

The Olympic Games - Athens 1896

VIII - Description of the Games

Sixth day

30th March

The press, interpreting the universal exultation, publishes enthusiastic articles regarding the victory by Louis, whose picture is published in all the papers, together with ample biographic details. The enthusiasm is imparted to the provinces and abroad, whither from the previous night thousands of cables have been sent, while congratulations pour in from everywhere. Pictures of Louis, lithographs, photos, of every size and shape are sold from this day onwards in their thousands and are hung up in all houses and shops. Several shops take on the name of the Marathon victor. Among the many donations made to him, noteworthy was that made through sums collected by the Greeks residing in England, who bought him a field, on condition that it should be named "Field of Marathon".

The hero of the day, Louis, a young man of twenty-five of sympathetic appearance and manly stature, belonged to a numerous hard-working and honest family of Amaroussion. Having served as a soldier in the 1st infantry regiment he showed there special swiftness of foot and endurance, and one of the members of the committee, Mr. G. Papadiamantopoulos, reading this by chance, took steps that he also should be included among the Marathon runners. The devout villager partook of the Holy Sacraments on the eve of the contest.

The programme of this day is also variegated. In the first place the postponed wrestling contest is resumed and completed in the morning in the stadium. Notwithstanding that the entrance to the stadium is free, the concourse of the public is very small in spite of the fact that the sight has appeal. The great emotion of the previous day however, made the public indifferent to all the other events.

Schumann and Tsitas then begin wrestling in the arena. Both are robust, but the German appears to be the more skilful. The contest remains undecided for a long time, when finally Schumann seizes his opponent firmly by the waist and, after many endeavours, throws him down. The spectators then demand by shouts that the other wrestler, Christopoulos, be brought, but this unfortunate athlete is hospitalised, having received a contusion of the shoulder blade on the previous evening. Thus Schumann remains the sole victor and the German flag is raised on the flag-pole and his victory is greeted.

Rifle range

The rifle range competitions continue and are extended from 9.a.m. until 3.p.m.

* Official report - See "Olympic Review" since N° 152-153.

1st Event

Pistol shooting at 30 metres

Six contestants take part of whom two are Greeks, N. Morakis and I. Frangoudis, an artillery captain. Each has the right to thirty shots.

The winner is the American Sommer Pain, with 24 successful shots and 442 marks. Second is the Dane Jensen.

2nd Event

Pistols at 2.5 metres

There are four competitors, namely Frangoudis, Orfanides, Nilsen and Merlin, the last of whom interrupted his shooting and withdrew. Each shoots 30 shots in five groups of six. The winner is Frangoudis with 23 successful shots and 344 marks. Second is Orfanidis.

3rd Event

Army Guns at 300 metres

25 marksmen take part in this event. Each has the right to 40 shots, in four groups of ten each. Frangoudis seems to be the best, but, at the declaration of other competitors who wish to participate, the contest is postponed for the morrow.

During the whole of the period of these contests at the rifle range, Prince Nicholas was in charge.

Swimming contests

During the morning of the same day the swimming events were held at the Piraeus, for which the weather was propitious and hence innumerable spectators went down from Athens to enjoy the sight.

The Bay of Zea, picturesquely surrounded by the most pleasant part of the city, constitutes a shallow and calm haven, communicating with the sea by the narrow entrance. The whole of the place is splendidly decorated owing to the festivity. On the quay is the royal platform, bedecked with flags. The judges consisting of K. Hatjikyriakos, Lt. Captain R.H.N., Th. Theoharis, Commander, Professor Hoppe, LG. Leonidas, Fabius and Kémény, are under the presidency of Prince George. They take up position on a suitably decorated barge anchored close to the shore. Other barges were destined for the representatives of the press and for the foreign athletes. Two huts set up on the shore serve, the one as a changing room, and the other as a provisional first aid room.

King George with the Crown Prince and Prince George, having gone down to the Piraeus, arrive by steam launch around 10.30 a.m. at the jetty where they are welcomed by the Mayor of the Piraeus. The bugle announces the start of the contests. The steam launch takes the contestants from the dressing room to the starting line, which is marked by a line of floating dried gourds. Here they jump into the sea and await.

1st Event

100 metres

Of the fourteen registered only thirteen participate, of whom two are Hungarian, one American, one Danish, one Swedish, and the remainder Greek. On the tiring of the pistol they all set forth swimming rapidly and the first to reach



The swimming events took place in Piraeus, in the small bay of Zea.

the finish, marked by a red flag close to the shore, is the Hungarian, Alfred Hajos, in the midst of applause from the shore and from the jetties. He covered the distance in 1:22 $\frac{1}{5}$. Second came E. Horafas from Cephallonia. The Hungarian flag is raised on the mast.

2nd Event

100 metres for sailors

In this contest only sailors of the navy participate. But from 11 entered only three take part, all Greeks, First comes the sailor I. Malokinis from Spetsai having covered the distance in 2:20 $\frac{2}{5}$ Second is S. Hasapis from Andros.

3rd Event

500 metres freestyle

In this 29 had entered but only three took part, of whom two were Greek and one Austrian. Among the Greeks Pepanos of Patras is included, having the reputation of being an excellent swimmer, having distinguished himself at other swimming competitions. The starting point is outside the bay, whither the contestants are taken by the steam launch. The Austrian, Neumann, finishes first and the Austrian flag is hoisted on the mast and applauded. He covered the distance in 8: 12 $\frac{3}{4}$. Pepanos comes second.

4th Event

1200 metres freestyle

Nine take part in this most important of all the swimming events, being a test of speed and endurance. The signal for starting was given, as for the previous event, by a gun shot. The spectators, to a high degree curious and impatient, await the appearance of the contestants. After a relatively long wait the first appeared, leading the second by 100 metres. When he reaches the finishing line he is recognised as being the Hungarian Hajos, the winner of the first race. The Hungarians become enthused and indulge in loud cheers as the Hungarian flag floats from the mast. Hajos covered the distance of 1200 metres in 18:22 1/2. Second comes I. Adreou, member of the Piraeus Walking Club, covering the same distance in 21:3 2/5.

Thus, it being past noon, the swimming events were completed.



The cycling races attracted large crowds

Cycling events

In the afternoon the cycling events are continued at the Phaleron cycling track under most favourable weather conditions. In consequence of this there is a large throng and the amphitheatrical stand is densely packed, making a fine sight, from 2 p.m. onwards. The naval band in the centre plays various select pieces. After the arrival of the Royal Family, with whom the Ring of Serbia arrived, the signal of the start is given by a bell.

1st Event

2 kilometres race

Four contestants take part, among whom the Greek Nikolopoulos. They are due to cycle six laps. They all start together, and at first the German Rosenmayer is in the lead who, however, tires quickly. The struggle results between the other three—the two Frenchmen, Flameng and Masson, and Nikolopoulos. Masson finishes first, having covered the distance in 4:58 1/5. Second is Nikolopoulos who covered the same distance in 5:0 1/5. The French flag is raised on the mast and is greeted with lively cheers.

2nd Event

10 kilometres race

Six contestants take part, among whom the Austrian Schmal, the German Rosenmayer, the two Frenchmen, Flameng and Masson, and the Greeks Collettis and Constantinidis. They are due to cycle thirty laps. They all set out, and in the early stages the bicycles of Collettis and Constantinidis collide and the cyclists fall. The contest continues among the others and Masson is declared the winner, having covered the distance in 17:54 1/5. Second is Flameng. Immediately the French flag is hoisted.

3rd Event

Single lap race

Eight cyclists take part in this event, including Nikolopoulos. Masson does the lap faster than all and proves himself an exceptional cyclist, covering the lap in 24 seconds. Second is Nikolopoulos in 25%. And, with the third hoisting of the French flag which was exclusively supreme on that day at the cycling track, the events are concluded early and the crowds depart.

Lawn tennis

In the afternoon of the same day, at the special grounds close to the Ilissos in Athens, the contests of these Games continue, of which the results had remained pending.

In the singles, the Englishman Boland is declared the winner and second is the Greek D. Casdaglis. In the doubles, the Englishman Boland and the German Traun are winners, while Casdaglis and D. Petrokokinos, both Greeks, are second.

In the evening, thanks to the propitious weather, great crowds gather in the brightly lit streets where the bands are playing. Many people go to the Great Theatre where the *Antigone* of Sophocles is being played with great success by amateur players who have rehearsed specially. The play is in the original ancient text, and the music of the choruses has been composed by Sakelaridis.

(to be continued)