

BEIJING 2008

Lausanne, 6 November 2001

The President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Dr Jacques Rogge, has decided to appoint Mr Hein Verbruggen as Chairman of the Coordination Commission for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in Beijing, in 2008.

An IOC member in the Netherlands since 1996 as President of an International Federation (IF), Mr Verbruggen chaired the IOC Evaluation Commission for the 2008 Games from September 2000 to July 2001.

“Hein Verbruggen has all the qualities needed to chair the Coordination Commission. His experience as Chairman of the Evaluation Commission and his knowledge of the Olympic Movement make him the ideal person to accompany Beijing in its preparations for the Olympic Games in 2008”, the IOC President declared.

“It is a great honour for me to be entrusted with this responsibility. Having already worked as Chairman of the Commission which evaluated the candidate cities for the Summer Games in 2008, I am very pleased to be able to make a further contribution to the IOC during the forthcoming years of hard work that await us”, said Mr Verbruggen.

“I am confident that the Beijing Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) will be able to guarantee us ideal conditions for staging superb Games”, he added.

President of the International Cycling Union (UCI) since 1991, Mr Verbruggen is also Vice-President of the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) and has been a member of the Board of the World Anti-Doping Agency since 1999. A member of the Evaluation Commission for the Games of the XXVIII Olympiad in 2004 (1996.1997), representing the IFs, he has been on the Coordination Commission for these Games in Athens since 1998.

The creation of the Organising Committee for the 2008 Olympic Games is scheduled for December 2001, and the first Coordination Commission meeting should be held in the spring of 2002. The Commission members will be appointed in December this year. [Olympic News Flash, November 6, 2001]



Book Reviews

OLYMPIC FOOTBALL TOURNAMENTS 1908* 1912* 1920* 1924* 1928* 1936. Published by the International Federation of Football History and Statistics [IFFHS], Graf-von-Galen-Strasse 72, D-65197 Wiesbaden, Germany. Two volumes, with resp. 184 [Volume 1] and 194 pages [Volume 2]; written in four languages; English, Spanish, French and German. Price: DEM 45 per volume, plus DEM 8 for postage; for the two volumes DEM 90 and no postage. Hard cover and no ISBN number. Reviewed by Wolf Lyberg.

Let me start with a confession. When our editor and ISOH Secretary-General (knowing my interest in international football) asked me to review these books, my first thought was:

- Well, probably another of these many books made for ‘fast’ money, containing a lot of well known facts and a lot of ‘exclusive’ photographs.

How wrong I was!

Just opening the books for a first look made it say “click”, as it showed to be a completely different set of books as I had expected it to be. And reading its contents confirmed that these volumes are a treasure for every friend of football and its statistics.

We, who like figures and facts, have here a real gold mine to dig in, as a lot of experienced statistic experts in the sport of ‘soccer’ have made contributions.

Not only do we get the history of the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association*/ [FIFA] and the start of the great international tournaments. We also get small reports on each of the individual games in the various Olympic tournaments, containing figures for attending crowds and giving details of the teams, with the names of the players and the clubs for which they used to play.

There is also in each of the volumes a list of all players with dates of birth and death (if available). Any collector of such facts, like myself, will find a lot of data unknown until now. In spite of many letters which I wrote all over the world, and all in vain, I now, in a short time, found many important data!

My sincere congratulations go to Dr. Alfredo W. Pöge from Wiesbaden in Germany, and the other members of his editorial team. Dr. Pöge however, was the soul behind this most agreeable surprise.

Let me also lift my ‘borsalino’ [I have to find it somewhere, stowed away as it is], for the wonderful photos in the two books. They are in many ways unique, and there are plenty of these. Just

to see the team-photos from "anno dazumal" is a thrill, showing the improvised stand up of the teams in the most fantastic formations. Compared to the well rehearsed team-photos of today, this is real football history.

The book contains texts in four languages (English, Spanish, French and German).

I especially enjoyed some of the special stories of the great stars from the past, among them the Uruguayan favorites of my youth: Andrade and Nasassi.

These books are a treasure for every fan of the football sport and they should be a must in his or hers library.

And let me finally express the hope that the publishers [IFFHS] will one day continue with new volumes about the Olympic tournaments in the Games of 1948 up to 1972; as these tournaments are in many ways as unknown for statisticians, as the ones described in these two volumes!

URHEILUKUNNIAMME PUOLUSTAJAT. SUOMEN OLYMPIAEDUSTAJAT 1906-2000, by Markku Siukonen. 400 pages, in Finnish, with 300 photos. Published by Graface Oy, Kauppakatu 17 A 3, 40100 Jyväskylä, FINLAND. ISBN 951-98673-1-7. Price: 250 Finnish Marks [*42 (Euro)]. Reviewed by Matti Hannus.

Few countries have such an illustrious tradition of Olympic heritage and documentation as tiny Finland. Dozens of books have been compiled on the subject, yet something crucial was missing: a comprehensive register of all Finnish Olympians, including relevant personal data with a list of each athlete's major achievements.

For this enormous task, a young sports student started collecting material more than 20 years ago. With time passing, Markku Siukonen has proved his competence as an Olympic historian, as evidenced by his internationally acclaimed 12-part SUURI OLYMPIATEOS (Big Book of Olympic Games), the latest volume of which finally seals his life's work in an exemplary way.

As to Siukonen's calculations, there have been 2229 Finnish men or women deserving an epithet "Olympian", of whom 2012 actually competed in the Games, the rest having been reserves or having taken part in unofficial contests or art competitions. After much effort, Siukonen has managed to contact some 1200 of these people personally, or by letter or phone. Thanks to the archives of Finnish Olympic Committee and Finnish Sports Library in Helsinki, he was able to locate much valuable information before it would have been irretrievably too late.

Condensing the facts to the basics, the book includes each athlete's name(s), dates and venues of birth and death (still unknown in a few cases), occupations and other qualifications, clubs represented, highlights of sports careers and last but not least, pet names and any unusual facts. For instance, Urpo Korhonen, a 4x10K Nordic skiing relay Olympic Champion in 1952, who today is known as an author of several Finnish-Russian war novels.

Among Finnish Olympians, only one has become a cabinet member (Antti Kalliomäki, pole vault silver medallist in 1976), and there are eleven members of the Diet - but the most interesting

case unfortunately didn't quite make it. Urho Kekkonen (President of Finland 1956-1981) barely missing the 1924 Paris Olympic Games as a high jumper.

As Siukonen saps in his preface, "this new basic mapping of Finnish Olympic sport hopefully serves as a foundation for many various kinds of analyses and summaries". Understandably some perplexing question marks remain. Karl ("Kalle") Nieminen, the first Finnish Olympic marathoner (London 1908), later moved to the United States, working as a professional runner and businessman, after which his traces disappear. Where did he die, and when?

There are no major errors in the book, although - typically, one might say - some of the athletes interviewed, remembering wrong or perhaps on purpose, claim things that just do not bear the actual facts.

Due to the tight printing schedule towards the end of this immense project, some questions unfortunately remained uncorrected or unchecked. Also, there seems to be some inconsistency as to the material that has been included and that has not.

The oldest living Finnish Olympian as at autumn 2001 was Kaarlo Tuominen, now aged 93, 3000 metres steeplechase silver medallist in Berlin 1936.

(Note: Anyone interested in obtaining this publication, can order it direct from the Publisher at the address in **Jyväskylä**, as mentioned above)