

The first Central-American Games

by Major Sylvio de Magalhaes Padilha, IOC member for Brazil



The President of the Republic of Guatemala, General Carlos Arana Osorio, declares the Games open. Surrounding him from left to right: Major Sylvio de Magalhaes Padilha, representing the President of the IOC, Mr. Luis Canella and Mrs. Ingrid Keller, President and Secretary General respectively of the Guatemalan Olympic Committee, Mr. José A. Beracasa, IOC member for Brazil and President of the PASO.

His time taken up by the December meetings, Lord Killanin was unable to attend the 1st Central-American Games in Guatemala; he requested Major Sylvio de Magalhaes Padilha, member of the IOC Executive Board, to represent him there.

We give below his impressions and thank him heartily for his contributions to the publication of the Olympic Review.

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The 1st Central-American Games took place from 24th November to 2nd December 1973, under the patronage of the IOC.

Organised by Guatemala, these Games included the participation of delegations from Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras and Panama.

As was the wish of these nations, whose technical systems are similar, these sports-promoting Games were recognised by the IOC.

Such recognition was amply merited, judging by the splendour of competitions which comprised 17 sports and the high standard of technical results.

The most outstanding feature was the friendliness among the hundreds of athletes gathered together in the same spirit of fellowship and understanding from the beginning to the end of these Games, thus proving that sports contests are a means of the unity of Central America and the Olympic Movement.

A unanimous feeling of gratitude was shown in thanks to the IOC and its President, Lord Killanin, for having opened up new prospects to participating nations and for having given the Olympic ideal a new dimension.

Sincere thanks should go to the Organising Committee, under the leadership of the Minister of Education, Mr. Alejandro Maldonado Aguirre, and to the Guatemalan Olympic Committee, under the presidency of Mr. Luis Canella, assisted by Mrs. Ingrid Keller, whose efficient work and enthusiasm in favour of the Olympic Ideal have allowed the fulfilment of this old dream, the Central-American Games.

Guatemala and the neighbouring countries have attached particular importance to this event, judging by the presence of the President of Guatemala, General Carlos Arana Osorio, ministers, diplomats and members of the PASO.



Major Sylvio de Magalhaes Padilha helped by Mrs. Ingrid Keller about to hoist the Olympic flag, while Mr. José A. Beracasa looks on.

The 1st Central-American Games have doubtlessly proved that they are an excellent means of promoting friendship between the countries concerned, and an excellent boost to the development of sport, in particular in the future of the Pan-American and Olympic Games.

The celebration of the Central-American Games, like most major international competitions, is expected to take place every four years, and the delegations have made a "rendez-vous" for the second Games, which will be held in January 1977 in the state capital of Salvador.

S.M.P.