

1920: Bronze at 3,000 meter team;  
1924: Silver at 10,000 meter; bronze at 5,000 meter;  
1928: Bronze at 5,000 meter, bronze at 10,000 meter;

He was eliminated in the heats at 1,500 meter in 1920, with the team at 3,000 meter in 1924 and again at 1,500 meter in 1928. In 1924, Wide collapsed in the infamous cross country race, staged on one of the hottest days in Parisian history. Not yet fully recovered, he is reported to have said: "Now I can die in peace. This was my last race in the Olympics". He stayed alive, however, for another 72 years!

Wide set three individual, officially ratified, world records:

June 7, 1925: 8:27.6 at 3,000 meter in Halmstad;  
June 11, 1925: 5:26.0 at 2,000 meter in Stockholm;  
Sept. 12, 1926: 9:01.4 at 2 miles in Berlin.

He also ran the last leg when his Stockholm club IF Linnéa set a world record at 4x1,500 meter: 16:37.0 in Norrköping on Aug. 2, 1925, 'while a previous mark at 2 miles, 9:08.4 wasn't ratified because the race was arranged with (too) short notice.

"The Flying Schoolteacher" was mostly overshadowed by his former country men Paavo Nurmi and Ville Ritola, "The Flying Finns". Wide beat them only twice each, Ritola in the heats at 5,000 meter in the 1924 Olympics and in a 2 miles indoor race in New York City in 1927, and Nurmi in world record races on consecutive days in 1926 in Berlin.

On Sept. 11 at 1,500 meter, Wide was 2nd (3:51.8, personal record) and Nurmi 3rd (3:52.8) behind German Otto Peltzer (3:51.0), who bettered Nurmi's world record by 1.6 sec.

On Sept. 12 at 2 miles, Wide won, 3.6 sec ahead of Nurmi and bettering the 22-year-old world mark of Alf Shrubbs (GBR) by 7.2 sec. In his early days on the track, Wide was considered slow in the finish, but with the years he improved considerably.

Defeating Nurmi gave Wide the 1926 Swedish Athlete of the Year award; an honor he shared with swimmer Arne Borg.

The international matches between Finland and Sweden were introduced in 1925, but Wide never entered against the arch rivals from his country of birth! After placing 5th against France and the USA in Paris in 1920, Wide won all his six races in country matches 1922 to 1931 (the last being a B match vs. Norway in 1931). He won 12 Swedish individual titles (1,500 meter, 5,000 meter, cross country) 1922 to 1928, and the US AAU indoor title at 2 miles in 1929. Other personal records included 14:40.4 (1925) at 5,000 meter and 30:55.2 (1924) at 10,000 meter.

A neighbor and good friend of Per Albin Hansson, Swedish prime minister from 1932 to 1946, Wide entered politics for the Social Democratic party in the 1930's. As a member of the regional Stockholm parliament from 1938, he was able to influence decisions concerning the development of school and youth sports, matters very dear to his heart.

## OBITUARIES

The coordinator of the obituaries for all Olympic medalists over the world, Ove Karlsson in Sweden, would like to request our readers to inform him about Olympic medalists from their respective countries, who have died in recent years (1993-1996) after the editorial deadline for the "Golden Book of the Olympic Games" by Bill Mallon and Erich Kamper, which is the reference book on this subject.

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EDVIN WIDE, 1896-1996

By Ove Karlsson

Edvin Wide (Sweden), one of the world's leading middle and long distance runners in the 1920's, died June 19, 1996 four months past his 100th birthday.

Born February 22, 1896, in Finland (Kemiö in the Turku archipelago), Wide came to Sweden in 1918 and became a Swedish citizen just in time for the 1920 Olympics. Wide never won an Olympic title, but five medals still make him one of Sweden's foremost Olympians:

(Already in 1925 Wide was a board member of the Swedish School Sport Association). Professionally, Wide retired in 1959 as head master of the elementary school in the Stockholm district of Abrahamsberg. A sculpture of Wide, by the Swedish artist Ingrid Geijer-Rönningberg, was unveiled in May 1946, and is now placed in the immediate vicinity of the 1912 Olympic Stadium, where Wide was the darling of the crowd in the 1920's.

Wide left competitive sport in 1931, but continued to practice running for many years. He was still skiing after his 90th birthday, and jogging regularly at the age of 95!

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