

The 1900 Olympic Games: Results for All Competitors in All Events, with Commentary by Bill Mallon (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1998). Reviewed by Garth Paton, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada.

It is clear that Mallon's work on the 1900 Olympic Games was a labor of love. In Mallon's own words, paraphrasing Dickens' opening lines in a Tale of Two Cities, the 1900 Games were, "the worst of Games, and,--the worst of Games." It was indeed fortunate that the 1896 Olympic Games held in Athens were judged most present and by Olympic history revisionists as "comparatively brilliant," because those that followed four years later, the Paris Games of 1900, did little, if anything, to enhance the image of the Modern Olympic Movement. And, the 1900 Paris disaster was followed by what many have described as a second successive disastrous set of Olympic Games, those in St Louis in 1904. Mallon refers to the 1900 Games and the 1904 Games collectively as "The Farcical Games." It is remarkable that the Olympic movement survived this double knockout- punch. It is even more remarkable that someone would treat them with the dedication to detail that Mallon exhibits in this book.

Mallon does just exactly what he sets out to do--he presents carefully documented information on the competitors, the events, and the results of the 1900 Olympic Games. Aside from an introductory chapter entitled, "Analysis and Summaries," the bulk of the book is devoted to an analysis of the "full Olympic medal sports" (as opposed to "non-Olympic status events" such as automobile and motorcycle racing, ballooning, bowls, lifesaving, motorboating, *longue-paume*, indeed, even baseball). Mallon was clearly not interested in presenting the socio-cultural background of the Paris Olympic festival, nor of offering a critique of the dynamics that surrounded the games. He dedicated himself to the painstaking work of presenting information on the competitors, the events and the results.

But one must ask the obvious question: "why do it?" Has this information not been available? Has it not been previously published by others? Mallon addresses these queries, and the answers are both "yes" and "no." Mallon is quick to recognize the work of writers such as, Wasner (*Olympia-Lexikon*, 1939), Mezö (*The Modern Olympic Games*, 1956), Kamper (*Enzyklopädie der Olympischen Spiele*, 1972), all of whom list only the medalists, the top six finishers, or in the case of Wallechinsky, (*The Complete Book of the Olympics*, 1984), the top eight finishers. Mallon goes beyond this detail and attempts to account for all competitors.

Mallon sets the "official stage" for the 1900 Olympics in the opening chapter, "1900 Olympic Games--Analysis and Summaries." The word "official" is used advisedly because the chapter contains significant listings of IOC members in 1900, members of the 1900 organizing committee, the organizing sub-committees, and the Comité d'Organization des Jeux Olympiques de 1900. Why does the reader need to know this detailed information? We don't--but it does provide excellent and complete background surrounding the organization membership. Of more interest to the general reader is the section, "The Selection of Paris and the Organization of the Games," as well as sections on the 1900 Paris World's Fair and the place of "The Games of the 2nd Olympiad" within this framework. These sections of this first

chapter are one of the few places where Mallon uses extensive prose (as opposed to anecdotal comments on events) to provide the necessary background and setting for these Games.

Mallon provides the reader with some background and detail of the frequently strange staging of these Olympic Games, including his rationale for excluding some of the rather unusual events designated as non-Olympic. Mallon points out that a dozen or so years after the Paris-1900 debacle, the IOC did in fact try to sort out the confusion as to which events were to be considered "Olympic" and which were not. But, the details of this effort remain unclear. Thus, this stands as one of the reasons for Mallon's undertaking.

The first chapter includes a listing (three pages, plus) of all the events conducted during the 1900 Universal Exposition (within which the Olympic Games were encompassed). The first chapter concludes with extensive listings of medals won, contestants and teams, as well as youngest and oldest medalists, and considerably more detail about the competitors (men and women) and their events. Indeed, this initial chapter might be considered the heart of the data surrounding the 1900 Games because the remaining chapters detail the results of each of the events individually. The analysis of the events are presented in alphabetical order, and include, Archery, Athletics (Track and Field), Cricket, Croquet, Cycling, Equestrian Events, Fencing, Football (Soccer), Golf, Gymnastics, Pelota Basque, Polo, Rowing and Sculling, Rugby Football, Shooting, Swimming, Tennis (Lawn), Tug-of-War, Water Polo, Yachting, plus a final chapter entitled, Other Sports--Non-Olympic Status.

In one sense Mallon might very well have reversed his order of chapters. The data within the individual event chapters, in fact, provide explicit details, whereas, the initial chapter, in one sense, could well serve as a concluding chapter because of the summarization of performance information. But, this mild criticism is hair-splitting!

Mallon's approach is both workable and necessary in order to give the reader a sense of the chaotic confusion that the Paris Games exuded. Mallon typically introduced each chapter devoted to specific events with a relatively short summarization of some of the problems surrounding the event in terms of general organization. For example, the chapter devoted to Archery indicates the enormous organizational problem of conducting this event. The event included over 5200 competitors, it began at the end of May in 1900 and was not completed until mid-August. Surprisingly, Mallon's analysis shows that only three countries competed in archery, those being France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. And, of the total number of competitors, 5100 were French. By Mallon's own admission he has less confidence in the Archery data than in the data of any other sport. Indeed, he rather reluctantly included this event as one of the "Olympic" sports. Notwithstanding the questionable figures, Mallon must be credited with an excellent effort in attempting to make some sense of this spectacle.

The chapter devoted to Athletics (Track and Field) was organized in a similar fashion. Mallon provided some brief introductory remarks including a listing of officials and a summarization of medals. He then delved into the specific events. Mallon provides information regarding each event using a series of abbreviations that are provided at the beginning of the book, in fact, a page and a half of abbreviations, including General terms, Sports, and Nations. The list is rather daunting to recall, but it does permit much detail with an economy of space and print. Using the abbrevia-

tions, Mallon presents us with the number of athletes competing (A), the number of countries represented (C), the date of the event (D), the time of day (T) for semi-finals, and finals. The results are provided for semi-final heats and finals, where appropriate.

In an attempt to balance sometimes boring statistical data, Mallon provides some insightful and interesting commentary on the athletes. For example, in the 60 meter event, he provides background material on two American athletes, Alvin Kraenzlein and Edmund Minahan. A similar pattern is followed with each event, which lends some humanization to the athletes and their endeavors. The events unfold, chapter by chapter, in a format similar to that described above. Quite naturally, some sections of the book are much more extensive than others. Athletics, for example, is extensive (thirty pages). Sections on Cricket, Croquet, Equestrian, Fencing and others, were relatively brief. Where necessary, endnotes are provided, indeed with Athletics 188 notes were included. Clearly, certain events stimulated more of Mallon's energy than others. Even so, he managed to provide some information on all sports. A good example of this relates to cricket, when he draws the readers attention to the fact that this sport, though included in 1900, in fact, had been scheduled as an Olympic sport in 1896 but cancelled due to insufficient entries.

Mallon includes four appendices, the first of which is a reproduction of the programs for the "JEUX OLYMPIQUES DE 1900" and "Championnats Internationaux" of the "EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE DE 1900." Appendix II is a very lengthy (40 pages) listing of competitors by country, followed by Appendix III-an IOC Document on 1900 Sports and Events. Appendix IV, a ten page listing of 1900 Olympic Sports and Events, provides a summary picture of the diversity and extensiveness of the 1900 Paris experience. Is it any wonder that some athletes, as Mallon and other authors have related, did not know they had competed in the Olympics until many years later. Their recall of, "some international competition in Paris," seems to sum up the experience rather nicely.

Mallon's major accomplishment in the production of this type of book was to provide a better resource book on the conduct, the countries, the competitors, the varied events, and yes, the total confusion surrounding the staging of the 1900 Paris Olympic Games than has yet been written. In this sense, he has achieved his purpose. Though this type of material does not generally lend itself to enraptured reading, the information Mallon presented is detailed (possibly too detailed for some); he organized it well; and he provided an excellent summary and analysis.

In short, though the book may not be everyone's "cup of tea," it is undoubtedly a valuable addition to Olympic history. Mallon, and a genre of Olympic historians like him, such as Wolf Lyberg, Erich Kamper, and David Wallechinsky, revel in detail and who undertake their mission with a zeal and passion that can only be described as a "labor of love."