

## ***DISTANCE RUNNING AT 1900 OLYMPICS***

by E. Ion Pool (GBR)

Olympics, not known as such, either “Paris Championships” or “the Great Exhibition Meeting of 1900.”

For the 5,000 metre team race our (GBR) team of Bennett, Robinson, Rimmer and Tysoe looked invincible. At the last moment the French decided that teams of five would count. [George] Orton (CAN/USA) was officially banned from the UK team, so the sprinter [Stanley] Rowley (AUS/GBR - Amateur Athletic Association) volunteered. Although he quickly ran himself out he managed to finish somehow. However, Robinson and Tysoe were passed by two Frenchman and “so spoiled the complete beauty and harmony of a great and glorious victory.”

The marathon turned out a dismal fiasco. The whole conduct of the race on the part of the responsible officials, beginning with the tardy date of the announcement abroad down to the smallest details providing, or rather failing to provide, for the convenience of contestants on the fatal day, and the entire absence of precautions to ensure fair play, can only be characterized by the one word “Presposterous” - with a capital P. Add to this the non-sporting instincts of the French populace and it will not be necessary to cite fully the details of the troubles that invariably beset the strangers only. At the best it proved a steeplechase, with bicycles and cars for obstacles. 25 miles is really too far for a steeplechase, but that was a mere circumstance. Suffice it to say that when the three placed men in last year’s London to Brighton GAYP found it necessary to retire inside of four miles and [Arthur] Newton (a well-known long distance record breaker in the States), who was unwise enough to finish, took longer than walking time to complete the distance, it shows that things were very, very wrong. I could a further tale unfold . . . but “no mattah.”

*[Note: The above was published in the magazine of the South London Harriers in 1900. It was provided by British sports historian and novelist Peter Lovesey who sent it to President Ian Buchanan. E. Ion Pool was one of the three British runners who started the 1900 Olympic marathon in Paris, but, as noted, he failed to finish.]*