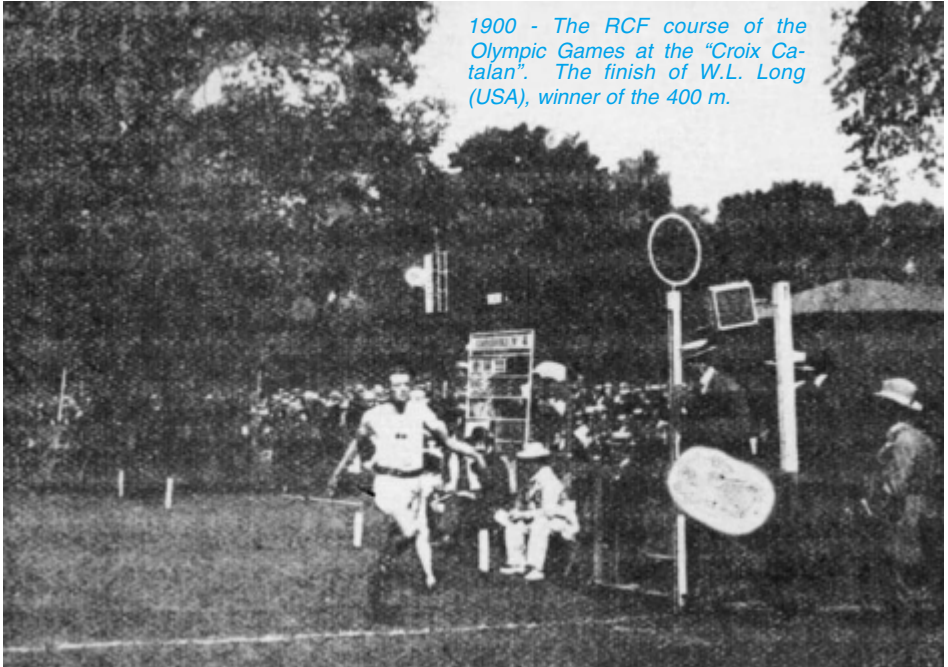


## A century in the service of sport



1900 - The RCF course of the Olympic Games at the "Croix Catalan". The finish of W.L. Long (USA), winner of the 400 m.

*On 15th January 1982, the President of the IOC, Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, attended in Paris the start of the celebrations commemorating the centenary of the founding of the Racing Club of France. We asked Lucien Daniau, a former journalist with AFP, to recall its history.*

Created in 1882 by a group of Parisian ex-lycée pupils besotted with cross-country running, the Racing Club of France is this year celebrating its hundredth anniversary. The long career of this club, one of the most prestigious in the world and one which embraces all sports, is intertwined with the history of sport in France. Its contribution to the national sporting heritage amounts to 46 Olympic medals, 33 world champions and recordholders, 73 European champions and recordholders, 11 European Cup champion club title holders and 1883 champion titles in France. To name but few of these champions, the following stand out : Jean Borotra, Jacques Brugnon, Jean-Paul Coche, Henri Cochet, Bernard Destremau, Alain Gottvalles, Jean-Claude Magnan, Alain Mimoun, Adrien Rommel, Jean Wadoux, Monique Berlioux and Christine Caron.

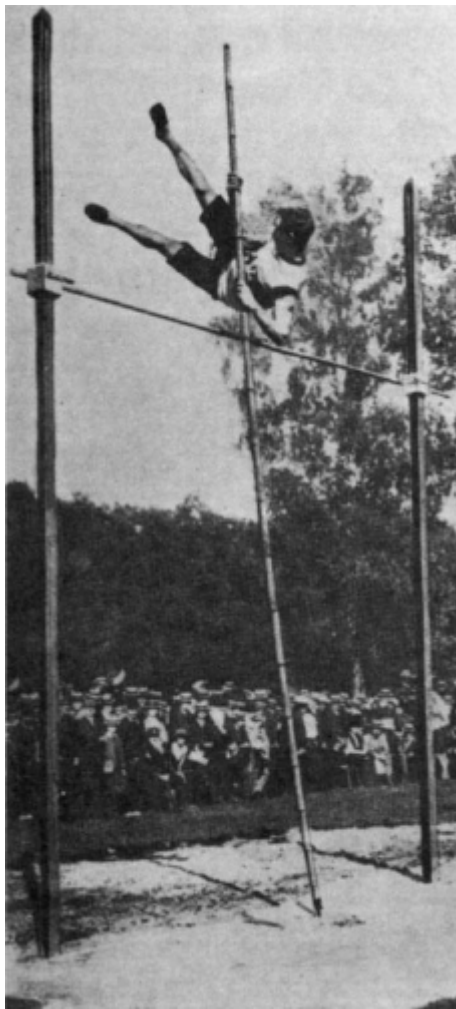
To mould these champions, the RCF had at its disposal trainers whose reputations

spanned the continents, including Joseph Maigrot and Suzanne Berlioux.

The Racing Club does not, however, wish to be accused of turning out champions like a factory.

*"Above all, we are seeking to maintain an atmosphere of friendship and conviviality within the club,"* states Mr. Roger Menard, thirteenth President of the RCF since 1968 who has been associated with the club for 60 years.

*"There is no generation war at the Racing Club. Yet, the development of sport poses problems for us. Amateurism is still our aim, but deprived of top class athletes, we should be doomed to disappear. We have also adopted a policy designed to assure our long life. Against "corruption" and "amorality", we have been led to agree to certain sacrifices in some of our sixteen sports sections as we have twenty-five teams participating in the national championships, nineteen of these in the*



*1904 - Many spectators looked on as Fernand Gonder broke the pole-vaulting world record (3 m 69) at the "Croix Catalan" with the help of his bamboo pole with its nail at the bottom.*

*first division. We are, moreover opposed to gigantism, being concerned above all with the complete development of the young in sport."*

The Racing Club of France has 20,800 members including 5,000 athletes participating in official competitions, 2,300 young peo-

ple in different schools for the young and those who practise sport for the pleasure of it. 54 monitors and trainers and 215 voluntary workers look after these athletes. The members of the Racing Club have at their disposal 133 hectares of sports' facilities distributed as follows :

- The "Croix Catalan". 7 hectares, which is mainly a leisure centre (2 swimming pools of 50 m and 33 m, a turf track, 4 volleyball courts, 50 tennis courts), but training-also takes place there for top-class tennis, swimming and athletics' competitions.
- The Olympic stadium of Colombes, 18 hectares, which was the setting for the Olympic Games in 1924 (400 m track, 12 football pitches and 4 rugby, one volleyball and one basketball court and 3 tennis courts).
- The golf club of « la Boulie », 106 hectares, (two 18-hole and one 9-hole greens, 2 rugby and 3 hockey pitches and 7 tennis courts).

To this already impressive list we can add the facilities available in the heart of Paris, and in particular at the headquarters of the Racing Club (2 swimming pools, 3 tennis courts, and halls for fencing, judo etc.).

The end of this century in the service of sport is only one phase in the history of the Racing Club of France. Thus 1982 should be a great vintage year for new impetus. The year will be distinguished by a programme rich in international meets the highlights of which will be a football match between Saint-Etienne and a strong foreign team (31/8). the first encounter in France between the Barbarians and the « XV du President » (16/10) and athletics with a European trophy, plus fencing, skiing, volleyball (European Cup), shooting, basketball, handball (return match for the World Championships, 14/5), badminton, lawn hockey, judo, golf and the National Tennis Championship. This full programme will culminate in a 1000 x 100 m swimming relay, a unique achievement in as far as the Racing Club of France can venture to enter a thousand different competitors from the Racing Club in one event alone.

On the fringe of these events, French folklore will not be forgotten, and Parisians will be able to relive the first hours of the Racing Club with a race across Paris during which the competitors will wear a jockey's coloured racing silks and carry a crop as was done in the Golden Age of the Racing Club of France.

*Lucien Daniau*