

Festival of Ancient Sports

by Professor Zivko Radan

The popularity and enterprise of the Olympic movement and Olympic Games contribute to the development of manifold activities in favour of physical education and sport in a large number of countries.

Influenced by this popularity, Yugoslavia decided to research into and revive ancient sports practices through demonstrations.

Since 1972, the village of Brodjanci in northern Yugoslavia has been staging a special event called "Festival of Ancient Sports", when the competitors dress up in traditional costumes and use ancient sports accessories, bringing them out of oblivion. The purpose of these gatherings lies in propagating and maintaining general interest in the original ancient sports games for the greater good of all.

This "Festival of Ancient Sports", which has its own symbol, is managed by a special committee. There is also an honorary committee whose members are supporters and propagators of these competitions.

Encouraged by the initial success and great interest shown in these events, the organisers have progressively extended the programme by following the example of the Olympic Games' organisation.

Besides the parades, salute and presentation of ancient sports by the teams, the programme includes cultural and artistic works such as painting, poetry and music on a sporting theme, as well as educational competitions for the "pioneer pupils" in primary schools.

The "Festival of Ancient Sports" is organised by the most qualified socio-sports leaders in Yugoslavia, with the contribution of the most eminent Olympic sportsmen and competitors who hand out the prizes.

The competitions are now held over a period of five days. The 5th edition was staged from 25th to 29th August 1976. The occasion began with an artistic work on the subject of



ancient sports and the "Festival of Pioneers" took place on 28th August with the participation of more than 300 boys and girls in a dozen different disciplines.

The most outstanding Yugoslavian chess players, including the grand master Svetozar Gligorić, played a match simultaneously on 25 boards.

458 competitors belonging to 26 teams paraded at the most important event, held on 29th August.

Matija Ljubek, the Yugoslav canoeist, gold and bronze medallist at the Games of the XXIst Olympiad in Montreal, lit the festival's flame. This ceremony, followed by the release of pigeons and several cannon shots, was opened by Mr. Boris Bakrac, member of the International Olympic Committee and Board member of the Yugoslav National Olympic Committee.

The competitions were held in 18 disciplines, followed by many cultural, artistic and traditional events which assembled naïve poets, musicians with ancient instruments, humorists and amateur singers. They performed an appropriate programme on the subject of ancient sports and customs in our area.

The improved organisation, the increased number of participants and a more varied programme will enable the "Festival of Ancient Sports" to play a major role in the research and assessment not only of ancient Yugoslav cultural traditions, but also of those of other interested peoples.

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