

THE ATHLETES OF THE GAMES OF THE OLYMPIAD

BY WOLF S. LYBERG.

ONCE UPON A TIME. . .

From my childhood, I remember that all fairy-tales start with this sentence!

Statistics (or rather figures)-to tell the truth-have never been my strongest side. Even so, while my father was a banker! Nevertheless, I must confess that I once started studying statistics at the Stockholm University, with our leading professor at the helm, but after eight months I gave up and was 'swallowed up' by journalism. And as a statistician (and researcher), I sometimes feel like a cat among ermines.

I must also admit that perhaps some more study in statistics would have been appropriate for the work I started around 1991, when I decided to try and bring some general order in the truly fantastic notes on the Olympic athletes of all times, which our much admired Olympic expert Lennart DAHLLÖF had left behind as his inheritance, and which he had gathered in some forty binders. At the time it seemed to be a "mission impossible"!

But already at the IOC-Session from 1993 in Monte Carlo, I had the pleasure to hand over to IOC-President Samaranch four volumes, containing 1.800 pages, weighing eight kilograms, with the names and facts on some 73.000 Olympic athletes, participants in the Olympic Summer Games.

Although I had received much help from fellow researchers, such as Bill Mallon (USA), Ian Buchanan (Great Britain), Walter Teutenberg (Germany), Magne Teigen (Norway), Hans Agersnap Larsen (Denmark), Giuseppe Odello, (Italy), Juan Fauria-Garcia (Spain), Bob Miyakawa (Japan) and last but not least Anthony Bijkerk (Netherlands) and some of the National Olympic Committee's, I

was very much aware of the sad fact that many working mistakes would still exist. Only think, how 'unreadable' names must have been misread or even misunderstood by people not used to such names from 'far-away-countries' and how they were misspelled or written down incorrectly from the start. The human factor must also have played an important role - speaking for myself above all.

I, for myself, had no reason to doubt the correctness Dahllöf had left behind, but I never had a real chance to check out and to compare. Especially in those cases where the athletes in teamsports always had the tendency to be over-represented, by counting entered athletes, which in many cases did not actually mean that they all really started or played! After having studied all the official match-reports from all team-sports, it was evident to me that too many athletes had been registered as participants. Especially so, as many International Federations also counted reserves sitting on a team-bench, as having taken part in the match. In the printed summaries, I have therefore noted in all teamsports the number of games played by each participant.

In the new summaries (made up sport by sport) in order to avoid too heavy and vulnerable volumes-I have also taken the time to try and check every name against the Official Reports and other available documentation.

In those new volumes, I have also decided to register athletes who started for two different nations, mentioning only his or her new country and thus facilitating a general view of the Olympic starts made in total. These athletes are of course, entered in the tables (summaries) of how the NOC-teams started Games after Games in each sport.

In my summaries, I also mention the names and years of athletes with most participations, the number of paying spectators in the sport for each Games, and finally also a summary of how the medals were distributed (per NOC) in each event and each year.

Of course, it has been a long and time-consuming work - and it is by far not yet ready. In the table at the end of this

short article, there are figures from twenty-seven of the twenty-eight sports on the Olympic programme, and my total count for the participating athletes in those twenty-seven sports is 64.180 (from which 10.442 are women). But I still have to finish the work on the biggest sport, track and field (with 15.000 athletes participating). While I am proceeding with an input of about 75 to 100 names per hour in

THE PARTICPANTS PER SPORT IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES FROM 1896 - 1996

SPORT	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	Total	Nations		
											Wom.	Men	Tot.
ARCHERY	608/247	81/37	27/11	8/1	2	-	-	-	-	726/296	54	60	65
BADMINTON	234/106	67/36	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	301/142	34	42	45
BASEBALL	284	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	302	-	12	12
BASKETBALL	1.881/375	417/75	77/4	19/2	2	-	-	-	-	396/456	18	50	53
BEACHVOLLEY	77/31	3/3	4/2	-	-	-	-	-	-	84/36	14	18	21
BOXING	3.791	377	49	1	-	-	-	-	-	4.128	-	167	167
CANOEING	1.640/305	480/90	124/21	29/4	6/1	-	-	-	-	2.279/421	43	65	66
CYCLING	3.615/179	526/42	87/7	10/2	-	-	-	-	-	4.238/230	46	121	123
EQUESTRIAN	1.296/177	315/38	111/19	22/5	18/3	8/1	1	2	-	1.773/243	33	49	52
FENCING	2.235/356	737/117	314/46	98/29	17/4	4/1	2/1	-	-	3.407/554	52	82	85
FOOTBALL	3.934/122	222	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.177/122	8	75	75
GYMNASTICS	2.898/1.098	537/171	107/30	7/2	2	-	-	-	-	3.551/1.301	54	64	70
HANDBALL	1.261/397	287/80	39/10	3	-	-	-	-	-	1.590/487	20	29	33
HOCKEY	2.014/362	508/82	129/12	21/1	-	-	-	-	-	2.672/457	16	36	37
JUDO	1.165/213	260/48	32	5	1	-	-	-	-	1.463/261	64	129	131
MOD.PENTAT.	494	123	26	6	1	-	-	-	-	650	-	53	53
ROWING	4.737/707	912/155	188/25	30/4	3	1	-	-	-	5.871/891	40	61	62
SHOOTING	2.807/235	717/64	257/23	75/3	27/1	6	2	-	-	3.891/326	79	130	132
SOFTBALL	120/120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	120/120	6	-	6
SWIMMING	5.465/2.301	1233/466	234/82	16/6	2	-	-	-	-	6.950/2.855	137	106	139
TABLETENNIS	235/110	80/42	17/4	-	-	-	-	-	-	332/156	52	60	71
TENNIS	558/177	141/50	15/9	1	-	-	-	-	-	715/236	53	61	69
VOLLEYBALL	1.164/500	298/129	63/24	7/2	-	-	-	-	-	1.532/655	22	30	32
WATERPOLO	1.279	409	120	27	4	-	-	-	-	1.839	-	43	43
WEIGHTLIFT.	1.489	409	94	19	1	-	-	-	-	2.012	-	124	124
WRESTLING	2.892	719	210	40	6	-	-	-	-	3.867	-	113	113
YACHTING	2.578/152	523/42	149/3	40	18	3	-	2	1	3.314/197	52	104	106
TOTAL	50.661/8.270		2.494/332		110/9		5/1		1				
		10.399/1.767		484/61		22/2	4			64.180/10.442			

To read these figures:

1. the figures 1 to 9 above the lists, indicate the amount of athletes participating from one, up to nine times, in the Olympic Games!

2. The first figure always represents the total amount of participants, while the second figure represents the amount of female participants. For instance: The figures: 50.661/8.270, indicates that 50.661 participants in total, from which 8.270 women took part in the Olympic Games for the first time.

my computer, and some more checking time has to be added, it can easily be understood that I need several hundreds of hours more work to finish what I started. But it is wonderful, even for an octogenarian like myself, to keep the gray matter of my brain working overtime!

Let me also say, that the figures mentioned above will not be the final and overall correct ones for these sports. I have not yet deducted the athletes who started in more than one sport!

For the moment I can only conclude that sofar the IOC should have printed some twenty or twenty-two of the twenty-eight volumes. When all volumes have been published, it is my intention to make a separate volume with an overall participation figure, Games for Games, and based on the figures I have printed in the earlier volumes.

A lot of other statistics will be added, which of course is only valuable for those people with an academic interest. However ambitious I have been from the start, it can be ascertained that there will still be many mistakes found in these volumes. After all, I must have typed millions of figures and characters and tried to check each one of them, but this can never be compared with reliable proof-reading by experts.

One interesting observation should be mentioned.

Generally speaking, some seventy-nine (79) percent of the athletes make only one Olympic start, but in the more traditional professional sports like football, boxing and cycling, these percentages are respectively ninety-four (94,1), ninety-two (91,8), and eighty-five (85,3) percent; with fencing sixty-five (65,6) percent and weightlifting sixty-nine (69,0) percent (participants making only one Olympic start). A final comment to those observant readers who might wonder why, in beach-volleyball with sofar only one Olympic competition, there still are seven athletes with two, respectively three Olympic starts? These athletes all had competed earlier in the Olympic volleyball-tournament.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: Although I completely agree with Wolf Lyberg about the immense value of the Dahllöf-lists (I used them myself for the *GOLDEN BOOK OF THE DUTCH OLYMPIANS*), I must point out that Lennart Dahllöf sometimes invented Christian names for Olympic participants in those cases when he didn't have the complete data!

This gave me several problems during my own research, because it gave me the wrong 'input' when requesting municipal authorities to search for the data from these people for me.

And up to this day, the Dahllöf-lists, when explicitly used, can give reason for the use of wrong data, even in some of the most valuable historical publications of the

early Olympic Games. For example, the eminent Prof.Dr. Karl Lennartz and his compatriot Volker Kluge both used the name of Gerardus VAN HAAN, for the still mysterious Dutch bronze medal shooter (50 meters revolver-team-competition) at the 1900 Olympic Games. I am convinced that whatever the name of this guy was, it was most certainly NOT: Gerardus van Haan! Prof. Lennartz himself admitted that he had used the Dahllöf-lists as the basis for acquiring this name.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR:

The author, Wolf Lyberg, would appreciate the assistance from all ISOH members with regard to information on the participants in the Olympic Games from London 1948, and Melbourne 1956. Lyberg would like to receive the full names and birthdates of each participant in the 1948 and 1956 Games, as the archives with the entry-forms from these two Games has "disappeared" and can no longer be found. Any information is welcome at the address: Valhallävdagen 112, 4 tr., S-114 41 STOCKHOLM, Sweden

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Information on these volumes can be obtained from Ms. Claude Borgeaud, the Documentation Department of the Olympic Museum, Villa Olympique, 1 Quai d'Ouchy, 1006 LAUSANNE, Switzerland. Phone: (41.21)-621 65 11 or Fax: (41.21)-621 65 12.
