

BOOK and FILM REVIEWS

The Golden Book of the Olympics. by Erich Kamper and Bill Mallon. (Published in Milan, Italy by Vallardi & Associati, 1993 [FAX 392-659-0557]. In English. ISBN 88-85202-35-7. Price \$55 USA) Reviewed by Tony Bijkerk.

The writers of ***The Golden Book of the Olympics*** hardly have to be introduced to the reader's of this journal. But for the sake of open-mindedness, I prefer to do so. Erich Kamper (*22 June 1914) is the honorary president of ISOH and has been researching the Olympic Games since the 1930's - almost sixty years! His earliest book ***The Encyclopaedia of the Olympic Winter Games*** dates back to 1964 and his ***Encyclopaedia of the Olympic Games*** was published in 1972. The data in that book were used for the database of the München Olympic Games. Kamper followed these with ***Lexikon der 12,000 Olympioniken*** in 1975 and ***Lexikon der 14,000 Olympioniken*** in 1983, topping it off with ***Olympische Heroen*** in 1991.

Bill Mallon (*2 February 1952) is well known as the secretary-general of ISOH since its establishment. He has also published quite a few books on the Olympic Games, including his first statistical work ***A Statistical Summary of the 1904 Olympic Games*** in 1981. This was followed by ***Quest for Gold: The Encyclopaedia of American Olympians*** in collaboration with Ian Buchanan of England, and his ***The Olympics: A Bibliography***, both in 1984. His most recent works were ***The Olympic Record Book*** in 1987 and ***The Unofficial Report of the 1920 Olympics*** in 1992.

Together these two leviathans of Olympic history have now produced ***The Golden Book of the Olympic Games***, a volume with no less than 672 pages of Olympic know-how of the highest degree. In close cooperation they have re-written all that is currently known about the Olympics, but they have done so in a completely new way.

The book starts with a chapter containing all kinds of records, like "Most Medals," "Most Gold Medals," and so on; this is, of course, valuable stuff for each journalist writing about the Olympic Games. But personally I thought that this chapter was a bit too much of the kind. Still, everything that one can think about is in this chapter and never has this information been collected so well-ordered.

The next chapter contains the results of the Olympic Games by sport, beginning with Archery, going through the Summer Sports, via the Winter Olympic Sports, and ending with Discontinued Sports, Demonstration Sports, and the discontinued Art Contests.

Still only half of the book is now finished, because in the next section are given all Olympic records by nation! This section is also new in its conception because for each country is given its official name, area, population, capital, location, language(s), religion(s), and government. Each nation's Olympic history is then detailed followed by a listing of all that nation's Olympic medalists, giving full name, dates of birth and death, and a listing of all Olympic medals won. A real herculean effort!

Of course, a statistical book like this is never complete. Every day Olympians can be born or can die, and each one of us who is interested in this kind of data knows how difficult it is to get the dates of death from many of the earliest Olympians. So do not despair when this list is not complete enough for your taste. It is a valuable summing up of all that is currently known about this subject.

At the end of the book a short description about each Olympic Games has been given. But it was a disappointment that I could not find a page about the very first Olympics in Athens in 1896. Why have these Games been left out? Could it be that the new chapter was accidentally left out by the printer (see below)? Pages concerning the Olympic on Television, Candidate Cities, and the section on the Ancient Olympic Games finish this very valuable, but sometimes quite hectic, book. **Everything** is there, but sometimes you have to search for it with diligence. *The Golden Book of the Olympics* by Erich Kamper and Bill Mallon contains 196 black/white photographs, mostly of the medalists, and that in my humble opinion is correct, because the athletes are still the kingpins of the Olympic Games.

[*Editor/Author Note:* Six pages were omitted from the book by the printer - the page containing the information on the 1896 Olympics, and five (5) pages with the results of women's athletics beyond the 400 metres. We apologize for this omission which has been corrected for future printings. An errata sheet containing the missing information is now provided with the book and is available from the publisher. - BM]

Athletes of the Century. by Peter Heidenstrøm. (Published in Wellington, New Zealand by GP Publications, 1992. In English.) Reviewed by Ian Buchanan.

In this large, well-illustrated history of New Zealand track & field athletics, Peter Heidenstrøm has struck an excellent balance between the statistical and the biographical. Although never fielding a large Olympic team, New Zealand has produced an impressive array of track & field champions with Lovelock, Read, Halberg, Snell, and Walker being joined by Yvette Williams as their only female gold medalist. The story of these, and many others, is well told and I was particularly interested to read, for the first time, of Lovelock's one-mile time trial of 3:56 in the early summer of 1936. This was apparently well-timed although a later secret trial in 3:52.2 is rather more suspect.

The story of the early days of the sport in New Zealand is well-researched and presented in an entertaining manner and the author has devised a new system of presenting all-time lists. At first, I found the system somewhat difficult to follow but once having mastered it, I found that it has much to commend it. I feel that a list of National Champions should have found a place in a book of this nature, but the absence of such a list does not materially affect the overall quality of the work which I can thoroughly recommend.

The book is available from G. P. Publications Ltd., P.O. Box 12 052, Thorndon, Wellington, NEW ZEALAND and is priced at NZ\$49.95. However, New Zealand postage charges add considerably to the cost with prices, including sea mail postage (air mail in brackets) rising to: Europe - NZ\$70.95 (NZ\$89.95); North America - NZ\$67.95 (NZ\$82.95).

The Seoul Olympics: The Inside Story. by Park Seh-Jik. (Published in London, by Bellew, 1991. In English. £12.95 UK. ISBN 0-947792-96-1) Reviewed by Bill Mallon.

Park Seh-Jik was the President of the Organizing Committee of the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988. This book is his story of the organizing committee and, as such, the exact details of the inner workings of the Seoul Organizing Committee can be revealed by the man who knew them best. While the book is interesting in parts, once again, only a few of its 167 pages are devoted to the actual Olympic Games and the athletes and the events themselves.

This book reminded me a great deal of *Made in America: His Own Story* by Peter

Ueberroth, which was really the story of the organizing committee of the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984. Both books are heavy on self-aggrandizement and to get a true story of the good bad accomplished by both committees, books by other authors should probably be consulted.

Some of Park's revelations are quite interesting. I would bet that few Olympic historians know that he fasted every Friday for three months preceding the Olympics so that his spiritual devotion could be added to that of his countrymen to make the Olympics a success. Revealed is the Organizing Committee's panic when, the night before the opening ceremonies, the cards for the card show were not available because the card-maker had missed his schedule. Only some last minute manipulations managed to get the cards to the stadium for the spectators to use. Also revealed was the agonizing that went on over the choice of the final torch bearer and the anger of Sohn Kee-Chung when he was told that he would not be the last torch bearer, but would "only" bring the flame into the stadium.

Perhaps the most useful portion of the book deals with the manipulations between the organizing committee, the IOC, and the North Koreans who were insisting on hosting at least a portion of the Games. Also explored in detail were the political difficulties faced by the Korean Organizing Committee, which represented a nation which did not have diplomatic relations with many of the former Communist nations.

Multiple interesting tidbits are found in this book. Still, it becomes difficult to fathom how "great" these Games actually were, if one listens strictly to Park Seh-Jik. The Games were free from Legal challenges, they made more money than any Olympics before them, but of course, money was never emphasized, they helped unite North and South Korea to a degree never before known, sports and culture were completely synthesized as never before, and, by his own words, the Seoul Olympics had the five "superlatives:" the most effective security, the maximum economy, the most profits, the best achievement (however that was measured), and the greatest harmony with the largest participation. At any time, I expected to read that the Seoul Olympics had cured poverty, united the Israelis and Palestinians, and probably found a cure for AIDS and cancer all at once.

This is in no way to diminish the Seoul Olympics, which were an amazing spectacle, an excellent Olympics, and overcame many obstacles to achieve all this. I would think it is natural, to some degree, for the president of the organizing committee to congratulate oneself a bit and, as stated, Peter Ueberroth did exactly the same thing after the Los Angeles Olympics. I believe Pasqual Maragall's book about the Barcelona Olympics has just come out (it will be reviewed when received). I would expect something along the same lines. After all, these Olympics of the 80's and early 90's have been very successful. Still, one wishes the authors could be a bit more objective.

Olympic Champions in Manchester. by James W. Bancroft. (Published by Aim High Productions, 280 Liverpool Road, Eccles, Manchester M30 0RZ, ENGLAND. 52 pages. In English. £5.95 UK & Europe, £6.95 USA and others (airmail). ISBN 1-872619-05-3) Reviewed by Ian Buchanan.

Author James Bancroft is primarily a military historian but he has done an excellent job with his first sports book. The emphasis is biographical rather than statistical and from interviews with relatives of the gold medalists from Manchester, Bancroft has produced some fascinating stories. The victory of the Manchester Osborne Swim Club in the 1900 Olympic water polo tournament provided a rich seam for research and the author has explored it well in addition to tracing some rare photographs of the early water polo teams.

I am pleased to add this book to my library and from it I was, at last, able to identify the flag carrier for Britain at the 1912 Opening Ceremony. Surprisingly, the book had no connection with Manchester's recent unsuccessful Olympic bid and perhaps others will be encouraged to pursue the life stories of Olympians from a particular city or region.

Barcelona '92: 16 Days of Glory. (Written, directed and produced by Bud Greenspan. Narrated by Nick Michaels. A Cappy Productions Movie, New York, New York. 132 minutes.) Reviewed by Bill Mallon.

The Olympics are, at best, a magical spectacle bringing together the world's athletes in a wonderful spirit of camaraderie and peaceful co-existence. The essence of this Olympic spirit and flavor is captured for us quadrennially in the movies of Bud Greenspan, himself an ISOH Member. ***Barcelona '92: 16 Days of Glory*** is the third in his series of "glory" movies, following on the heels of ***Los Angeles '84: 16 Days of Glory*** and ***Seoul '88: 16 Days of Glory***.

But they cannot be this good. Or can they? You watch this movie and you wonder what the press and the media has been missing. Why can't NBC or other television networks do this? How can anyone tell stories this well? How can someone pull at your heartstrings so strongly? We talk about the Olympic Spirit and Olympism and the Olympic Movement, and those old bromides that cannot be defined. They are herein defined: Watch this movie or any movie Bud Greenspan does about the Olympics and you will know. You will just know.

Barcelona '92: 16 days of Glory tells ten (10) stories about the 1992 Olympic Games. Each one is touching, each one is emotional, each is beautifully photographed. The narration is typical Greenspan - understated, never trying to rise above the story, but always summing up wonderfully what everyone must be feeling. The narration this time is a poignant one, for Bud Greenspan's brother, David Perry, has always been the "Voice of Cappy Productions." Perry recently passed away and there was felt to be no way to match his deep, measured, melodious voice; it was like trying to find a replacement for John Facenda (†1983), the "Voice of NFL Films," he who would somberly intone about the "frozen tundra of Lambeau Field." But Nick Michaels comes close to being the perfect replacement for Perry; (he would be, too, for Facenda).

The movie begins by telling the well-known touching story of Derek Redmond, the British runner who tore a hamstring in the 400 metre semi-finals and continued on to the finish, hobbling, only to be joined by his father, who burst from the stands to help him finish. Michaels notes that the episode summarizes "All that is good in sport." It cannot get better than this, one wonders? Why would Greenspan start with that story?

But it does. Next is the story of Estonia's Erika Salumäe and her victory in the women's match sprint cycling and her friendship with American Connie Paraskevin-Young. This is followed by stories on Khalid Skah and the 10,000 metre controversy; and Trent Dimas' upset victory in the men's horizontal bars in gymnastics. Other stories include those on Pedro Morales, and the Abbagnale brothers attempt to win a third consecutive gold medal in rowing, only to be thwarted by Britain's Searle brothers in the coxed pairs. The last story concerns Evelyn Ashford and her final Olympic appearance and summarizes her amazing career. Michaels finishes the sports stories by stating, "Perhaps the career of Evelyn Ashford can best be understood in the words that have been used to define the hero. Simply: 'The hero lasts a few seconds longer.'"

But there were three stories that stood out for me. One dealt with Yael Arad, the Israeli judoka who won a silver medal and dedicated it to the 11 Israeli athletes who had been savagely murdered at the 1972 München Olympics. Greenspan follows Arad both before and after the Olympics in Israel as she meets with the families of the deceased athletes and visits their memorial. She is disappointed in her silver medal but realizes she has done something no

Israeli ever had, so that the world would never forget the eleven who didn't get that chance.

Another memorable vignette concerned the women's 10,000 metre race which turned out to be a battle between Ethiopia's Derartu Tulu and South Africa's Elana Meyer. Frought with political overtones, a battle between a black African and a white South African, it was an emotional moment. Interviews with both athletes were telling. Tulu stated, "I didn't like it when my country didn't go to the Olympics (1984/1988). And I didn't think it was right that Elana Meyer's country (South Africa) could not go to the Olympics. I met her at Barcelona and I liked her immediately. I didn't care that she was white and I was black."

To me, however, the best story, if such a distinction among greatness in storytelling can be made, was the one concerning Silken Laumann, the Canadian sculler. Laumann, you may recall, was 1991 world champion and would have been favored to win the Barcelona gold medal in the single sculls. However, on 16 May 1992, while training in Essen, Germany, she was hit by another shell which drove a section of her boat into her right leg. She sustained an open fracture with muscle and nerve damage. She was not expected to recover in time to compete but did although she wore a brace on her right leg to support the foot which no longer functioned normally because of the nerve damage. She persevered when nobody thought she would be able to compete, and she won a bronze medal.

Laumann commented, "I felt extremely happy. Having the accident made me appreciate being an Olympian so much more. And I appreciated the whole experience for what it was and I was trying to be the best I could be and get the most of myself. And I think that is the true spirit of the Olympics."

But next came the words of Greenspan, spoken by Michaels, that would bring all but the hardest of souls to tears, "Now that it is over, now that the race has been run, millions throughout their lifetime will remember the courage of Silken Laumann this day. One that celebrates all that is right in the human spirit. As the victory ceremony takes place, one columnist is already writing the lead paragraph to all that took place here on Lake Banyoles. 'Canada won four gold medals and one bronze in rowing at the Barcelona Olympics. Let the word go out that on this occasion the bronze medal shines as brightly in the Barcelona sun as any of the gold.'"

As an orthopaedic surgeon, I was stunned at the accomplishment of Silken Laumann. As a fan of the Olympics, I was stunned at the accomplishment of Bud Greenspan in bringing us this wonderful movie. You must see it.

Cool Runnings. (Directed by John Turteltaub. Produced by Dawn Steel. 102 minutes.) Reviewed by Bill Mallon.

Cool Runnings is a movie of bad Olympic history. It is the story of the Jamaican bobsled team which competed, against many odds, at the 1988 Olympic Winter Games in Calgary and became media darlings. The movie is also cliché-ridden and has a stereotypical story line in which athletes fight against the odds, work hard, turn doubters into fans, and succeed, at least to a degree in this case, in the end.

I would not, for a minute, expect any ISOH Members to respect it at all for its flagrant lack of respect for many things Olympic and the liberties it takes with the true story line. The movie will also win no awards. The acting is only fair, and comedic farces, which this borders upon, never win any acting awards anyway.

Having said all the above, I really enjoyed the movie. It is funny and at the same time a classic "feel-good" movie. If you have two hours and want to watch a movie with somewhat of an Olympic theme, I would recommend it if you simply want to leave at the end with a warm, fuzzy feeling.