



Within the International Federations

The history of luge

by Jan Steler,

Secretary General

of the *Fédération Internationale de Luge de Course*

Luge is the latest sport to be included in the Winter Games. It is however the oldest winter sport for it has evolved over the centuries from a form of transport known back in history, that of the sledge.

The sledge without runners was used in Egypt to transport blocks of stone for the construction of the pyramids. It was also used with runners on ice and snow to transport heavy loads. In the Viking Museum in Oslo, among the objects found on the boat "Oseberg" which was discovered in 1904, are to be found carved wooden

sledges similar to the horsedrawn variety of the 17th century in cold countries. The eskimos still use today a special type of long, narrow wooden sledge drawn by reindeer or dogs.

However, the sledge has obviously not been simply a practical means of transport ; it has also given enjoyment on snow-covered slopes. In 1520 the German poet Hans Sachs described the joys of sledging, and some years later Conrad Schwarz mentions the "Rodel" (luge) in his writings.

The luge was thus already known in the 16th century, but it was not until the 19th century that repeated sliding on a device similar to the present day child's toboggan was seen on the slopes of the Swiss Alps. Thus, the

▲ *Mr. Steler (in the foreground) at the luge track in Lake Placid (USA).*

first luge competitions, usually organised on roads by Swiss hoteliers, took place.

The first official national and international competition was held in 1881 on the road between St. Wolfgang and Klosters. Following this a Davos farrier had the idea of coupling two luges, thus creating the bobsleigh.

But the luge continued its rise to popularity. The first run, the "Schatzalp", was laid out in Davos where the International Luge Club was founded in 1913. The same year the International Luge Sports Union was created in Dresden.

In 1914 the first European championships were held at Reichenberg, in which over 80 competitors from many countries took part.

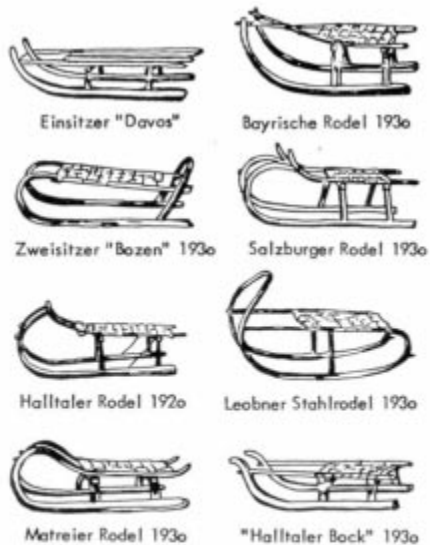
The growth of this marvellous sport was interrupted by the 1914-1918 war, but when peace was restored the International Luge sports Union continued its activities throughout central Europe. It grouped the German, Austrian and Swiss federations, and later that of Poland, where one of the first artificial race tracks was constructed at Krynica.

Bobsleigh developed alongside luge, setting itself up internationally as a federation created in 1924, the Fédération Internationale de Bobsleigh et de Tobogganing (FIBT), presided by the French Comte de la Frégolière.

In 1935 luge was incorporated into the FIBT and a "luge" section created. From then on luge championships took place annually. The section was made up of the national federations of Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Norway, Poland and Czechoslovakia. A new luge, lower than the previous model, made its appearance ; it was the real racing luge made by Martin Tietze, European champion in 1934, 1935, 1937 and 1938.

In its turn, the Second World War halted development of the sport but from 1945 onward, under the influence of Austria, luge became a very important sport in central Europe.

From 1952 this sport was influenced by one man in particular, Bert Isatsch, President of the Austrian federation. He strove energetically to make luge a sport in its own right



and to have it included in the Olympic events.

When the USA and Canada joined the luge section, the members decided to organise a luge congress every year. The first of these was held at Cortina d'Ampezzo in 1953, when the decision was taken to hold annual world championships, the first of which were organised at Oslo in 1955.

At the second luge congress, held in Davos in 1954, the national federations decided to create an International Federation independent of the FIBT. The same year, the IOC Session in Athens made the major decision to admit luge as an olympic sport.

But it was not until 1957 that the Fédération Internationale de Luge de Course (FIL) was officially created and recognised by the International Olympic Committee, meeting in Sofia, with Mr. Bert Isatitsch as its President.

At the IOC Session in Munich in 1959, President Isatitsch succeeded in having a luge run built for the IXth Winter Games. The Olympic inauguration took place at Innsbruck in 1964, on the artificial track at Igls, with a competition in which twelve countries took part.

In 1969, a remarkable event in the history of luge racing took place—the first refrigerated run was constructed at Königssee in the Federal Republic of Germany, followed by a second at Oberhof (German Democratic Republic) for the 1973 world championships. These runs are not dependent on atmospheric conditions and can accommodate thousands of enthusiasts from autumn to spring.

In February 1975 the first combined Olympic refrigerated run for both luge and bobsleigh was inaugurated at Innsbruck-Igls for the 1976 Winter Games.

In addition to the refrigerated runs, 120,000 licensed amateur athletes now practise luge on some thirty non-refrigerated artificial tracks and on innumerable natural runs over three continents—America, Asia and Europe—where they strive towards Olympic perfection.

Meanwhile, a number of new federations have joined the FIL and today the "luge family" includes the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Andorra, Austria,

Belgium, Canada, Spain, the United States, Finland, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Norway, Poland, the German Democratic Republic; the Republic of China (Taiwan), Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

J. S.

International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF)



- *The official film of the IAAF athletics world cup* which was held last year will have its world premiere at Düsseldorf (GER) on 1st March 1978.
- *The 6th IAAF international cross-country race*, the major event of the winter season, will take place in Glasgow (GBR) on 25th March 1978.
- *The best European athletes* will compete against their American counterparts at an indoor meeting on 14th March in Milan (ITA).

Federation Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron (FISA - rowing)



- *The 1978 world championships* (for men and women) are to be held from 1st to 5th November and will take place on Lake Karapiro in New Zealand.
- *The first Spanish international rowing basin*, 2,200 m long and 148 m wide, is to be constructed at Santander.
- *An artificial basin*, 2,500 m long and 200 m wide, will be built in Nice (FRA) by 1981.

**Federation Internationale
de Basketball
Amateur
(FIBA)**



● *For the 1978 men's world basketball championships* (at Manila - PHI, 1st to 14th October). matches will be played simultaneously at the Arenata Coliseum, which can hold 25,000 spectators, and the Rizal Memorial Stadium, containing 10,000 seats.

These championships will bring together 14 teams : USA, YUG and URS (the three best teams of the Olympic tournament and previous championships). PHI (team of the organising country), CAN (North America), DOM (Central America). BRA (South America), TCH (Europe), AUS (Oceania), PR of China (Asia) and SEN (Africa).

These 11 qualified teams will be joined by three invited teams : ITA, PUR, and KOR or JPN. The draw for the preliminary groups will take place on 1st June in Manila.

**Federation Internationale
de Bobsleigh
et de Tobogganing
(FIBT)**



● *On the track at Lake Placid*, which will be used for the next Winter Games, Erich Schaerer and Josef Benz (SUI) became world two-man bob champions at the beginning of February. During these competitions, they also broke the track record with 1:05.12.

● *The FIBT international calendar* for March provides for events in Lake Placid (USA, 4th and 5th), Königssee (GER, 6th to 12th) and Oberhof (GDR, 18th and 19th).

**Association Internationale
de Boxe Amateur
(AIBA)**



● As we go to press, we have heard that *Dr. J. L. Blonstein* (GBR), untiring President of the AIBA Medical Commission, died on

1st February. We join all the friends of the amateur boxing world in their grief.

**Fédération Equestre
Internationale
(FEI)**



● *The 1978 world championships*

— Dressage : 5th to 9th July at Goodwood (GBR).

— Show jumping (open) : 17th to 20th August at Aachen (GER).

— Driving : 24th to 27th August at Kecskemet (HUN).

— Three-day event : 14th to 17th September at Lexington (USA).

● *Moscow 1980*

The FEI has appointed the veterinary surgeon, Colonel P. Benazet (FRA), veterinary technical delegate for the Games of the XXIIInd Olympiad. Any veterinary questions concerning the Games may be sent to him in this capacity at the following address : Société d'encouragement pour l'amélioration du cheval de race en France, 11, rue du Cirque, 75008 Paris (FRA).

**Fédération Internationale
d'Escrime
(FIE - fencing)**



● *The world under-20's championships* will be organised by the Spanish federation from 23rd to 27th March 1978 in Madrid (ESP). The FIE Commissions will hold their first meetings of the year between 20th and 22nd.

● *The FIE Congress* will be held from 16th to 19th May 1978 in Monte Carlo's international congress centre.

● *The FIE currently recognises six continental or regional confederations* : the Asian, Central American and Caribbean, Oceanic, South American, Pan-American and Maghreb Confederations.



● *New Executive Committee of the Confederation of Central and North America and the Caribbean (Concacaf) :*

PT: Mr. Joaquin Soria Terrazas (MEX) ;
VPTs : Messrs. Hiram Sosa Lopez (GUA),
Gerard Bean (BER), Andrés Kamperveen
(SUR) ; *Ms :* Messrs. Roberto Ochoa Cordoba
(HON), Gene Edwards (USA), Roberto
Monroig (PUR).

● *The 14th ordinary Congress of the European Association Football Union (UEFA) will be held on 22nd April 1978 in Istanbul (TUR).*

● No fewer than 251 matches were required to qualify the 14 teams which will be taking part in *the final stage of the 1978 World Cup* with the German team (cup holder) and the Argentinian team (host country).

● *Mr. Théodore Laclé (TOG), former FIFA international referee, has become his country's Minister of the Interior.*



Ricardo Teixeira Havelange (aged 3) held by his grandfather, the President of the FIFA, made the draw for the World Cup, watched by Dr. Helmut Käser, Secretary General of the FIFA.

● The draw in Buenos Aires (ARG) on 14th January for the *1978 World Cup* resulted in the formation of the following groups :

- Group 1 (in Buenos Aires and Mar del Plata) : ARG, FRA, HUN, ITA.
Group 2 (in Buenos Aires, Rosario and Cordoba) : GER, MEX, POL, TUN.
Group 3 (in Buenos Aires and Mar del Plata) : AUT, BRA, ESP, SWE.
Group 4 (in Cordoba and Mendoza) : Scotland, HOL, IRN, PER.

The procedure will be as follows :

The two teams to finish top of each group at the end of the first round will qualify for the second round which will also be played on a points system (championship formula). The greatest difference in goals scored for and against will decide between teams gaining the same number of points in the first round matches. In the event of a further tie, the team scoring the most goals will qualify. A draw by lots will settle yet another tie.

The second round will comprise two groups of four teams. The first two in each group will play off in the final, and the second two will compete for 3rd and 4th places. The same system as in the first round will be applied to decide between the teams.

The final will be subject to 30 minutes' extra playing time in the event of a draw. If neither team takes the lead after this period, the match will be replayed with extra playing time if necessary. Another tie will be decided by a series of penalty shots.

**International Handball
Federation
(IHF)**



● *The roll of honour of the 9th world championships*, contested in Denmark between 26th January and 5th February 1978, shows : 1. GER, 2. URS, 3. GDR, 4. DEN, 5. YUG, 6. POL, 7. ROM. These seven teams have henceforth qualified for the 1980 Olympic tournament.

The German handballers have thus recovered their former glory as they were the first world title holders in 1938.

**Federation Internationale
de Hockey
(FIH)**



● *The FIH statutory Congress* will be held on 30th March 1978 in Buenos Aires (ARG).

● *The FIH Supreme Council* has been convened in London (GBR) on 5th March. The day before, its members will meet the members of the Men's and Women's Game Rules Committees in order to examine the union of these two committees which will be concluded by 1st January 1980.

**International Ice Hockey
Federation
(IIHF)**



● *The 1978 IIHF Summer Congress* will take place in Sirmione (ITA) from 1st to 8th July. The election of the Council features on the agenda.

● *A refresher course for coaches* is planned in Prague (TCH) from 9th to 11th May 1978.

Four subjects will be studied :

- Physical training.
- Techniques and tactics.
- Youth training.
- Evolution of the game.

**Fédération Internationale
de Lutte Amateur
(FILA - wrestling)**



● *No.1 of the FILA official bulletin* includes the FILA work programme for 1978, the minutes of the calendar congress, the FILA's major dates from 1978 to 1982, an article on the commissions' work procedures, the rules of sambo wrestling and a letter from the President of the FILA, Mr. Milan Ercegan, on the prohibition of competitions with wrestlers from non-affiliated federations.

● *The traditional freestyle wrestling world cup* will be held at Toledo (Ohio, USA) on 1st and 2nd April 1978, with the participation of the European, Asian, American and African champions. The first Greco-Roman wrestling world cup may be staged in Poland during September.

● *Five FILA courses for referees* will be organised between now and the beginning of April at Oulan-Bator (MGL, 7th-10th

Freiburg (GER, 17th-19th March), Haparanda (SWE, 31st March-1st April) and Aschaffenburg (GER, 31st March-2nd April).

● *The 1978 world championships* in freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling will be staged by the Mexican federation from 3rd to 9th October in Mexico.

**Fédération Internationale
de Natation Amateur
(FINA - swimming)**



● *The FINA Board* will be meeting in Mexico on 13th, 14th and 15th March 1978.

● On 6th January in Brisbane, *the first world record of 1978* was established by a 15-year-old Australian girl, Michelle Ford. In clocking 8:34.86, she improved by 18/100ths the world 800 m freestyle record held by the Olympic champion over this distance, Petra Thumer (GDR).

Two weeks later, she lowered her record to 8:31.30.

International Skating Union (ISU)



● Like last year, *the junior world speed skating championships*, held in Montreal (CAN), saw the triumph of the Heiden brother and sister (USA), Beth winning the 500 m and 1500 m and Eric the 500 m and 3000 m.

● *Addition to the ISU calendar*

The first ISU speed skating championships on a short track (110 m) will be held in Birmingham (GBR) from 7th to 9th April 1978.

Federation Internationale de Ski (FIS)



● *The Vasaloppett*, the most extraordinary cross-country skiing race, will this year assemble 10,000 participants, as the organisers have limited entries to this number.

Let us recall that this 85 km event, between Sallen and Mora (SWE), commemorates the historic journey on ski by the founder of modern Sweden, King Gustav Vasa, in 1521.

● *Winnders of the world Alpine skiing championships* (Garmisch-Partenkirchen - GER, 29th January-5th February):

	<i>Women</i>		<i>Men</i>	
Downhill	Annemarie Moser-Proell	AUT	Josef Walcher	AUT
Giant	Maria Epple	GER	Ingemar Stenmark	SWE
Special	Lea Soelkner	AUT	Ingemar Stenmark	SWE
Combined	Annemarie Moser-Proell	AUT	Andreas Wenzel	LIE

● *The 26th four-jump tournament* (Oberstdorf and Garmisch-Partenkirchen - GER, and Innsbruck and Bischofshofen - AUT), ended with Kari Ylianttila (FIN) overall winner.

Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB)



● *The FIVB Executive Committee* met in January at Lucerne - the first time in Switzerland. Discussions were particularly concerned with preparations for the 1978 Congress to be held in October in Italy.



Ingemar Stenmark

International Weightlifting Federation (IWF)



● *World record*

By lifting 221.5 kg at Bakou (URS), *Adam Saidoulaiev (URS, 21)* increased by 500 g the clean and jerk record in the 100 kg category held by his compatriot Schamaleidin Panakov.