

Olympic medals

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This is a continuation of the series on the Olympic Medals, which we started in Nos. 29 and 34/35 of the "Olympic Review".



1912 STOCKHOLM

In 1909, at the IOC Session in Berlin, the members confirmed their decision, made in The Hague in 1907, to adopt a standard medal for every Olympic Games: only the reverse side would carry an original design for each Olympiad. This, in fact, came into force in 1908 for the Games in London.

The medal for the Stockholm Games was designed by the engraver, Erik LINDBERG, and portrayed a herald standing in front of a bust of LING, the founder of Swedish gymnastics. The medals, 33mm. in diameter, were minted in gold, vermeil, silver and bronze; their presentation cases were blue, gold red or green respectively.

The diploma, which had to accompany the medal, was the work of Professor Olle HJORTZBERG. This diploma (45.5 cm. x 65 cm.) represented the Goddess, PALLAS ATHENA, carrying a lance in her right hand, and in her left, the Greek symbol of victory; a stadium was outlined in the background. It was also used to recognise the merit of those competitors whose performances justified it, in particular in the marathon and cycling.

In track and field, the winner received a gold medal, the second a silver and the third a bronze. In the team events, the first place carried with it a diploma and each member of the team got a vermeil medal. Those in the second- and third-placed teams had silver and bronze medals respectively. There were always exceptions: in the equestrian events a medal went to each member of the first team; the same applied in the doubles teams. The helmsman and his second, winners in the 12 metre yachting class, each received a gold medal.



The commemorative medal was also the work of Erik LINDBERG - on the front, a Greek chariot pulled by four horses carrying the competitor and the judge ready to present him with the palm of victory, and on the reverse side, Zeus, seated on a pedestal, the Goddess of Victory in hand, stands out against the Royal Palace in Stockholm. This medal was made in silver, bronze and pewter. Two were made in gold for His Majesty King Gustaf and the Crown Prince.

King Gustaf introduced a special medal, awarded to the Royal Swedish household, and other Royal Families at the Games, as well as to members of the International Olympic

Committee, the Swedish Olympic Committee, official representatives and the Swedish prize-winners. This medal, attached to which was a ribbon, was to be worn on the left side of the chest as a decoration.

It was decided, furthermore, that at the solemn presentation of prizes, each athlete coming first would wear a crown of oak leaves, strung together with a ribbon in the Swedish colours.

1920 ANTWERP

Despite the fact that in both London and Stockholm the medal carried the same design, this was not so in Antwerp, where the Organising Committee of the Games of the VIIth Olympiad gave the responsibility of the medals and diplomas to the Count d'ASSCHE.

Josué DUPON, the Belgian artist, was appointed to bring out a medal 60mm. in diameter. On the front is an athlete bringing back the palm of victory and in the background, the statue of the Renommée. On the reverse side, the monument of Antwerp commemorating the legend of Braba, the killer of the Giant who terrorised the river, standing out against the Cathedral and port of Antwerp. This medal was not made of gold; 450 were minted in vermeil and 400 in silver and bronze. The diploma, 55cm. x 72cm., the



work of Mr. PRIVAT-LIVEMONT, is a drawing in red chalk of the crowning of the athlete at the Olympic Games, against a panorama of the City of Antwerp and its Stadium. 1350 diplomas were printed.

Besides the vermeil medal, the winner of the individual events received a bronze statuette "*The Victorious Athlete*". For this the artist was another Belgian, Mr. GRANDMOULIN. The design was put in hand by the Organising Committee at the International Olympic Committee, who approved it, but the cast was destroyed to prevent further reproductions. The second- and third-placed athletes were given silver and bronze medals respectively.

In the team events, the winning team received a diploma and each member of that team was presented with a vermeil medal. A silver medal went to the second team and a bronze one to the third.

In yachting, the procedure was slightly different as in each category, the helmsman of the first team received a vermeil medal and a statuette but the remaining members of the team got just the medal. In the doubles tennis, each player of the winning couple received a statuette and medal in vermeil.



6,000 copies of the commemorative medal were minted and distributed to the members of the National Olympic Committees, to all those taking part in Olympic events and to anyone who helped with the organization of the VIIth Olympiad. This medal, engraved by Mr. THEUNIS, shows on the front an effigy of the winner of the ancient chariot race and on the back, the Goddess crowning the victorious of the Olympic Games.

It is interesting to note that the diploma was also awarded to some unplaced competitors with outstanding performances.

A miniature of the winner's medal was made for the members of the National Olympic Committees and served as a badge.

Baron JASPAR, newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, refused to approve the Olympic medal as a national decoration and thus found himself in a rather delicate position with those concerned, to whom a nomination had been promised. The President of the Executive Committee obtained the authority to create an Olympic medal like the one in Stockholm, which would be worn by the nominees as an everyday decoration.

The front of the medal showed the figure of King Albert and on the back was inscribed "*Olympic Games in Antwerp - 1920*". The red and white ribbon represented the colours of the City. The Olympic medal was awarded to the princes in the Belgian Royal Family, the members of the International Olympic Committee, to the Sovereigns, ministers and consuls of the countries taking part, the winning athletes and numerous foreign officials.

