olympiad Helsinki (FIN), 19 July – 3 August 1952

The 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki lasted for 14 days and were beautifully organised in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

### FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN EQUESTRIAN SPORT

The 1952 Olympic Games brought some fundamental changes to equestrian sport. Most visible was the change from army officers to civilians. In the 1948 Jumping competition, 41 of the 44 starters were riding in uniform; in 1952 more than half were civilians.

The FEI had made some essential decisions:

- **Non commissioned officers, corporals and soldiers** were allowed to compete in all three disciplines.
- **Women were allowed in Dressage** but not in Jumping - the FEI having decided against it in 1951 - and not in Eventing, which the FEI did not even consider. FEI's decision not to allow women in Jumping forced the USA to drop their sole woman on their squad.
- There would be **two rounds in the Jumping competition (Nations Cup)**.
- **Piaffe** and **passage** would again be part of the Dressage test.

### ENTER THE SOVIET UNION

For the first time since 1912 Russian riders competed – now representing the Soviet Union. They did not stand the slightest chance of winning after 35 years of isolation and total ignorance of modern-day rules and judging principles. But they learned fast: 10 years later a Soviet rider won Olympic Dressage gold, the Soviet Eventing team was European champion and the Soviet Jumping team won the prestigious Nations Cup of Paris.

### Games facts & figures

- **69** nations
- **4,955** athletes (519 women; 4,436 men)
- **17** sports
- The **Soviet Union** entered the Olympics for the first time, although their athletes were housed in a separate "village".
- It was also a first for **Israel** only four years after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

### Equestrian facts & figures

- **25** nations (Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Netherland, Norway, Portugal, Rumania, Soviet Union, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, USA)
- Newcomers were **Canada, Egypt, Korea** and the **Soviet Union**. Chile returned for the first time since 1912.
- **138** entries (52 in Jumping; 27 in Dressage; 59 in Eventing)
- Mixed events opened to both men and women took place for the first time.

## JUMPING (52 riders from 20 nations)

The two sets of medals – team and individual – were decided by the Prix des Nations (Nations Cup) held for the first time over two rounds. Sixteen teams with three riders each competed. The course, designed by Björn Strandell, measured 786 meters, which gave a time allowed of 1 min. 57.2 sec. The height of the obstacles was up to 1.60m – the water jump measured 5m in width. Strandell, who had travelled all over Europe in the years preceding the Games, also built the obstacles of the Cross-Country of Eventing.

### Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Pierre Jonquères d’Oriola (FRA)	Ali Baba
2. Silver	Oscar Cristi (CHI)	Bambi
3. Bronze	Fritz Tiedemann (FRG)	Meteor

### Medallists – Team

1. Gold	Great Britain	Harry M. LLEWELLYN (Foxhunter), Duggie N. STEWART (Aherlow), Wilfried WHITE (Nizefela)
2. Silver	Chile	Oscar CRISTI (Bambi), Ricardo ECHEVERRIA (Lindo Peal), Cesar MENDOZA (Pillan)
3. Bronze	USA	William C. STEINKRAUS (Hollandia), John W. RUSSELL (Democrat), Arthur McCASHIN (Miss Budweiser)

## DRESSAGE (27 riders from 10 nations)

The Dressage competition of 1952 bore little resemblance to the one of 1948. The test, which now included piaffe and passage, took 15 minutes; non-commissioned officers were allowed and so were women, four of whom competed of a starting field of 27.

The best known of these women has come to be Lis Hartel of Denmark, whose background was rather different from most equestrian athletes of the time. In 1944, at the age of 23, she had been paralysed by polio and while she had gradually regained the use of most of her muscles, she nonetheless remained paralysed below the knee but learned to do without those muscles. She was chosen to represent Denmark at the 1952 Olympics and, even though she had to be helped on and off her horse, was awarded silver. When gold medallist Henri St-Cyr helped her up onto the victory platform for the medal presentation, it was one of the most emotional moments in Olympic history.

Eighteen riders competed on the first day, nine the day after. As was customary then, the scores were only made public after the end of the competition.

There were five judges. But for the first and last time the highest and the lowest scores of each judge were not considered.

### Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Henri St-Cyr (SWE)	Master Rufus
2. Silver	Lis Hartel (DEN)	Jubilee
3. Bronze	André Jousseume (FRA)	Harpagon

### Medallists – Team

1. Gold	Sweden	Gustav A. BOLTENSTERN (Krest), Henry ST. CYR (Master Rufus), Gehnäll PERSSON (Knaust)
2. Silver	Switzerland	Gottfried TRACHSEL (Kursus), Henri CHAMMARTIN (Wöhler), Gustav FISCHER (Soliman)
3. Bronze	Federal Republic of Germany	Heinz POLLAY (Adular), Ida VON NAGEL (Afrika), Fritz THIEDEMANN (Chronist)

### EVENTING (59 riders from 21 nations)

The demands were slightly raised compared to what was asked in 1948, as follows:

- A. roads and tracks 7km 240m/min.
- B. steeplechase 4km 600m/min.
- C. roads and tracks 15km 240m/min.
- D. cross-country 9km 450m/min.
- E. gallop 2km 333m/min.

The obstacles in both the Cross-Country and the Jumping were up to 1.20m.

Of the 19 nations with teams, 13 fielded army teams. Two – Great Britain and Ireland - had mixed teams composed of military officers and civilians and four – Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, and the USA – participated with civilians. On the two medal podiums there were five officers and seven civilians.

### Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Hans von Blixen-Finecke (SWE)	Jubal
2. Silver	Guy Lefrant (FRA)	Verdun
3. Bronze	Willi Büsing (FRG)	Hubertus

### Medallists – Team

1. Gold	Sweden	Hans VON BLIXEN-FINECKE (Jubal), Karl Folke FROLEN (Fair), Nils Olof STAHRE (Komet)
2. Silver	Federal Republic of Germany	Klaus WAGNER (Dachs), Otto ROTHE (Trux von Kamax), Wilhelm BÜSING (Hubertus)
3. Bronze	USA	John E.B. WOFFORD (Benny Grimes), Walter STALEY (Craigwood Park), Charles HOUGH (Cassivellanus)