

THROUGH THE AMERICAN PRESS

# Sports of the *Times*

(FROM THE NEW-YORK TIMES) by ARTHUR DALEY

(Réd.: Published under the responsibility of his author)

## ON TRIMMING THE OLYMPIC PROGRAMME

The proposal already has been made on the continent, French and English sports authorities leading the way, to eliminate from the Olympic programme all those superfluous sports which have given it the distressing appearance of the tail wagging the dog. According to their theory, a slenderizing operation is in order so that the next Games in Helsinki two years hence will bear a svelte and streamlined look.

It's about time. The biggest of all international shows has gotten out of hand. There's nothing new about that, of course. It also happened a couple of thousand years ago, too. The first Olympic winner of record was Coroebus in 776 B. C., and he ran approximately 200 yards on a straightaway. His was the only event on the programme.

But the ancient Greeks kept adding to it until Callias, the Athenian boxer, protested during the Games of the seventy-seventh Olympiad that chariot races had so interfered with the facebashing pleasantries that the boxers were compelled to box by the light of the moon. They probably

should have used arc lights, but no one had thought to invent electricity just then.

When the modern Olympics were resumed in 1896 the programme was a restrained one, painfully so. There were just eleven track and field events. There was a 100-meter swim and there were two weight-lifting tests. That's all. But at the recent London show there was competition in seventeen sports, and even that was four fewer than Berlin had staged in 1936.

## AWESOME NUMBER

As far as this statistician has been able to figure out, the modern Olympic Games have been the scene, at one time or another, of thirty-five different sports (Winter Sports included. *Red.*). Some of them have been dillies. There even has been an Olympic championship in—so help me, Hannah!—roque. There have been title competitions in clay-bird shooting and—howja like this?—running deer shooting. They've had them in that, sterling pastime, tugof-war. Five sets of Olympic Games held title competition in Rugby football.

And who do you think won? Guess again, junior. Not the British, who should have won by all rules of reasonableness, but the United States. (*Red.*: and Australia once). Someone should have ordered a saliva test after those tournaments ended.

On various occasions the Olympic folk have staged championship play in polo, tennis and golf, which certainly never belonged there. They have held championships in archery, sculpture and—well, are you beginning to get the idea? The once sacred Olympics have developed into the darndest athletic catch-all ever devised by man. Everyone and his brother strives desperately to get his favorite sport on the programme.

#### BACK TO ESSENTIALS

It would seem proper that the international committee get right back to essentials. In this corner the Olympics mean track and field with everything else just window-dressing, although swimming has since boomed to rival the footracers and hardware throwers as a counterattraction.

The swimming programme should get more recognition by being enlarged. There is no earthly reason for not adding to the present grossly inadequate schedule events as the 200-meter free-style, the 300-meter individual medley, the 300-meter medley relay and a 1,600-meter free-style relay. There are too many holes in the existing skimpy list.

Perhaps women's swimming should be continued, but all women track athletes should be led to the end of a dock and started out toward the open sea. After all, the female of the species originally wasn't even permitted to attend the ancient games as a spectator. One of the first scandals came when the father of Pisidorus died while training his son for the Olympics. So mama took charge of him, entered the stadium in disguise and was so unrestrained in her joy at her son's victory that she was unmasked.

#### QUITE UNNECESSARY

It doesn't seem here as though the Olympics is the proper place for yachting, canoeing, shooting, equestrian events or field hockey. This reporter would keep track (men only), swimming, rowing, boxing, wrestling, weight-lifting, fencing and, contrary to the opinions of the European experts, both soccer and basketball.

These last two rank as truly international sports and the dribble addicts are bound to become more numerous before they ever get less. This generically American game has spread throughout the world and is getting bigger every year. The Olympics serve as the tie which binds. Perhaps the United States never will lose in international competition, but with the passing of

time the other nations are going to make it closer and closer.

As for the abandonment of the Winter Olympics which has been suggested, that would appear to be going too far. Personally I can take them or leave them, preferably, the latter. But they serve a useful purpose.

#### SOUND IDEA

Trimming the Olympic programme from its present top-heavy state is a most sound idea and the sooner it is done the better.

As for cutting the programme from a fortnight to a week, that's a bit, too much. The British made the mistake of jamming the three top sports, track, swimming and rowing, into the same week, instead of devoting the first one to the footracers and the second one to the other two sports, as always had been done hitherto. Proper scheduling and judicious trimming would do the trick. Nothing else is needed.