

Participants in the Olympic Games



COUNT JEAN DE BEAUMONT

SENIOR-MOST IOC MEMBER TO HAVE TAKEN PART IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

A finalist in the 110m hurdles at the world university championships, Count Beaumont was also selected for international football competitions and was the joint world shooting champion. In 1924 he participated in the shooting events of the Games of the VII Olympiad, in his home city of Paris. He is therefore the oldest living IOC member to have taken part in the Olympic Games. He pursued simultaneous careers in national sports administration, which included serving as president of the French National Olympic Committee

from 1967 to 1971, and in government and business, and he is currently the honorary president of the French Académie des Sports. He was elected as an IOC member in 1951 and has served on a number of commissions including the Olympic Aid Commission and the Rules Editing Commission. He chaired the IOC Finance Commission from 1972 to 1988, before becoming its honorary chairman in 1989. He was vice-president of the IOC from 1970 to 1974, and has been an honorary IOC member since 1990.

OR : What is your earliest image of the Olympic Games?

Taking part in them and attending the presentation of athletes, team by team. It was amazing: I had the feeling I was part of the world community.

OR : What is your best memory or favourite anecdote from the Olympic Games?

In 1924 I thought that I was a very good shooter. And in fact, I had won a number of trap- and skeet-shooting events in France. When I took part in the Olympic Games, I realized that my shooting technique was not compatible with the very mechanical techniques used by some of the American athletes. My results were totally disappointing and I failed to place anywhere.

I also remember taking part in the heats of the 100 metres as a member of the Paris University Club (PUC), I ran against the American Paddock, who was the world record-holder, and that also was an unforgettable moment. After an excellent start we were

neck and neck for the first 35 metres. Then, suddenly, Paddock seemed to take off, and I felt as if I were standing still. It was quite a disconcerting experience.

OR : In your opinion, what is the significance of the Centenary of the Olympic Games?

The Centenary is very significant in my opinion. It is the resurrection and continuation of an ideal. In earlier times, the Olympic Games were held in Greece, but now they may be held in any one of the five continents, depending on how the IOC votes. They have a strong, excellent influence on young people in many ways.

OR: What role do you feel sport and Olympism play in modern society?

I believe that the adage "*Mens sana* grow older. *in corpore sano*" - a healthy mind in a healthy body - is not only highly appropriate to Olympism, but also by extension to society as a whole. Today it is unthinkable that in a modern

nation, young people should be denied free access to sport. It is also true, however, that we should guard against the opposite extreme, which disturbs the biological equilibrium and creates monsters.

OR : What message would you like to give to today's youth?

For the soul to find its path, it must reside in a body that is as balanced and healthy as possible. You must not economize energy or effort, for it takes a great deal of both to build a life, to maintain emotional and physical well-being, and particularly not give in to the temptation to take the easy road.

I would also advise young people not to smoke. It is a foolish habit which eats away at the lungs and can ruin your life, both now and when you grow older.

