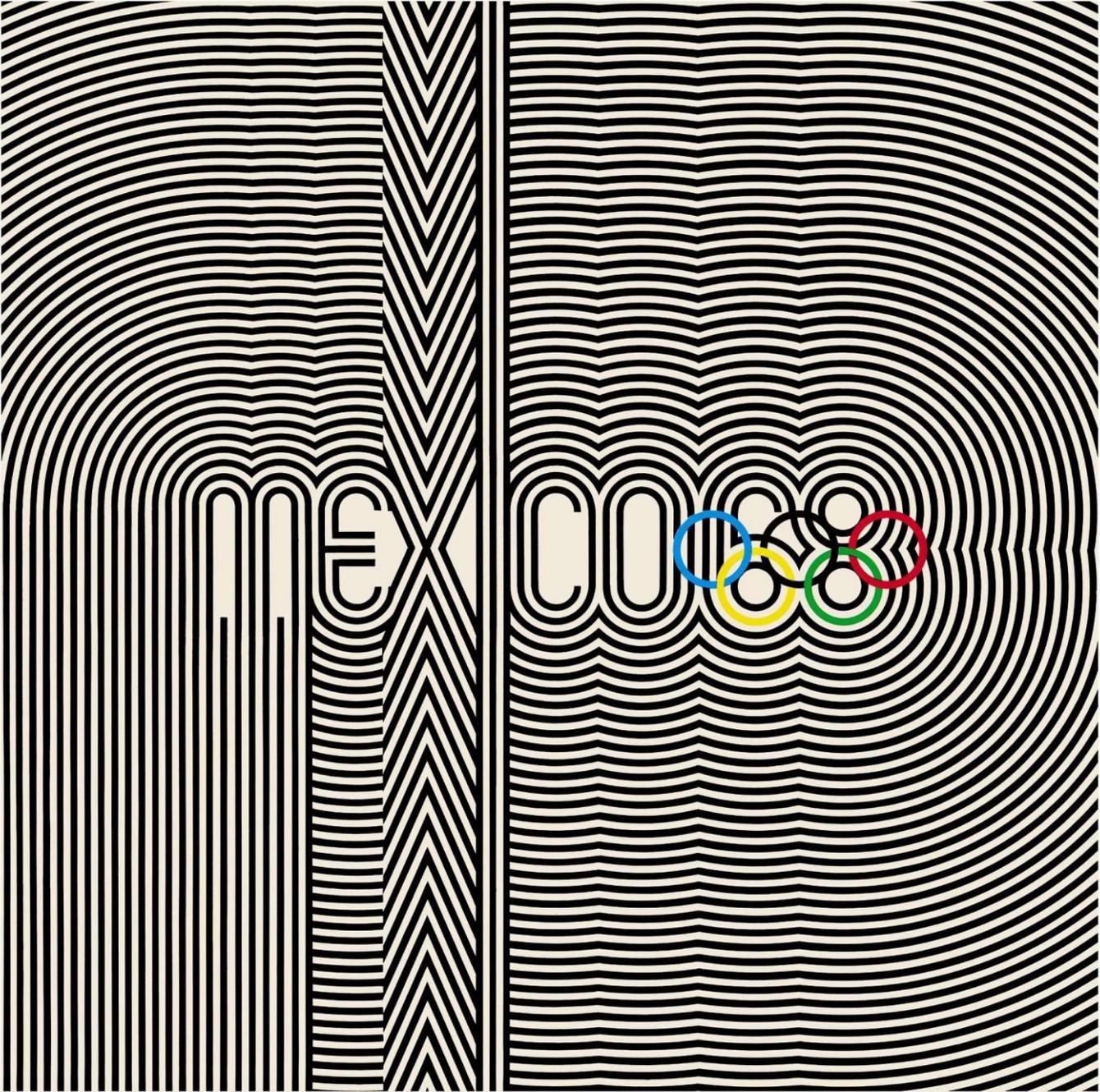


# History of equestrian events at the Games of the XIX Olympiad



## Games of the XIX Olympiad Mexico (MEX), 12 – 27 October 1968

### HIGH UP

The choice of Mexico City to host the 1968 Olympic Games was a controversial one because of the city's high altitude, 2,300m, which meant that the air contained 30% less oxygen than at sea level. The rarefied air proved a great difficulty to many athletes, including the horses, competing in endurance events, such as Eventing. It had been pointed out that racehorses competing in Mexico City arrived just the day before and left right after the race. On the other hand, horses for the 1955 Pan American Games in Mexico City had arrived several weeks before to adjust. It was, finally, concluded that after a spontaneous adjustment to the high altitude in the first week, a serious loss of strength and form occurred from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> day. Thus an adjustment period of three to four weeks was advised. The horses from the Soviet Union, Argentina and Ireland were, in mid-September, the first to arrive. The last to stable were France and Germany on 28 September, i.e. 20 days before the start of the competitions on 18 October.

### TROPICAL TORRENTS

The selection of the site for Eventing had also caused controversy. Originally Oaxtepec, 110km south of the capital at 1,450m altitude had been chosen. But the tough stony ground and a subtropical climate forced the FEI to ask for an alternative. The golf club of Avandaro, in the Valle de Bravo, 150 km north-west of Mexico City was proposed. It had an altitude of 1,800m, but was famous for its mild climate, with a permanent breeze from a nearby lake. Ignored was the fact that from October to March tropical rain fell almost every day.

The rainfall came promptly on cross-country day. It only lasted 30 minutes but the small two-meter stream serving as obstacle number 34 grew to reach up to 12m in width, with no visible take-off point. The programme of the equestrian competitions was held over eight days with two rest days in between.

### TWO GERMAN TEAMS

Of particular interest was the first participation of Dressage and Eventing riders from the German Democratic Republic. In 1960 and 1964, their Eventers were part of a unified German team. This time they were allowed to enter under their own flag. This happened again in 1972. After that equestrian sport was considered by the GDR sports authorities as no guarantee for medals and thus eliminated from further Olympic consideration.

### Games facts & figures

- **112** nations
- **5,516** athletes (781 women; 4,735 men)
- **20** sports
- For the first time, the winners had to undergo a **doping test** (narcotics, stimulants). The 1968 Games saw the first drug disqualification, as a competitor tested positive...for excessive alcohol.

### Equestrian facts & figures

- **18** nations (Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, German Democratic Republic (GDR) , France, Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Soviet Union, Switzerland, USA)
- **126** entries (51 in Jumping; 26 in Dressage; 49 in Eventing)
- The equestrian competitions were timed manually and electronically; for the first time, the **electronic time was the official one.**

## JUMPING (51 riders from 16 countries)

The victory of Canada in their first Olympic appearance, the crowning of Bill Steinkraus' glorious career and a bizarre incident involving the Irish team highlighted the Jumping competitions.

The Irish incident happened after their first rider, Diana Conolly-Carew, was eliminated. By some misunderstanding the message was brought to the Irish chef de'équipe that the whole team had been eliminated. Thus Ada Matheson's horse went back to the stable and was not at the ingate when she was called. Ned Champion, the third Irish rider, was later ready and allowed to jump the course. But with only three riders to a team Ireland was eliminated. This was all the more annoying since the Irish had decided to forego the individual competition and concentrate on the team.

The three courses of the individual competition measured as follows: A: 750m / B: 410m; jump-off: 370m. Round B was a puissance-type course with an oxer 1.65 / 1.70m x 2.20m as the major obstacle. There were 10,000 spectators.

The course for the team competition was measured at 631m with 14 obstacle necessitating 17 jumping efforts. But only four of the 87 rounds were inside the time of 96 seconds. It has been argued that the course was actually 693m long.

### Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	William C. Steinkraus (USA)	Snowbound
2. Silver	Marion Coakes (GBR)	Stroller
3. Bronze	David Broome (GBR)	Mister Softee

### Medallists – Team

1. Gold	Canada	Tom GAYFORD (Big Dee), Jim DAY (Canadian Club), Jim ELDER (The Immigrant)
2. Silver	France	Janou LEFEBVRE (Rocket), Marcel ROZIER (Quo Vadis), Pierre JONQUERES D'ORIOLO (Nagir)
3. Bronze	FRG	Hermann SCHRIDDE (Dozent), Alwin SCHOCKEMÖHLE (Donald Rex) Hans Günter WINKLER (Enigk)

## DRESSAGE (26 riders from 9 nations)

The programme consisted of 33 movements.

There were eight full teams of three and two individual riders from Mexico. Seven qualified for the ride-off. Germany and the Soviet Union shared the top four places individually and won gold and silver with the teams. Switzerland, the silver medallists in Tokyo 1964, dropped to third. Following the judging scandal of 1956, the judges came from France, Chile and The Netherlands, none of which had a rider competing.

After the Grand Prix, Josef Neckermann (FRG) and Mariano had a comfortable lead: 948 points against 908 for Ivan Kizimov (URS)/Ichor and 896 for Reiner Klimke (FRG)/Dux. The ride-off (6min. 45sec. compared with 12min. 30sec. for the Grand Prix) resulted in a change of leader. Kizimov received 664 points while Neckermann managed only 598. Thus it was gold for Kizimov, silver for Neckerman and bronze for Klimke.

### Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Ivan Kizimov (URS)	Ichor
2. Silver	Josef Neckermann (FRG)	Mariano
3. Bronze	Reiner Klimke (FRG)	Dux

### Medallists – Team

1. Gold	FRG	Josef NECKERMAN (Mariano), Liselott LINSEHOFF (Piaff), Reiner KLIMKE (Dux)
2. Silver	Soviet Union	Ivan KALITA (Absent), Elena PETUSHKOVA (Pepel), Ivan KIZIMOV (Ichor)
3. Bronze	Switzerland	Gustav FISCHER (Wald), Marianne GROSSWEILER (Stephan), Henri CHAMMARTIN (Wolfdietrich)

## EVENTING (49 riders from 13 nations)

There was plenty of drama on days three and four of the Eventing competition. During the Cross-Country, several horses were clearly in distress due to the heavy rain that had come after 30 of the 49 riders. There were two horse fatalities – Ballerina from the Soviet Union and Loughlin from Ireland – which had occurred before the big rainfall.

The 35 jumps were designed by Mario Becerril who had competed in the 1952 Olympic three-day event. After endurance day Jean-Jacques Guyon, Jim Wofford and Pavel Deev were less than 10 points apart. In the Jumping Guyon and Pitou had 10.25 points and earned individual gold. Wofford and Kilkenny had a disappointing round, with a fall, which dropped them to sixth place. Deev's fate was even worse. The Soviet rider was last to go and with a good round he could win individual gold and team bronze. But after obstacle five he took the wrong course and was eliminated. This brought silver to the 54-year-old Derek Allhusen on the 10-year-old Lochinvar. Bronze went to Michael Page on Foster. The British, with Derek Allhusen, Richard Meade, Staff Sergeant Ben Jones and student nurse Jane Bullen won team gold, ahead of the USA and Australia.

### Medallists – Individual

1. Gold	Jean-Jacques Guyon (FRA)	Pitou
2. Silver	Derek Allhusen (GBR)	Lochinvar
3. Bronze	Michael Page (USA)	Foster

### Medallists – Team

1. Gold	Great Britain	Derek ALLHUSEN (Lochinvar), Reuben Samuel JONES (The Poacher), ane BULLEN (Our Nobby), Richard MEADE (Cornishman V)
2. Silver	USA	John Michael PLUMB (Plain Sailing), James WOFFORD (Kilkenny), Michael PAGE (Foster), Kevin FREEMAN (Chalan)
3. Bronze	Australia	William ROYCROFT (Warrathoola), Brian COBCROFT (Depeche), James SCANLON (Diambo de Nora), Wayne ROYCROFT (Zhiwago)