

**Cosentino, Frank and Leyshon, Glynn, *Olympic Gold: Canadian Winners of the Summer Games*, (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Ltd., Toronto, 1975). 147 pp., illustrated.**

**This excellent book by two distinguished physical educators is a must for scholars in sport history, particularly those who specialize in Canadiana. The work is the official History of Canada's Summer Olympic Gold Medal winners, as authorized by the Organizing Committee of the 1976 Olympic Games. It is, essentially, the story of those athletes who have won gold**

medals for Canada in Olympic competition.

Canada did not have an official team in the modern Games until 1908 at London, but Canadian athletes competed successfully prior to that date. No Canadian was in the 1896 Games at Athens, but in 1900 at Paris a Canadian, George Orton, competed for the United States and won the 2500 m. steeplechase. And in 1904, at the St. Louis Games, held in conjunction with the exposition, Etienne Desmarteau, in the 56-pound weight toss, the Winnipeg Shamrocks Lacrosse Club, George Lyon (golf), and the Galt Association Football (Soccer) Club all won gold medals. Canada was certainly recognized, though not officially. And in 1906, the marathon runner, Billy Sherring won the "off-year" Olympics at Athens.

But in 1908, there was official national representation and selection, though, like the USA, there were contending bodies endeavoring to control the amateur movement. In any case, some 84 athletes were selected and \$20,000 was contributed from federal and provincial sources. Some thirteen medals were awarded Canadians. The cost of Olympic medals comes a little higher these days.

Amateur attitudes seemingly changed from 1912, in that athletes seemed to be more prepared, and Canada won no gold medals by 1924. This occasioned the Canadian government to contribute some \$26,000 and a training camp for athletes was held in Hamilton, prior to the 1928 Games, where both authors were born. Some 12 medals were won. This is the peak of Canada's Olympic achievements, and the authors point out the decline since 1928, particularly in the post-World War II years.

The authors hypothesize as to reasons for that decline. Among the reasons advanced are the lure of professional sport, which diverted those with a high degree of athletic accomplishment to football and ice hockey; the use of non-international rules in such sports as basketball; the lack of "a distinctive Canadian sporting culture;" the absence of club sports; the low age—approximately 21—of Canadian participants. Despite these reasons, the authors discern hope for the future, particularly with the reorganization of Canadian sports administrative bodies, the hiring of full-time technical directors and secretaries at the national level, coaching certification schemes, the Game Plan and the introduction of the highly successful Canada Games, and more particularly, increased federal and provincial funding.

The book *Olympic Gold* is essentially a series of sketches of those athletes and teams which have won gold medals for Canada: The Winnipeg Shamrocks (Lacrosse), Etienne Desmarteau (56-pound weight throw), George Seymour Lyon (golf)

and the Galt Association Football Club (soccer), all in 1904; Bill Sherring (marathon) in the "off-year" Olympics of 1906 in Athens; Bobby Kerr (200 m.), the All Canadas (Lacrosse), Walter Ewing (trapshooting) in 1908; George Gouldng (10,000 m. walk) and George Hodgson (400 m. and 1500 m. swimming) in 1912; Earl Thomson (110 m. hurdles) and Albert Schneider (Welterweight boxing) in 1920; Percy Williams (100 m. and 200 m. sprints), Ethel Catherwood (high jump) and women's 400 m. relay in 1928; Horace Gwynne (bantam-weight boxing) and Duncan McNaughton (high jump) in 1932; Francis Amvot (Canadian Singles Canoeing) in 1936; George Genereux (trapshooting) in 1952; Gerald Ouellette (small-bore rifle-prone) and the University of British Columbia Coxswainless Fours in 1956; George Hungerford and Roger Jackson (Coxswainless Pairs) in 1964; and the Equestrian Team in the Grand Prix (jumping) in 1968. The diversity of sports may be seen by Canada's honor roll, as well as the difficulty of gaining medals from 1948 on.

*Olympic Gold* is extremely well illustrated, a number of the photographs being heretofore unpublished. Perhaps the sole criticism from the point of view of the sport historian has to do with the lack of primary sources. Despite the lack of primary sources in the work, the close reading of the work leads one to the conclusion that the authors did their homework, and simply did not wish to clutter their presentation in such a manner. The biographical sketches present much new material, extremely evident to the Canadian expert. In summary, *Olympic Gold* is an excellent addition to Canada's sporting heritage. It is well written, it is accurate and it chronicles in a most interesting fashion the successes of Canada's gold medal winners.

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