THE EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE
SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES, 1900-1948

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

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* * * * *

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1974

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation could not have been made possible without the cooperation of a great number of people, both at a personal and at a professional level. The person to whom I am most indebted is my very good friend Professor Thérèse Bonin, who accompanied me to the I.O.C. headquarters in Lausanne and who has helped me with the translation of the French sources included in this study. She has edited much of the writing and has lent her support in countless ways.

The people whom I have met and talked with during the course of my study have been a source of great personal and professional satisfaction to me. Among the Olympic officials and former competitors whom I interviewed were Mr. Harry Hainsworth and Mr. Daniel Ferris of the Amateur Athletic Union, and Mr. Robert Paul and Mr. Maurice Schulman at the United States Olympic House. Thanks must also be extended to Mr. Avery Brundage, former President of the I.O.C., who so graciously consented to an interview, to Mr. George Gulack, former vice-president of the F.I.G., Ms. Catherine Meyer, outstanding athlete of the 1920's, and Ms. Aileen Riggin
Soule, champion diver of the 1920's, who was interviewed for me by Mr. Robert Miller.

Within the profession of physical education itself, I am especially indebted to Helen Hazelton, who provided me with materials previously unknown, and Dorothy Ainsworth, who not only offered her suggestions, but made my stay in Massachusetts so pleasant. Dr. Margaret C. Brown, former manager of the U.S. women's gymnastics team, consented to doing taped responses to my questions, despite the fact that she was recovering from a severe illness. The cooperation of Donna Olsen, who arranged and did the taping, was appreciated. Thanks go to Marie-Thérèse Eyquem, who helped me contact Mme. Germaine Gagneux-Bisson in France. Mme. Gagneux-Bisson was extremely helpful in providing information about the F.S.F.I. I would also like to express my appreciation to Ellen Gerber, who read some of my writing and gave me useful suggestions, to Cathy Small for editing a chapter, and to Sara Staff Jernigan, who made several suggestions.

I am also indebted to the various international sports federations, national sports organizations, and national Olympic committees who responded to the inquiries I made of them.

Certainly not least of all, I would like to thank
my adviser, Dr. Bruce L. Bennett, for his help; and my reading committee, Dr. Barbara Nelson and Dr. Lewis Hess, for their diligence in reading and commenting upon such a lengthy discourse.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations of Proposed Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of the Study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives for the Study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods and Procedures</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of Chapters</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Initial Thrust</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coubertin and the Political Situation in</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France: Why Coubertin Re-established the Olympic Games</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogie Sportive</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tendency Towards International Sport</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of Coubertin's Inspiration and the Ideal of Modern Olympism</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Organization of the International Olympic Committee</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coubertin Further Re-affirms His Control and Power Despite Early Dissension</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Place of Ceremony in Coubertin's Conception of the Modern Olympic Games</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. COUBERTIN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN IN SPORTS ........................................ 55

  Coubertin's Double Standard Regarding Human Equality ........................................ 58
  Coubertin's Concern for Propriety and Decency .................................................. 60
  Coubertin's Opposition to Women's Participation in Specific Sports .................. 63
  Coubertin's Opposition to Women's Participation in the Olympic Games ............ 70
  Coubertin Retires But His Position Does Not Change ........................................... 78
  Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 87

IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF OLYMPIC SPORTS FOR WOMEN, 1900-1914 .......................... 91

  The Entry of Women into Olympic Competition ...................................................... 106
    The Olympic Games of 1900 ............................................................................ 106
    The Olympic Games at St. Louis, 1904 ............................................................... 108
    The Unofficial Games in Athens, 1906 ............................................................... 109
    The Olympic Games of 1908 ............................................................................ 110
    1912--Women Gain Further Access to the Olympic Competitions .................... 115
    The Olympic Games at Stockholm, 1912 ........................................................... 118
    The Aftermath of the Stockholm Olympic Games .............................................. 123
    The Amateur Athletic Union and American Women in Competitive Swimming .... 126


  Social Background: Public and Professional Attitudes Toward Women Athletes .... 134
  The Woman Athlete Viewed by Her Contemporaries ............................................. 147
  The Establishment of the F.S.F.I. ........................................................................... 155
  The 1922 Women's Olympic Games ................................................................... 163
    Overall Results ..................................................................................................... 164
United States Preparation and Participation in the Women's Olympic Games. .......................... 165
American Reaction and Counter Reaction to the Games .................................................. 168
The Growing Interest of the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. in Controlling Women's Track and Field ................................................................. 171
Negotiated Agreement Between the I.A.A.F. and the F.S.F. ........................................... 173
Gothenburg Games of 1926: "Second International Ladies' Games" ................................ 176
The Struggle for Inclusion in the Olympic Games ................................................................. 179
The Third Women's World Games ......................................................................................... 188
The Fourth Women's World Games, London, 1934 .............................................................. 197
Summary ............................................................................................................................... 205

VI. THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF WOMEN'S ATHLETICS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1922-1934 ................................................................. 209

The Conflict Over Control of Women's Track and Field, 1922 .......................................... 210
The War Waged by the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation Against Competitive Sports for Women, 1923-1927. .......................................................... 259
The A.A.U.--1923-1928 ........................................................................................................ 266
The Olympic Protest ............................................................................................................... 275
The A.A.U. After the Olympic Protest .................................................................................... 283
Track and Field, 1934 ........................................................................................................... 291
Summary ............................................................................................................................... 294

VII. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SPECIFIC OLYMPIC SPORTS, 1920-1932 ................................................................. 299

Tennis, 1920-1924 .................................................................................................................. 300
The Controversy Between the I.O.C. and the I.L.T.F. .......................................................... 302
Swimming ............................................................................................................................... 305
The Concern of American Officials for the Swimmers' Morality ........................................ 310
The Development of American Supremacy in Swimming .................................................... 311
Women's Swimming: The Olympic Games, 1928 .............................................................. 314
Swimming, 1932 ................................................................................................................... 315
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The writer's decision to investigate the topic treated in this dissertation was the result of a combination of factors. A major interest in the history of sport, a growing personal concern and awareness of women's need for recognition and opportunity for self-realization both in society at large and in sport in particular, and the realization of the dearth of historical information and writing regarding the place of women in sports constituted the major factors in the selection of the subject for study. This writer was prompted to apply insights derived from her academic study to the understanding of the evolution of women's participation in the Olympic Games. A certain amount of first hand familiarity with the French language was also an influencing factor since much of the material written about the Olympic Games has been written in French. The initial idea was to study the relationship between social, economic, and political events and the evolution of women's participation in sports. However, it soon became apparent that actual causality between specific events, movements,
etc., and the degree of participation and recognition of women athletes would be hard to establish and would also be more in the realm of sociological study than in an historical one. Thus, the main focus of this study will be a history of women's participation in the Olympic Games, with consideration given to the forces that have influenced and shaped it, both negatively and positively.

In what follows, the writer will trace the steps and findings of the initial investigation of the topic, which should provide an outline of the evolution of women's participation from its inception to 1948, when women's admission to the Games finally seemed well established. The writer has also taken the freedom to inject comments or raise questions called to mind by the sequence of events.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

The initial investigation of the literature soon revealed that the road to women's participation in the Olympic Games was strewn with numerous obstacles and barriers. It also became clear that indeed, women did struggle for inclusion in the program and that the struggle was a long one. One of the greatest obstacles was the early and enduring objection of Pierre de Coubertin, "renovateur" of the Olympic Games and
president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) from 1896 to 1925, who from the beginning of his involvement with the Olympic movement until his dying day disapproved vehemently of women's participation in the Olympic Games as competitors. Coubertin's philosophy, his Olympic ideal, the way he conceived and organized the Games is dealt with at length in Chapter II of this study.

In spite of Coubertin's wishes, the participation of women in the Olympic Games came quite early. The organizing committee of the Second Olympic Games in Paris, 1900, admitted women's tennis singles and mixed doubles to the program. Golf, also, was on the program with a Miss Abbot of the United States winning that event. Yet, in the 1904 Olympics (St. Louis) only archery appeared for women. ¹ The London Olympics of 1908 included tennis singles and mixed doubles, archery, and figure skating (singles and pairs). In 1912 at Stockholm, archery (for both men and women) was not on the program, but tennis remained and three swimming events were added. From these facts, one is led to ask a number of questions:

¹Information about early performances comes from Monique Berlioux's book D'Olympie a Mexico. There is a contradiction concerning the information about archery in 1904. A United States Olympic Committee publication states that there were no women's events in that Olympics.
1. Why were women admitted to participation in the Olympic Games quite early, especially against the desires of the president of the IOC?

2. What were the effects of Coubertin's position upon the evolutionary process?

3. Who were the representatives (all men--then and now) and countries opposing admission and what were their reasons?

4. Was there any relationship between the admission of women to participation in the Olympic Games and the militant phase of the feminist movement which was at its peak in Europe around 1912 and 1913.

5. Why were women's gymnastics not admitted to the program earlier, perhaps, in the Stockholm Games of 1912, when much of the physical activity of women centered around gymnastics, particularly in the Scandinavian countries. Gymnastics were demonstrated first in 1906 in Athens, then in London and Stockholm. Gymnastic competition for women, however, was not admitted until 1928 and then only in team competition.

6. What is the significance of the kinds of events women were permitted to enter in the early Games? i.e. What were the factors that led the International Olympic Committee to admit one sport and not another? Were there some social and psychological reasons for these preferences?

Track and field sports for women were not included in the Olympic program until 1928, although demands for participation had been made as early as 1919 by Madame Milliat of the French track organization, Fédération Féminine Sportive de France. The demand made by that organization met a very swift refusal, a refusal which brought about a very long, concerted effort on the part of women for representation in the Olympic Games. This
study explores this effort from the establishment of the International Federation of Women's Sports in 1921 and the subsequent holding of the first Women's Olympic Games in 1922 to the complete assumption of control of women's track and field athletics by the International Amateur Athletic Federation after the Games of 1936. It also explores the effect American participation in the Women's Olympics had upon the direction of women's athletics in this country. Literature suggests that American participation in the Women's Olympic Games (and perhaps the assumption of the control of women's track and field competitions by the AAU in 1922) had a direct bearing on the decision to establish the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation which affected the direction of women's athletics in the United States. Certain pertinent questions could be asked here, such as:

1. Why were there no American women participating in the Women's Games of 1926 and 1930, after they had competed successfully in Paris in 1922?

2. Why was the physical education profession in the United States so opposed to the participation of American women in the Olympic Games, and especially in track and field? What course did that opposition take?

3. What effect did the establishment of the Women's Division of the NAAF have upon the AAU of the United States?

4. What factors permitted tremendous growth and acceptance of track and field athletics in Europe? Were these factors present in American
society? Why were the effects of these factors different in European and American societies?

It is assumed that the mood of societies, political ideology, economic and geographical considerations, among others, were of importance to the evolution of women's participation in the Olympics. These factors in turn influenced the decisions of the IOC, International Federations, and National Olympic Committees and Sports Federations. The decisions made by these bodies (particularly the IOC and International Federations) and their attitudes toward granting membership to women and admitting them to a growing number of events was examined in that light. In addition, some attempt was made to determine what effect the image of women athletes themselves had upon the decisions of the above mentioned sports organizations concerning the admission of women to participation.

Newspapers and magazines were the primary modes of distributing information during the period in question, thus, this writer surmised that sports columns in newspapers and magazines were the bases on which the general public's understanding and opinions on various questions depended. Another of the objectives for this study, then, was to investigate newspaper and magazine sources not only for information, but also to point out the sometimes subtle, but quite effective, image-shattering
comments newsmen and sportswriters made regarding women athletes and women's sports activities and to attempt to put this effect into proper perspective.

Finally, an attempt was made to give accurate details concerning the date of the admission of all sports in which women have participated from the beginning of the modern Olympic Games until 1948, the problems involved, if any, in that admission, the results obtained and the identification of the nations which the participants represented.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

This is an age when women challenge the traditional roles and the somewhat negative self-image imposed upon them by a male dominated society and seek to free themselves from its shackles. This process of searching for one's real identity and of freeing oneself from repressive laws, institutions, roles and above all mental attitudes that have so restrained the spectrum and depth of opportunity for self-realization, leads to a re-examination of history. Most history is written by men and necessarily from a man's point of view since they are products of the society in which they live and conditioned by the attitudes, values, and patterns of living found in that society. History books make little mention of women,
and when they do, their role is usually presented as insignificant.

The participation of women in the Olympic Games is a case in point. Only a sentence here and there in the histories of the Olympics can be found which pertain to the accomplishments of women and these seem very insignificant by comparison. There is a need for the re-examination of the history of sport, and a study of the critical period in women's struggles to enter the Olympic Games as participants has its place within that broader context. The period under study, 1900-1948, has been chosen precisely because it represents the most difficult and critical period in the struggle of women athletes to gain recognition for achievement in that particular domain of human achievement, the domain of sport, and more specifically in the hall of the consecration of sport, the Olympic Games.

VALUE OF THE STUDY

In the past, male Olympic athletes have provided other young athletes an image worthy of emulation. Women should be given the opportunity to identify with female Olympians with the admiration, recognition, and approval which is usually granted to high achievement in athletics. Perhaps by drawing together the facts relating to the
struggle for inclusion of a full program of events for women in the Olympic Games, and treating it as a part of the whole struggle for female emancipation, this undertaking will contribute to the pride of women in their athletic achievements and will provide a mode through which women can come to recognize the contributions and struggles of the highly skilled women athletes of the past. It is through the examination of history that people can appreciate and understand the forces and events that have shaped their destiny and self-image, thus, an intensive re-examination of the forces and events which influenced the evolving participation of women in sport is highly desirable. It is through that examination, too, that insight is gained to avoid the mistakes made in the past and to understand the negative forces which were present in that setting. Hopefully, the result of this or any other re-examination of the history of women in sport would be the attainment of a sense of pride in the struggles and achievements of previous generations and a better understanding of the conditions which have limited those achievements so that a greater sense of purpose and determination will be aroused in women to shape their own futures.
OBJECTIVES FOR THE STUDY

The objectives for this study were:

1. To identify and to investigate the forces which influenced and shaped the kind and degree of women's participation in the Olympic Games and to attempt to ascertain the effects of each:
   a. Pierre de Coubertin and the Olympic Idea
   b. The International Olympic Committee
   c. National and International Sports Federations
   d. National Olympic Committees
   e. Women Athletes
   f. Physical Educators

2. To draw together into a coherent whole the widely scattered and infrequent reports and commentaries relating to women in the Olympic Games; to analyze and point out the inconsistencies and biases which may exist in supposedly factual material.

3. To investigate the extent to which women's growing participation and recognition in society at large is paralleled by greater participation and recognition in sport and to point out the relationships between the two.

LIMITATIONS

The proposed research is limited to historical materials relating to the following topic: The Evolution of Women's Participation in the Summer Olympic Games, 1900-1948.
Historical materials relative to the topic would include those dealing with the social, political, economic, and educational development of society in general, with particular attention given to attitudes toward women in sport. Certain societal influences, such as religion, for example, cannot be studied separately or systematically as possible inhibiting or facilitating factors in the evolution of women's participation in the Olympic Games, but will be alluded to as part of the general make-up of the society under consideration.

As with all historical research, the writer can only hope to outline trends as they emerge from the data collected, to formulate hypotheses about the interrelationship of influences at work and given supportive evidence for the explanations offered. By necessity the historian must rely on the bits of information available: the evidence of what is past, recorded, and beyond the reach of change. His or her task is to utilize this information in an attempt to arrange it into a logical sequence. Yet, however powerful his or her case may be in support of a particular thesis, actual proof is rarely attainable, a fact which acts as a substantial limitation in any historical research.
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The historical method of research was used to gather and analyze materials related to the topic under investigation. Much of the material utilized by the writer was available in the library of the Ohio State University and through the inter-library loan system. However many materials were available only at their source, such as those located in the library and archives of the International Olympic Committee headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland. These documents included the Bulletins Officiels du C.I.O., volumes of the Revue Olympique, the official publication of the International Olympic Committee, and the complete Official Reports of the Olympic Games, published by the organizing committee responsible for holding the Games. It is regrettable, however, that a large number of personal documents, such as Coubertin's correspondence, which might have clarified important matters of attitude and influence were not available to the writer despite the writer's pressing requests. These documents will not be made public until fifty years after Coubertin's death (1987).

The search for historical documents also included trips to the United States Olympic headquarters in New York City and to the Amateur Athletic Union headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana. National Olympic Committees
and national and international sports federations were contacted primarily by letter to solicit information and documents.

Some attempts were made to contact former women Olympic athletes. This proved to be rather difficult, thus, not a great deal of direct information was available from that source. Correspondence and interviews with physical educators active during the period under study were quite valuable, however, as were the interviews with people directly involved with the sports scene during that era. Among the more influential figures were the former International Olympic Committee president, Mr. Avery Brundage, and the former executive secretary of the Amateur Athletic Union, Mr. Daniel Ferris.

Ms. Helen Hazelton, who in her professionally active life was a highly respected member of the Women's Athletic Section of the American Health and Physical Education Association had the kindness to turn over to the writer the extensive correspondence she had kept which was pertinent to the investigation of American women's participation in the Olympic Games. This represented a substantial and revealing set of documents that have not been made public to this date. Dr. Margaret C. Brown, manager of the American Women's Olympic Gymnastics team in 1936, was extremely enlightening in her information about the
difficulties women in gymnastics had in organizing, controlling and judging their own competitions. The former secretary of the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale, Madame Gagneux-Bisson of France, also provided valuable documents and information.

Of primary importance were also the newspapers of the period under consideration. The major ones consulted were The New York Times and the London Times. Professional periodicals such as the Journal of Health and Physical Education, Mind and Body, Physical Training and The Amateur Athlete were reviewed for pertinent information. Popular magazines were consulted to ascertain the prevalent societal attitudes towards women in athletics. These magazines included Collier's, Ladies' Home Journal, Outing, Harper's Monthly, the Literary Digest, and the Saturday Evening Post, among others. The search for data and background information also encompassed books and articles written by Pierre de Coubertin and other International Olympic Committee members, women athletes, sportswriters, physical educators, and other prominent people with concerns about women in athletics. Finally, certain pamphlets and theses figured in the development of the subject under study.
ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter II is a re-statement of the political, social, and philosophical reasons for the reorganization of the Olympic Games. It also gives insights about the man whose whole life was bound up in the idealistic Olympic movement. The writer felt it necessary to re-examine the events of the re-establishment of the Games with an eye toward the implications they might have for the development of women's participation in the Olympic Games.

Chapter III focuses on the attitude of Pierre de Coubertin, the "renovateur" of the Olympic Games, towards the participation of women in sports, not only in Olympic competition, but also in society as well. His attitude, rather typical of Victorian society, helps to explain why women were discouraged from participation in the Olympic Games in general and were denied participation in some specific events.

Chapter IV investigates the early participation of women in Olympic sports, from 1900 to the period just before World War I (1914). It attempts to explain how women were first admitted to participation in the Games and what the obstacles were which had to be overcome.

Chapter V studies the struggle women faced in seeking to be allowed to participate in the Olympic Games
(1920-1936). It also investigates in detail the establishment of the International Federation for Women's Sports (F.S.F.I.) and the conflict over the control of women's international competitions in track and field.

Chapter VI is a detailed account of the controversy which arose in the United States as a result of American women becoming interested in competitive track and field on an international scale. This chapter shows the power relationships and struggles among the three factions which were competing for control of women's track and field.

Chapter VII investigates the progress of women athletes in specific sports during the period 1920-1932. Tennis, swimming, fencing, gymnastics, and track and field are each considered separately.

Chapter VIII concentrates upon two Olympiads: the one which culminated in the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936 and the one held in London in 1948. This chapter is intended to compare women's participation in the pre and post World War II Games and to show the progress made by women during that period, perhaps as a direct result of World War II.

Chapter IX attempts to draw some conclusions and makes interpretations about the topic under study. It also contains a number of reflections made by the writer regarding the study and its significance.
CHAPTER II

THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

INTRODUCTION

Pierre de Coubertin's conception of his creation, the Modern Olympic Games, the organization of the Games and the orientation he gave to them, the philosophy and ideals which evolved around them were all of great consequence in the struggle of women for admittance to participation. It may also be important to realize that at their inception the Olympic Games were to a large extent conceived as a movement for universal world peace, but as an instrument through which France would be revitalized by its youth. At that time the participation of women in the revitalization of a country was not seen as any kind of primary force; females were not seen as people who would act upon existing conditions for the good of all. Rather, they were valued almost exclusively as "breeders" of men who could bring about change. Later, when women began to be viewed as "companions" of men, it was solely in a supportive role, i.e. making men feel happy and secure so that they could devote their energies
to their noble missions, whatever they might be. It is in this general social context that Coubertin's views and philosophy developed and in that respect, especially, they are strongly tinted by the commonly held values and prejudices of his time.

A developmental history of women's admission and participation in the Olympic Games can not be complete nor fully understood without first looking at the events, philosophy, cultural values and beliefs that provided the setting within which the rebirth of the Olympic Games and Olympism took place. It is hoped that recording these events will give the reader a better perspective from which to view the actual problems and attitudes which women encountered when they started actively seeking admission to the Games. Furthermore, some light may be shed upon the more prosaic reasons why the Games were re-established in the first place.

THE INITIAL THRUST

From the beginning of the restoration of the Olympic Games Pierre de Frèdy, Baron de Coubertin wanted to make it clear that the modern Games would not be a literal reproduction of the Greek Games. They would retain only the "spirit" of the Greek model, but would depart radically from its form. This viewpoint was expressed
by Coubertin in an article written for the *Revue de Paris* in 1894.

Modern, very modern, will be these restored Olympic Games. There is no question of reviving the old-time dress and manners; and those who suppose that it will be upon some sacred hill and to the revived tones of 'the Hymn of Appollo' that the contest will be waged have only their own imagination to thank for the mistake. There will be no tripods, no incense; those things are dead, and dead things do not revive. It is only the idea embodied in them that can revive and it must be adapted to the needs and the taste of the present age.¹

From the outset Pierre de Coubertin insisted upon the need for the Olympic Games to be initiated in keeping with the needs and structure of the modern world. This was not the first time such words had been uttered. On the occasion of the "jubilé" of the Union of Athletic Sports (Union des Sports Athlétiques) at the Sorbonne on November 25, 1892, Coubertin spoke at a conference whose subject was "Physical Exercises in Antiquity, in the Middle Ages, and in the Modern World."² It was at this conference that he revealed publicly for the first time his intention to re-establish the Olympic Games.


Let us export rowers, runners, fencers: therein lies the free-exchange of the future and, the day when it will be introduced into the customs of old Europe, the cause of peace will have received a new and powerful support. That is enough to encourage your servant to think now about the second part of his program; he hopes you will aid him in this undertaking as you have helped him up to now and that with you he will be able to pursue and bring about, on a basis in keeping with the conditions of modern life, this grandiose and beneficent work: the re-establishment of the Olympic Games.¹

In spite of the audience response of polite applause, no one quite understood the deeper thoughts of Coubertin and in fact failed to grasp the significance of his idea. Later he was to say of their reactions:

(They) . . . placed the Olympic Games in their mental museum at the same level as the mysteries of Ulysses or the Delphic Oracle; things dead that can not be revived except at the Opera.²

And again:

'The big joke among the educated—-or rather they considered themselves as such—-was to ask whether women would be admitted as spectators at the new Games and whether, as in certain periods of antiquity, complete nudity would be enforced, the better to prohibit the access of the feeble sex to the venue.'³

This experience sobered the young Frenchman somewhat. He became more prudent. He took up his project again and during the course of the year 1893 decided to hold a congress in Paris which was to be entitled: "International Congress of Paris for the Study and the Propagation of the Principles of Amateurism." The Congress was set for June, 1894, and its program was to be prepared by three commissioners appointed for that purpose: Mr. C. Herbert, the secretary of the Amateur Athletic Association of Great Britain and her colonies; Mr. William Milligan Sloane, professor of history at Princeton University (and personal friend of Coubertin) for the American continent; and Pierre de Coubertin for continental Europe.¹

The original program, as explained by the circular of January 15, 1894, was to treat diverse problems in amateur athletics, such as professionalism, specialization, disqualification, and requalification. Almost as an afterthought, and as a last point to be discussed was the re-establishment of the Olympic Games. In Coubertin's own words:

The Programme for the Congress was drawn up in such a way as to disguise its main object 'the revival of the Olympic Games'; it merely put forward questions on sport in general. I carefully refrained

¹Coubertin, Une Campagne . . ., pp. 90-91.
from mentioning such an ambitious project, afraid it might raise such a storm of contempt and scorn as to discourage beforehand those favourably disposed towards it. For whenever I alluded to my plan at meetings in Oxford in New York, etc., I had always been sadly conscious that my audience considered it utopian and impracticable.

To show however that something more important than an ordinary sporting conference was intended to be held, I insisted on our meetings taking place in the Sorbonne. . . . It seemed to me that under the venerable roof of the Sorbonne the words 'Olympic Games' would resound more impressively and more persuasively on the audience. 1

At the opening meeting, Saturday, June 16, 1894, there was an audience of two thousand people, delegates invited from "all sporting societies of the world" and "membres d'honneur." From thereon everything moved swiftly and smoothly. To Coubertin's delight, by the end of the Sorbonne Congress the re-establishment of the Olympic Games had come triumphantly to the fore; their renewal was unanimously decided upon. Several significant decisions were made at that gathering. It had been Coubertin's plan to hold the first celebration of the Olympic Games in 1900, the year of the Great Exposition in Paris. However, it was decided that six years was too long a delay and it was thought advisable to advance

that date to 1896. At the proposition of Mr. Vikelas, Athens was chosen as the place for their inauguration. Paris was chosen for the second celebration of the Games in 1900 and afterwards, at intervals of four years, the Games were to be held in every major capital of the world in its turn. The International Olympic Committee was formed, comprised of fourteen members, which would carry out the decisions of the Congress.¹

The modern cycle of the Olympic Games was thus begun; it was to become a phenomenon of the modern world, a perpetual controversial subject of our time. And this gigantic undertaking was the brainchild of one man, Baron Pierre de Coubertin. He never failed to assert proudly his authorship, saying in 1896: "I hereby assert once more my claims to be the sole author of the whole project."²

COUBERTIN AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN FRANCE: WHY COUBERTIN RE-ESTABLISHED THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Baron de Coubertin's purposes for re-establishing the Olympic Games were very real and developed over a number of years of observation and study. In order to better understand the reasons for his long fight for the renewal of the Olympic Games, it is first necessary to

¹Ibid., p. 58. ²Ibid.
understand the social, political and economic conditions in Europe during the latter part of the nineteenth century and particularly in France. Baron de Coubertin was born in 1863, just seven years before the end of Napoleon III's reign and the crushing defeat of France by Germany in the Franco-Prussian War. Around 1880, when he was but seventeen years of age, "... he began to scrutinize the weaknesses of his people and the discouragements under which they were recovering hope and self-respect."\(^1\)

Still suffering from the crisis of 1870, "... the country was instinct with reform of every kind--political, military, social, ecclesiastical, and educational. It was an epoch in France of morbid introspection..."\(^2\) The advent of three monarchies, two empires and three republics in less than a century, were too much; even for a people as resourceful as the French.\(^3\) The monarchist party was still numerous, too numerous to satisfy the republicans; the name, the Third Republic, was too much for the monarchists. These sentiments weighed heavily upon the government's powerlessness to create stability.\(^4\)


\(^2\)Ibid. The word instinct used here means imbued.

\(^3\)Pierre de Coubertin, Une Campagne ..., p. 1.

\(^4\)Ibid.
Coubertin, at seventeen, was passionately interested in contemporary history and was subject, perhaps, to greater sensitivity than other young men of his age over the set-backs of France politically. The revolutions of 1830, of 1848, of 1870, the coups d'Etat of the 18 "brumaire" and of the second of December left him feeling humiliated.

Nothing troubled worse my own love for my country than the cohabitation in my pocket of coins carrying different faces. Did that not underline our repeated disarray and did it not accentuate our ridiculous instability?\(^1\)

He came to the conclusion that political conditions in France during the nineteenth century were not indicative of stability in the French character, and the situation was described by Sloane in this way:

An utter absence of calm reflection, of organizing power, and efficient action seemed to be its vices . . . The causes must lie in qualities produced by ages of absolutism and militarism which had . . . sapped the power of initiative. (Coubertin felt that) . . . somewhere in adolescence there were faculties repressed and powers dwarfed which, if properly exercised and developed would go further than all else to solve the problem of French regeneration.\(^2\)

At seventeen, Coubertin had decided that a reform of French education was indispensable; he felt that an

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Sloane, "The Modern Olympic Games," p. 73.
efficient remedy would be found "... only in education modified and transformed, capable of producing collective calm, wisdom and reflective strength."¹

For a young man like Coubertin, born of French nobility, the choices for a life's work were limited to three areas: the military, the clergy, or politics. Never having been particularly religious, Coubertin in reflecting upon the monotonies of garrison life in the military, quite suddenly decided to change careers and to attach his name to pedagogical reform. He would initiate his reform from the top down, for he did not allow himself the delusion that reform could come outside the political arena. He believed that the transformation could only come at the Parliamentary level.²

In 1880, he had completed his studies at the Jesuit Collège of the rue de Madrid. Afterwards, he studied law, although quite unenthusiastically (he only did so at the bidding of his father), while at the same time attending lectures at the School of Political Science (École des sciences politiques) in Paris. Eugen Weber, in an article appearing in Contemporary History, says of Coubertin:

¹Coubertin, *Une Campagne* . . ., p. 2.
²Ibid.
Listless, dilettantish, he was looking for a way, a purpose, which neither the 'systematic Right' nor the extreme gauche pleine d'inconnus could furnish. He found them first in the philosophy of Frederic Le Play, whose views on the reconciliation of worker and employer carried attractive overtones of 'noblesse oblige.' The possibility--the duty--of emancipating and integrating the working classes always remained one of Coubertin's concerns, ... 1

Before he was introduced to Le Play, however, he was influenced by a translation into French of Tom Brown's School Days. He was later to study the system of English education implemented by Thomas Arnold at Rugby School first-hand. Coubertin has called Thomas Arnold ... the greatest educator of modern times, who more than any other is responsible for the present prosperity and the prodigious expansion of his country. With him athletics penetrated a great public school and transformed it; and from the day on which the first generation fashioned by his hands was launched on the world, the British Empire had a new look. 2

He was fascinated by Taine's Notes sur l'Angleterre, which set out to show that "... the existence of a superior class, its moral and political influence, and the acceptance of this superiority and influence by the


nation as a whole, were sources of stability, of social energy, of national power, and success."\textsuperscript{1}

Throughout his life, Coubertin was to show evident predilection for the two groups which were the most underprivileged and the most malleable: youth and the working class.\textsuperscript{2} The apparent contradiction here lies in the fact that for the upper classes or nobility (to which Coubertin belonged), it was an obligation of the socially conscious to provide protection, direction, and moral guidance for the lower classes. At the beginning of his efforts, he knew in a very precise manner what he wanted to do and would never vary from them. From unedited manuscripts come these words:

'I will rejuvenate a youth now weak and sedentary. I will refurbish its body and its character through sport, its risks and even its excesses. I will broaden its vision and its understanding through contact with broad spatial, planetary, historical horizons and especially those of universal history which by fostering mutual respect will become a ferment of a practical international peace [all that will be for everybody] without any distinction of birth, caste, wealth, situation, or profession.'\textsuperscript{3}

\footnotetext[1]{Eugen Weber, "Pierre de Coubertin and the Introduction . . .," p. 6.}


\footnotetext[3]{Ibid.}
Coubertin was concerned about the effects of industrialism on society. He was struck by the moral disorder produced by technological and industrial science. People had nothing to hold on to, he felt, because of the continual shifting and changing of everything about them. As a consequence they groped for whatever elements of moral strength they could find lying scattered about the world. This, he believed, was the philosophic origin of the physical renaissance, i.e. the development of the German and Swedish gymnastics systems, which took place during the early nineteenth century.\(^1\) Patriotism, he believed, was:

\[\ldots\text{ formed and developed in the ranks of the common people. It is there that the homeland has been loved with abnegation and with selflessness, and not for the benefits or the commodities that are taken from her.}\(^2\]

Thus he believed that the moral valor of the people was greatly superior to that of the rulers of a country. His acceptance of the secretaryship of an investigative commission on the state of working class housing in France and in foreign countries further points out his efforts to come into contact with the workers.\(^3\)


\(^2\)Byquem, Pierre de Coubertin: *Épopée Olympique*, p. 102.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 57.
PEDAGOGIE SPORTIVE

Throughout his life, Coubertin was to pursue two objectives, from which he would never dissociate himself: educational reform and making sport an essential activity in life. He wished to incorporate the teaching of sports (pedagogie sportive) into the school curriculum, but the traditional French educational system saw that sort of training as possibly harmful to the intellect and at best, as a waste of time. One of the reasons he eventually decided not to go into politics was his realization of the:

'... inefficiency of laws which do not correspond to a deep conviction of the nation. For instance, what was the use of Victor Drury's decree making gymnastics compulsory in secondary and elementary schools? It is therefore the nation one must convince and that outside of Parliament.'

The decree for the requirement of gymnastics in the schools came in 1869, just one year before the war with Germany. After the war, Jules Simon, statesman, writer and a great teacher in the university, decided to put the law into practice. The Minister for Public Instruction hired "moniteurs" for the lycées and established a liaison with the Minister of War so that there would be continuity between the teaching of gymnastics in school and

\[1\] Ibid., p. 56.
in the army. Coubertin, once commenting upon the close relationship between public instruction and the army, remarked that it was a perilous "identité de vues."¹

'The wind of revenge is blowing, but it blows the wrong way. We need soldiers? Let us first make citizens. It is not a matter of militarizing school boys but rather to virilize them, which is not the same thing.'²

Coubertin was critical, too, of the growing number of gymnastic societies in France whose mission was basically patriotic. Partisans, he said, were "... forever extolling discipline. What they were after, in a word, was military training."³

My own idea was that France was perishing through its cult of discipline, that the whole of its educational system was infected with it and that our adolescent Republic could only survive if we succeeded in freeing youth from the strait-jacket which oppressed it and prevented it from preparing itself for self-government. Hence my leaning toward Anglo-Saxon ways, ...; I considered that at this juncture in its history French education ought to learn from them, on condition that it did so with discretion.⁴

Coubertin knew France had nothing to gain by continuing to smolder with hatred for Germany and desire for

¹Ibid., p. 61. ²Ibid.

³Pierre de Coubertin, "The Olympic Games and Gymnastics," The Olympic Idea: Discourses and Essays (Stuttgart, Germany: Olympischer Sport-Verlag, 1966), p. 120.

⁴Ibid.
revenge. France had existed largely in isolation since 1870 and was suspicious and fearful. Yet, by the early 1890's that desire for revenge had lost practically none of its intensity. France had become narrowly nationalistic and chauvinistic. She was pre-occupied with domestic reform and colonial expansion during that period, and was not ready to accept the call of Coubertin to embrace the concept of universal athletics. It was the chauvinistic concept of nationality which suddenly laid hold on the movement for pedagogic sport. Coubertin had worked for six years in an effort to establish sport in French schools, only to be challenged by Paschal Grousset, founder of the National League of Physical Education, on nationalistic grounds. In 1888, Grousset published a series of articles in Le Temps which supported the idea of sport in schools but condemned the importation of 'English Games' and indicated that the French would do better to seek their models in antiquity rather than from across the Channel.


be French especially in big or important things such as the education of our sons if we want France to survive in the middle of the wild beasts roaring around her . . . there is no unimportant concessions: let us not make any useless ones!"  

Perhaps that is why in 1891 Coubertin insisted, "Il y a un athletism français . . ."

THE TENDENCY TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL SPORT

Although Coubertin came to realize that the only lever he could use to popularize sport in France was international sports competitions, he remained essentially an educator. He felt that, as a general rule, "... most of the great national questions reduce themselves to questions on education . . ."  

2 and that no education could be complete without the aid of athletics.  

He did not renew the cycle of the Olympic Games for the amusements of the crowds, neither did he conceive of sport for sport's sake. He saw the Olympic Games as the "... garden for the cultivation of the will which is provided by organized sport."  

What young men lacked in

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1 Ibid., p. 11.
4 Coubertin, lecture given in Paris, 1929, included in The Olympic Idea, p. 114.
France was drive and passion not health or courage.  

Just when the idea to re-establish the Olympic Games first came to him, Coubertin himself is not sure. He saw their revival as the logical consequence of the cosmopolitan tendencies of the period: a general awakening of a taste for athletics, inventions such as railroads and telegraphs brought people of different nationalities into communication; exhibitions, assemblies, and conferences had brought together people of similar backgrounds in science, literature, art and industry. Gradually sport was becoming more international. At the close of the century Coubertin saw athleticism degenerating, everywhere he saw discord, he saw excessive specialization and a "spirit of lucre." With the increasing number of international competitions, Coubertin felt that what athletics needed was to be purified and unified.  

Of all measures tending to this desired end, only one seemed to me at all practicable, namely the establishment of a periodical contest to which sporting societies of all nationalities would be representatives, and to place these meetings under the only patronage which could throw over them a hallow (sic) of greatness and glory. 'The patronage of Classical Antiquity!' To do that was to establish the Olympic Games. That name forced itself.

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1 Ibid.  
upon us, it was not even possible to invent another one.\footnote{Ibid.}

**SOURCES OF COUBERTIN'S INSPIRATION AND THE IDEAL OF MODERN OLYMPISM**

Coubertin drew his inspiration from two sources: classical antiquity and the Middle Ages. It was these which provided the foundation for the philosophy of modern Olympism. In modern sport Coubertin saw "something more and something less" than in the sport of the ancient world. It was something more because of its highly perfected instruments and it was something less because "... of the absence of the philosophical basis, a lofty aim, (and) the whole patriotic and religious apparatus which once surrounded the festivals of youth."\footnote{Coubertin, "The Re-establishment of the Olympic Games," p. 700.}

The philosophical foundation of ancient and modern Olympism alike is composed of several different elements or characteristics: The first characteristic was that of being a religion. The true religion of the athlete of classical Greece, as Coubertin saw it, was not simply sacrificing before the altar of Zeus; he saw this as a traditional gesture only. The true religion consisted of taking the oath of honor and disinterest;\footnote{Disinterest in the French sense means selflessness or lack of interest in money.} and in

\[\text{35}\]
striving to strictly abide by it. The Olympic athlete was thus purified and in his purification was revealed the moral beauty and the scope of physical culture.\textsuperscript{1} Coubertin's object in reviving an institution twenty-five centuries old was to form "... new adepts of the religion of sports, as our great ancestors conceived it."\textsuperscript{2} He saw in Olympism a school of moral nobility and purity as well as of physical endurance and energy.\textsuperscript{3} In antiquity, exercising the body was honoring the Gods.

In doing likewise the modern athlete exalts his country, his race, his flag. I therefore think I was right to recreate from the outset around the renewed olympism, a religious sentiment transformed and widened by the Internationalism and Democracy which distinguish the present age, but still the same as that which led the young Greeks, ambitious for the triumph of their muscles to the altars of Zeus.\textsuperscript{4}

Democracy and internationalism, he felt, would preserve the cult of honor and disinterest which would enable athletics to help in the tasks of moral education and social peace, as well as muscular development.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{1}Coubertin, "The Oath of the Athletes," \textit{The Olympic Idea}, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{2}Coubertin, "Address from Olympia to the Youth of the World," \textit{The Olympic Idea}, p. 100.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{4}Coubertin, "The Philosophic Foundation of Modern Olympism," \textit{The Olympic Idea}, p. 131.

\textsuperscript{5}Coubertin, "Athletics in the Modern World ...," \textit{The Olympic Idea}, p. 9.
The second characteristic of Olympism, as Coubertin saw it, was that it is an aristocracy, an élite. In ancient times, only Greek citizens could participate in the Olympic Games and one could be a citizen only by birth right. The aristocracy, the élite which Coubertin spoke of was to be completely egalitarian and determined only by the bodily superiority of the individual, his muscular possibilities, and to some extent, his will to train.\(^1\) This élite was often compared by Coubertin to the knights of the Middle Ages where chivalry reigned supreme. The Olympic ideal was in the eyes of Coubertin an ideal of knights: there was "... the same solemnity, the same sense of honor, the same courage for conquest, the same disinterestedness."\(^2\) Sport must have no other end than to make men worthy of the name: men "... who search for fear in order to dominate it, fatigue in order to triumph over it, difficulty in order to conquer it."\(^3\) Medieval Chivalry, as he saw it, was the source of the role of sport as social educator in modern democracy. "We must look ... towards those much-neglected and much misunderstood tournaments of the Middle Ages, whose

\(^1\)Coubertin, "The Philosophic Foundation ...," The Olympic Idea, p. 131.


\(^3\)Ibid.
only fault was sometimes to push beyond reason the ele-
gant cult of honour, stoicism and generosity."¹

The Olympic hero, in Coubertin's view, was the adult
male individual. The athlete became a sort of "officiat-
ing priest of the muscular religion" who was consecrated,
purified and admitted to the contests. The Altis, or
sacred enclosure, was a sanctuary reserved only to the
athlete.² In his conception Coubertin imagined Olympism
in this way:

... consisting at its centre of a
sort of moral Altis, a Sacred Keep wherein
the confrontation of strengths unites the
competitors in the manly sports par excel-
ence, the sports which aim at the defense
of man and his mastery over danger, over
the elements, over animal nature, over
life; ... ³

This central Altis would consist of gymnasts, runners,
riders, swimmers and rowers, fencers and wrestlers; those
sports which were individual in nature. Team sports and
other sports manifestations would not be excluded, but
would rank as secondary in importance to those already
mentioned above.⁴

The third element in "the festival of the human

¹ Coubertin, "Closing Words, Stockholm, 1912," The
Olympic Idea, p. 133.

² Coubertin, "The Philosophic Foundation . . .," The
Olympic Idea, p. 133.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.
springtime" is that of beauty, achieved through "the participation in the Games of the Arts and of Thought."\textsuperscript{1} In addition to the art, music, and literary competitions, Coubertin hoped to see history take its place alongside poetry in the intellectual manifestations organized around the Games. Universal history, he felt, was the only genuine foundation for a genuine peace.\textsuperscript{2}

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

A fourteen member International Olympic Committee was appointed at the Sorbonne Congress in June 1894. According to Otto Mayer, former general secretary general of the International Olympic Committee, Coubertin personally named the first members of the Committee; that he frankly declared his desire for complete freedom of action during the beginning period because he feared someone might seek to modify the direction of the movement he had created.\textsuperscript{3} From the beginning Coubertin had stipulated that the Committee be self-recruiting, which is to say that when a member dies, resigns, or is dismissed, the rest of the members select someone to replace him. The members thus selected became members for life;

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid. \quad \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., pp. 133-134. 
\textsuperscript{3}Otto Mayer, A Travers les Anneaux Olympiques (Genève: Cailler, 1960), p. 20.
they were not delegates from the countries or sports federations to the Olympic organization, but were, on the contrary, representatives of the IOC to the national committees and sports federations having sufficient power to impose the ideas of the International Olympic Committee at home,¹ a policy which still exists today, except for a mandatory retirement age. Its representatives are generally citizens and residents of the country to which they are appointed and in close touch with amateur sport in the country.²

The International Olympic Committee, stipulated Coubertin, must be composed of three concentric circles:

(1) A small tightly-knit nucleus of competent and dedicated workers

(2) A larger group of members of good will who can be progressively educated and which may serve as a breeding ground for future leaders

(3) A facade of titled men, wealthy or important, whose presence would give satisfaction to certain national aspirations and would assure visible prestige to the assembly.³

¹Ibid., p. 50.
³Mayer, A Travers ..., p. 21.
The principle on which the constitution of the International Olympic Committee was based, which Coubertin referred to as "delegation in reverse," was not above criticism. It was certainly in opposition to the idea of parliamentary democracy. Coubertin found it necessary to defend his creation against severe criticism from time to time. In a speech he delivered at a dinner given by the British government in 1908, a speech which has become well-known since, he expands on the reasons for the attacks on the I.O.C.

The reasons for these battles? Dear God: I can tell you in two words. We are not elected; we are self-recruiting and our mandates are not limited. Is anything more needed to aggravate a public opinion which is becoming more and more accustomed to see the elective principle extend its domain and gradually put every institution under its yoke? In our case there is an infringement of the law which it is difficult to tolerate, is there not? Very well! We accept the responsibility for this anomaly very gladly and with no qualms. For my part I have in the past learned many things in this country, and among them that the best means of safeguarding liberty and serving democracy is not always to abandon everything to election, but on the contrary to maintain within the broad electoral ocean some islets whereon there may be assured in certain specialities, the continuity of a stable and independent effort.¹

In 1912, in a speech before the Swedish Parliament, Coubertin insisted that under any other form of govern-

ment the Olympic Games would have "perished in the cradle." The success of the undertaking was due, he believed, to the total independence ensured to the Committee by the constitution.¹ In 1925, in an address to the Olympic Congress at Prague, at which he formally resigned as President of the International Olympic Committee, Coubertin again upheld his organization of that committee:

If modern Olympism has prospered, it is because it had at its head an absolutely independent council that no one has ever subsidized and which, since it is self-recruiting, is free from all electoral meddling and does not allow itself to be influenced either by nationalistic passions or by the weight of corporate interests. With a supreme council composed of delegates of the National Committees or the International Federations, Olympism would have died in a few years, and even today its future would be compromised if this essential condition of permanence were abandoned.²

COUBERTIN FURTHER RE-AFFIRMS HIS CONTROL AND POWER DESPITE EARLY DISSENSION

That dissension existed within the International Olympic Committee fairly early is a fact. This dissension can be illustrated by some examples which follow. The first incident surrounds the desire of Greece to keep


²Coubertin, "Address to the Prague Congress, May 29, 1925," The Olympic Idea, pp. 97-98.
the Olympic Games permanently in Athens, while Coubertin maintained his position that the Games should be held in various capitals throughout the world. The tenth anniversary of the revival of the Olympic Games was celebrated by the Athenian Games of 1906. "These Games did not form part of the regular cycle, but were the result of a compromise between those who thought that the revived Games should always take place in Athens, and those who favoured the selection of world-wide venues."¹ Coubertin was not present at the Games in Athens. Instead, he decided to convene a "Consultative Conference of Arts, Letters and Sports" for May 23 in the foyer of the Comédie-Française in Paris. He even acknowledged using the conference as a pretext for not going to Athens.² In Athens, the members of the Committee who were present met under the presidency of Count Brunetta d'Usseaux, and assisted by Count Mercati.

A single resolution was passed, the reorganization of the International Olympic Committee. Coubertin did not take the thing seriously and thought that such a session could not represent the Olympic doctrine in any integral way. From that session, nothing is left except that the Renovateur remained,


²Mayer, A Travers ..., p. 54.
always, master of the situation, and held
in his hands the direction of the I.O.C.\textsuperscript{1}

This incident shows the power Coubertin held over
the Committee. He knew what he wanted to do and did it.
During the years of his presidency he assumed, alone, all
the administrative and financial burdens connected with
the office. He attached little importance to bureaucratic
redtape.

He had created a work and he intended
to direct according to his principles and
his ideas. Of little import to him was
this or that decision taken during a ses-
sion. He knew, as any diplomat does, how
to adapt them to his own taste!\textsuperscript{2}

From time to time certain decisions were made during the
sessions concerning the publication of minutes of the
meetings or proceedings of the sessions. For example,
in 1911 at the session in Budapest, the International
Olympic Committee decided to no longer publish the minutes
of the meetings, but only the text of the resolutions
taken.\textsuperscript{3} At the eighteenth session in Antwerp in 1920,
I.O.C. members spoke of drawing up the proceedings of the
sessions. Several proposals came forth, tending to show
the insufficiency of previous texts.\textsuperscript{4}

Coubertin was opposed to the drawing
up of the proceedings. He thought that the
texts which appeared in the bulletin were

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 55.
\item \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 39.
\item \textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 66.
\item \textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 88.
\end{itemize}
sufficient because he feared having to abide by the decisions taken in the course of the Congress, preferring to sail his ship as he intended. Thus, he declared without committing himself too much: 'For the moment we have our Bulletin and we will see how things go.' The bulletin, let us not forget was written by him. On a question from Count Gautier-Vignal (Monaco) concerning the writing of the bulletin, the president responded evasively: 'For the moment the Revue will be nothing more than an information bulletin of facts.' However, Coubertin knew that his Revue, which he wrote himself, would give only the opinion that he wanted to be communicated.¹

Coubertin had established La Revue Olympique (The Olympic Review) very early in the Olympic movement. He also published it, financed it and acted as its editor for many years. In addition, it is assumed that he wrote most of the articles which appeared in it, at least in the early period, as stated by Otto Mayer and corroborated by Mr. Avery Brundage.² However, it is interesting to note that at one time Coubertin indicated that the articles in La Revue Olympique were anonymous and would remain so.

The American Olympic Committee was critical of these particular practices of Coubertin. From the Report of the American Olympic Committee in 1920 comes this criticism:

¹Ibid.
²Interview with Avery Brundage, former President of the I.O.C., March 28, 1973.
The International Olympic Committee, while having a secretary and records, has no stenographer present at its meetings and it is generally understood that the minutes are made up by the president from his memory and notes. It thereby oftentimes happens that the recollection or record of just what took place is vague or misleading with consequent misunderstanding and opportunity for trouble.\footnote{The Official Report of the American Olympic Committee, 1920, p. 422.}

The International Olympic Committee looked upon itself as "trustees" of the Olympic idea. Its authority emanated from the idea. It did not interfere with the privileges of sports associations nor did it make technical policy. Yet, during the period between 1895 and 1914, it was often necessary for it to play a more active role in the preparation of the Games, from the technical point of view and from the point of view of the program. It is important to realize that in the early period few international federations existed and the ones which did exist, along with the national federations, showed themselves to be, in general, anti-Olympic.\footnote{Monique Berlioux, The International Olympic Academy Report, 1968, p. 66.} These federations often regarded themselves or were regarded by others as rivals of the International Olympic Committee. Although the athletic federations, both national and international, had the power to formulate regulations and to settle
Olympic rules, they had only a consultative share in the
decisions made by the International Olympic Committee,
which created a certain amount of discontent.¹

In 1920, the question of the relations between the
I.O.C. and the international federations was the object
of a long discussion. Many of the members of the I.O.C.
were looking for an entente with the federations, yet
there were no direct lines of communication between the
two. It was in the course of the session at Antwerp that
there was talk of a movement, emanating from the federa-
tions, to modify the institution of the I.O.C. The prob-
lem between the I.O.C. and the federations was one which
had reappeared regularly at the discussion table. By the
same token, Count de Baillet-Latour, the man who was to
succeed Coubertin, knew that sooner or later a movement
would be established to change the structure of the
I.O.C.² In the Olympic Congresses, to which the federa-
tions could send representatives, a delegate could
legally represent more than one organization and was
permitted one vote for each of the organizations he
represented. Because the Congresses were made of I.O.C.
members, and representatives of the National Olympic

²Mayer, A Travers . . ., pp. 87-88.
members, and representatives of the National Olympic Committees and the International Federations, theoretically, a person could represent the I.O.C., his National Olympic Committee and an International Federation, thereby holding a total of three votes. Since all the members of the I.O.C. were entitled to representation, this resulted in an over-balance of power, and a source of conflict and criticism.¹

Another form of opposition which arose to present an obstacle for Baron de Coubertin, very early, was that which came from the various gymnastic societies of Europe. Even before the Congress of the Sorbonne in 1894, the Belgian federation wrote to the other federations suggesting a concerted stand against the work of the Congress. The greater part of the gymnastic societies of Germany, France, and Belgium, said Coubertin, were animated by a rigorously exclusive spirit and were not inclined to tolerate other forms of athletics which they referred to as "English sports." Sports, because of their increasing popularity became particularly offensive to them.² On the other hand, Coubertin was no friend of gymnastics and denounced gymnastic societies as disciples of those with militaristic ends in mind.

THE PLACE OF CEREMONY IN COUBERTIN'S CONCEPTION
OF THE MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES

Coubertin attached great importance to receptions,
dinners, and organized festivals given on the occasion
of the International Olympic Committee sessions. His
love of pomp and ceremonial, however, was in keeping with
his grandiose vision of the Games; i.e. the moral force
they embodied and the solemn commitment to the Olympic
ideal that he expected of all the participants.

If the modern Games are to exercise
the influence I desire for them they must
in their turn show beauty and inspire rever-
ence—a beauty and reverence infinitely
surpassing anything hitherto realized in
the most important athletic contests of
our day. The grandeur and dignity of pro-
cessions and attitudes, the impressive
splendour of ceremonies, the concurrence
of all the arts, popular emotion and gen-
erous sentiment, must all in some way col-
laborate together.¹

The ritual and solemnity of the Games were to be at
their peak during the opening and closing ceremonies.
For these Coubertin personally devised all the ceremonies
and details of the rituals, which he perfected over the
years. As a motto for the Games, he chose the words of
the Dominican priest Père Didon inscribed over the
entrance to the college d'Arceuil: citius, altius,
fortius. He designed the Olympic flag, which symbolized

¹Coubertin, "Why I Revived the Olympic Games," The
Fortnightly Review, XC (July, 1908), p. 113.
the importance of the Games in the five rings, intertwining the five continents with each ring being a separate color to represent all the colors found in the flags of all nations. He drafted the wording of the invitation and of the opening address; the opening of the Games commenced with the roar of cannon, the release of thousands of doves, the unfurling of the Olympic flag, and the lighting of the Olympic fire, which was to burn throughout the Olympic competitions.\textsuperscript{1} He drafted the wording of the oath of athletes, which was of special importance to him, and in promoting the idea, he said:

\begin{quote}
There is one (ceremony) which existed then (in antiquity) and which could be transposed almost unchanged. It is the oath. Before the beginning of the Games the athletes who had been admitted as competitors went to the temple of Zeus and vowed to observe in every particular the law of the Games. They declared themselves without taint and worthy to appear in the Stadium. If the image of God were replaced for each athlete by the flag of his country, the grandeur of the ceremony could surely not fail to be enhanced, and the appropriateness of this 'modernisation' is so obvious that there is no need to insist upon it.\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}

Another aspect Coubertin gave to the Games, in addition to the organization and celebration of them was their international character. His desire for the

\textsuperscript{1}Carl Diem, "Baron de Coubertin," \textit{Olympic Games News Service}, Berlin (Feb. 26, 1934), p. 3.

\textsuperscript{2}Coubertin, "A Modern Olympia," \textit{The Olympic Idea}, p. 34.
development of friendship, cooperation, and exchanges of viewpoints among peoples and among nations to bring about world peace has provided rationality for calling Coubertin a utopian, an idealist. The idealism of his philosophy, through which he hoped to create a "spiritual renewal" of youth, is epitomized in the closing words at the Congress of the Sorbonne in 1894:

I . . . lift my glass to the Olympic idea, which has traversed the mists of the ages like an all-powerful ray of sunlight and returned to illumine the threshold of the twentieth century with a gleam of joyous hope.¹

CONCLUSION

Inspired by a powerful dream, Baron Pierre de Coubertin structured and implemented that dream with the fervor and enthusiasm of a religious reformer. His vision assumed almost mythical and mystical dimensions as he presented it on the altar of the new century. His dream reflected his desire to resuscitate French influence abroad and to create a "spiritual renewal" at home. The new religion he proposed was based on the devotion of the individual to a higher aspiration for perfection. And the asceticism through which this moral perfection could be reached was the practice of sport, the ever

renewed effort to go beyond one's limits, beyond all past achievements.

Coubertin wanted to create an élite; a superior class of athletes, i.e. a class fully conscious of and devoted to the promotion of its superiority. The door was open to all who would enter; the key was youth. Yet the new breed he hoped to foster had haunting and disturbing philosophical connections with what was later to manifest itself in the youth movements of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.

Coubertin's dream was to bear the imprint of two kinds of influences. On the one hand there were the immediate constraints and preoccupations of his time and on the other were the broader and more remote sources of philosophical and ideological inspiration. The Franco-Prussian War, the subsequent narrow nationalism and chauvinism in France, the drive for colonial expansion with its underlying philosophy, Social Darwinism, the effects of industrialism were all important features in determining the structure Coubertin was going to impart to his dream. His fascination with the Grecian spirit of antiquity, and the concept of knighthood during the Middle Ages combined to mold his philosophy for the modern Olympic Games.
The tools on which Coubertin depended to bring about the realization of his dream were to a large extent his own intellectual, moral and financial resources. As a member of the aristocracy, he was able to devote his life and his money to the causes he championed. His skills of persuasion were honed to a fine edge. His speech was eloquent and precise and "... an unbending will could be guessed beneath the captivating charm of his personality."¹ When he was attacked or when his organization was attacked, he seemed to take pleasure in doing battle. Always in control, Coubertin did not relinquish his position until he knew his work of renewal had been completed down to its smallest detail.

The creation for which he is best known, the Olympic Games, was not simply a series of world championships of physical prowess, it was the quadrennial celebration of the youth of the world. Moral perfection, social peace, muscular development and the glorification of the fatherland were to be the results of consecrating oneself to the cult of athletics practiced in the spirit of true sport. The "human springtime" of which Coubertin spoke was embodied in the young male adult in whose honor the Olympic Games were to be celebrated because upon him

depended the future and the link between the past and the future.¹

Unfortunately, those characteristics necessary to develop "moral perfection, social peace, muscular development and the glorification of the fatherland," in short, all the noble virtues that every society agrees to praise and foster in its youth, were defined by society as exclusively virile traits. For women, the key to social acceptance, praise and success was (and to a large extent, still is) to be feminine. But femininity as defined by society and by Pierre de Coubertin had nothing to do with self-assertion, heroism, strength, courage, or self-abnegation. Thus, there was no room for women in the concept of Olympism or in the Olympic Games.

¹Coubertin, *The Olympic Idea*, p. 133.
CHAPTER III

COUBERTIN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN IN SPORT

It has been said that Pierre de Coubertin was a man truly ahead of his time; his humanitarian ideals extolled the equality of men without regard to race, position or caste. Yet, Baron de Coubertin, though he espoused the equality of all men and insisted that the Olympic Games would be adapted to the needs and conditions of the modern world, was opposed to the admission of women to participation in them. Coubertin had not planned for the admission of women, did not want women to be admitted, and fought against their admission for more than thirty years. He was opposed to it from the inception of the Games to his dying day. That he never wavered from his position will be shown in this chapter, and it will emphasize as well the tenacity and even the violence with which he attacked this "obstacle" in order to rid his Olympic structure of this "regrettable" impurity.

Coubertin had given some thought to physical exercise for women and to some extent was in favor of it. That can be ascertained from his comments at various periods in his life through his writing about the place
of sports and physical exercises in education. When writing a report of his travels to the United States in 1889, he noted favorably the place of physical education for women in American colleges:

Americans find that women, too, have the right to physical exercises. And why not? Women need natural movements in the out-of-doors as much as men do. At the school of Berkeley, a gymnasium is reserved for them with different apparatus from those of men... On the other hand, at Wellesley, the women students participate in equitation, rowing, swim, play tennis, and seem to take great pleasure in it.¹

This statement tends to show that his concern was not a negative one; he was sensitive to feminine charm and beauty, and did not ignore women's need for physical activity. Yet while he felt that women needed a certain amount of physical activity in the out-of-doors, he also felt strongly that they should stay within the limits prescribed by the "laws of nature," that is, the laws of nature as he and many people of his time perceived them.

Women have probably proved that they are up to par with almost all the exploits to which men are accustomed, but they have not been able to establish that in doing so, they have remained faithful to the necessary conditions of their existence and obedient to the laws of nature.²


In 1902, when Coubertin made that statement, he was already aware of the feminist movement, but it seems that as yet, he had not made up his mind whether to support or oppose such a movement. He had already spoken out on the good the movement could do if it forced a change in the antiquated laws which forbade women to own and administer property, private fortune, and to manage the estate of a minor. Yet his sympathy for the opposition can already be seen, particularly should a woman dare to step outside the role which had been assigned to her. He did not want any usurpation of deep-rooted traditions in the expression of the principles of human equality.

In order to indicate further that the feminist movement was of some note, even in France, and to show more clearly the attitude of Coubertin regarding women and tradition, and women and the law in France, the writer will include here a section of a letter written by Pierre Laborde, a student in humanities who was spending his vacation at the Exposition in Paris in 1900 and attended the Olympic Games there, to one of his friends.

'Brace yourself, my friend, women have participated in these Games, as the women of Laconia at the Herean Games of long ago. Our sportswomen were clad in white, elegant, pretty, and the racket they held in their hands did not just caress the ball! Their ardor and their endurance have astonished me! I thought Melle Prévost would get us another "Marseillaise" but we
had the "God Save the Queen" thanks to Miss Cooper.

This intrusion of women in a stadium gave me a lot to think about. The Feminist Congress, which was held within the walls of the Exposition, though it was marked by numerous incidents, was not ridiculous either. And I approve of what the Baron de Coubertin who takes interest in everything, has written on this subject: "The French, by heredity, by disposition, by taste, are opposed to the idea of the apparent equality of the two sexes. They will accept the principle of real equality as long as it does not display itself too boisterously in the open, and that, in the expression it takes, it will not shock their deeprooted traditions. The movement could then be very useful to the country in provoking the revision of an antiquated legislation concerning women. Napoleonic laws still remaining in use today submit women to a tutelage which, in matters concerning business, the administration of private fortune, and the management of the estate of a minor, is absolutely unreasonable; certain careers are closed to them in which they would like to be employed; finally, the article of the Civil Code which prohibits the establishment of paternity is becoming the object of a reprobation justly deserved."

In short, why not have sportswomen? Movement, sport, challenge light up their beauty more perhaps than the artificial fires [flashy jewelry] of the elusive Loïe Fuller.¹

COUBERTIN'S DOUBLE STANDARD REGARDING HUMAN EQUALITY

To further explore Coubertin's ideas on human equality, as it concerns women, it is interesting to turn to a speech he made somewhat later, just after World War I to the Greek Liberal Club of Lausanne in 1918 on the

¹Eyquem, Pierre de Coubertin: Épopée Olympique, pp. 171-172.
subject of world peace and the rebuilding of postwar society.

It is readily agreed that the best foundation for social peace within a democratic society would be the establishment of a happy equilibrium between the inequality introduced by nature among men and the equality which legislation seeks to impose. But where are the bases and bounds of such an equilibrium?

The thing which makes inequality hard to bear for those who are adversely affected by it is its tendency to perpetuate injustice. People revolt against it because it usually has the two-fold characteristic of being permanent and unjustified.1

Here is a statement that should warm the hearts of all the oppressed minorities, including women, and lead them to think that Coubertin would be the dedicated champion of their cause. But not so, Coubertin is quick to set limitations to such noble consideration. Later in his speech he talks about building the city of the future, a city in which equality exists and which can only be developed through the collaboration of all its citizens. He warns his listeners:

Let us not fall into the Utopia of complete communism. Equality must stop at the threshold of the family hearth, for men will never give it access to their homes or allow it to interfere in family affairs.

1Pierre de Coubertin, "What We Can Now Ask of Sport," The Olympic Idea, p. 47 [italics added].
Intimate social relationships are governed by heredity, tradition, and everyday habits.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 51 [italics added].}

One must wonder here how Coubertin could perceive with such force and lucidity the fundamental striving of all humanity for equality and then in the same speech deny equality to one-half of the human race on the grounds that they belong within the confines of intimate social relationships and thereby should be governed by heredity, tradition and habit. Rationality would have demanded a different interpretation. Thus, it might be concluded that on the subject of equality for women, Coubertin was definitely not ahead of his time.

COUBERTIN'S CONCERN FOR PROPRIETY AND DECENCY

As time went on and women became more interested in participating in more sports and as the movement for the emancipation of women began to take on a more militant character, the attitude of Coubertin seemed to become more rigid. Articles appeared in the \textit{Revue Olympique} more often which criticized and ridiculed women in different areas of sport. In January, 1908, an article appeared on "The Snow Sports." He took that opportunity to chide women for their participation in winter sports.

Those are fine sports, and although some women tried their hands at them, they
may be classified as virile sports; they strongly deserve that name. It is quite a different matter as far as the sleigh is concerned, which remains a child's toy and has now become a grown-up's distraction. As we have said, it was the English who brought about this transformation. The English ladies, especially, have contributed to it with the greatest ardor. And they have also contributed, if we may say it as we view it, to organizing in wintry Switzerland the most inaesthetic sight human eyes could contemplate, a spectacle before which our glorious ancestors, the Greek athletes would assuredly faint from indignation. A sled is already in itself an object ugly enough, like a stool of inelegant shape. The position it requires from the person who sits on it is not the most graceful.

... Seeing a lady with her skirts lifted sliding in this position, usually scratching up the runway with two small pointed sticks which she holds in her hands and which help her to steer the sleigh, that sight represents a true offense to the eyes. Nothing uglier could be imagined. This ugliness sometimes even becomes indecency, a quite inconceivable fact on the part of a people as concerned with propriety as is the British.¹

The sight of a woman in a somewhat awkward position, having fun in a "childish" way was seen as impropriety and indecency by Coubertin. Monique Berlioux, author of several works on the Olympic Games and now Director of the International Olympic Committee, has this to say about Coubertin's attitude toward women in sport:

Coubertin feared more the infatuation of women for certain specific sports than

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for sport in general. Probably the aesthetic sense of the baron was shocked by the sight of women "lightly clad" engaged in strenuous exercises, and covered with sweat.\(^1\)

This is in sharp contrast with the following statement:

> Who then will succeed in inspiring in the crowd respect for human beauty if the athletes themselves are afraid to show their legs or their chests.\(^2\)

The apparent contradiction springs from the fact that Coubertin is now talking about male athletes, the only "real" athletes and "real" representatives of human beauty. This points out the double standard of Coubertin who is otherwise very indignant at the idea of Women's indecency in showing any part of their bodies in the practice of sports. To Coubertin, human beauty seems to be divided into two categories, on the one hand the male's beauty, which is wholesome enough to be shown in public and is best displayed in effort; on the other hand, the female beauty which is best appreciated if carefully veiled and expressed through the passivity of a decorative and adorned object, as opposed to the male's body, beautiful enough to be seen in plain nudity.

Coubertin wished to re-establish the nude or semi-nude appearance of the male athlete that was practiced


in Greek times. This is further occasion for him to emphasize that "decency" or modesty has a different meaning when applied to men and women. Here again his double standard is evident when he praises nudity as being favorable to the practice of sport and to good hygiene, but fails to extend those privileges to women, on the account of "decency."

However it is not unusual to notice that masculine nudity (the only one possible) is little by little reintroduced into the mores by sports to which nudity is so favorable and by hygiene which recommends it so strongly.¹

In a footnote to his comment about masculine nudity, Coubertin explained what he meant by "the only one possible."

I hasten to say that all this applies only to man about whom questions of decency are in general quite conventional and vary infinitely according to the country, the time, and even the circumstances.²

Variations in questions of decency were not permissible, it seems, in the case of women.

COUBERTIN'S OPPOSITION TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SPECIFIC SPORTS

In his opposition to various sports in which women would have to display themselves out in the open,

²Ibid.
Coubertin runs the whole gamut of popular reasons for them to abstain: the female organism is ruled by nerves rather than muscles, mothers of children should not participate in dangerous activities lest children be left motherless, the entrance of women into public displays would result in the destruction of order and decorum at meets. A good sample of these types of criticisms is to be found in Coubertin's critical reactions to some female aviation meets that took place in Paris shortly after the turn of the century. Aviation was one of the sports that women were beginning to take serious interest in at that time.

But to that sport women must not be admitted. The crash at this same meeting of Reims of a courageous aviatrix, madame de Laroche, cast a note of horror, and if one can employ this word "against nature," on the assembly. Do we allow women to participate in horse-racing and should women jockeys appear would we calmly watch them break their skulls from the spectator stands? Would we allow women's teams to compete for polo or football championships... We wouldn't would we? Respect of individual liberty requires that one should not interfere in private acts and if a woman wants to go up in an airplane no policeman must keep her from doing so. Should there be licenses to issue, let us even admit that women be allowed to take the examination, but in public competitions, their participation must be absolutely prohibited. It is indecent that the spectators should be exposed to the risk of seeing the body of a woman being smashed before their eyes. Besides, no matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her organism is not cut
out to sustain certain shocks. Her nerves rule her muscles, nature wanted it that way. Finally, the egalitarian discipline that is brought to bear on the male contenders for the good order and good appearance of the meeting risks being affected and rendered inapplicable by female participation. For all these practical reasons as well as sentimental ones, it is extremely desirable that a drastic rule be established very soon.¹

The irony is that this passage follows a very praising paragraph about the courage of men aviators who are spurred on to meet the challenge all the more determinedly since one of them had just crashed.

On the contrary, they seemed excited by this immediate contact with danger and seeing the accident and its terrible consequences had the effect of spurring on their energy. That is how things must be between men.²

Here again in Coubertin's mind the quality of courage in the face of danger is definitely a male privilege, and women trying to practice that noble quality are usurpators guilty of a "crime de lèse majesté."

The following year (1911) another article appeared on almost the same subject which proposed public laws to prohibit the participation of women in these "celestial" activities. He saw no purpose for the kind of heroism which was being displayed by women in ballooning; the

²Ibid., p. 109.
qualities necessary for such an activity were admirable in men, but unpleasant in women. Furthermore, Coubertin felt that women who had enough time to devote to aviation did not have enough to do at home.

And now, let us grumble a little, if we may. First against women. They go up in balloons a lot. They even do their utmost to break open their heads in airplanes and we have already said that in our view their participation in celestial races must be prohibited by police laws in the absence of club rules. . . . Let women accompany their husbands every now and then, that is quite enough. It is said that the other day in Paris, the aeronautic society that has the lovely name of Stella and has only female members saw twelve or thirteen balloons taking off piloted by women. This sight would not have been to our liking. We know, anyway, that the weaker sex is capable of heroism, but this kind of heroism is not what it should seek, because instead of the qualities of cooperation which create great devotions, in order to make a good pilot one needs calm, "sang-froid," self-control, calculated will-power made of prudence and energy . . . a whole array of qualities which are very much appreciated in a man, but very unpleasant in a woman. And also, really, if a woman is still young enough to like going up in a balloon and to follow her penchant . . . it is because she does not have much to do at home. Women who have children to raise do not expose themselves to useless perils because they know they are needed.1

What about men who also have families, one may humbly ask: Do they not know they are needed and therefore

should not expose themselves to useless perils? It is also interesting to note that qualities that are admittedly recognized as admirable human qualities are considered unpleasant in a woman. For the defense of Coubertin, one must add that attitudes have not changed that much since his time.

Not only did Coubertin object to aviation for women, he also objected to their participation in equitation, but for a different reason. In an article discussing popular equitation, before purely and simply dismissing the subject of women's role in that sport, Coubertin made a few comments to justify his rejection of serious consideration of the subject.

They [the women] are not to be considered. There is no popular female equitation. The woman who rides horseback is almost invariably a refined lady of leisure and this sport is almost never engaged in for utilitarian purposes, except in the colonies and again in specific circumstances. In any case, the rules of "rough-riding" that we stipulated for young men can not be applied to young ladies, even though the fashion has come from America for women to ride astraddle. This is a strange custom, the physiological effects of which we do not need to insist upon here, but which prudent and wise parents should never accept.¹

There are two or three points which will be brought up here to help in the understanding of the above passage.

Equitation in the Olympic Games was essentially a military event until after the 1948 Games in London; it was aimed at the "defense of man." Coubertin, at one time had proposed including a "fencing on horseback" event in the Olympic Games to add to the utilitarian feature of equitation. It might also be pointed out that Coubertin was a great admirer of Theodore Roosevelt, who popularized the concept of rough-riding through his exploits. Roosevelt, as Lucas¹ points out, was for Coubertin the epitome of manhood, of virility if you will. Rough-riding could in no way apply to women. Nor did horseback riding serve any utilitarian purpose for women, indeed, it had a detrimental physiological effect. It seems fairly evident that the harmful physiological effect to which Coubertin was referring was the damaging of young ladies' hymens, symbols of their virginity, and therefore of their purity. The writer wonders what Coubertin thought of the American "young ladies" from whence came the new fashion.

Around the same period, there appeared an article on fencing and women in the Revue Olympique. The article was in reaction to a fencing tournament held in Paris in

which the contestants were all females and at which there were a great many people present. Until this time, 1911, women fencers had taken part in public competitions only two or three times, and in a discreet manner. Even this seemed to Coubertin to be audacious and tolerated only as an exceptional "originalité." For Coubertin, this event represented an unacceptable departure from what he was willing to tolerate because it was an official sports event, attended by a mixed and enthusiastic audience. Coubertin seriously questioned the benefits that could accrue from such an event, for either women or the sport of fencing. He first rejected the possibility of a man and woman competing against each other since out of gallantry, a man would refrain from pushing his opponent too hard and this was contrary to the spirit of fencing which required no sparing of either oneself or the adversary. This seems reasonable enough an assumption; however, Coubertin also rejected the idea of fencing contests between women, on the sole ground that women do not belong on the fencing platform. He went on to justify his position by saying that healthwise, fencing is not recommended very highly because of the type of movement, the position, and nervous strain that it requires. Fencing was justifiable only on the ground that it teaches a man how to fight and, according to Coubertin,
one can not conceive of a boy who does not know how to handle a sword. His virility is incomplete as long as it has not been consecrated by his contact with arms. But for women it was quite a different matter, in his own words, "This same contact is unpleasant and futile." He could see some justification in teaching women some self-defense techniques which are not too demanding physically, but he could see no reason, either on moral or on physical grounds to justify teaching them "to fight like a man." He further believed that fencing would be detrimental to women, and worse still, women would be detrimental to fencing. Coubertin could not fail to perceive the anti-feminist overtones of his position and hurried to protect himself by saying that he is in favor of mixed basketball games as they were played in Holland at the time.¹

COUBERTIN'S OPPOSITION TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Despite the opposition of Coubertin to women's participation in the Olympic Games, their admission came in the second Olympiad in Paris in 1900. The development of their participation will be discussed in later chapters, however, the date of the admission is mentioned here to

emphasize the fact that in Pierre de Coubertin's *Memoires Olympiques*, written in 1931, no mention whatsoever is made of the admission of women nor of their accomplishments in the Games. Practically the only time he mentions women in his book is in order to praise a Swedish woman who had six sons in the Olympic Games of 1912.

A record. A Swedish woman, Madame Wersall had six sons engaged in the Games, the younger ones in the role of boy-scouts registered to aid in keeping order and as messengers. Is this not antique [in keeping with the spirit of the Greek Games]? The International Olympic Committee has awarded her the Olympic medal.¹

Both this lavish praise for a mother and the total absence of it for sportswomen clearly indicate where Coubertin thought women belonged and what kinds of accomplishments were befitting and praiseworthy for their sex. It is also interesting to note that Madame Wersall, the winner of the Olympic medal was born the Countess Lewenhaupt, and therefore was in no way representative of the average woman. The *Revue Olympique* called her accomplishment "A new kind of record" and went on to say that: "The mothers of Swedish families appreciated the homage given to one like themselves."² It may be safely


assumed that Coubertin, and the International Olympic Committee as well, believed that a woman’s glory rightfully came through the number and quality of the children she produced. And where sports were concerned, her greatest accomplishment was to encourage her sons to excell rather than to seek to win records for herself. This again is a very prevalent view in a patriarchal society where women are supposed to accomplish themselves only through the achievements of their husbands and sons and conversely, social status and praise accorded to her husband, naturally extend to her, even without any special contribution on her part.

Until the Olympic Games of 1912 women did not participate in the Olympic Games except in a sporadic manner, though there were some tennis and archery competitions. In the view of Monique Berlioux, Coubertin was resolutely opposed to the intrusion of women into the Olympic arena.

Pierre de Coubertin was resolutely opposed to this intrusion of women into sport. With violence—one could certainly never say of him that he gave in to middle-age temptation—he pled that "our companions" be kept outside the competitions. . . . To them grace, parasols, vapors, the family hearth and charming children, to men the a priori virile sports competitions.  

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Yet for the Games of 1912, all his passion and ardor were in vain. His antagonists would not give in to him this time. Anyway, Coubertin knew that it would be just a matter of time before women would be admitted to the Olympic Games in greater numbers, but he certainly was going to hold back as long as he could. Coubertin wrote in 1910 that the Swedish Organizing Committee would probably admit women to the championships in swimming in 1912.

In 1912, the organizing committee of the host nation was the group which planned the program for the Games. When the draft of the program was made, it was laid before the I.O.C. for revision and later, for final approval. At that time it would have been extremely difficult for Coubertin to legally intervene to prohibit women's events in swimming given the fact that the democratic process prevailed within the committee and given the favorable attitude of the I.O.C. members towards admitting women for swimming. The blatant use of authoritarian methods with the committee would have borne only bitter fruits. It was definitely a concession he was forced to make, but which he could never accept, as is evident from his "La Bataille Continue," written in 1934.

This is exactly what did happen. Yet, Coubertin's fight was not over. The July 1912 issue of the Revue

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1Ibid.
Olympique, which coincided with the dates of the Olympic Games for 1912 included the first major statement devoted to the participation of women in the Olympic Games. The text has been translated by the writer and appears below in its entirety.

WOMEN IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

The question of the admission of women to the Olympic Games has not been decided. It cannot be resolved negatively for the simple reason that antiquity had resolved it thus. It cannot be resolved affirmatively either simply because women competitors have been accepted for swimming and tennis events in 1908 and 1912. The other day an application came signed by a neo-amazon who wanted to compete in the Modern Pentathlon and the Swedish Committee, who was left free to decide in the absence of fixed legislation, refused that application. One sees, thus, that the discussion remains open.

It is preferable that too prompt a decision did not occur and that the affair dragged on. It will be solved quite naturally during the Congress of Paris which will give to the Olympiads their definitive appearance. In what sense? We do not have the power to predict, but, as for us, we do not fear to choose the negative side. We feel that the Olympic Games must be reserved for men. . . . As the saying goes: a door must be open or closed. Can women be given access to all the Olympic events? No? . . . then why permit them some and bar them from others? And especially, on what basis does one establish the line between events permitted and events prohibited? There are not just tennis players and swimmers. There are also fencers, horsewomen, and in America there have also been rowers. Tomorrow, perhaps, there will be women runners or even soccer players. Would such sports practiced by women constitute an edifying sight before
crowds assembled for an Olympiad? We do not think that such a claim can be made.

But there is another motive and that one is of a practical nature. Would separate events be organized for women or would we accept registrations helter-skelter without distinction of sex, whether it be an individual or a team competition? The latter solution would be logical since the doctrine of equality between the sexes tends to be spreading. The only thing is, it presupposes the existence of mixed clubs. There are but only a very few at the present time, outside of tennis and swimming. Yet, even among the mixed clubs, 95 times out of 100, the trial heats will favor men. The Olympic Games, let us not forget, are not parades of physical exercises, but aim at breaking or at least maintaining existing records. Citius, altius, fortius. Faster, higher, stronger, this is the motto of the International Committee and the raison d'être of all Olympism. No matter what the ambitions of female athletes may be, they cannot be high enough to pretend to win over men in running, in fencing, in equitation. . . .

To bring into the question here the principle of the theoretical equality of the sexes, would thus be to engage in a platonic manifestation devoid of meaning or significance.

There remains the other alternative which would consist in adding competitions for women to the existing male competitions in sports that have been declared open to them. A small female Olympiad alongside a large male Olympiad? Where would be the interest? The already overloaded organizers, the already too short deadlines, the already formidable difficulties of lodging and of classification, the already excessive expenditures, one would have to double all that! Who would want to take that upon his shoulders?

Impractical, uninteresting, inaesthetic, and we are not afraid to add: wrong; in our opinion this is what this female semi-Olympiad would be. Such is not our idea of the Olympic Games in which we feel
(that) we have tried and that we must continue to try to achieve the following definition: the solemn and periodic exaltation of male athleticism with internationalism as a base, loyalty as a means, art for its setting, and female applause as reward.

This formula combined with the ancient ideals and the traditions of chivalry is the only healthy and satisfactory one. This formula, by itself, will command acceptance by public opinion.¹

Time was not a damper for the belief of Coubertin that women should not compete in the Olympic Games. The heroism shown by women in the first World War and their growing independence seemed to make no difference in his attitude. At the 18th session of the International Olympic Committee in Antwerp, Belgium, in 1920, he called for the suppression of women's participation. His countryman, Count Clary, did not agree with his opinion concerning the exclusion of women from the Games and explained himself this way: "Strong women make a strong race and there are enough sports where women can compete with men."² Coubertin continued to maintain, however, that these events were illegal and that the executive committee had tolerated them only under express reservations.³

Marie-Thérèse Eyquem, who authored a rather monumental book on the study of Coubertin, Pierre de Coubertin:

³Ibid., p. 105.
L'Epopée Olympique, made some devastating comments regarding his attitude towards women in competitive sports. Referring to a passage in Montherlant's novel (Les Olympiques) in which a woman is described in the agony of effort,¹ she mentioned how Coubertin hated the sight of women engaged in violent effort and how he had no sympathy for them.

Coubertin does not like this kind of sight. What right have women to complain if they are booed? Who forces them to that "undressing" which kills their mystery, to these efforts, these painful grins that give them sexless faces and bodies.²

Eyquem wisely points out that they appear "sexless" in effort, precisely because they transcend the limitations of sex identity and embody the very image of human pathos. She also challenges Coubertin's assumption that the right to represent what is human belongs to men and points out the blatant sexism of which women are victims.

Why should men be the only ones to represent what is human? And sportswomen suffer more than sportsmen and are the only victims, finally, of a racism supposedly banished from the Games, which causes them to have greater difficulties than men to train, fewer competitions from which to

¹"She threw herself on the finish line, her jaw stretched out like that of a cadaver, tearing, swallowing a mouthful of air, as if she were dying and still trying to bite into life." (from Eyquem, p. 261).

improve, and then their struggles are paid back with sarcasms and their triumphs with jeering.

Coubertin has written: "I believe in female heroism." But he still does not wish to witness it directly, if that heroism causes their faces to be distorted.¹

COUBERTIN RETIRES BUT HIS POSITION DOES NOT CHANGE

Coubertin's retirement in 1925 as president of the I.O.C. did not cool his feelings about women competing in the Games. In his speech to the athletes and all who took part in the Olympic Games in 1928 at Amsterdam, he does not miss the chance to let fly another arrow against the participation of women.

As to the admission of women to the Games, I remain strongly against it. It was against my will that they were admitted to a growing number of competitions.²

By 1931, Coubertin had developed what he entitled "The Charter of Sport Reform," a reform which would end the three main objections brought against sport: that it strained and overtaxed the body, that it assisted in dull-

¹Ibid., p. 262.

²Pierre de Coubertin, "To the Athletes and All Taking Part at Amsterdam in the IXth Olympiad Games," Bulletin Officiel du Comité International Olympique (October, 1928), p. 14. Let it be noted in passing that it was the above statement which the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation used when it drafted its Olympic Protest after the Games of 1928 which called for the suppression of women's events in future Olympic Games.
ing the intellect, that it spread a mercantile spirit and bred a love for money. Coubertin saw sport as a neutral body, i.e. in itself it was neither a force for good or evil. That evils in sport existed, he did not deny. But he did not blame the athletes; the guilty ones were the parents, schoolmasters, the public authorities, the directors of the sports federations and the press. To offset these evils, Coubertin offered several counter-measures, one of which could not fail to involve women and it was no less than the suppression of women's events in meetings where men take part.¹ He had held a conference during a session of the League of Nations to present his Charter to the world. Somewhat later in the year he published an article entitled "La Bataille Continue" in the Bulletin International de Pedagogie Sportive, the publication of the Bureau International de Pedagogie Sportive which Coubertin had founded after he retired as president of the Olympic Committee. The statement shows his continued concern with the problem of female participation, which obviously still upset him, and he explains his position.²

²Mayer, A Travers . . . , p. 132.
The Battle Continues

Every day brings new proof that the Chart of Sports Reform has put forth measures responding precisely to present-day evils.

One of the articles of the Chart deals with the irritating question of feminine athletics and their public exhibition. At the same time, almost the same day, two contradictory facts have just taken place in this respect. On the one hand the International Olympic Committee assembled at Barcelona has capitulated before the injunctions of certain groups and has opened again the door of the Games to women. Until 1928, they were admitted only to swimming and tennis. Now they are admitted to fencing and what is more serious, to the athletic events which take place in the stadium.

The "Charter of Sports Reform" has judiciously taken a position by simply asking the "suppression of the admission of women to all competitions in which men take part." There is the disjunction: a disjunction which does not imply the suppression of female competitions. Let the latter be organized freely according to the idea of those who take the responsibility for them and so far as they deem it desirable. The experience will bring public opinion to decide between adversaries and supporters. But what is important in the meantime is to put an end to promiscuity [meaning women and men participating side by side] because that promiscuity prevents sports pedagogy from exerting profitably its action not only on adolescence, but on adults as well; and we consider that both are dependent on it.¹

That kind of fighting is not suited

for women. It is in no way good for them. If they want to face it, let it be in their own privacy. No spectators remains the rule. It is indeed remarkable that it was the workers' [sports] societies which seemed to have been the first ones to understand it. But to do away with spectators would mean doing away with female athletics, thus the debate is not resolved. ¹

One can see from this article a definite alteration of Coubertin's ideas or strategy when compared to the earlier period. One might characterize his new attitude as one of benevolent neglect. He is no longer talking about the ugliness of women when they participate in sport. He is saying that it is alright for women to compete, but let them hold their own competitions; let them organize and be responsible for their own Games. Then public opinion would either bury women's sports or they would find acceptance. It may be interesting for the readers to see later on in this dissertation the reactions of the I.O.C. and the sports federations when women tried to do just that.

It is the writer's feeling that Coubertin thought that if women were left to organize and administer their own competitions, they would fail. How could they have procured the money to put on such competitions? Male supporters were able to help provide the monies needed for such ventures through their contacts with industry,

¹Tbid., p. 134.
etc. Women did not control the purse strings. Further, although interest in women's sports was growing by leaps and bounds, these activities were not widespread enough to insure the lasting interest of women, and thus provide the necessary ingredients for continued expansion of the pool of athletes as well as public interest and support. Women's sports, whether the women liked it or not, depended upon the interest and benevolence of men.

The process of striving, to go beyond one's limits was still considered a "mechanism of masculinity." Women, on the other hand, as Coubertin saw it, should be kept away from the tension surrounding competitive situations because confrontations were not suited to them. Finally, in his paternalistic way, Coubertin was saying, let women organize their own competitions, but we will tell them how they should be conducted. No spectators should be allowed. If they conformed to these prescriptions and interdictions that he had set up, there would be no reason to "outlaw" sports competitions for women. The "no spectators" stipulation would have effectively destroyed the whole sports movement for women. How could expansion of sports interest occur if women were never seen participating in them? Coubertin's own motto after World War I, All sports for all, could not exclude women from participation or even fail to encourage it. That
motto was not unlike the one used by the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation, "A team for everyone and everyone on a team." Not only were the mottoes similar, the plea for having women organize and administer their own activities and allowing no spectators were present in the philosophies of both Coubertin and the Women's Division.

Some three years later, in 1934, Coubertin was to reiterate his concern that the athlete was being corrupted by the influences around him, including feminine athletics. On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the rebirth of Olympism, Coubertin made these remarks:

I continue to . . . hold parents, schoolmasters, politicians, the press and the directors of sports federations responsible for his [the athlete's] lapses, and to be somewhat astonished that they are not even more numerous.

I still think that contact with feminine athletics is bad for him and that these athletics should be excluded from the Olympic programme . . .

What Coubertin means when he says that the male athlete's exposure to female sport is bad for him is elaborated upon in a brief treatment of the subject in his book Pedagogie Sportive, published in 1934.

The subject of sports for women is muddled by the passion and exaggerated expressions which the feminist campaign

brings to it. The leaders of this campaign are prone to claim the annexation of everything which was until now the domain of the man, hence the tendency to herself capable of equalling man in all things. It is thus that in sport, women rely on nervous strength to reach the results obtained by the muscular strength of their masculine rivals. What will be the disadvantages or the dangers of such a situation the day when it will have completed its expansion? And it is now spreading with great speed; Now I will say frankly what I think: nothing serious nor lasting is to be feared provided the rule which governs this whole question is observed: no spectators [sic]. The sports spectator always needs moral surveillance. One must know what he is seeking and why he is there. But whereas, for the masculine competitions, the large majority is there for the sport, so that the black sheep lost in the crowd can be ignored; it will always be a different matter in female competitions. Technically the female football players and boxers they have tried to exhibit here and there presents no interest whatsoever; they will always be imperfect copies. There is nothing to learn from watching them; so those who assemble for this purpose have other things in mind. And in this way, they contribute to the corruption of sport without helping otherwise to raise the general moral standard.

If feminine sports are carefully kept distinct from the aspect of spectacle, there will be no reason to outlaw them. We will see what comes out of it. Maybe women will soon realize that this attempt is not beneficial to their charm nor even their health. On the other hand, it is not without interest that a wife could participate to a fairly large extent in her husband's enjoyment of sports and that a mother be capable of directing intelligently the sports education of her sons.1

Coubertin blames the feminist movement for introducing women to such sports as football and boxing. Since the female competitions could never be more than mere copies of men's competitions, then it was to be assumed that people who attend such games or bouts were there for other reasons, and in Coubertin's view, these reasons were less than commendable, thus corrupting the sports themselves and the "real" athletes who took part in them.

It must be noted here, too, that Coubertin may have been directly referring to the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale (F.S.F.I.) and Madame Milliat, the president of that organization. Madame Milliat was a strong feminist and through her federation was able to put pressure on the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. to include female sports in the Olympic Games. The organization was one of those which sponsored football (soccer) matches for women.

The only way to keep women's sports in the proper perspective, in Coubertin's view, was to allow no spectators. If such a rule were made, women would not corrupt sports and athletes and in turn the women would be raising the moral standard by no longer tempting male spectators, that is, if women really insist upon having sports competition. A woman was supposed to be sufficiently fulfilled by sharing in her husband's enjoyment of sports and directing her sons' education in them.
In 1935, just two years before his death, Coubertin in a message broadcast from Berlin finally granted a little niche for women. In the elaboration of the philosophic foundation of modern Olympism, he described the sports which make up the "Altis" or sacred enclosure, that is to say the sports which aim at the defense of man and at his mastery over himself, over danger, and over the elements, as has been pointed out in Chapter II. Coubertin would give team sports a secondary place outside the Altis and it was in this category that women could take part if it were necessary.

Women could also take part here if it is judged necessary. I personally do not approve of the participation of women in public competitions, which is not to say that they must abstain from practicing a great number of sports, provided they do not make a public spectacle of themselves. In the Olympic Games as in the contests of former times, their primary role should be to crown the victors.¹

Throughout his life, Coubertin held his ground. In July of 1937 at a reunion of the alumni of the collège de Madrid, just two months before his death, Coubertin declared: "'Let women participate in all sports if they want to, but let them not exhibit themselves doing them.'"² Authors

¹ Coubertin, "The Philosophic Foundation of Modern Olympism," The Olympic Idea, p. 133.

have stated that Coubertin's position and his attitude
towards the participation of women in the Olympic Games
softened over the years. The materials presented in this
chapter clearly indicate that this is not so.

CONCLUSION

As has been shown by the documents presented in the
foregoing chapter, Coubertin was violently opposed to the
admission of women to competition in the Olympic Games.
His opposition, however, was not one which would exclude
the participation of women in physical exercises or
activities in the out-of-doors, nor even of certain kinds
of competition. What he hated was seeing women "making
fools of themselves" in public, i.e. appearing lightly
clad, sweating, their faces contorted by effort. His
views also represented the feelings of even the more
enlightened people concerning the physiological dangers
involved in women's participation in vigorous sports.

But more than that, sport was a mechanism specially
designed and suited to display man's virility. Thus it
was necessary to keep women out of the Olympic Games
because on the one hand "virility" was not a pleasant
characteristic in the female sex and on the other, their
participation took away some of the virile image of the
sports that men wanted to hold on to. If women were
allowed to participate in these sports, then the sports were not quite as uniquely "virile" as the men wanted to believe; their participation took away from the virile image of the sports and therefore men could not take as much pride in their accomplishment in these sports, thereby damaging their self-image.

The woman's place was in the home and she was to submit fully to the intimate relationships surrounding that environment as determined by heredity and especially tradition. And although women had proved they could do just about anything a man could do, uprooting or even just challenging traditions could not be tolerated. Though Coubertin favored a law which would guarantee women certain rights of property, and the right to be employed without being frowned upon, these were the kinds of things which were more desired by the upper classes of society; they would have had the most to gain from such a law. Yet while he favored such a law, he was opposed to the other aspects of equality, i.e. an equality which would challenge the patriarchal dominance and mean a diminution of the husband's power within the family structure. Never does Coubertin question that women should not be emancipated from the moral and social tutelage of men.
Coubertin's image of woman required the facade of dignity and sophistication. The sight of English women, who were supposed to be concerned with propriety and decency, coming down a hill on a snow sled with their skirts lifted was to him one of the ugliest sights he could imagine. His sensibilities were shocked when he saw women in somewhat shorter dresses and later on, in shorts engaged in strenuous exercises. The display of effort by women covered with sweat was especially repugnant to him. By contrast the nude or semi-nude body of a male athlete engaged in effort was a vision of human beauty.

The First World War which resulted in greater freedom for women made no difference in the attitude of Coubertin. Neither did he express himself any less openly after his retirement in 1925. In 1928 he called for the suppression of women's events in future Olympic Games and in 1931 his "Charter of Sport Reform" called for the suppression of all women's events where men took part. He asked for the end of this "promiscuity" in sport and suggested that women organize and conduct their own competitions. To purify sports for women, Coubertin's remedy was to allow no spectators. Then women would not be exposed to a howling audience making fun of the poor performances of women and hurling sarcastic remarks at
the competitors. If men were not admitted to female performances, they would not be tempted and women would be credited with raising the moral standard.

Coubertin fought the inclusion of women in the Olympic Games as competitors throughout his life, and his influence, though he was opposed, was nevertheless substantial. Though his concern was great for educational and humanitarian causes, that concern did not extend to the social emancipation of women. The picture he painted of women in sports was not very pretty.
CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF OLYMPIC SPORTS FOR WOMEN,

1900-1914

Around the turn of the century much of the writing concerning the growing freedom of women seemed to be of a favorable nature. However, this need not mean that women's emancipation was accepted and even less that it was a welcome fact. A closer look at the data reveals that those who spoke so favorably were more likely than not, female authors. Still, the mood was optimistic. One author in 1896 wrote that the new woman was not a temporary fad, but the inevitable product of evolution:

She has been slowly developed from carefully scattered seed, which fifty years ago, amid the jeers and mud-throwing of scandalized conservatism, a small band of determined, "new" women started out to plant, making the first efforts to obtain some recognition of the then scouted idea that women were men's intellectual equals if only given an equal chance.

Old prejudices, one after another, have been overgrown, smothered with the ever-strengthening force of women's intellectual power, until there hardly remains today an old original obstacle which has not been overcome; and the development, gathering force as it grows, is destined to uplift the race to heights undreamed
of. The effects of a cultured mother's guidance is incalculable.¹

It is true, the early women's movement was able to achieve a great deal in getting laws changed which provided a more equal education for girls and women. The most potent argument in favor of equal education was the favorable influence an educated mother could have upon her sons. Great as that achievement may have appeared in those days, it was still a long way from recognizing the rights of women to an education for their own sakes. The goal of equal education for women did little to change the traditional roles of women in society to any significant degree.

The access of women to sport may have been a more influential factor. According to Cozens and Stumpf, no social achievement, with the exception of the improved legal status for women, has had more far-reaching effects than the entrance of women into sports.² Harriet Ballintine, writing in the American Physical Education Review in 1896, said that a frequent criticism of girls participating in active, competitive games was that they


had a tendency to become hoydenish. Evidently, the 
influence of unrestricted dress, the general relaxation 
and the excitement of the game resulted in a freedom of 
manner which was seen as objectionable. She rationalized, 
however, that if the outcome of a more vigorous life was 
better physical and mental health, giving up some of the 
former feminine attributes might be worth the sacrifice:

But looking at the subject from a 
broader point of view, if refinement and 
quietness are but the results of weakness 
and inactivity, and a more pronounced man-
ner must necessarily be the outcome of a 
more vigorous life, we must be willing to 
sacrifice the former feminine attributes 
for the more precious possession of good 
health.¹

Perhaps one of the reasons for Harriet Ballintine's 
article was to answer criticisms with which female sports 
were being met. In her article, she referred to the intro-
duction of track and field athletics the year before at 
Vassar College which drew criticisms from colleagues and 
ridicule from the press:

Mind and Body in speaking of this, 
said: "We are in no way surprised to learn 
of a field day at Vassar College, but we 
lament it as one of the outgrowths of a 
wrong appreciation of what physical train-
ing should do and be. To accomplish by 
education the full development of the

¹Harriet Ballintine, "Out-of-Door Sports for College 
Women," American Physical Education Review, III (March, 
1898), p. 42.
feminine physique needs to some extent the choice of suitable material.\textsuperscript{1}

Despite the admonitions of the professional journals that athletics were not suitable for women, Miss Ballintine noted that since the introduction of basketball, there had been a growing interest in all kinds of athletics and that the girls who succeeded in basketball wanted to compete in other directions. Track and field, she said, had been introduced by the students themselves and had proven a satisfactory endeavor. She also noted that the year before a course for women in track and field athletics had been instituted at the Harvard Summer School of Physical Training (administered by Dr. Sargent) and the active interest shown by the fifteen women who took part in the course was conclusive evidence of the growing demand for such training.\textsuperscript{2} The interest and general support, in fact, were such that Vassar College kept records for women in their track and field meets which appeared in the *Spalding's Almanac of Athletic Records* as early as 1904.

Alice Bertha Foster of Bryn Mawr, around the same period, perceived another evolving situation in our society: the growing participation of women in a world outside the home. In answer to the question: "Have

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 40. \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., pp. 40-41.
girls any use for training and practicing basketball?" She made the following statement, which showed a keen awareness of the goals women were then striving for and of some of the tools needed to achieve those goals. The strong wording of this statement gives it a political resonance not unlike the present-day feminist position.

Women are taking places in the industrial, commercial, and intellectual world today as integers, no longer as fractions, and what one particle of the body politic requires that does another. The self-supporting woman of today needs the same equipment for seizing an opportunity, using it well and passing it on, that the man requires.¹

A game, particularly a team game or sport, she felt, was a struggle for attainment and the co-operation demanded for that attainment was inherent in the game and fully in accord with the "Zeitgeist."² Needless to say, she felt, as did most other physical educators of the period, that the qualities learned on the playing fields or basketball courts transferred to situations in the world at large, yet few were willing to extend their philosophies to include women.

Mrs. Bergman-Osterberg, who founded the Physical Education College for women at Dartford, England,

²Ibid., p. 152.
challenged the seemingly exclusive rights of men to the benefits and joys of sports.

Why are women denied the pleasure of sports? Men already have enough privileges such as this without refusing us the happiness and benefits which are procured through sports. Besides, do we not have more need than men to acquire the strength and health through exercises and reasonable games? Mens sana in corpore sano is especially necessary for the frail creatures that we are, than for the robust creatures that you are...1

Madame Bergman-Osterberg did not allow her students to wear corsets during a game, so that they could enjoy themselves and benefit physically from the exercise. Nor did she allow them to wear hats. She said: "I treat them a little bit like boys and they are enchanted."2 The idea of not wearing hats was perhaps due to the sudden discovery that the sun was not an enemy to good health. The sickly pale or jaundiced look of women who carried their parasols and wore hats and gloves in the sun was losing popularity, while the fresh, vigorous, tanned look was just over the horizon.

Madame Bergman-Osterberg was careful that her students remained "ladies." One of her students told a reporter from La Vie Au Grand Air:


2Ibid.
If we want to be strong, it is not to masculinize ourselves, or to play at being men... because we adore "chiffons:" we still know how to take pride in our appearance... when we must and as we must; and we intend to become good wives and mothers of model families."

In order to rationalize sports for women during that period, they had to be practiced in the name of good health. In 1898 an article appeared in La Vie Au Grand Air entitled: "Fencing and Women" which exploited that idea. Not only would fencing make a woman conscious of her own strength, develop her sense of worth, make her elegant and supple, from the medical point of view fencing would:

... increase the expenditure of energy, burn excess fat, eliminate toxins, etc., making it a powerful adjunct, an active modifier of all illnesses produced by deviations of nutrition, by a production of excess chemicals, acids, organic poisons or salts, such as obesity, rheumatism, gout, migraines... .

Pleasure and fun were not sufficient reasons for women to be allowed to participate in sports; good health was the only acceptable motive, with the implication of course that the good health of a woman would have a positive effect on her offspring.

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1Ibid., p. 587.

This was the most frequently invoked rationale in support of physical activities in school and college programs. But women were catching on to the pleasures of sports for their own sake. Worse still, as women were becoming more skilled they were also more concerned with achievement and competition. By 1906, it was apparent that within the membership of the American Physical Education Association there was concern over the growing competitive spirit among women:

The gaming spirit is growing among women, one evidence being the extent to which they play for prizes. This is the competitive spirit without the play spirit or joy or exhilaration of games.\(^1\)

Could it be that sports were beginning to take on a more serious aspect for women, that, perhaps, they were no longer playing as children? There were no norms or references for comparing women's achievements in sports since previously there had been only children's games and men's athletics competitions. Already the seeds were being sown for the resolutions that would be passed concerning women's athletics by the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation and the Women's Athletic Committee of the A.P.E.A., which were to be organized in 1923 and 1917, respectively. The essential

ethical principles for sports for women were outlined by Frances A. Kellor in 1906; they are stamped with a clearly anti-competition spirit:

(1) Sports must be conducted for the good of the number and not for the purpose of getting good material for championship teams; they are not for the purpose of developing record breakers, or track winners, but so each one may have equal opportunity and training; the end desired is not to play well in a contest, but to better fit the individual for her place in life. (2) The predominating note in women's sports should always be the joy and exhilaration and fun of playing, not the grim determination to win at any cost. Social features should be retained as a part of these sports lest they become too hard and business-like. (3) Women's games are not for themselves and for their school and college. With few exceptions, the standards of women's athletic contests do not possess sufficient educational value to justify giving them before indiscriminate audiences who pay admission fees.¹

At the national meeting of the Public School Training Society that year, a resolution of the same nature was passed:

That under present conditions we do not approve of inter-school athletics for girls, believing that most of the desirable results accruing from such activities can be secured by intra-school games and many grave dangers may thereby be avoided.²

¹Ibid., pp. 161-162.

The fear of any individual or team being singled out for their achievements was further expressed by a resolution offered by Jessie Bancroft at that same convention and it was also adopted:

That this Society disapproves of the admission of the general public to athletic games played by girls, and to sensationally written or illustrated newspaper reports of such games, especially such articles as exploit individual players.¹

Gulick, the author of the report in which the above resolutions appeared, was a physician as well as a physical educator. In an article entitled "Athletics Do Not Test Womanliness," he uses Darwin's theory of evolution to surmise that athletics were to some extent a measure of manhood when he said:

We are the survivors of those whose very lives depended upon their ability to run, to strike, and to throw, but whose mental and moral qualities of endurance, pluck, team work, fair play, and the like, were developed in connection with the playing and the earnest use of these exercises. . . . And the development of boys into manhood seems, to be related, partly at least, to the moral as well as physical qualities involved in athletics.²

Women on the other hand were not hunters or fighters, therefore, it was the women who were the best

¹Ibid.

mothers, the best workers, and the most true to their homes, who survived. Must one assume then, that the measure of womanhood is, as Madison Avenue still tends to think, in baking and kitchen cleaning contests, and baby contests? Gulick believed that athletics for women should be restricted to sport within the school, that they be played exclusively for recreation and pleasure. Strenuous training, he felt, was injurious to both mind and body. He also thought that public, general competition emphasized qualities which were unnecessary and undesirable in a woman but of great value in a man.

Dr. Dudley A. Sargent, on the other hand, did not hesitate to say that there was no sport practiced in which women could not participate, not only without fear of injury, but with great prospect of success. Yet, he too had reservations concerning certain sports for women. His criticism, came from his apparent feeling that women who excel in the rougher and more masculine sports either inherited or acquired "masculine" characteristics. He felt, that certain sports and games should not be played in the form in which they were played by men, and suggested that they be modified to fit the physical and

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1 Ibid., p. 159.
2 Ibid., p. 160.
psychological variations between men and women. ¹ Good form rather than great records, he believed, should be a woman's goal in athletic exercises. She should confine herself to the lighter and more graceful forms of gymnastics and athletics. "Women," as Sargent said, "could be excused for not being as strong and enduring as men, but they cannot be excused for not being more finished and graceful."² Despite his apparent liberation, it is clear that Sargent never took seriously women's aspirations for excellence in sports and relegated them, as Coubertin did before, to the role of helpless and devoted supporters and admirers of their gallant and brave knights. Should a woman still be immodest enough to seek some of that glory and heroism for herself, he warns her that helplessness would be a surer way to man's heart.

Let her know enough about rougher sports to be the sympathetic admirer of men and boys in their efforts to be strong, vigorous and heroic. This kind of devotion has made heroes of men in the past, and it will continue to make heroes of them in the future. . . .

A woman's heart naturally goes out to the conqueror, and she looks to him instinctively for protection. So a man's heart will always respond to the trusting helplessness of woman when a direct assault would steel him to adamant.³

²Ibid., p. 180.
³Ibid., p. 181.
Yet women did not seem to take heed and remain quietly in the role that befitted them. Six years later Sargent would comment in an article in the Ladies' Home Journal upon the change taking place in American girls and women:

That there is a change taking place in our American girls and women is unquestioned. And it is so elusive, so baffling of description that it is proving the most attractive of subjects for discussion in the newspaper and magazine. Every journalistic wind that blows either moans or shrieks, according to its source, of feminine activities, and we are forced to listen whether we will or not. Much of the reading matter put forth in certain somewhat sensational papers so utterly disregards truth and reason that we are in danger of half-believing that womankind has already become a distorted Amazon creation, to be talked about and wondered at, but no longer to be loved and admired.¹

Sargent was confused, as many men were, perhaps; he could see no reasons for the desire of women to acquire the more "masculine" characteristics, i.e. those characteristics attributed to success in a man's world in any endeavor. In his view, the divergence of the sexes grew as races became more civilized. Co-education, participation in occupations and recreation of certain kinds only tended to make the ideals and habits of women approximate those of men, which did not belong to the progressive

stages of the evolution of mankind.¹

It is interesting to note that by 1923 Dr. Sargent has changed his attitude once again towards competitive sports and games for women. He is now criticizing the lack of exercise for girls after they reach puberty.

Custom decrees, and elders instruct, that by the time a girl is thirteen she must begin to think about becoming a lady. If she becomes fat and stiff, it is not because she is a girl, but because her early exercise, which had kept her fit, is suddenly cut off.²

He cited the fact that in the more primitive cultures where women do hard labor while the men are off hunting, the function of motherhood is not impaired by their strenuous physical activities:

In fact, the comparison between maternity in such tribes and in civilized society is lamentably to the discredit of our enlightened views.³

He blamed centuries of repression and overspecialization for the development of "female" characteristics, i.e. broad hips, large thighs, narrow shoulders, small waists, etc. According to him, lately girls have begun to tire of their inactive and uninteresting role and begun to

¹Ibid.


³Ibid.
strike out into "unmaidenly" fields of endeavor.\(^1\) In sympathy with their revolt, he is now advocating competition for girls and women:

Competitive games, normally played and regulated, are just as beneficial for women as for men. They stimulate interest, create the desire to equal and excel in sports, an ambition which implies practice and preparation, and to that end they do more to encourage physical development than any other factor in the curriculum of physical culture.\(^2\)

Thus, women were becoming educated, they were entering the professions, they were beginning to play competitively in sports at the turn of the century; these factors, among other lesser ones, perhaps, were behind the uprooting of traditions, causal factors in provoking women to demand equal education, equal protection under the law, the right to work, the right to hold office, to sit on juries, the right to vote, and to own property. In 1912 the United States was beginning to feel the effects of the militant phase of the movement for women's rights. Athletics came in for its share of the "blame" in all this, for many persons believed that athletics made girls bold, masculine, and over-assertive; that they destroyed the beautiful lines and curves of their figures and robbed them of their charm and elusive qualities

\(^1\)Ibid. \(^2\)Ibid.
which had for so long been characteristic of the female sex.\textsuperscript{1} It was this type of social thinking and these beliefs which provided the background upon which women entered into competition in the Olympic Games.

THE ENTRY OF WOMEN INTO OLYMPIC COMPETITION

The Olympic Games of 1900

There are few data as to how women came to be admitted to participation in the Olympic Games. The opposition of Pierre de Coubertin was great, and yet women were admitted to tennis singles, mixed doubles, and golf for the Second Olympic Games held in Paris in 1900. There were certain conditions present during the cycle of the Games which may have helped them gain entry: the Games were dragged out over a period of several months, there were problems within the French Government; the management of the Games was turned over to the Exposition Committee leaving Pierre de Coubertin with little to say concerning the program and administration of the Games may have been critical considerations.

According to the editor of Outing Magazine, Casper Whitney, who was also a member of the International Olympic Committee at the time, Coubertin had assembled a committee of the best known sportsmen in Paris among

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid.
whom were several monarchists. The following may explain why Coubertin's committee was dissolved:

After the Dreyfus trial and its attendant frenzy had fallen upon Paris, the French Government scattered De Coubertin's committee to the four winds, took the management of the Games entirely out of the hands of the Olympian Committee and turned it over to the Exposition Company, whose knowledge of athletic management and intelligent appreciation of the task before them remain yet to be disclosed.¹

With the resignation of the Chairman of the Organizing Committee, and the usurpation of the real intent of the Games by the Exposition Committee, the Games became little more than a side-show. In any event the reason and actual procedures for the admission of women to tennis and golf are not known. There exists no report of the second Olympiad, except the one written in the hand of Pierre de Coubertin which is kept in the archives of the I.O.C. and which the writer was not allowed to see.

The only two known countries sending representatives for competition in lawn tennis for women in 1900 were Great Britain and France; a total of six women participated. Caroline Cooper of Great Britain won the lawn tennis singles 6-4, 6-2 over Helène Prévost of France. Cooper teamed with Reginald Doherty in mixed doubles to defeat the French team of Prévost and H. S. Mahony.

Cooper was the first woman to win at a modern Olympic Games. Miss Margaret Abbot was the winner of the competition in golf. She was an American,¹ the first American woman to win an Olympic event. A plaque signifying her achievement has been placed on the wall of the MacArthur room in the United States Olympic House in New York. Yet nothing is known about her or how she happened to be entered in the golf event in 1900.

**The Olympic Games at St. Louis, 1904**

Archery was the only sport in which women participated in 1904. Although tennis and golf were on the program for men, they were not open to women as they were in 1900. Mr. James Sullivan, secretary of the A.A.U. and chairman of the organizing committee for the 1904 Games was greatly opposed to the entrance of women into the Olympic arena. Thus, it is likely that this was the primary reason why women were not admitted to tennis and golf. A thorough perusal of the *Revue Olympique*, organ of the I.O.C., for those first years shows no record of either application for participation by any individual or group, nor any evidence of the Committee members having ever discussed the issue of admitting women to participation in the Olympic Games.

There is some confusion regarding archery in the Games of 1904. A U.S.O.C. publication states that no women competed in the Games in St. Louis. However, the results of the archery competition are given in the 1904 Spalding's Report on the Olympic Games, which is recognized by the U.S.O.C. as its Official Report of the 1904 Games.¹

Competition consisted of a short-distance double Columbia round (48 arrows at 50, 40, and 30 yards) and a long-distance double National round at 60 and 50 yards, and a team competition. All competitors were American; the team competition was between two American teams, one from Cincinnati, the other from Washington, D.C.² The winners of those events can be seen on pages 433-434, Appendix A.

The Unofficial Games in Athens, 1906

According to a New York Times article written in 1932, it was at the unofficial commemorative Games in Athens that women first appeared in the modern Olympic Games. This is not true, however, but it was the first time that women gymnasts had appeared. The King of


²Ibid., p. 71.
Greece invited a group of Danish girl gymnasts (16 of them) to give an exhibition during the Games. The King, it is reported, was so impressed by the exhibition that he invited the entire team as his dinner guests. The publicity which surrounded this honor was said to be instrumental in bringing the question of women's participation in the Olympic Games before the International Olympic Committee. ¹ Whether this was true could not be ascertained through the information available to the writer. It is worthy of note, however, that exhibitions of several gymnastics teams and exhibitions in swimming and diving were included for women in the program of the London Olympics of 1908.

The Olympic Games of 1908

The newspapers were enthusiastic about the appearance of women in the grand parade of athletes in London. The Daily Telegraph said:

The triumph of training was written on the face and figure of every man and woman in the athletically distinguished company, for, as shall be hereafter shown, the ladies who took part lent to the exhibition a grace and charm all their own.

The fact that the Danish contingent included a party of over twenty ladies

¹"More than 250 Women, Record for Olympics will Compete in the Games at Los Angeles," New York Times (April 14, 1932), p. 27.
in neat gymnastic costume was instantly appreciated by the multitude, who gave vent to their admiration by prolonged applause. . . . The presence of their party of ladies in white serge gymnastic costumes and pale brown stockings, without shoes, would of itself have arrested the attention of the multitude.\(^1\)

In the Olympic Games of 1908, held in London, there were only competitions in tennis singles and archery for women (grass courts and covered courts). As can be seen from the table below, all but five of the contestants were British. The only other countries entered in the competitions were Sweden, Hungary, and France.\(^2\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries Participating</th>
<th>No. of Entries</th>
<th>Lawn Tennis Covered Courts</th>
<th>Lawn Tennis Grass Courts</th>
<th>Archery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is readily apparent that the only country to compete in archery was Great Britain. It was hoped that some

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\(^1\)From "Grand Parade of Athletes," Daily Telegraph, July 14, 1908, from the newspaper clippings, file #3 at the Olympic House, New York.

French "ladies" would come, but they failed to come at the last minute.\(^1\) The women's competition in archery was held in the center of the Stadium, July 17 and 18. On the first day they had hardly begun to shoot when they had to run for shelter (from the rain). The rain did not prevent them from finishing the competition, however.\(^2\)

In the grass court ladies' singles in tennis, there were only four matches played; only three wins were necessary to clinch the gold medal. Mrs. Lambert-Chambers of Great Britain won over Miss Norton for the championship. Of the indoor championship games the reporter said:

The finals of the Ladies' Singles between Miss Eastlake-Smith and Miss Greene produced a really excellent game, in which there were numerous rallies marked by sound judgment and headwork. It was a much more interesting game than most ladies' singles are, inasmuch as it was not fought out entirely from the base-line, but intermingled with some very pretty net play.\(^3\)

The real interest, however, was not in archery or in tennis, but the gymnastic displays given by the Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, and British teams:

The interest of the afternoon was mainly spectacular and the various displays

\(^1\)"Archery," The London Times, July 17, 1908, p. 10.


\(^3\)Ibid., p. 223.
of gymnastic exercises were among the chief features of the programme. . . . At the Games in Athens two years ago they [the Danish team] gave a similar display, under the leadership of the same distinguished instructress, and their performance then was one of the most popular items of the inaugural ceremonies. To-day their exhibition of grace and agility proved equally popular, though suffering somewhat from the counter-displays by the masculine teams taking place behind them and on either side.  

Two days later another article mentions again the gymnastics displays, but continues to emphasize the impressive Danes, referring to them as the "bevy of beauty that created such an impression on the opening day." The author of the article goes on to say of the Danish gymnasts:

They went through some remarkably complicated evolutions, such as balancing themselves on a narrow board and climbing over bars with rare agility and grace. Its like had never before been seen in this country. These girls it may be mentioned, follow the teaching of Ling, who is known as the father of Swedish gymnastics. The Danish Government adopted his principles, and it was the exercises that he invented which are known here as Swedish drill, that the girls performed yesterday. It may be of some interest to mention that all the girls, with three or four exceptions, are drawn from the working classes of the country.  

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1"The Olympic Games Opening by the King," The Sportsman (July, 1908) from File 3: Newspaper Clippings of the IV Olympiad at the Olympic House in New York.

2"Third Day, Britain Leads," The Sportsman (July 16, 1908), File 3, ibid.
The last sentence of the above quotation is, perhaps, the first reference made to the involvement of the lower classes in the display of physical prowess, because tennis and archery were sports to which only the higher classes of society were accustomed. These sports were thought of as too refined to be of any interest to the more vulgar elements of society and matches were only played in the company of persons representing the same class in society.\(^1\) It must be added that since public courts were not available, "common" women did not have practical access to the sport. Gymnastics, then, was the first physical activity for women which developed elsewhere than within the "gentry."

Sir Theodore Cook, a member of the I.O.C. who wrote the book, *International Sport*, made this comment about the Olympic displays and competitions for women in 1908:

> Since in skating,* archery, and lawn tennis, women won medals in the Olympic meeting of 1908 and since they gave most attractive displays in swimming, diving, and gymnastics, they may possibly have an opportunity of winning prizes on another


*Skating (figure-skating) was admitted to Olympic competition for women in 1908 for the London Olympics. This paper does not deal with the winter sports included in the summer cycle up to 1924 when a separate cycle for winter sports was instituted.
occasion, not only in those six events but in shooting as well.¹

Incidentally, little could be found by the writer concerning the displays of swimming and diving. The only reference was found in a short comment in the London Times which stated:

Displays of swimming and diving were given by Miss Ebba Gisico, the Swedish swimmer, and half-dozen lithe-looking athletes from Iceland.²

1912--Women Gain Further Access to the Olympic Competitions

It is not known just how or why the International Olympic Committee decided in its meeting in Luxembourg in June of 1910 to include "swimming for ladies" for the Olympic Games of 1912, however, a meaningful progression can be perceived in the sequence of events, which, one must assume, opened the way for that new development. As has been mentioned earlier, the organizing committee of the host nation during that period was responsible for drafting the program of the coming Games. At the Luxembourg meeting in 1910, the detailed program for the 1912 Games was presented to the International Olympic Committee by the Swedish Organizing Committee. However,


²The London Times (June 13, 1908), p. 15.
that draft program of the Swedish Committee did not include women's events, among other things, and was not adopted at the Luxembourg meeting, but was returned to the Committee with statements regarding all events of the Games. Regarding the women's program, the I.O.C. asked that ladies' competitions be added. Both indoor and outdoor competitions in tennis were asked for by the I.O.C. and competitions were also proposed for the inclusion of women's swimming (the 100 meter freestyle and a high diving event).

Three months later (Sept. 11, 1910) at the Congress of the International Federation of Amateur Swimming (F.I.N.A., founded in London in 1908 and consisting of 15 member nations in 1910) the following notation was on the agenda:

Item 13--LADIES COMPETING AT OLYMPIC GAMES
That the federation are in favor of ladies'

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1 The Olympic Games of Stockholm, Official Report of the Swedish Olympic Committee (Stockholm: Wahlstrom and Widstrand, 1913), p. 58; also, letter from Mr. Wolf Lyberg, Assistant Secretary, Swedish Olympic Committee, to the writer, May 9, 1973.

2 It is noteworthy, perhaps, that to this point the term "ladies'" competitions has been used exclusively when referring to women's events. This not only describes the sex of the individuals, but also implies gentility. Cozens and Stumpf (p. 28) indicate that American women golfers refused to follow the precedent of Great Britain and call their tournament the "Ladies' Championship." American golfers insisted that the distinction was one of sex and not gentility, therefore, referring to their big tournament as a "Women's Championship."
races in future Games but are strongly against mixed races, viz: (ladies and gentlemen competing in the same race).\footnote{Letter from Mr. Harold Henning, President of F.I.N.A., April 29, 1973.}

Mr. Wolf Lyberg, Assistant Secretary of the Swedish Olympic Committee, indicated that Great Britain protested at the F.I.N.A. Congress in Brussels, and later at the I.O.C. session in Budapest, asking for the inclusion of a 4 by 100 freestyle race for women in addition to the two events proposed by the I.O.C.\footnote{Letter from Mr. Wolf Lyberg, May 9, 1973.}

As a result of the expressed wishes of the I.O.C., the Swedish Organizing Committee amplified its program to include lawn-tennis competition (indoors and outdoors) for women and in swimming, the 100 meter freestyle and high diving. It laid its new draft of the program before the I.O.C. session in Budapest in May, 1911.\footnote{Official Report of the Swedish Organizing Committee, p. 59.} At that meeting Great Britain proposed once again the addition to the program of the 4 X 100 freestyle relay, which Sweden finally accepted.\footnote{Ibid.}

\footnote{This would tend to substantiate Mr. Harold Henning's contention that F.I.N.A., since its inception, had favored the inclusion of women in competitions.}
courts and out-of-doors courts and in swimming the 100 meters freestyle, high-diving, and a 400 meters team competition.¹

The fears of Coubertin were realized, for he had warned in the Revue Olympique just after the I.O.C. meeting in Luxembourg in 1910 that the Swedes would admit women not only to lawn tennis, the gymnastic exhibitions, but to swimming events as well. The Swedish Organizing Committee, however, in its first draft of the program, had included no events at all. It only did so at the request of the I.O.C. No information is available as to what went on in that session, but it must be concluded that Coubertin was not able to pull together enough votes to defeat the proposal or that some kind of compromise measure was obtained, for example, the modern pentathlon.²

The Olympic Games at Stockholm, 1912

Women's participation in the Games at Stockholm was greater than ever with a total of 11 countries being

¹Ibid.

²The modern pentathlon was admitted to the program of the Olympic Games for the first time in 1912. This was a "pet" project of Pierre de Coubertin which had been rejected by the I.O.C. until this time. Monique Berlioux has suggested, in her book, the possibility that the modern pentathlon was accepted in return for allowing the swimming events for women.
entered in the competitions. The following table will show the reader the nationalities and the number of participants in each of the events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries Represented</th>
<th>Lawn Tennis Indoor</th>
<th>Lawn Tennis Out-door</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>Mixed Doubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohemia [Czechoslovakia]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swimming 100 meters free.</th>
<th>400 meters free.</th>
<th>Diving (team)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Australia, which had only two contestants in the Games, won first and second place in the 100 meters freestyle in swimming, the very popular Fanny Durack winning the gold medal. Great Britain won third place in the 100 meters, but won a gold medal in the team competition. Germany and Austria placed second and third, respectively. In the high diving, the only two countries represented were Sweden and Great Britain with Great Britain having only one contestant, who placed third, while Sweden had 12 contestants in that event.

The lawn tennis tournament suffered at Stockholm because of the conflict with the Wimbledon tournament. Of some importance, too, was the fact that the tennis world thought a little contemptuously of Olympic lawn tennis. 1 According to Joanna Davenport, 2 the United States Lawn Tennis Association records made no mention of the Olympic events in their files until 1908. In any event, Olympic competition was participated in more or less incidentally and as it happened to suit the competitors. The U.S.L.T.A. sent no competitors to the Games

1 "The Olympic Games," The London Times (July 29, 1912), p. 10.

of 1912, although it did approve the entry of a male contestant who went on his own.1

A total of seven countries were entered in the lawn-tennis competitions. Great Britain carried away the honors in the indoor singles, winning first and third places and in the indoor mixed doubles, winning first and second. The second place indoor singles award went to Denmark and third place went to Sweden. Germany did well in the out-door competitions, winning the mixed doubles tournament and placing second in the singles competition. First place in the singles went to Mlle. Broquedis of France; the French mixed doubles team placed third. Sweden placed second in the out-door mixed doubles and Norway placed third in the out-door singles. A list of individual winners for all events of the 1912 Olympics in which women took part is presented in Appendix A.

The 1912 Olympic Games also included demonstrations in team gymnastics for women, however these events were still non-competitive. Participants were Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland. The writer asked the following question of the Swedish Olympic Committee regarding the

1 Ibid., p. 114. Note: Davenport also stated that tennis was not on the Olympic Games program in 1908. This statement is false as proved in the Official Report of the 1908 Olympic Games.
subject of women's exclusion from competitive Olympics gymnastics: Why did the organizing committee not include gymnastics for women on the program in 1912 when they had been successfully demonstrated previously in 1906 in Athens and again in London in 1908 and had been quite favorably received? The writer felt this was a relevant question, given the importance of gymnastics in the whole physical activity programs of Europe, particularly in Scandinavia. The answer given by the Swedish Olympic Committee was as follows:

Sweden was against competitive gymnastics in 1912 and only proposed exhibitions. But the IOC and the federation wanted competitive gymnastics and Sweden accepted for men. Ladies participated in the exhibitions: Sweden 48, Norway 22, Denmark 148, and Finland with 18.¹

That Sweden generally opposed gymnastics competition was one of the things Coubertin was referring to when he said that the Swedes opposed specializations. However, the writer believes that the IOC and the International Federation of Gymnastics did not want competitive gymnastics for women, as the answer from the Swedish Olympic Committee might indicate. Nothing was mentioned to that effect by either the Official Report of the 1912 Games or by the IOC in the Revue Olympique. Rather, the writer has been led to the conclusion that the gymnastic federations were

¹Letter from Wolf Lyberg, May 9, 1973.
opposed to the measure because the masculine federations demonstrated their evident opposition by refusing to accept feminine sections. In France, for example, Madame Ludin organized at Lyon on April 21, 1912, the first independent female federation in France, under the name Union Française de Gymnastique Féminine, for that very reason.¹

The Aftermath of the Stockholm Olympic Games

Very little could be found in magazines or newspapers concerning the way women were accepted as competitors in the Stockholm Games. As has been stated briefly before, Fanny Durack of Australia was a popular winner in the swimming events and possibly influenced public opinion in the United States. As has been mentioned before also, there were four countries, all Scandinavian, which performed in the gymnastic exhibitions and were well received. Denmark, in particular, had already performed in demonstrations at previous Olympic Games: at Athens in 1906 and in London in 1908. In 1912 its team consisted of 148 members. It is noteworthy, perhaps, that in January of 1913, the Revue Olympique made the following statement in an article under the heading

"Chronique du mois," obviously written by Coubertin since he was the editor.

Denmark . . . There in gymnastics, feminism rules and in addition it does so without any objection. Is this a good thing? . . . We will not ask the question since the 1914 Congress is supposed to discuss it. ¹

In June of 1913, the program of the I.O.C. Congress to be held in Paris in 1914 was given in the Revue Olympique. One of the questions for that Congress was to be: "Women, should they be allowed to take part in the Olympic Games?" ²

The Congress of Paris was held from June 13 to June 23, 1914, with Coubertin taking almost the full financial burden of it upon his own shoulders. During those ten days, fifteen sessions took place with more than 100 people taking part: members of the I.O.C. and delegates from national committees. ³ Unfortunately the July, 1914, issue of the Revue Olympique relates only the "Fêtes de Paris et de Reims" that took place concurrently with the Congress. It announced that a summary of the sessions of the Congress would occupy the next issues


² "Règlements du Congrès de Paris," Revue Olympique (June, 1913).

³ Mayer, A Travers . . . , p. 74.
of the Revue. Although Coubertin said that a considerable piece of work had been done, according to Mayer, no one expected that the written accounts or proceedings from the Congress would ever be published. Drafted in three languages, a commission had been assigned to compare the texts in order to eliminate errors. This commission was to have met in August and publication of the proceedings was to have followed in the autumn. But the assassination of Archduke Francis-Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria Hungary, in Sarajevo prevented the commission from meeting. The publication of the Revue itself, was stopped because of the beginning of World War I. It was not until November, 1919, that any of the decisions taken during the Congress of 1914 concerning the events of the Games and the special rules governing them were published.¹ As for the decisions made about the admission of women to the Olympic Games, nothing whatsoever was ever mentioned in official publications. Otto Mayer noted in his book that:

From the Congress of Paris we do not have a single conclusion, neither in the writings of Coubertin, nor elsewhere.²

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
The Amateur Athletic Union and American Women in Competitive Swimming

The Amateur Athletic Union of the United States in November of 1914 voted to admit women for registration in swimming. Thus far, American women had been conspicuously absent from international competition. Since swimming had been admitted as an Olympic event for women in the Stockholm Games, there had been some agitation to allow the enrollment of women athletes in the ranks of the A.A.U. Duke Kohanamoku of Hawaii in men's swimming and Fanny Durack of Australia in the 100 meter free-style for women had been two very popular champions and the newspapers carried a lot of publicity on these events.\(^1\)

The admission of women swimmers into the ranks of the A.A.U. in 1914 was a striking reversal of their earlier position. In fact, in January of that same year the A.A.U. had taken a mail vote on whether to admit the registration of women, which resulted in an overwhelming vote to refuse registration to women athletes in all sports and competitions controlled by the A.A.U. This vote effectually barred women from competing or giving exhibitions in open games or meets sanctioned by the A.A.U.\(^2\) The National Registration Committee Chairman

\(^1\)Interview with Mr. Daniel Ferris, former Secretary of the A.A.U., March, 1973.

(and also Secretary of the A.A.U.) James E. Sullivan conducted the mail vote which was sent to all members of his committee asking them to vote on the following resolution:

Resolved: That the A.A.U. Does not and will not recognize the registration of women athletes and it is the sense of this committee that the rules were designedly formed to include none but the male sex.¹

Only one member of the committee voted against the resolution. Another voted for the resolution, but asked that women be registered in a group by themselves. Any club, association, or organization affiliated with the A.A.U. which allowed women swimmers to take part in a sanctioned meet, then, was in violation of the A.A.U. law.²

There were violations of the law. The New York Times on August 12, 1914, noted that: "The Rye Beach Club permitted a 50 yard exhibition swimming meet for girls which did not go unnoticed by A.A.U. officials. Permits for such races have been refused time after time by the A.A.U."³

At the annual convention of the A.A.U. in November of that year it was proposed that women be legally

registered for swimming, which seemed to represent a radical departure from the apparent rigidity on the same question only months before. According to Mr. Daniel Ferris, women's swimming might have been admitted earlier had it not been for Mr. James E. Sullivan, one of the founders of the A.A.U., and a very strong leader who was staunchly opposed to having women in the organization. However, he died in the summer of 1914, leaving the way open for the acceptance of women. Mr. Ferris' belief that Mr. Sullivan was the primary reason for the delay of American female swimmers into the Olympic Games is corroborated by Mr. Everett Brown (see quote on the following page).

The request for special legislation to permit the registration of women in swimming was proposed by Mr. Seward A. Simons of the Southern Pacific Association. After it was moved that the amendment be accepted, Mr. Simons spoke on behalf of the proposed amendment.

I came to ask special legislation for our association to have women in meetings at which men participated. Let me say to you that I have attended a great many meetings in the East before going to California and have been the judge in many events both in the East and the West, and I have never seen in any contest any act of immodesty that would bring the blush of shame to any man, mother, or child.1

1A.A.U. Minutes of the Annual Convention, 1914, p. 31.
Mr. Simons was followed by Mr. Everett C. Brown of the Central Association who also spoke in favor of the amendment and gave further background information.

I do not know what prompted the proposed amendment, but I was one of the delegates attending the International Amateur Athletic Federation and Congress and this was discussed at both conventions, and with the exception of France and the United States every member of the seventeen countries voted for the competition of women. I think the reason the United States voted against the proposition was due to the personal feelings of our late lamented Secretary. I believe two members would like to see the United States vote for women. I might say in all the discussions at these meetings, there was never a hint from any of the foreign delegates of any immodesty or immorality and that in the countries where it was practiced there was absolutely the highest regard for women. I personally saw the competitions at Stockholm and if there was any criticism there, it might have been brought about by foul minds. I believe this should be passed by the A.A.U.1

The amendment was then adopted. It should be noted that both speakers on behalf of the amendment felt it necessary to allay fears that the admission of women to swimming would foster immodesty and immorality.

The New York Times called the registration of women swimmers an "unexpected action" and regarded it as a: "brilliant victory for the fair natators, particularly

1Ibid.
as it opens to them the long-sought opportunity of bidding for honors in Olympic Games. . . "1

Of course, the amendment did have its adversaries and even among its supporters and advocates, there was some concern that the swimming program would be supervised by men and it was strongly recommended that the new department of the A.A.U. be supervised by women. A New York Times article indicated that when the question of admitting women was first made known, a delegation from the National Women's Life-Saving League went to the A.A.U. headquarters to suggest that their organization become affiliated with the A.A.U. and in turn assume control of women's swimming competition, a proposal which was not given any consideration by the A.A.U. Yet, according to the author of the Times article the National Life-Saving League was probably in a better position than the A.A.U. to control the direction of the sport. There seemed to be a fear on the part of some that the "undesirable" element would increase, i.e. participating in water carnivals and other similar contests or events. The author of the Times article said:

It would seem the sensible course, it is said, to accept the offer of the life-saving league, place the running of

things in its hands and relieve the officers of the Amateur Athletic Union of all responsibility, while still wielding authority over the fair contestants.

Supported by affiliation by the AAU, the league would in a very short while be firmly established in every district and in a far better position than any body of men to place water sports for women on a solid base and keep it free of all objectionable features.¹

The "objectionable features" were the center of a discussion at the annual A.A.U. convention in 1915. They provided ready ammunition for the opponents to the inclusion of women's swimming. At the convention a letter was read from Mr. Theodore R. Bland, a former member of the A.A.U. Board of Governors, in which he included a newspaper clipping of a young school-girl in a one-piece bathing suit. The rather "shocking" display of the seventeen year old girl in an immodest costume put the whole question of sponsoring women's swimming in jeopardy. It was moved that a resolution be made that the holding of championships for women in swimming not be granted. However, a substitute motion was introduced, then revised, and finally carried, which read:

Swimming championships for women shall be held in such events as the Championship Committee shall determine.²

¹Ibid.
The opposition was not over; in 1916 the Legislation Committee reported a proposal made by the Revision Committee to amend the constitution of the A.A.U., which if adopted would prohibit the registration of women.\(^1\) The Revision Committee, itself, was divided upon the question of continuing registration of women.\(^2\) Although sensitive to the criticisms underlying the view of the Legislation Committee on the Revision Committee's proposal, the Legislation Committee upheld the earlier decision to include women.

The registration of women for swimming has been in force for two years and at each meeting has been the cause of considerable discussion. It has been suggested that the women associations undertake the government of the sport, but they are satisfied with the manner in which the Amateur Athletic Union has governed their sport and wish no change to be made. Several of our Associations have adopted resolutions urging a continuance of Amateur Athletic Union control. The women swimming championships have been remarkably successful as to competition and attendance and in view of the proposed visit of the Australian swimmers of Olympic reputation, it is unfortunate that a suitable women's organization is not ready to properly supervise a sport that is necessary for all women; the knowledge of swimming.\(^3\)

Thus, from the beginning of the registration of women athletes there were complaints from supporters and

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 4. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 25. \(^3\)Ibid., p. 4.
adversaries alike that women did not control their own sports; yet there were no women with enough knowledge of competitive swimming to competently coach girls and women for Olympic competition. They had only begun to compete and a sufficient amount of time had not elapsed which would allow them time to acquire the technical knowledge and skill necessary to perfect the competitive techniques of others.
CHAPTER V

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WOMEN'S OLYMPIC GAMES AND
INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS, 1920–1936 AND THE
RESOLUTION OF THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL

This chapter deals with the development of organized efforts to force Olympic and other amateur sports officials to recognize the desire of women to compete in international and Olympic contests. In order to better understand that evolution and the resolution of the struggle it is important to look first at the social background of the period under scrutiny and to the attitudes that prevailed concerning women.

Social Background: Public and Professional Attitudes Toward Women Athletes

There is no doubt that the first World War accelerated social trends for women. According to Ernest Groves, who wrote The American Woman, it added momentum to the women's rights movement and tore down barriers against women's entrance into industry. The War provided women the opportunity to demonstrate their ability, adaptability and efficiency in jobs which had been previously
closed to them, either because of social convention, the bias of employers, or because of the opposition of the male-dominated labor unions.\textsuperscript{1} Women thrived on the advantages of power and influence and in many cases earned money beyond anything they ever expected. With the coming of the Great War, to them fell the responsibility of supporting their families or running the farm, etc., and they proved to be equal to the situation, perhaps even to their own surprise. The realization of their own self-sufficiency provided the seeds of social change for women where they had been absent before.

According to Groves:

\begin{quote}
It [the War] broke through the crust of tradition, thus allowing new ideas, the seeds of social change, to come to life. It also brought special stimulation by disturbing the prevailing routine and artificially multiplying the willingness to experiment, the conflict, the unrest, that are unavoidable at times of rapid revamping of the relation of the sexes.\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}

When peace came, women who had left their homes for work in industry were in for a surprise. Many were forced to quit jobs they were enjoying and doing as efficiently as men simply because that was the proper thing to do or because men were protected by better organized


\textsuperscript{2}Ibid.
labor unions which did not allow female memberships and by a masculine social code.\textsuperscript{1}

However women were "rewarded" for their devotion to their country and aid in its darkest hour of need, by being given the right to vote in 1920. The women who had for many years hailed the passage of the woman suffrage amendment to the Constitution as the way to human equality and who had put all their eggs in this one basket would again be disappointed. Politicians knew, by this time, that giving the vote to women would make no changes whatsoever in the system. The possibility of a bloc vote by women, as had been demonstrated in some of the Western states where female suffrage was already in effect, was nil.

Society was changing rapidly in the early '20's. Young women were hungry for new experiences; they challenged the accepted traditions and morality of the time. The new fashions in clothing, the bobbed hair, of the flappers were all part of the drive toward new freedoms. They also began to try all kinds of new sports. That women athletes were not accepted by society did not seem to matter to the more forceful "suffragette types." Marea Hartman indicated that in the early 1920's these "suffragette types" were needed to blaze the trail. The

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 334.
press of the day described the early athletes as just that, "pioneers of the athletics for women movement," and many conducted themselves as such.¹

While the women athletes of that period took themselves quite seriously, the medical profession, many of the athletic federations and the women physical educators, particularly in the United States were against women participating in competitive sports. The opposition of these groups was based not only on physiological grounds, but on the concerns for morality as well. Perhaps the greatest criticisms were (1) that the physical strain would damage future generations by rendering the female athlete unable to bear children, and (2) that participation in competitive sports masculinized girls.

On the other hand, Pierre de Coubertin at that time was advocating physical activity, in the name of social peace, not only for those whom the laws of amateurism were created, the leisure class and the middle class, but for the proletariat, itself:

> It will be necessary for the muscular pleasure which is a source of joy, vigor, calm and purity, to be made available to the humblest citizens in the wide range

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of forms which the development of modern industry has given it.\textsuperscript{1}

Did not woman qualify as one of the humblest citizens and therefore deserve to receive the joy, vigor, calm and purity to be derived from physical activity? Why was it that sports competition had such a great role to play in social reform for men and was regarded as an evil for women? Pierre de Coubertin saw the sports group as a basic cell of democracy where inequalities introduced artificially by men could not enter; in this sense sport was a leveller of classes. He saw sport as a counter irritant to all evil instincts, an antidote for disease, a factor in physical and moral hygiene.\textsuperscript{2} How could his new slogan, "Every sport for everyone," deny women the opportunity to participate in these activities, without denying them recognition as members of the human race?

The new interest of women in sports brought a rash of articles on the subject, articles like "Is Competition Good for Girls" or "What Sports Can Do for Girls." Both supporters and adversaries of the sport movement published articles on the topic. Well-known sports figures

\textsuperscript{1}Pierre de Coubertin, "XXVth Anniversary of the Olympic Games," \textit{The Olympic Idea} (Speech in April of 1919), p. 74.

\textsuperscript{2}P. de Coubertin, Letter to IOC members, Jan. 1919, \textit{The Olympic Idea}, p. 71.
like Walter Camp, Molla Mallory, Glenna Collett, and Aileen Riggin wrote articles favoring the participation of women in the various sports while physical educators and physicians, generally, were writing in opposition to competitive sports for women.

In an article written in 1922, Walter Camp,\(^1\) often referred to as the father of American football, saw sports as a force in helping to preserve physical and mental balance; competition, he believed, gave women mental poise and balance, self-control, built endurance, both physical and mental and perhaps even moral endurance. Mr. Camp also pointed favorably to a new kind of woman which was being developed through athletics: "The slender, graceful and supple girl of today, long-limbed, lightly poised and slimly built has only been so developed by athletics."\(^2\) Competition served as a builder of character and as a desirable emotional outlet. It is not difficult to understand why Mr. Camp agreed to serve on the advisory board of Dr. Stewart's National Women's Track Athletics Committee (an organization which promoted track and field athletics for women).


\(^2\)Ibid.
Molla Mallory, women's national champion in tennis during that period, considered sports just as important to a girl as to a boy. "Health and happiness and the sporting spirit are the rewards which every woman, as well as every man, may win from athletic games."¹ She advocated "tomboyism" and co-education in sport and pointed out the already prevalent lack of exercise in the life of the average woman. To combat the critics who said competitive sports were dangerous for women, Mallory pointed to May Bundy (four children) and Mrs. George Wightman (also four children), both top-notch tennis players.²

Glenna Collett, national golf champion at age 19 (1922), said that in the first quarter of the twentieth century women won two rights: the right of suffrage and the right to participate in sports. She viewed the change in the dress of women as a proof of the revolutionary effect of the practice of sports. Girls were not persuaded to abolish tightly laced corsets, to wear low heels and broad toes because of common sense, but because the flapper, who played sports, found them more practical. She felt that, if a girl were not repressed and forced to

¹Malla Bjurstedt Mallory, "Shall We Encourage Athletics for Girls?" Woman's Home Companion, XLIX (Sept. 1922), p. 13.

²Ibid.
conform to a false ideal of what is "ladylike", she would enjoy games and being outside as much as a boy. "She responds to the direction of those interested in sport as naturally as a flower blooms."\(^1\) Collett extolled the joys of physical fitness and good sportsmanship and ably answered the critics who decried sports for women on the grounds that they made girls masculine or that they endangered unborn generations.

In 1932 Aileen Riggin, who had been the Olympic Diving Champion in 1920 in Antwerp, wrote an article in which she spoke of women's participation in the Olympic Games as a natural extension of the freedom of women:

> The emancipation of woman became the cry and almost before anyone realized it, women were voting, swimming and really living for the first time. It was only natural that the Olympic Games should be one of the many goals toward which the erstwhile weaker sex was striving.\(^2\)

On the other hand, articles were appearing which scorned the woman's sports movement. A particularly critical one was written by Kuhn in 1926 and included in *Mind and Body*. This article plays upon all the popular biases against women in sport:


\(^2\)Aileen Riggin, "Woman's Place," *Collier's*, LXXXIX (May 14, 1932), p. 11.
It is not the physical exercises . . .
That alter and injure the woman and make
her over into a muscular masculine form:
it is the participation in contests, in extreme performances, and in record-
breaking attempts that bring this to pass.
The women themselves should energetically oppose such efforts. How repelling are
the distorted faces and the protruding neck muscles of an athlete during extreme effort.1

The author quotes Dr. Ritter von Holt, the German decathlon champion (later an I.O.C. member), who righteously defended sports as the sole province of men:

'The contest is the province of man;
it is a stranger to the nature of woman.
It shall not harden our German girls, it
shall not make masculine bodies out of them. Therefore, away with women's competitive sports, away with the dreadful registering of records in women's activities!'2

Kuhn, invoking Nietzsche's words "Your body is a great mind," admonished women to realize what it meant for them and to make the best of what they had. Mind and body, he claimed, were more closely bound together in women than in men. Man's whole structure bespeaks strength, he said, while women's "strength" lies "in her slenderness, the rhythm of her curved lines, in the delicacy of movement permitted in the joints, and in the


2Ibid., p. 354.
tenderness of her skin." Thus, if sports were to aid in the development of young women, they were to emphasize the development and improvement of the finest qualities of women: beauty, grace, slenderness of lines, suppleness, and soft, flowing muscles.\(^1\) Though the author strongly recommended running for women, he stated that: "just so little can I bear to look upon a woman at the end of a 100 metre race: strained, livid and sweat streaked face."\(^2\) He went on to say:

And could such a woman see herself in the mirror, I believe she would consider very carefully whether or not she would continue such activities, because one cannot but agree that participation in contests results in a loss of femininity and therewith the finest that one esteems in her.\(^3\)

He felt that it was a mistake to bring the principle of the equality of the sexes into the realm of sport. After telling women what was right and proper for them to do, ironically, Kuhn ends with this statement: "Man cannot lead: he can but advise."\(^4\)

Opposition to athletics for girls and women came from highly respected sources. In 1929 Dr. Frederick Rand Rogers, director of health and physical education for the state of New York, voiced the feelings of many

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 354-355; passim. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 355. 
\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 355-356. \(^4\)Ibid., p. 356.
of his colleagues by stating that physical and psychic differences between men and women should be emphasized rather than minimized and he attacked feminism "whose chief effect in life is to destroy femininity in women."\textsuperscript{1} He felt that the characteristics of participants in "honors" contests were the development of a combative spirit, selfishness, the "will to power" and domineering impulses and tendencies which were contrary to his definition of femininity. Since the feminists emphasized the similarities of men and women rather than their differences, Rogers said: "it is almost futile to argue this point [psychic differences] with either feminists, many of whom violate nature themselves, or psychologists, whose measuring instruments are fortunately still too crude to discover emotional and mental sex differences."\textsuperscript{2} Rogers went on to describe what he called the most obvious psychic difference of all:

Perhaps the most obvious psychic difference of all is that men are more animal-like, mobile, energetic, aware, while women are more plant-like, more closely attached to the soil, to home, and quieter by nature. Man combats, but woman tends to conform. Man destroys, but woman truly creates. Man more truly knows, but woman more truly lives. Man

\textsuperscript{1}Dr. Frederick Rand Rogers, "Olympics for Girls?" School and Society, XXX (Aug. 10, 1929), p. 190.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 191.
makes history, but woman is history. Competition, even though undesirable socially is at least natural to men. In woman it is profoundly unnatural. Man wins through struggle, but woman stoops to conquer.¹

As with Kuhn, the argument here rests on Nietzsche's view of woman as imprisoned within the confines of her own body, a body conceived of as passive matter rather than the source of action, i.e. the medium through which the human being can act upon the world. Further, the feminists, so said Dr. Rogers, were prone to dismiss the differences between the sexes as environmental. "They forget that the most potent environment of the female mind or personality is her own body..."² The competitive sports only developed "behavior patterns contrary to the feminine nature." In his opinion "manly" [i.e. active] women and "effeminate" men constituted nature's greatest failures and should, perhaps, be corrected by means as drastic as those by which the most "hideous deformities" were treated. The traits which should be developed in women were those which were necessary to attract fathers for their children, to provide the best physiques for child-bearing, and to build maternal emotional and social behavior patterns. In his view the participation of women in the Olympic Games only served

¹Ibid., p. 191; italics added. ²Ibid.
to destroy girls' physical and psychic charm and adaptability for motherhood.\(^1\) There is little doubt that Rogers, both because of his respected position and his writings, was able to exert an influence not only on physical educators, but upon public opinion as well.

Opposition to Rogers was voiced by Bernarr MacFadden, a popular physical culturist of the day. He found it regrettable that a man of the intelligence, experience and influential position of Dr. Rogers found "no place for women in competitive sports" and he took exception to the contention that competitive sports made women manly. On the contrary, he felt physical training gave them vivaciousness and aliveness. "It makes the body firm, strong, brightens the eyes, clears the complexion."\(^2\) Vital, vigorous mothers, he felt, were necessary to the future progress of the nation.

The double standard as to what is good and worthy of applause, is obvious in an article entitled "Nations at Play," written by Carl Schrader, State Director of Physical Education for Massachusetts and one-time president of the American Physical Education Association. Describing the opening ceremonies of the 1928 Olympic

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 194.

Games, Schrader wrote:

How genuine and alike was the greeting for all, and how one was forced to recognize the oneness of humanity. Each nation has its flowers of manhood, fine specimens in bearing and build. The followers of each national team were justified in their thrill, manifested in cheers. So were we thrilled over the magnificent appearance of our boys, not only as a group, but as individuals.¹

Obviously the "oneness of humanity" meant men and the applause was only for the "boys". Rather than being praised for their bearing and build and representing the flower of the nation's womanhood, women were reluctantly praised for "behaving admirably" and reproached for their very presence.

In expressing the opinion here, that the participation of women in the Games is out of place, no criticism of women participants is intended, for they all behaved admirably. There are situations, however, in which women simply do not fit, aside from the fact that there are events that are definitely disastrous for women.²

The Woman Athlete Viewed by Her Contemporaries

Swimming and diving became quite popular in this country quite early, earlier perhaps than in European countries. According to Aileen Riggin, this popularity may have been due to the success of Annette Kellerman,


²Ibid.
an Australian, who swam and dived on a "thousand different American stages.""\(^1\) Annette Kellerman preceded the other early Australian swimmer, the great Fanny Darack of the Olympic Games of 1912. In the opinion of Frank Menke, Kellerman revolutionized women's beach garb:

Miss Kellerman took up swimming to build up a frail body, and developed a figure which artists raved about for twenty years . . . Trying for speed in the waters, she found herself handicapped by the skirted bathing suit. She discarded it, substituted a man's two piece bathing suit, created a furor, was condemned, but outlived it, and the abbreviated beach vestments for ladies today is the result.\(^2\)

Or it may have been due, Miss Riggin speculated, to a sudden health fad whereby doctors and physical training experts were advising fresh air and sunshine. Swimming and diving filled the requirements for both.\(^3\) Thus, the acceptance of these sports became widespread and little opposition to Olympic participation in swimming and diving events can be found in the literature of that period. Girls looked more graceful swimming than they did running.

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\(^1\)Aileen Riggin, "Woman's Place," Collier's, LXXXIX (May 14, 1932), p. 11.


\(^3\)Riggin, "Woman's Place," p. 11.
Track and field athletics, however, met severe criticism, and still does, to some extent. The reasons were numerous: (1) When compared to sports like swimming, diving, figure skating and the like, track and field was a sport which displayed more apparently the strength necessary for achievement. (2) It was a sport in which only the "lower classes" participated. It was rarely practiced in the colleges but was more popular in industrial society. (3) Many people used the track and field performances of women to show the apparent inferiority of women. Public antagonism was particularly evident and cruel during the early period of women's track and field and the women who competed then had to contend with the hooting and jeering of the spectators. Their inexperience made them easy prey for the hecklers. An incident is related by Aileen Riggin in her article concerning the appearance of Stella Walsh in the Millrose Games at Madison Square Garden. According to her account the starter allowed something like 15 false starts in the first event of the evening for women, the 100 yard dash.¹

During all the excitement, with twenty thousand spectators howling with laughter and the girls pale and nervous, Stella maintained an inscrutable calm. She had not "broken" once.

¹Ibid., pp. 11 and 46.
As Stella sped around the track the whole crowd arose to acclaim her. She ran like a man, with a smooth effortless motion that just ate up the ground. [italics added]¹

Miss Riggin also mentioned the fact that Stella had done well in Germany the year before and told of German clubs composed of a thousand girls who have monthly field days and who train just as men do.²

Track and field seemed to be more closely allied to feminism than any other form of physical activity, yet in the 1920's, it was the one in which women showed the greatest inferiority in performance when compared to men. And in fact, the comparisons were often made. One example of biting sarcasm appeared in 1924 under the title "Another Denial of Equality." The article reads as follows:

Those somewhat too ambitious women who, not content with recognition of the fact that the sexes are different, insist that by constitutional amendment they shall be declared equal, must feel themselves much aggrieved by the managers of athletics and the awarders of records in that important domain.

For instance, out in Chicago this week there was a contest in indoor high jumping. Both men and women participated in the rivalry, but not against each other --a truly invidious discrimination. And in a kindness which the equalitarian will be obliged to resent, the rulers of the

¹Ibid., p. 46. ²Ibid.
games recognized as a new world record the achievement of a woman who leaped the bar at 4 feet 11 inches, while a man, to gain the same honor, had to go over one set at 6 feet 6 inches.

Why it well may be asked, give the woman a glory so dim and the man one so bright? Let her wait till she competes on level terms against all comers. Then the world's record would mean something more than a revelation of physical inferiority.¹

The comparison of men's and women's records during that period was regrettable, since differences between body build and musculature result in obvious inferior performances of women, regardless of their qualities and training as athletes. Yet, many people began to theorize that now that women had begun to make up for centuries of inactivity by participating in all kinds of strenuous sports, they would in time be able to compete with men. Examples could be given, such as the feat accomplished by Sybil Bauer early in 1923 when she broke a world's record in the quarter mile backstroke by a full five seconds, which was previously held by a man. Or Gertrude Ederle who astounded the sports world in her courageous conquest of the English Channel, a feat that only a few men could do. A short article entitled "Man's Athletic Crown in Danger" which appeared in The Literary Digest

is dedicated to that kind of reasoning. Speaking about women athletes, the author says:

Frankly, they are making what may be called herculean efforts to overcome the vaunted superiority of their brothers in games requiring physical skill and prowess.¹

Miss Ethelda Bleibtrey, who won three gold medals in swimming in the 1920 Olympic Games, wrote an article which was quoted in the Literary Digest. In it she refers to the hundreds of women who were creeping closer each year to the championship laurels which were being worn exclusively by men. In commenting on the feat of Sybil Bauer, she said:

'I predict that Miss Bauer's swimming record definitely marks the beginning of an era when the world's sport crowns will fall, one by one, before the conquests of the "weaker sex," and that eventually women will wear as many prizes as men.'²

Miss Bleibtrey's pronouncements were a bit optimistic, perhaps, for they did not take into consideration that men, also, would improve with time.

Among the higher classes in this country, which during the 1920's included college and university students, there was agitation to keep sports for women for the social and intellectual élite only. John Tunis, in

²Ibid.
1929, for example, cautioned against the evils likely to spread if the trend to popularize sports for women continued:

To understand the nature of the danger it is necessary first to realize that sport for women is no longer confined, as it used to be, to the colleges and the socially desirable country clubs.¹

By then the industrial concerns, insurance companies, and banks, among others, were providing the material (office workers, factory workers, etc.) from which the Olympic team was selected. Tunis felt that these girls would be injured should the evils in men's athletics be allowed to creep into athletics for women. He advocated summer camps for the young girls. After a summer of canoeing, climbing, swimming and bareback riding they would come home all sun-tanned and healthy. They would be more mature and self-reliant, in great contrast to what took place in the "recruiting places for the women's Olympic teams."² This all sounds very idealistic, but Tunis forgot to tell where factory girls were supposed to find the time and money to attend these summer camps. They were accessible, unfortunately, only to the girls from well to do families. The truth was that the only way

²Ibid., p. 216.
women workers could get to participate in sports was through the opportunities provided by their employers and the latter were interested in the kind of competition and record breaking performances which would bring publicity to their companies.

However, there were those who saw benefits not only in the practice of "gentle" sports, but even in harsh competitions. According to John La Gatta and Grantland Rice women were gaining from sports: "not only a finely molded body, an underpinning of power and grace, arms and shoulders to match, but . . . also . . . the virility of will to battle against odds—to play the game to the final step."¹ Competition, they felt, had given sports—women stout hearts and cool heads.

Track and field sports are not "social" sports in the sense that tennis, swimming and golf are. In the era when women began participating seriously in track and field, the boyish or short hair style was fashionable. The wearing of shorts and displaying one's legs before a crowd of spectators was shocking to much of the populace. According to Ms. Catherine Meyer, a national champion in the hurdles and the 880 during the 1920's, whom the writer interviewed, the public image of women

in track and field, and their interest in participating, improved only when women's events were included in the men's major indoor meets. The attitudes of the coaches to that development, however, were something entirely different. They were very vocal against what they termed: "these silly girls' events" that were "taking up time," and "let's get on with the real business of the meet."¹

Despite the prejudices and the opposition against the participation of women in sports and along with the sympathizers who extolled the benefits to be derived from sports competitions, a number of dedicated people were actively working to make a place for women in athletics. The struggle manifested itself in an international organization established for and by women to promote international competitions, the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale (F.S.F.I.). This federation fought to exist and in so doing left its mark upon international competition for women, and in particular their participation in the Olympic Games.

The Establishment of the F.S.F.I.

When the International Olympic Committee renewed its activity after the Great War, the question of women's participation was forced upon the Committee anew and with

even greater strength. At the 18th session of the I.O.C. in Antwerp in August of 1920, a preliminary discussion took place concerning the program of the 1924 Games, to be held in Paris.¹ During this discussion Coubertin proposed, among other things, that women not be admitted to the Games. Yet, when he posed the question to the Committee: "Women, are they to be admitted to the Games?" the response was affirmative.² The International Olympic Committee refused however to consider the admission of track and field events for women for the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp and the Paris Games of 1924.

The decision of the International Olympic Committee and the International Amateur Athletic Federation (I.A.A.F.) not to concern themselves with women's track and field sports saw the creation of a women's international sports federation which was one of the greatest forces during the 1920's and 1930's in the fight for inclusion in the Olympic Games. This international federation of women's sports, formally entitled the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale (F.S.F.I.) was created on October 31, 1921, in Paris with the strong-willed French woman, Madame Alice Milliat, at its head. The F.S.F.I. grew from five representative nations

¹Mayer, A Travers . . ., p. 87.
²Ibid., p. 88.
in 1921 to thirty representative nations in 1936, the year of its demise. The importance of this organization to the evolution of women's participation in the Olympic Games has not yet been fully realized, particularly by non-Europeans. The struggle for the inclusion of women's track and field in the Olympic Games was basically a European one, the major goal of the F.S.F.I. Although the United States was one of the five representative nations at the establishment of the federation, circumstances, which will be discussed later in this chapter, prevented it from making any meaningful or continuing contribution to the development of international competition in track and field. A look at the history of the F.S.F.I. and its role in the evolution of women's participation in the Olympic Games is therefore in order.

Though the United States is considered by international sports historians as the pioneer in women's track and field, the Europeans nurtured it and gave it substance. Both France and Austria are credited for the institution of international competitive track and field, having organized on a national level even before the end of World War I. In 1917 the Fédération des Sociétés Féminines Sportives de France (F.S.F.S.F.) was organized in France while in Austria at about the same time, the Austrian Amateur Athletic Association was established.
The following year, 1918, the first women's national championships were held in Austria. Other countries credited for pioneering in track and field included Great Britain, Poland, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, and Norway.  

The impetus needed to organize a legislative body to administer the control of international competition for women in track and field was provided by a dedicated French sportswoman, Madame Alice Milliat. When France organized on a national level in 1917, Milliat, a rower with the club Fémina-Sport, one of the three major societies in France for women's sports, was elected treasurer. She proved herself so capable that by June of 1918, she became the Secretary-General of the national body, and by March of 1919, she was elected to the presidency in a unanimous vote. 

In 1919, after assuming the presidency of the F.S.F.S.F., Madame Milliat organized championships in field hockey, association-football, basketball, and swimming. By 1920, the leadership of the organization, originally organized by males, was exclusively female. In that year events were organized for schoolgirls and

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the first international match in which French women were to take part was held in England where they participated in four soccer matches.\footnote{1}

According to Dr. Fr. Messerli, founder of the Swiss Olympic Committee, former historiographer of the International Olympic Committee and a personal friend of P. de Coubertin, women in the sporting world put in strong pleas with the International Olympic Committee to incorporate women's events in track and field. These pleas were entered for the VII Olympiad at Antwerp in 1920 and the VIII Olympiad at Paris in 1924.\footnote{2} If his statements are accepted as fact, a plea was entered by Madame Milliat for the inclusion of women's track and field in the Olympic Games before 1920.

However, F.A.M. Webster's account is slightly different, stating that the request to the I.O.C. for entry into the Olympic Games came from Madame Milliat shortly after the F.S.F.I. was formed, thus not before October of 1921.\footnote{3} These two accounts seem in contradiction with each other, but Webster may not have been aware of a previous request for admission to the Games in 1920.

\footnote{1}{Eyquem, \textit{La Femme et Le Sport}, p. 52.}
\footnote{2}{Dr. Fr. Messerli, "Women's Participation To \textit{[sic]} the Olympic Games" (Lausanne: The I.O.C., 1952), p. 10.}
\footnote{3}{F.A.M. Webster, \textit{Athletics of To-Day for Women} (London: Frederick Warne and Co., Ltd., 1930), p. 98.
It was his belief that the international federation for women's sports was inspired by an international meeting between England, Italy, France, Norway and Sweden held in Monte Carlo in March of 1921. Monte Carlo authorities conceived this sports event and called it a "Reunion Internationals d'Éducation Physique Féminine" (International Women's Physical Education Meeting). The meet was to include gymnastics and a basketball tournament as well as track and field events. He felt that, inspired by the success of that international meeting, Madame Milliat then decided to form an organization to govern international sports for women.\(^1\) Indeed, this may have been the case. It is possible that it was only during this meeting that Madame Milliat's ideas were crystallized.

In any event, a pamphlet published by the F.S.F.I. in 1936 stated that the international body was organized because of the refusal of the ruling bodies in men's athletics to be concerned with women's sports.\(^2\) The attitude of the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. reflected the general attitude: that female sport interested no one. Madame Milliat then took it upon herself to provide a forum for international competition for women and to

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 30-32.

recruit support through organizing sports federations for women's sports in other countries. Thus, on October 31, 1921, in Paris, the Fédération Sportive Féminine International was organized.¹

The newly elected president of the F.S.P.I. was a controversial figure. Her dedication to her goal and her tenacity irked those who opposed her efforts while those close to her held her in great admiration and esteem.² As Avery Brundage said in an interview with the writer, "She was active for years and she demanded more and more. She made quite a nuisance of herself."³ In French sport for women, and later, throughout the world, her voice was heard and her authority accepted without question. She was the outstanding authority on sports for women between the two World Wars.⁴ Madame Milliat was also a dedicated feminist who believed that woman suffrage could help bring about acceptance and recognition for women's sports. Evidence of her perception of the relationship between the broader feminist issues and women's participation in sports can be found in a statement she made during the 1934 Women's World

¹Eyquem, La Femme et Le Sport, p. 53.
²Ibid., pp. 49-51.
⁴Eyquem, La Femme et Le Sport, p. 51.
Games in London, when she was interviewed by a writer for Independent Woman:

Women's sports of all kinds are handicapped in my country by the lack of playing space. As we have no vote, we can not make our needs publicly felt, or bring pressure to bear in the right quarters. I always tell my girls that the vote is one of the things they will have to work for if France is to keep its place with other nations in the realm of feminine sport.¹

The organizational meeting of the F.S.F.I. was preceded by a dual track and field meeting between France and England. The following day, five nations were represented in the inaugural meeting of the F.S.F.I.: Great Britain, the United States, France, Czechoslovakia and Italy.² At its constitutional meeting certain important decisions were made: (1) to cooperate with all existing women's federations in all countries, (2) to determine rules and regulations and events for international competition, and (3) to provide the rules for the organization and administration of a universal group.³

In the second annual meeting of the F.S.F.I. held in


³Webster, Athletics of To-Day . . ., p. 33. Also under "Statuts" of the F.S.F.I. pamphlet, although slightly different, p. 5.
Paris, August 18, 1922, just two days before the opening of the First Women's Olympic Games, it was decided that the Women's Olympic Games would be held every four years. The success of the Games about to take place was to be the consecration of Madame Milliat's hard work and a dramatic breakthrough in international competition for women.

The 1922 Women's Olympic Games

The First Women's Olympic Games was composed of eleven events, in great contrast to the five events which were allowed women in the Olympic Games of 1928. The events of 1922 included a 1,000 meters event, 200 meters more than the 800 meters race which was excluded from women's competition in the Olympic Games after the 1928 Games for being too strenuous (until 1960).

The first women's Olympic Games took place in Paris on August 20, 1922, in Pershing Stadium. A crowd of some 20,000 spectators was estimated to be in attendance. The Games were held under the presidency of M. Henri Pathé, commissioner of physical education in France. Impressed by the solemnity of the ceremony, a Dr. Pillet, writing for the magazine, Sportives, reported the event in terms that conveyed his own emotion as well as that of thousands
of people assembled in the stadium. ¹ For the first time, perhaps, a women's sports event was reported with the same mixture of respect, admiration, and mystic fervor as the "real" (i.e. male) Olympics had inspired before.

And indeed, it was a true victory for women athletes, and women in general; no one could fail to perceive this message in Madame Milliat's words as she proudly proclaimed open the "Premiers Jeux Olympiques Féminins du Monde." Entitled "A New Era for France" the front page of the official Olympic program carried a prologue from Madame Milliat. The feminist overtones of her statement are quite apparent:

France has the honor of having been at the forefront of this movement ... We are aware of having worked for the betterment of woman, whatever class of society she comes from, to have helped her become a healthier human being, both morally and physically, having no fear of her responsibilities and ready also to demand that her rights be respected in every domain without losing the grace which has always been her charm.²

Overall Results

According to the New York Times of August 11, the United States and Panama had entered seventeen contestants in the Games, England had entered 16, Belgium 12,

¹M. T. Eyquem, La Femme et Le Sport, p. 55.
²Ibid.
Switzerland 8, and Czechoslovakia 12.¹

The British team was the overall champion with 50 points. The nearest contender was the United States with 31 points, followed by France, Czechoslovakia and Switzerland. A total of four world's records were broken. Later that year the New York Times published another article which reported that U.S. women held 21 of the 49 records recognized by the F.S.F.I. The list published in Paris by the F.S.F.I. reflected the phenomenal growth of women's activity in track and field. In 1922 alone, 29 of the 49 records recognized by the F.S.F.I. were established. An analysis of the list showed American women to be superior in hurdling and jumping, holding 4 out of 5 of the records in hurdling and 5 of 6 in the long jumps and high jumps. England and France were superior in the relays and distance running, holding the majority of the records.²

United States Preparation and Participation in the Women's Olympic Games

The road for American women had been an arduous one however. A great flurry of activity had occurred during


²"American Women Athletes Head World in Records Recognized by International Body," The N.Y. Times (Dec. 3, 1922), Section 1, p. 2. It is interesting to note, here, that the author seemingly can not resist making comparisons with men's events. For example in the 100 meters: 11.4 to 9.6; in the high jump: 4'9" to 6'7-5/16".
the spring of 1922 when the announcement was made that the United States would send a track and field team to the First Women's Olympic Games. The May 8 New York Times reported the plans for the Eastern trials to select candidates for American representation in Paris. The Eastern trials were to be held at Oaksmere School in Mamaroneck, N.Y., on May 13. According to the article the selection committee intended to take into consideration not only the results of the Eastern trials, but also the results of a country-wide telegraphic meet to help determine eligibility and previous records of school and college meets.¹ At the meet in Mamaroneck, there were a total of 102 competitors from Maine to Florida.²

Perhaps to allay the fears of concerned people, the coach of the women's team, Dr. Harry Eaton Stewart, in the article on May 8 indicated that expert coaching, medical supervision, and chaperonage would be provided. The circumstances under which the girls would go to Paris will be discussed elsewhere, but briefly, Ms. Winifred Merrill, principal of Oaksmere School, the head of Dr. Stewart's advisory committee, had offered to entertain the girls and pay their expenses while they were in

²N.Y. Times, May 14, 1922, p. 28.
Paris. She was in a position to do that since a branch of her school was located in Paris. Suzanne Becker, secretary of the National Women's Track Athletics Committee (the sanctioning body for the U.S. athletes) and a teacher of physical education at Oaksmere School, served as Dr. Stewart's assistant.\(^1\) Despite the rather hectic preparation and the widespread opposition to their participation in the Games, American women were well represented and achieved considerable success. America's team consisting of 13 girls\(^2\) won second place with 31 points or 37% of the prizes, second only to Great Britain who had a total of 50 points. They won that distinction in spite of their lack of experience. In Dr. Stewart's own words:

> Most of our team was composed of school girls who were pitted against trained and seasoned athletes. In Europe women have been competing in athletic games for years, while the idea is new in America.\(^3\)

According to an article in *Mind and Body* it was the first

\(^1\)The *N.Y. Times*, July 20, 1922, p. 25.


time a complete team of American women athletes had seen Europe and the impression they left earned generous applause. The American team won three first places and tied for a fourth; the tie was with Great Britain in the high jump. The three first place events were the: 100 yard hurdles, the standing long jump, and the shot put. (See table on following page.)

Lucile Godbold of the United States set a new world's record for the shot put (right and left hand throws added together). Camelia Sabie of Newark also set a world mark, 14.4 seconds for the 100 yard hurdles, and won the standing long jump. Miss Godbold also won 3rd place in the 300 meters and 4th place in the 1,000 meters. Elizabeth Stine won second in the long jump and Camelia Sabie won third. Flora Batson was the only other American contestant who placed; she was third in the javelin throw.

American Reaction and Counter Reaction to the Games

The controversy over the participation of American women in the Games continued after the Games were over. Much of the opposition came from physical educators themselves. An article which appeared in the N.Y. Times

WINNING PERFORMANCES IN THE WOMEN'S OLYMPIC GAMES, PARIS, 1922*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Performance min. sec.</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 meters</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Mejzlikova II</td>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 meters</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>Callebout</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 meters</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>Lines</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 meters</td>
<td>3:12</td>
<td>Breard</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 yd. Hurdles</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>Sabie</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440 yd. Relay</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Jump (ft. in.)</td>
<td>4' 9-1/10</td>
<td>Hatt &amp; Voorhees</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Long Jump</td>
<td>16' 7-1/3</td>
<td>Lines</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Long Jump</td>
<td>8' 1-9/10</td>
<td>Sabie</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 lb Shot Put</td>
<td>66' 4-1/10</td>
<td>Godbold</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800 grs Javelin</td>
<td>141' 10-3/10</td>
<td>1Pianzola</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1(both hands).

*Taken from F.A.M. Webster's Athletics of To-Day for Women, p. 39.
of August 23--three days after the meet--acknowledges and counters the criticisms voiced by "certain spectators" who after seeing the Games had concluded that such "Games" were not proper for women, or at any rate not for girls. According to these spectators the severe exhaustion shown by some of the participants after their victories and particularly after their defeats, might seriously harm or even permanently affect the girls, due to the strains the girls put on their hearts and other muscles in the excitement of competition.¹ The author's response to these critics was as follows:

That there is some truth in this criticism hardly can be questioned, but it can be applied as fairly to young men as to young women, and too much could be made of the fact that in several instances the girls fell into fits of hysterical crying . . . By no means all the girls cried when they were beaten, the majority of them showed only a weariness that was little if any more than wholesome, and not at all likely to have lasting effects.

That the American team made only 31 points while the Britons made 50 is not surprising, but it probably should give rise to more thought than the fact that the competitions were more vigorous than those in which the majority of girls now would think of taking part--more vigorous than any girls, a few years ago, would have dreamed of engaging in.²

²Ibid.
The Growing Interest of the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. in Controlling Women's Track and Field

By 1923 there were nine countries affiliated with the F.S.F.I. and perhaps a dozen others who were actively interested in promoting track and field for women. At the I.O.C.'s twenty-first session in Rome during April of 1923, the Committee occupied itself with the feminist movement and "the abuses and excesses" to which it gave rise.¹ The Committee decided that it was inevitable that women should want to participate in the national sports and games of their respective countries. Furthermore, the Committee felt that if sports and games were promoted for the betterment and improvement of women from the physical and moral point of view, then the soundest line to adopt was for the governing bodies to see that their games were properly organized and that they take part only in the sports which were most suited to their sex.² Thus, it would seem correct to assume that the I.O.C. suggested the control of women's sports by international federations in order to limit their growth.

The International Amateur Athletic Federation took up the rather loose proposal of the International Olympic Committee at its Congress, meeting in Paris in July of

¹Mayer, A Travers . . ., p. 103.
1923 and empowered its Council to draw up rules with a view toward taking control or managing female sport.\(^1\) The Council then proposed to alter the rules of the I.A.A.F. to permit the inclusion of women. This proposal was adopted by the Congress of July 1924 in Paris.\(^2\) Women's track and field had become a force to be reckoned with; so many men's clubs were including women's events in their meets that the I.A.A.F. had to recognize women's activities. The I.A.A.F. Congress of 1924 decided to take over women's track and field, then promptly voted not to allow women's events in the Olympic Games.\(^3\) The management of women's sports was designated to a special commission which began holding negotiations with the F.S.F.I.

Again in 1924, the participation of women in the Olympic Games held the attention of the International Olympic Committee. Some of the members of the Committee wanted to put the question aside, but since the problem would likely come up at the congress to be held in France the following year, the Committee decided it was better to take an immediate position. The Committee felt that the program of the Games was already overloaded anyway,

\(^1\)I.A.A.F. Congress Minutes, 1936, p. 19.
\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)Webster, Athletics of To-Day . . ., p. 98.
and to open the doors of participation for women more widely would only make the load heavier.\textsuperscript{1} The following motion, made by Count Clary of France, was adopted as a result of that discussion:

Faced with the universally well-known necessity of shortening the Olympic program and without wanting to touch here on the principles even, the I.O.C. has decided, concerning the participation of women in the Olympic Games, to simply maintain the status quo. In no case will it accept as obligatory feminine events in fencing.\textsuperscript{2}

The status quo for women was swimming and tennis. It was during this session that Coubertin expressed his opinion that the introduction of women's events was illegal and the Executive Commission of the I.O.C. had tolerated them only under express reservations. The question was discussed at the Prague Congress in 1925, the Congress at which Coubertin resigned as President of the I.O.C., and according to Messerli, the Congress concluded in favor of women,\textsuperscript{3} though little is known about the discussion and conclusions from that Congress.

\textbf{Negotiated Agreement Between the I.A.A.F. and the F.S.F.I.}

As a result of meetings between the Special Commission of the I.A.A.F. and the F.S.F.I., a proposal that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}Mayer, \textit{A Travers} . . ., p. 109.
\item \textsuperscript{2}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{3}Messerli, \textit{Women's Participation To} . . ., p. 10.
\end{itemize}
the two bodies cooperate was introduced at the Hague Congress of the I.A.A.F. in 1926. The agreement reached through the negotiations gave the F.S.F.I. authority to direct women's athletics. In return, the F.S.F.I. agreed to abide by the rules and regulations of the I.A.A.F. The women retained power, however, to modify rules in order to adapt them to female use. The agreement also allowed any affiliate of the I.A.A.F. to claim membership in the F.S.F.I. if it was requested.\footnote{Minutes of the I.A.A.F. Congress, 1936, p. 20 [photocopied for the writer by the I.A.A.F., 1973].}

Ironically, perhaps, the year after Pierre de Coubertin resigned the presidency of the I.O.C., Mr. Siegfried Edstrom, president of the I.A.A.F., proposed to admit women to competition in a restricted number of athletic events at the Amsterdam Olympic Games for 1928, which was accepted.\footnote{Bulletin Officiel du C.I.O., July, 1926, p. 15.} The International Olympic Committee to this point had not favored the entry of women into the Olympic Games in track and field and probably passed this measure grudgingly. The I.O.C. was particularly antagonistic towards the F.S.F.I. and the introduction of the Women's Olympic Games. Nothing was ever mentioned in the \textit{Bulletin du C.I.O.} about the discussions the I.O.C. conducted on the women's athletic
question, or in any other publication the writer has had access to. Although there was no direct assault, the I.O.C. advised the international federations to take over the control of women's sports, in effect, in order to limit their growth. Another example of rather indirect action against the F.S.F.I. came even before the First Women's Olympic Games took place in 1922. The I.O.C., at its Paris Meeting in June of 1922, passed a resolution concerning the abuse of the term Olympic. Although not explicitly, the improper use of "Olympic" they spoke about no doubt referred to Madame Milliat's Women's Olympic Games. The resolution passed is as follows:

The I.O.C. considering the abuse made of the terms Olympic and Olympiad and the complaints which arose from all directions on this subject, call the attention of all to the fact that it is historically absurd to attribute the title Olympic to competitions which are neither quadrennial nor world-wide and on the other hand, technically the term Olympiad refers to an interval of four calendar years and cannot be employed to designate a competition.¹

This matter finally came to a head when the Executive Committee of the I.O.C. interviewed Madame Milliat and pressed for a withdrawal of the term Olympic which the F.S.F.I. was then using to designate the Women's

¹Mayer, A Travers . . ., pp. 95-96.
World Games it organized. The result was Madame Milliat's agreement not to use "Olympic" in the designation of the Women's Games. This agreement was quite likely a point of negotiations between the I.A.A.F. and the F.S.F.I. in 1926. In any case the title for the second series of Games was changed to the "Second International Ladies' Games."

Gothenburg Games of 1926: "Second International Ladies' Games"

Very little could be found about the Gothenburg Games of 1926 except what was written in F.A.M. Webster's book published in 1930 and George Pallett's publication in 1956. Originally, the Games had been planned for Brussels; in 1925 the Belgian Federation notified the F.S.F.I. that it could not fulfill its obligation. Sweden, who had just become a member of the F.S.F.I. during that year, agreed to hold the Games.

Obviously, there was no publicity given to the event at all by the A.A.U. because Catherine Meyer, formerly Catherine Donovan, whom the writer interviewed, who was the country's foremost hurdler and prominent in the 220 dash, stated that she knew nothing about the 1926 Games at all. In fact, though she had been excited

about the Women's Olympic Games of 1922, which received quite a bit of publicity, she did not hear of any of the Games in 1926: "I never even heard about that. I was competing then and should have heard talk about it. I was close enough to competing at the national level that I would hear those things. When you are an athlete you just train and do what your coach says."¹

The A.A.U. of the United States had not yet become the sanctioning body for international athletics for women by the time the Games were held in 1926, because the I.A.A.F. and the F.S.F.I. had not yet reached agreement on control. The A.A.U. either did not want to organize a women's team, or did not have the money to send a team to Sweden, or did not want to risk the ire of opposition groups to women's competition in track and field, particularly since it was being outlawed by educational institutions all over the country. Neither did the A.A.U. care to create unnecessary friction or show disloyalty to the I.A.A.F.

Dr. Einar Lilie, President of the Swedish Women's Athletic Association, became head of the organizing committee, which included such honorary members as General V. G. Balck, who headed the organizing committee for the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912 and Madame Milliat,

President of the F.S.F.I. The King of Sweden was to present the cup to the winning nation\(^1\) and the Crown Prince, the patron of the Games, awarded a cup for the winning relay team. Ten nations entered teams, but only eight participated: Sweden, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Japan, Poland, and Latvia.\(^2\)

The festival for 1926 was augmented to three days rather than one as in 1922. On August 27, again in accordance with Olympic tradition, the games were proclaimed open. The program at the Games included: 60 meters; 100 yards; 250 meters; 1,000 meters; 1,000 meters walk; 100 yard hurdles; shot-put; javelin, discus; high jump; standing long-jump; running long-jump; and the 440 yards relay.\(^3\)

The outstanding athlete of the Games was Kinuye Hitomi of Japan who, alone, scored all of Japan's 15 points. Japan, with its sole competitor, placed 5th in the Games following Great Britain, 50 points; France, 27 points; Sweden, 20 points; and Czechoslovakia, 19 points. Hitomi placed 1st in the standing long jump and the running long jump (a world record), second in the discus,

\(^1\)The F.S.F.I., from the beginning, recognized the desire of nations to keep points, legally, and to determine a national winner.

\(^2\)Pallett, *Women's Athletics*, p. 27.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 255.
3rd in the 100 yd. dash, 5th in the 60 meters flat, and 6th in the 250 meters. For her feat in the Games, she was awarded a gold medal as the best all-around athlete by Madame Milliat. Another outstanding performer was Melle Radideau of France who won the 60 meters and the 100 yard dash and placed third in the 250 meters.¹

The Struggle for Inclusion in the Olympic Games

The issue over the inclusion of women for the 1928 Olympic Games ended in a compromise. Mr. Edstrom of Sweden, president of the I.A.A.F., and later President of the I.O.C., had already warned that refusal to permit women to compete in the Olympic Games would mean that the I.A.A.F. also refused to control athletics for women. Mr. Pikhala, an I.O.C. member from Finland, opposed completely the idea of women's athletics; women's competition in the Olympic Games was not in keeping with the classic Greek ideal and would serve only to bring ridicule on them. Finnish women, he said, were themselves opposed to taking part in track and field in the Olympic Games.² The compromise was offered when the proposal was made to include women's events "as an experiment."

Rather than accept the special committee's report which

¹Ibid., p. 256.
²Webster, Athletics of To-Day . . . , p. 99.
stated that women's events were to be included in this
and in the following Olympic Games, the words "and in the
following Olympic Games" were deleted.\(^1\) A Joint Technical
Commission was appointed to serve as the connector between
the I.A.A.F. and the F.S.F.I.\(^2\) Madame Milliat is quoted
by F.A.M. Webster to have said:

> Women's sport "cannot be an experiment
> now, as it has brilliantly shown what it
can do. Such a short list of events cannot
> be a help to women's sport propaganda, and,
on the other hand, we have to think of the
> moral question to be considered in connec-
tion with a world meeting including men and
> women together."\(^3\)

At the Fourth Congress of the F.S.F.I. in Gothenburg,
Sweden, held in August 1926, Madame Milliat told of her
offer to change the name of the women's world champi-
ionships. She had reserved for the F.S.F.I. the right to
complete liberty of action should agreement with the
I.A.A.F. fail to be reached. When the terms of the
I.A.A.F. were announced, Madame Milliat indicated that
the five events proposed for women in the Olympics were
meager indeed; Mrs. Elliot-Lynn of the Women's Amateur
Athletic Association of Great Britain felt it was so
meager that women had nothing to gain through participa-
tion in the Olympic Games. The F.S.F.I. had come too far

\(^1\text{Ibid.}, p. 100.\)
\(^2\text{Ibid.}, p. 101.\)
\(^3\text{Ibid.}, pp. 101-102.\)
now, however, to turn back, and although dissatisfied with the five event program, the International Committee of the F.S.F.I. voted (with the exception of Great Britain) to accept the I.A.A.F.'s offer,¹ but decided that the program of future Olympic Games must include 10 events.² The British women decided not to participate in the Games in 1928 because, as Lady Mary Heath put it:

We British did not send a team because we felt that to a very large extent the position of women in the Olympic Games was not defined.³

Lady Mary Heath was at that time vice-president of the F.S.F.I., a famed aviatrix of the time, and a former track and field competitor.⁴ The British were particularly displeased that a full program was not granted for the Games of 1928. Their boycott of the Games was even more dramatic when one realizes that their competitors were chosen by experts as the strongest and were favored to win the greatest number of events.

The F.S.F.I. Congress held in 1928, the fifth Congress, from August 1 to August 3 in Amsterdam, admitted

¹Pallett, Women's Athletics, pp. 34-35.
²Webster, Athletics of To-Day . . ., p. 102.
³A.A.U., Minutes of the Annual Convention, 1928, from a speech delivered to the convention by Lady Heath, p. 181.
⁴Ibid.
six more nations for affiliation: Greece, Holland, Roumania, Argentina, Esthonia and South Africa, for a total of 23 nations in affiliation.\footnote{Pallett, \textit{Women's Athletics}, p. 40.} The Czechoslovakian Federation was to be in charge of the Third Women's World Games to be held in Prague in September of 1930. It was decided, also, to augment the program by holding World's Championships in basket-ball, handball, and hazena. The program for Prague in track and field was fixed to include the following 12 events:

- 60 meters \hspace{1cm} \text{Running High Jump}
- 100 meters \hspace{1cm} \text{Running Long Jump}
- 200 meters \hspace{1cm} \text{Throwing the discus}
- 800 meters \hspace{1cm} \text{Throwing the javelin}
- 80 meter hurdles \hspace{1cm} \text{Putting the shot}
- 400 meter relay \hspace{1cm} \text{Triathlon (High Jump, javelin, and 100 meters)}\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 257.}

Mr. Edstrom himself was present at the 1928 meeting of the F.S.F.I., held during the 1928 Olympic Games, and pronounced himself in favor of a complete program of women's events in the Games, all taking place on the same day. The Technical Commission later outlined the complete program for future Games, in order of priority: 100 meters dash, 400 meters relay, high jump, discus,
javelin, 800 meters, long jump, hurdles, shotput, and the 200 meters dash. This program was passed and reported to the Ninth Congress of the I.A.A.F. on August 6, 1928.¹ In that Congress, Mr. Harry Barclay of Great Britain stated that British women were not in favor of women participating in the Olympic Games, but that he felt they would take part if a full program were provided. Pikhala, however, took the floor to denounce once again the whole concept of track and field for women, saying it was a mode of the moment and that athletics did not suit women. The full program was rejected by a vote of 14 to 8. Nations voting against the measure were Finland, Canada, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, and Ireland.² Part of the problem was the strong opposition to the 800 meters event, which had received wide publicity in the Games which had just ended.

In 1929, however, a recurring threat to the participation of women again appeared on the horizon. In his speech to the opening session of the I.O.C. in Lausanne, the president of the I.O.C., Count de Baillet-Latour, explained the necessity for reducing the program of the Olympic Games. The success of the Games enlarged the program, he said, and made it difficult to conserve their

¹Webster, Athletics of To-Day . . ., p. 103.
²Ibid.
true character, as the "fondateur" (founder) had defined it.\textsuperscript{1} Thus, he said:

You will have to decide on the Program of the Games. The reduction of the program, which is a necessity, is intimately linked to maintaining the participation of women.\textsuperscript{2}

He had already appointed a working committee, with Mr. Edstrom as chairman, which had come up with five possible solutions, solutions which were to serve as a basis for discussion and could be fused with other propositions. The committee's five possible solutions included the pure and simple suppression of women's events in the Olympic Games. According to the report of the meeting the opinion of the committee was strongly divided, however the proposals were first to be passed along to the Executive Commission for discussion of the question with the delegates of the international federations.\textsuperscript{3}

The President also read some letters he received from absent members in connection with this question, one from Mr. Myholm of Denmark and one from Mr. Krogius of Finland. Both were strongly in favor of the absolute exclusion of women and women's events from the Olympic Games.\textsuperscript{4} Most, however, were only strongly opposed to

\textsuperscript{1}Bulletin Officiel du C.I.O., May, 1929, p. 6. 
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., pp. 6-7. 
\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., pp. 8-9. 
\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 7.
the participation of women in track and field. Since the inclusion of women in track and field for the 1928 Games was only "an experiment," the possibility that their future participation would be suppressed was a very real one.

At the Vittel, France, meeting in July of 1929, the Executive Commission of the I.O.C. passed the following rule concerning women's participation, to be included in the general rules for the Olympic Games of 1932:

IV. Participation of Women

Women are not admitted in the Olympic Games except in the events of gymnastics, swimming, lawn-tennis and skating.¹

Thus were officially eliminated from the Program track and field and fencing events that had previously been included. The fact that lawn-tennis was included is somewhat confusing, however, because lawn-tennis had already been excluded from the 1928 Olympic Games.

One of the important questions, at the I.A.A.F. Congress of 1930, therefore, centered around women's participation in the Olympic Games. The committee on Women's Sports of the I.A.A.F., chaired by Madame Milliat, president of the F.S.F.I., and upon which Avery Brundage, president of the A.A.U. sat, went on record as

favoring women's participation in future Olympic Games. The Congress of the I.A.A.F. itself decided that the delegates of the I.A.A.F. to the Olympic Congress should speak in favor of and vote for the participation of women. It was also decided by the Federation that if the Olympic Congress accepted the proposal before the I.O.C. Congress to bar women from competing in track and field events in the Olympic Games, a new Congress of the I.A.A.F. would be called to determine whether or not men's competition in track and field would be withdrawn from the 1932 Olympic Games.¹

In May of 1930 at the Olympic Congress at Berlin, Article IV as quoted above was maintained without any alteration.² There is conflicting information at this point. A New York Times article dated May 24 from Berlin indicated that at a final session of the I.O.C. that day, an overwhelming majority voted to recommend to the Olympic Congress that no changes regarding women's participation should be made. However, according to the same news article, the American delegates to the I.A.A.F., headed by Gustavus Kirby, urgently recommended that the I.A.A.F. adopt a resolution which threatened to withdraw


all male athletes from the Olympic Games of 1932 unless women were allowed to compete. The outcome of that resolution was a majority vote in favor of women's participation in track and field. Another article followed from Berlin on May 29 which indicated that the action of President Baillet-Latour, which sought to limit women's participation in Olympic gymnastics, swimming, and skating was rejected by the Congress. Apparently what happened was that the Berlin Congress had allowed Article IV of the General Regulations to stand without alteration while voting overwhelmingly to allow women to participate. The final decisions were made at a meeting of the I.O.C. on April 25th, 1931. The participation of women in the Games of the Tenth Olympiad (1932) was agreed to unanimously in gymnastics and swimming (and skating although not in the Summer Olympic cycle). The vote favoring admission of women to track and field athletics was 16 to 3 and for fencing 17 favored the event while 2 voted to suppress it.

It is of some interest to mention here that not all members of the American delegation were in favor of

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women's participation in the Olympic Games. One of the three American members of the I.O.C., Ernest Lee Jahncke, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, objected to the sanction of strenuous athletic contests for women. To emphasize his opposition, Jahncke wrote to General Charles H. Sherrill, the senior member of the American representatives to the I.O.C., endorsing the attitude of the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation. The Women's Division opposed participation in the Olympic Games or in activities carried on in conjunction with or simultaneously with the Olympic Games.¹ That opposition is discussed more in detail in chapter VI. Mr. Jahncke, incidentally, was later dismissed as a member of the I.O.C. because of his violent opposition to American participation in the Olympic Games of 1936, owing to the persecution of Jews in Germany. He was replaced by Avery Brundage, who was instrumental in the decision of the American athletics bodies to allow their members to compete. He had gone to Berlin and found no cause for the non-participation of American athletes.

The Third Women's World Games

Despite all the controversy over the participation of women in track and field athletics, the F.S.F.I.

¹"Wants Women Barred," N.Y. Times (June 8, 1930), Section XI, p. 2.
continued to grow and flourish. In 1930 the Third Women's World Games were held in Prague, Czechoslovakia, at the huge Letna Stadium September 6-8, 1930. Czechoslovakia was one of the charter nations of the F.S.F.I. and its women continued to support it, both with great interest and great competitors. Seventeen nations were represented in the Prague Games, with a total of 214 athletes participating.¹ Fifteen thousand people were on hand to see the Games.²

Germany was the overall winner with a score of 57 points. This was the first time it had participated in the World Games, although it had requested membership before the 1926 Games in Gothenburg. Germany was denied admission at that time on the grounds that membership in the F.S.F.I. would be granted only when it was admitted to membership in the League of Nations. German athletes won the 400 meter relay, the high jump, the shotput, the javelin, and the triathlon, with I. Broumuller winning both the triathlon and the high jump championships.³ Poland was the closest contender with 26 points; Great Britain was third with 19 points; Japan scored 13 points,

¹Pallett, Women's Athletics, p. 42.
³Ibid.
Sweden 10 and Holland 9. Halinaa Konopacka of Poland held on to her discus title while Kinuye Hitomi of Japan again won the long jump, placed second in the javelin and 60 meters flat and 4th in the 200 meters.  

Stanislava Walaciewicz (Stella Walsh) of the New York Central Railroad Athletic Association of Cleveland, was invited by Poland, her native country, to compete as a member of its team for the Prague Games. Knowing she was not eligible to compete for the U.S. at the Prague Games (she could not become naturalized until July, 1930), she accepted. When the A.A.U. could not assure her that she would be eligible to compete for the U.S. in the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1932, it cabled the I.A.A.F. for information and was assured that this meet would not affect her eligibility. She proved to be the outstanding performer in Prague.  

\[1\] She won the 60 meters, the 100 meters, and the 200 meters races,  

\[2\] earning 15 of Poland's 26 point total.

Despite the demands each year by the F.S.F.I. for a full program of events in track and field in the Olympic Games, the program for the Los Angeles Olympics in 1932 was augmented by only one event: the controversial 800

\[1\] Pallett, Women's Athletics, p. 44.

\[2\] A.A.U. Minutes 1930, p. 158.

\[3\] Pallett, Women's Athletics, p. 44.
meters run was eliminated; while the 80 meters hurdles and the javelin throw were added for a total of six events. The International Olympic Committee limited the maximum distance for track events for women to 200 meters at its Barcelona meeting in 1931.¹

Although Madame Milliat was not able to attend the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1932 (Eyquem noted that she was quite ill in her later years), the F.S.F.I. was represented at the I.A.A.F. Congress being held there by Dr. F. Messerli of Switzerland. Dr. Messerli announced to the Congress that the F.S.F.I. would hold the fourth Women's World Games in London in 1934. He also stated to that body that the F.S.F.I. wished to introduce a complete program of track and field athletics in the Olympic Games and that if the I.A.A.F. were not prepared to do this, the F.S.F.I. preferred to have no women's events at all.²

Apparently the brew was thickening. At its May meeting in 1934, the International Olympic Committee, although granting unanimous decisions in favor of women's participation in skating, fencing, swimming, and gymnastics, admitted women to track and field by a very slim margin, 11 to 9. This was in great contrast to the vote

²Pallett, *Women's Athletics*, p. 47.
in 1931 when 17 favored admission and only 3 dissented.\(^1\)
On June 14, 1934, a letter was received by the F.S.F.I. from the I.A.A.F. informing the Fédération Féminine (often referred to as the Fédération Milliat) that the German Federation was asking that a proposal be put on the agenda of the I.A.A.F. Congress, to be held in Stockholm Aug. 28 and 29, requesting that women’s track and field be hereafter governed by the I.A.A.F. The German Federation advised the F.S.F.I. of its action directly on July 10.\(^2\)

Madame Milliat reminded the representatives of the F.S.F.I. Congress that it was only after the refusal of the I.A.A.F. to take over track and field for women that she took the initiative to organize the F.S.F.I. After the success of the first Games in Paris in 1922 and the development of the Federation, the I.A.A.F. wanted to dispossess the F.S.F.I. Long discussions followed which terminated in the accords of 1926 which were known until this time [1934].\(^3\) An extract of the minutes of the 8th Congress of the F.S.F.I. further stated:

\(^3\)Ibid.
Today the F.S.F.I. has increased considerably and the I.A.A.F. is making another attempt to take over the results of a work which is not its own. It should be noted that she (Madame Milliat) succeeded in getting only six events [sic] [only 5 were admitted] in the Olympic Games (Amsterdam 1928).\(^1\)

It was the belief of Mme. Gagneux-Bisson that the I.A.A.F. after having given delegative powers to the F.S.F.I. and witnessing the development and world-wide influence of that federation probably realized its error and tried to retrace its steps.\(^2\)

Mr. Voss of Germany explained to the group that the German Federation's intention was not to harm the F.S.F.I. but simply to obtain a complete program for women in the Olympic Games.\(^3\) Thus, in the name of the British Federation, Mrs. Cornell made the following proposal, which was passed unanimously:

> The F.S.F.I. will agree to give up the Women's World Games when a complete program for women's athletics is included in the Olympic Games, and under the condition to have a direct representative on the International Olympic Committee. The F.S.F.I. note that the I.O.C. is more and more reluctant to have women take part in the Olympic Games in every kind of sport. Under such circumstances the F.S.F.I. think

\(^{1}\)Ibid.


\(^{3}\)Extrait du Procès Verbal . . . , 1934.
that we must take up again the idea of organizing Women's Olympic Games including every kind of women's sport.¹

The Congress of the F.S.F.I. took note of the fact that the participation of women in track and field passed in the I.O.C. only by the vote of 10 to 9 in the last I.O.C. Congress.² Thus, the F.S.F.I. felt that it was its duty to take up once again the idea of Women's Olympic Games, which would take in all aspects of female sports activities.³

The I.A.A.F., by letter, had invited the F.S.F.I. to send two delegates to its Congress in Stockholm, August 28 and 29. Madame Milliat refused to go there to take part in the discussion and to defend the F.S.F.I.'s point of view, therefore Major W. B. Marchant, vice-president, was charged with representing the F.S.F.I.

At the I.A.A.F. Congress in 1934, Germany made the following suggestion to the Congress at Stockholm:

'We propose that the I.A.A.F. at its Congress in Stockholm decides [sic] to govern Women's sport in field and track events for the whole world completely. The members of the I.A.A.F. should be requested to permit women's athletics only within the


²Ibid.; the I.O.C. report stated that the vote was 11 yes, 9 no for participation in track and field.

³Ibid.
I.A.A.F. A special commission for women's sport shall not be recognized. The work of the women's sport shall take place within scope [sic] of the present organization of the I.A.A.F.¹

The reasons given by the I.A.A.F. to justify this new position were that: (1) many countries wanted women's sport to be managed by the same organization as men's sports, (2) the present dualism was expensive and troublesome, and (3) since women's sports did not have the same standing in the I.O.C. as men's sports, women could be better represented there by the I.A.A.F.² The Council of the I.A.A.F. supported Germany and according to Pallett recommended that members of the I.A.A.F. leave the F.S.F.I.³ The Congress did postpone the final decision on this question, however, and appointed a commission to negotiate with the F.S.F.I.⁴

According to the A.A.U. Minutes of that meeting in 1934, Madame Milliat was present at the I.A.A.F. Congress and delivered a report objecting to the proposal made by Germany. She called attention to the resolution which was passed unanimously by the F.S.F.I. Congress on

²Ibid.
³Pallett, Women's Athletics, p. 48.
⁴I.A.A.F. Minutes, 1936, p. 20.
August 12, which had met in connection with the Fourth Women's World Games in London.¹

The negotiations between the appointed Commission and the F.S.F.I. ended with the F.S.F.I. asking these terms:

(1) The F.S.F.I. would stop its work if the World Records passed by the F.S.F.I. were accepted by the I.A.A.F.

(2) The F.S.F.I. wished to have an extended program for women's sports at the Olympic Games.

(3) The F.S.F.I. wished to hold the 5th Ladies' World Games in 1938.²

It was upon the influence of Germany, which only started participating in the Women's World Games in 1930, that the I.A.A.F. considered seriously the question of taking complete control of women's track and field. On this subject it should be noted that most countries involved with track and field had women's federations separate from those of men despite similar technical rulings. The same was not true in Germany, where there was only one leadership.¹ Part of Germany's motivation

¹ A.A.U. Minutes, 1934, p. 12.
² I.A.A.F. Minutes, 1936, photocopied for the writer by the I.A.A.F., pp. 20-21.
may have been derived from a feeling that their women's outstanding success in the Women's Games of 1930 and 1934 proved that women's athletics could best be directed by men. Undoubtedly Germany's political and social ideology had something to do with its desire to develop competitions for women. Where no such political motivation existed, there was no such emphasis on developing strong teams for international competitions. The dominance of Germany is clearly seen in the description of the 1934 Women's World Games.

The Fourth Women's World Games, London, 1934

The Women's World Games of 1934 were held in London, England, just following the close of the British Empire Games. The opening ceremony was held on August 9 in the White City Stadium and according to the London Times, only four to five thousand spectators, at best, were present.\(^1\) Of the poor attendance the London Times said:

For the sake of a meeting which already has achieved wonders in the face of so many obvious difficulties and become to women what an Olympiad is to men it is to be hoped that a much larger attendance will be present to cheer the competitors on to fresh triumphs tomorrow . . .\(^2\)

The opening ceremony was much like the opening ceremony

\(^1\) "Women's World Games," The London Times (August 10, 1934), p. 3.

\(^2\) Ibid.
of the Olympic Games, with the declaration of the opening of the Games, the oath of the athletes, the parade of nations and the release of pigeons. Many countries were represented who had never been represented before: Canada, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Palestine, Rhodesia, and South Africa.¹ Nineteen countries were represented from a total membership of 30 nations.²

In addition to the usual track and field competitions, the 1934 Games included basketball (France versus the U.S. in the final) and a game called "hazena." Popular in Czechoslovakia, Hazena is described as the old game of handball speeded up. It was played completely with the hands, allowed no heading, but used a mild form of frontal tackling. The goal was somewhat like a "large hockey goal."³ The description sounded very much like what is referred to as team handball.

The track and field events in 1934 included the 60 meters, 100 meters, 80 meter hurdles, 800 meters, 200 meters long jump, high jump, the discus throw, the javelin throw, the shot put, and the 400 meter relay.⁴

¹Ibid.
²Pallett, Women's Athletics, p. 49.
⁴Ibid.
Further, the pentathlon was introduced for the first time. That contest consisted in the high jump, long jump, javelin, shot put and sprinting.

Germany, during the games, compiled 95 points for the first place position and in so doing won more points than the next three countries combined—Poland with 33 was second, England with 31 was third, and Canada with 22 was in fourth place. Germany failed to win or place in only one athletic event, winning 9 firsts, 5 seconds and 2 third places. In addition, it broke four world's records.¹ Gisela Mauermayer of Germany, who was to become an outstanding athlete of the 1936 Olympic Games, won 1st place in the first pentathlon² followed by a teammate, Miss Busch, in second place. Of the 19 nations participating, 8 failed to score a single point.

Stella Walsh, "the Polish flyer," competing for Poland, won only the 60 meters dash this time, losing to Fraulein Kathe Krauss of Germany in the 100 and 200 meters events. The only event the United States entered was basketball. Its team advanced to the final round only to be beaten by France; the final score was 34–23.

²Ibid.
The New York Times in reporting on the Games commented:

Nazi women athletes of Germany, even more powerful in track and field than London was prepared to believe, convinced the city that Berlin is amply prepared to entertain the world at the 1936 Olympic Games. Judging from the Germans' sweeping triumph in the Women's World Games that ended today, it will be a warm entertainment indeed.¹

The German girls who appeared in the parade of nations wore on the left sleeve of their sweaters black armbands in memory of the late President von Hindenburg.²

An article appeared in the Independent Woman which was, in a sense, an appraisal of what sports had done for the emancipation and self-realization of women. The author told of talking with a Russo-Polish native who said:

A leveling force is at work that not only makes for better understanding and companionship between the sexes, but also is breaking down national barriers. Polish, German, Swedish, French—you couldn't tell one girl from another, for they all looked stalwart, and carry themselves fearlessly, like goddesses. Sport is the influence that has brought about this miraculous change.³

³Ibid.
The German girls were characterized as "magnificent physical specimens who stepped out proudly, registering confidence in every line."¹ The author of the article reflected on the rise of physical fitness throughout Central Europe since World War I, saying that in reality it was a conscious struggle for self-preservation: "Mussolini was one of the first to recognize the importance of athletics for women, and one of the first fruits of his régime was the opening up of sports facilities for girls on equal terms with their brothers," while Germany and Russia encouraged athletics as part of their program for racial development.²

Madame Milliat's original objective of promoting women's sports "for the betterment of woman" in all phases of her life, certainly a feminist outlook, had been sabotaged before the onslaught of extreme nationalism. Although early in the 1920's the International Olympic Committee encouraged federations to take over women's sports so that they could control and regulate those sports, in the late 1920's and early 1930's the case was not the same. The fact that points were added together (men's and women's) to obtain an "unofficial" superiority in the Olympic Games made federations more willing to control women's sports. Good performances by

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
their women might make the difference whether or not a nation would attain that superiority.

Clearly, Madame Milliat was not pleased at the proposal of Germany that the I.A.A.F. take complete control of women's track and field. In February of 1935, at the meeting of the I.O.C. in Oslo, the Committee discussed a letter which it had received from her. In that letter she proposed that the I.O.C. should exclude all participation by women from the Olympic Games. Women could then organize their own games quadrennially, which would include all the sports regulated by the F.S.F.I. Following the discussion the Committee decided that no further deliberations could be undertaken before Madame Milliat's proposals were agreed to by the international federations involved.¹ Further information on that development was not available, however, the cause of women's participation was set back still more when the Executive Commission of the I.O.C. rejected the proposal of the Women's Technical Committee of the I.A.A.F. to include the discus throw and more running events to the women's athletic program of the 1936 Olympic Games. The Executive Commission stated that the program must be identical with that of Amsterdam.²

²Ibid., p. 6.
The letter to the I.O.C. was probably a last effort by the F.S.F.I. to save everything it had worked for. The following year the Commission of the I.A.A.F. proposed (1) that the I.A.A.F. accept the World's Records in women's athletics as validated by the F.S.F.I.; (2) that a program of nine events be proposed for the Olympic Games.

The Commission was opposed to the holding of a 5th Ladies World Games, however. Finally, it asked that the F.S.F.I. dissolve its organization and proposed that the Congress take over the management of women's track and field as it had been proposed by Germany in 1934.\footnote{I.A.A.F. Minutes, 1936, pp. 20-21.} The letter which was received by Madame Milliat from Mr. Edstrom, President of the I.A.A.F., in October follows:

\begin{flushright}October, 1936\end{flushright}

Dear Madame,

The Congress of the I.A.A.F. at Berlin has decided that women's track and field should be governed by the I.A.A.F. itself. In accord with your wishes, the records of the F.S.F.I. will be recognized as world records by the I.A.A.F. The Games of Vienna (1938) will be allowed, but only as European championships and will be directed by the I.A.A.F.

Would you be so kind as to send me a complete list of your records, so that I can have them registered (validated) before
the end of the year. (?)

Concerning the program of the Olympic Games, the I.A.A.F. will do its best to see that it is enlarged, but this can only be obtained with the consent of the Int. Oly. Committee (I.O.C.). A decision will probably be made by the said Committee next year at its meeting in Warsaw.

The Congress of the I.A.A.F. has decided, finally, to send (address) a vote of thanks to the F.S.F.I. for all the good work it has done for women's track and field.¹

Thanking you for all your kind help,
I remain

Sincerely yours,

Signed: Edstrom
Wasteras 1 and 2 October, 1936

A word of thanks, for 15 years of hard work; the F.S.F.I. had grown from a membership of 5 member nations to a membership of 30 nations. In 1936, the F.S.F.I. was in full prosperity only to disappear completely from the athletic scene, disheartened by the ingratitude which was payment for its devotion. This treatment caused a great deal of bitterness among women involved in the movement, which is shown in a statement made by Marie-Thérèse Eyquem: "Those who had not wanted to assume the risks of a hazardous beginning showed themselves eager to gather the fruits of the labor of others."² No meeting of members of the F.S.F.I. took place after the I.A.A.F.

¹Copy of Edstrom's letter sent by G. Gagneux to the writer.

²M. T. Eyquem, _La Femme et Le Sport_, p. 507.
Congress of Berlin, and no dissolution of the Federation has ever been pronounced.¹

Though the officials of international federations tried to ignore the existence of the women's sports movement, the efforts of Madame Milliat and the F.S.F.I. greatly accelerated the development of serious international sports competition for women, a fact testified to by Madame Germaine Gagneux-Bisson, General Secretary and Treasurer of the F.S.F.I. in 1936.

The initiative taken by Madame Milliat and the subsequent success of the F.S.F.I. served to sensitize the athletic milieux, which did not want to hear about women. That was the first step in the evolution which probably would have come about only much later.²

Summary

This chapter has presented the social background and attitudes from which the woman athlete emerged to participate in international competitions during the period between the two World Wars. The fight for woman suffrage, the growing desire of women for a life outside the home, and the emergence of a new self-concept led women to challenge social tradition. Entering the world of sport,


particularly in the lower status sports, was one way in which social tradition was challenged.

Women who were the "pioneers" in sports were viewed as "forceful suffragette types." Most of the publicity surrounding these early events was clearly derogatory and ridiculed the competitors. The greatest slur on women athletes was the accusation, direct or indirect, that participating in sports masculinized women. Their critics argued that sports should only encourage the development of beauty, grace, slenderness of lines, soft flowing muscles, etc., which defined femininity. Participation in competitive events like the Olympic Games destroyed not only their physical and psychic charm, they believed, but their physiological capacity and adaptability for motherhood as well.

The establishment of national sports organizations for women in European countries was evidence of the interest women were developing in competitive sport, but it was also the result of the intransigence of men's associations in refusing to admit women to membership. In practically all cases an attempt was made first to enroll in men's organizations. The creation of the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale was the result of such an attempt. The International Amateur Athletic Federation had first refused to grant membership
to women and it was only after the success of the F.S.F.I. was apparent that the I.A.A.F. began to make overtures of interest in taking women's track and field under its wing.

The interest and initiative of European women in the promotion of international sport was demonstrated through the F.S.F.I.'s sponsorship of a series of four international track and field competitions, organized much as the Olympic Games were. The first Games (1922) were called the Women's Olympic Games, but the opposition of the International Olympic Committee to the use of the term "Olympic" forced women to change the title. The last series (called the Women's World Games) was held in London in 1934 and incorporated other sports besides track and field. A fifth series was planned for Vienna in 1938 for which even more events were to be included, however, the decision of the I.A.A.F. to take complete control of women's track and field prevented that series of World Games from taking place. Instead they became the first European championships in track and field.

The struggle of Madame Milliat and the F.S.F.I. for admission to competition in the Olympic Games was instrumental in focusing attention on and forcing recognition for women's sports. The decision of the I.A.A.F. to co-operate with the F.S.F.I. put the I.A.A.F. in a position to limit or regulate the growth of women's track and
field. Despite the continued efforts to get a full program of events in that sport, only five events were permitted women in 1928.

The proposal of the German representative to the I.A.A.F. that the I.A.A.F. take complete control of women's track and field was countered by a proposal by Madame Milliat that the I.O.C. exclude all female participation in the Olympic Games. The final decision of the I.A.A.F. to take control of women's track and field after the Berlin Olympics in 1936 effectively ended the function of the F.S.F.I. The initiative and dedication of Madame Milliat and the F.S.F.I. greatly accelerated the development of serious international sports competition for women, a fact which has little been recognized by sports historians.
CHAPTER VI

THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF WOMEN'S ATHLETICS
IN THE UNITED STATES, 1922-1934

Introduction

The period following the First World War to the period just preceding the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin was one which was filled with controversy. The problems which existed for women athletes at the international level were also manifest in the United States, i.e. the view of society towards women athletes, the attitudes of federations towards the desires of women to become members and as such to be eligible to compete in the Olympic Games.

With the establishment of national federations for women's sports and the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale, European women were afforded numerous opportunities for competition. These women's associations, although some were administered by men (i.e. the Women's Amateur Athletic Association of Great Britain), had as their primary objective the promotion of sports for women.
There were no associations in the United States established solely to promote sports for women. As a result of the growing interest of women in competitive athletics, it became clear that an agency to regulate and control these sports was desirable. The announcement that a women's track and field team would be sent to the Women's Olympic Games of Paris in 1922 was the beginning of a long struggle in the United States for the power to regulate and control women's sports competition. The intent of this chapter is to examine in detail the conflicts which arose from that announcement and the resolutions which evolved as a result. The controversy centered upon women's track and field during that period, therefore, this chapter will deal basically with that aspect of the whole women's athletics picture.

The Conflict Over Control of Women's Track and Field, 1922

The conflict over the control of women's track and field in the United States came into sharp focus when a decision was made to take a girls' track and field team to the First Women's Olympic Games to be held in the summer of 1922 in Paris. More specifically, the conflict was between Dr. Harry Eaton Stewart, chairman of the track athletics committee sponsoring American participation in the Paris Games, the Women's Athletic Committee
of the American Physical Education Association (A.P.E.A.), opposed to women entering into serious competition in sports, and the Amateur Athletic Union, which was considering taking control of women's athletics. The Women's Athletic Committee of the A.P.E.A. had been formed in 1917 because of the rapidly growing interest of women in athletics and the need for a regulating body to control the direction of these sports. Miss Blanche Trilling of the University of Wisconsin was chairman of this committee in 1922. By her own admission, it was only when it became clear that the United States would send a women's track and field team to Paris that the Women's Athletic Committee really became active.¹

A number of reasons contributed to the reticence and opposition of women physical educators to the idea of widespread competitive athletics for women. One of these reasons was directly related to the problems involving men's athletics. Until shortly after the turn of the century, departments of physical education were not concerned with athletics. Intercollegiate athletics were developed and controlled by the students themselves. It was only when the operation got out of hand--problems with injuries, schedules, finances--that the presidents

of universities placed men's athletics in the realm of education, specifically physical education, and regulatory bodies were organized for intercollegiate athletics.\footnote{Interview with Helen Hazelton, March, 1973.}

The women, on the other hand, controlled and supervised sports activity from their inception. In the early 1920's, the physical education program for women was 80% gymnastics and apparatus work. Any sports that were participated in outside physical education classes were played under the auspices of the Women's Athletic Associations. The women's departments of physical education, instead of leaving the women students to their own devices, provided a staff member to coach field hockey, basketball, etc., in the Women's Athletic Associations.\footnote{Ibid.}

The women leaders at that time were concerned lest sports for women get out of hand as they had for men and it is likely that this is the reason they took a stand against intercollegiate competition. Also, although other aspects of the intercollegiate picture were more important, the difficulties with travel and the financial problems involved with such an undertaking had to be seriously considered.\footnote{Ibid.}

Track and field athletics was not a sport that was popular in the colleges and universities. The chief
force behind the track and field movement came from out-of-school people. It was a natural activity for girls in industry and black girls to focus their attention upon because of the relatively low cost of participation. Another factor which kept track and field out of school programs was the fact that women did not know enough to coach the activities.\(^1\) On the other hand, there was a great deal of antagonism and criticism when men coaches trained girls and women.

The special attack on track and field sports, however, was probably provoked by the conditions under which girls were trained. The women did not like the idea of men training women athletes. The establishment of the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation was the result of this concern. This organization felt that a stand had to be taken in order to regulate the conditions under which women participated. Male coaches and certain types of events were questioned as to their suitability for girls and women. The new Women's Division focused on girls in church and industrial leagues. It tried to regulate and improve the conditions under which girls participated in sports and took a stand against state and national tournaments.\(^2\)

In the early days, the desire for competition at the

\(^{1}\)Ibid. \(^{2}\)Ibid.
college level was fulfilled through rivalry among classes and among sororities. There were small group loyalties that were the basis for intramural competition which do not exist today in large universities. ¹

The movement of physical education towards a philosophy which embraced a broad intramural program, play days, etc., was essentially an outgrowth of the concept presented by progressive education. Play, for progressive educators, was not only a mode for obtaining physical fitness; it was also seen as a medium for mental growth and poise and for social adjustment. ² The concept of the "Play Day" focused attention upon the "new plan for athletics" to foster in American youth the spirit of play; the conceived purpose for athletics was relaxation and fun for all rather than concentration on the few. Everyone was to have an opportunity to play, to be exposed to a variety of sports so that each became "a first class all-around player." Full and equal opportunity for all was the byword. ³

The relationship between progressive education and

¹Ethel Perrin and Grace Turner, Play Day: The Spirit of Sport, from the Foreword by Mrs. Herbert Hoover, founder and first President of the Women's Division of the N.A.A.F., pp. 10-13, passim.


physical education was a close one. For example, Laurentine Collins, very active in interpreting progressive education through physical education, was also Chairman of the Standards Committee of the Women's Athletic Section of the American Physical Education Association. The main effect of this relationship was the adoption of intramural programs and play days rather than varsity competition.¹

The Growing Controversy

Dr. Harry Eaton Stewart was a thorn in the side of the Women's Athletic Committee of the American Physical Education Association. For some time before the Women's Olympic Games held in Paris in 1922, Stewart had been interested in track and field athletics for women. As a result of this interest he had organized the National Women's Track Athletics Committee (1916) and had written articles for the American Physical Education Review on subjects related to athletics for women as early as 1914. In 1916, a two-part article appeared, entitled "A Survey of Track Athletics for Women." (Dr. Stewart was at that time physical director of the Wykeham Rise School for Girls in Washington, Connecticut.) In this article he acknowledged the rapid growth of track and field among

¹Ibid.
women and the prejudice which surrounded it, and stated his belief in the importance of developing a spirit of self-sacrifice and sportsmanship in women as well as in men. He felt that team spirit and fair play could be easily and thoroughly taught in athletic games and competition. Stewart had also begun to collect high school and college records for women in track and field and published them in the Spalding's Athletic Almanac. He was a bona-fide member of the A.P.E.A., more specifically a member of the National Council from the Therapeutic Section, as shown on official A.P.E.A. stationery in 1922, and he had also served on the women's field hockey and basketball committees.

When the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale was formed in 1921, Dr. Stewart was apparently in close communication with its leaders and became one of three vice-presidents of that organization at its second annual convention just prior to the Games in 1922. Somewhat earlier, however, on his own initiative, Dr. Stewart had organized a committee which he called the National Women's Track Athletics Committee. Ironically, Ms. Trilling, who was to be Stewart's chief opponent in his struggle for recognition for women's track and

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field, was among the women whom he first appointed to this committee. A good background summary of the situation, though it represents only one side of the argument, is given in a letter from Ms. Trilling to Ms. Katherine Sibley, Director of Women's Physical Education at Syracuse University who, in 1922, agreed to chair the Women's Athletics Committee's sub-committee on track and field then in the process of being formed:

Elizabeth Burchenal was originally chairman of the committee on Women's Athletics. When she received the appointment she found herself confronted with some embarrassment as a result of having on the committee some members who had been appointed by Dr. Arnold and who were, I judge, pretty difficult to handle. Dr. Harry E. Stewart, who at that time was doing some work at Wykeham Rise School, was very much interested in track and evidently had some pretty definite ideas about events which were all according to the men's standards. Miss Burchenal and other members of the committee recognized that it would be almost impossible, at that time, to have Dr. Stewart for chairman, decided that since the committee was undertaking a new work, to postpone any definite work with track and field until the other activities with which women were more familiar were more definitely in hand, and so Dr. Stewart was told that no official track committee would be appointed, but that of course any work that he could do might prove of help and advantage to the committee. Evidently he placed his own interpretation upon this, and immediately organized a committee which he called the National Women's Track Athletics Committee.

A number of us, myself included, at that time were asked to become members of
this committee, and accepted places on it under the erroneous impression that this was the committee working with the A.P.E.A. Miss Burchenal immediately wrote us regarding the situation and we at once felt no work should be done that was not done in cooperation with the committee appointed by the Physical Education Association.¹

Very early in 1922, Dr. Stewart wrote to Carl Schrader, then the State Supervisor of Physical Education for the State of Massachusetts and a national figure in physical education, to tell him about the new international federation of track and field for women formed in Paris (the F.S.P.I.) and of the proposed meet, the Women's Olympic Games, planned for August. Feeling that the movement needed increased backing, Stewart informed Mr. Schrader that he had written to the Secretary of the Amateur Athletic Union regarding the possibility of the A.A.U. creating a section of women's athletics and placing track and field in the next Olympic Games (1924). Dr. Stewart further informed Schrader that he had received a favorable reply from the Secretary of the A.A.U., Rubien, indicating that the President of the A.A.U. would appoint a committee to discuss the advisability of accepting such a measure. Stewart and several members of his track athletics committee were asked by Rubien to meet with the A.A.U.'s committee. Dr. Stewart

¹Copy of a letter from Ms. Trilling to Ms. Sibley, April 4, 1922.
then asked Schrader if he would be willing to serve as one of the members of the group to meet with the A.A.U., whose undertaking Stewart describes as "a vitally important point in the history of Physical Education for women in this country . . ."¹ In addition, Stewart sent Schrader a copy of the Rules and Regulations of the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale. (These are to be found in the Appendix.)

Uncertainty as to what the proper decision should be concerning his participation on such a committee led Mr. Schrader to write to Dr. James H. McCurdy, editor of the A.P.E. Review, about the situation. McCurdy's reply was basically that he believed that the women in the A.P.E.A. were better qualified than any other group to make rules and standardize women's sports and he doubted that the women would switch to the A.A.U. Perhaps more significantly in this letter to Schrader, McCurdy revealed what he perceived as the real motives of the A.A.U.

The A.A.U. is out to capture, or rather to control, athletics in this country. The woman's committee would be simply a part of that scheme.

¹Copy of a letter from Harry Eaton Stewart to Mr. Carl Schrader, January 25, 1922. This letter was supplied by Ms. Helen Hazelton, former chairman of the women's track and field committee.
I think it would be wise for you to sit in at the proposed meeting to find out the way things are going, and help steer them right.¹

A very dark and abiding fear of the men in the A.P.E.A. was that the A.A.U. was trying to consolidate enough power to enable it to control all athletics in the United States. It should be noted that the A.P.E.A. was then allied with the N.C.A.A. and a great deal of enmity existed between the A.A.U. and the N.C.A.A. Concern was such at this point that certain groups were seriously considering forming another organization on a broader base, namely what thereafter became the National Amateur Athletic Federation, designed to limit the power of the A.A.U.

It seems that Mr. Schrader had not known that there was a Women's Athletic Committee, though it had been in existence since 1917, which in itself attests to the apparent inactivity of the Committee. In a letter to Ms. Trilling, Schrader said:

Dr. McCurdy informs me that you are chairman of a committee on women's athletics and I, therefore, turn to you to see if you do not feel it timely to stave off such a probable combination as suggested

¹Copy of a letter from J. H. McCurdy to Mr. Carl Schrader, January 31, 1922. Supplied from the files of Ms. Helen Hazelton.
in this communication.\(^1\) [The communication mentioned is the proposed cooperation of the National Women's Track Athletics Committee and the A.A.U.]

Grateful to Mr. Schrader for his support of women's control over their own affairs, Ms. Trilling, in her reply, points out men's tendency to assume control. She may have seen this as the greatest danger to the development of women's athletics.

I do appreciate very much the attitude which you express when you write that you are strongly of the opinion that all matters of athletics for women should be dealt with and planned for entirely by women. Unfortunately all of the men have not been so generous, but have felt that they would like not only to dictate the policies of athletics for men but also for the women, and it is as a result of this attitude that the present difficulty with regard to track has arisen.\(^2\)

With the realization that the A.A.U. was quite likely to assume control of women's track, Ms. Trilling found it particularly important to appoint a Chairman of a track and field committee within the Women's Athletic Committee at this time. Ms. Trilling's job was not an easy one, and the question of track athletics for women was perhaps a perplexing one for her, for she says in the same letter:

\(^1\)Copy of a letter to Ms. Blanche Trilling from Mr. Carl Schrader, February 7, 1922. From the files of Ms. Helen Hazelton.

\(^2\)Copy of a letter from Ms. Trilling to Mr. Schrader, February 14, 1922.
This old question of track athletics for women has caused me a good deal of embarrassment, and I have been more or less at a loss to know just what to do in the situation. I really hesitated for a long time with regard to accepting the chairmanship of the committee on athletics for women, after Miss Burchenal resigned, largely on account of the confused muddle with regard to the track committee. Miss Burchenal wrote me at length with regard to the situation when she resigned. From the very beginning Dr. Stewart has given some trouble. He is the chairman of a more or less self-appointed committee which has no connection with the one appointed by the American Physical Education Association. I have already appointed a chairman for basketball, swimming, and hockey, but I have done nothing with regard to track because I was really quite puzzled as to what was the best thing to do.¹

One might wonder here why Ms. Trilling felt embarrassment concerning the track and field situation and why the earlier demand for a track and field committee was ignored.

Dr. McCurdy, in a letter dated February 21, 1922, urged Ms. Trilling to include in her track and field committee some of the women on Dr. Stewart's committee:

It seems to me it would be policy [sic] to have some of the women on this committee on your own committee, provided they are the type of women you want. I think it might be unfortunate to have the Women's Athletics swing over to the A.A.U. It is probably true that there will be a group of the more "sporty" women who will go with that group. I do not believe that

¹Ibid.
they will take the leadership of the women with them.¹

Thus it seems clear that Dr. McCurdy advocated making Dr. Stewart's committee a part of the A.P.E.A.'s sub-committee on track and field. Perhaps he hoped that by doing this the control of women's track and field would remain with the A.P.E.A.

It is interesting to note here, that while information was flying between Ms. Trilling, McCurdy and Schrader, and copies of all Dr. Stewart's letters were being passed among the three mentioned above, little information as to what was going on filtered back to Dr. Stewart. Evidently Ms. Trilling was searching frantically for a qualified person to assume the chairmanship of the track and field committee, and everyone "on the inside" was trying to withhold information from Dr. Stewart. This view is supported by a letter from Mr. Schrader to Ms. Trilling on March 14, in which Mr. Schrader said:

I have had no further word from Dr. Steward [sic] and would not be at all surprised if his suspicions were aroused and I possibly will not receive notice of any meeting with the A.A.U. Committee.²

¹Letter from James H. McCurdy to Blanche Trilling, February 21, 1922.

²Letter from Mr. Schrader to Ms. Trilling, March 14, 1922.
The A.A.U. was not standing still in this whole issue and on March 19, President Prout of the A.A.U. told the press that within a year or two, track and field sports for women would be recognized and supervised by the A.A.U. Mr. Prout stated that undoubtedly women's events in track and field would be included in the 1928 Olympic Games and that he had been approached by the director of the Women's Track Committee (Dr. Stewart) to consider making that body a subsidiary to the A.A.U.¹

The search for a chairman for the Women's Athletic Committee's sub-committee on track and field athletics ended in early May when Ms. Katherine Sibley, Director of Physical Education for Women at Syracuse University, accepted the position. There were a number of events which emphasized the necessity to move with speed. In the spring of 1922, Ms. Trilling had received an invitation from Mr. Howard Cleaveland of Long Beach, California, a member of the advisory board of Dr. Stewart's Committee, to enter her school in the telegraphic track and field meet for women, which she refused. Shortly thereafter she received the materials Schrader had sent to her regarding the formation and plans of the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale, and she decided it was urgent to appoint a track and field committee. In

addition she took other initiatives: (1) she wired Mr. Schrader concerning the appointment he had made for an interview with the president of the A.A.U. At that meeting the A.A.U.'s intention to take control of women's athletics was to be discussed. Ms. Trilling urged Mr. Schrader to strongly express "the disfavor with which the representative women in physical education would look upon an alliance with the A.A.U." (2) she advised the Women College Directors in the Midwest of the state of affairs and asked Sibley to do the same at the Eastern meeting at Bryn Mawr (3) she made suggestions regarding the selection of the rest of Sibley's committee, indicating that Mr. Schrader should be a member.\(^1\) She also warned that different interests and different sections of the country should be taken into account when making the appointments:

[we] must be exceedingly careful that we do not call criticism upon ourselves by making our committee top heavy with Wellesley* people, even though this may be our inclination.\(^2\)

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\(^1\)Letter from Ms. Trilling to Ms. Sibley, April 4, 1922.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 3.

*For the reader's information, the Boston Normal School of Gymnastics had combined with Wellesley College to form Wellesley's Department of Hygiene. It was known for its stand against competitive sports for women and supported the "play for play's sake" philosophy. Women who were trained at Sargent's School, however, supported
(4) finally, she warned Sibley that they must be careful about what would be said at the A.P.E.A. Convention in Detroit in May about the National Women's Track Athletics Committee. "I think it only fair to state that there is such a committee and that it is in no way connected with ours." ¹

On April 8, 1922, the Amateur Athletic Union, at a meeting at the Hotel McAlpin in New York City,² decided to appoint a committee to study the advisability of taking control of women's athletics. According to a New York Times article:

The need of some authoritative body to control events and meets was apparent, but whether a special organization, or the A.A.U. could best undertake the work was an open question.³

President Prout, in his address to the assembly, indicated that athletics for girls were an established fact a program for women which was more competitive in nature. Inviting women from other parts of the country was a way to keep on controlling the situation while avoiding the criticism that the committee was overloaded with Wellesley people.

¹Ibid., p. 5.

²It is interesting to note that the organizational meeting of the proposed National Amateur Athletic Federation, which was formed to counter the powers of the A.A.U., was also held on April 8.

and the time had come to regulate them properly.\(^1\)

Numerous requests have come in from clubs in the A.A.U. asking that girls' events be put on field day programs. There is a great demand, and I agree that the women of America should be put upon the same physical basis as the women of other countries. We don't want them to get too far ahead of us.\(^2\)

In a subsequent discussion of the dangers involved in competition, a question was asked about the support of the medical profession. In answer, Mr. Prout mentioned Dr. Dudley A. Sargent, who had expressed himself in favor of the regulation of track and field athletics for girls. Mr. Prout is quoted as saying: "The girls have become athletes. We can't stop them. We must simply standardize their games."\(^3\)

There was also some discussion which ran along the line of: perhaps women in the colleges don't need the A.A.U., but the girls not in school do. Talking about the latter Ms. Charlotte Epstein (who later became the chairman of the women's department of the A.A.U.) is quoted as saying: "They want it, and they ought to have it."\(^4\) Mr. Prout then suggested that the A.A.U. did

\(^1\)Lucy Calhoun, "A.A.U. to Control Girls' Athletics," The New York Herald, April 9, 1922. A copy of the article reprinted on A.A.U. stationery was provided to the writer by Helen Hazelton.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^4\)Ibid.
not want to thrust itself upon the women's colleges, but invited them to participate on the A.A.U. committee. It was at this meeting that Dr. Stewart asked the A.A.U. to help send the girls' track team to Paris in August.

After a thorough discussion, the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, that the Board of Governors of the Amateur Athletic Union be urged to adopt events for track and field competition for women and invite the cooperation of the National Women's Track Athletics Committee, of which Dr. Harry Eaton Stewart is Chairman, and other committees whose formation has been prompted for similar purposes, with a view to popularizing participation and competition in track athletics for women.¹

These various proceedings and resolutions related in an article from the New York Herald were disturbing to Ms. Trilling and in a letter to Ms. Sibley, she enclosed the article and reacted to it; she proposed taking firm action as a counter-measure.

Nothing, it seems to me, could be so contrary to the desires of the leading women in physical education, and the best schools, colleges, and universities than this alliance with the A.A.U., and it seems to me highly important, at this time, that some definite action be taken voicing the protests of the women against this alliance, and that very wide publicity be given this protest in order that there will be no confusion regarding our sentiments. Of course we have no way to stop Dr. Stewart from

¹Ibid.
forming his track team and taking it over to France. On the other hand, it seems to me it would be very unfortunate for us, at this time, not to recognize the danger of this alliance and to make it very clear to the public that it does not have our backing.  

Ms. Trilling suggested that the Eastern Directors at their meeting in Bryn Mawr pass a resolution protesting the proposed alliance and go on record as saying that they felt the Women's Athletic Committee of the A.P.E.A. was the body which should legislate with regard to women's athletics.  

She also let it be known that she would ask the Western Society to pass the same sort of resolution at its meeting in Oregon in May. With these resolutions in hand, the committee could take action at the Detroit convention; it could then ask the women's section and the Council of the A.P.E.A. for the passage of a similar resolution.  

If these resolutions were then given to the United Press, it would at least let the public know that we are not in sympathy with this proposed plan. My information from any number of men in the field is that there is a good deal of feeling against the A.A.U., at the present time.  

Plans were going ahead for the women's meet in Paris. On April 16, just eight days after the A.A.U.

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1Letter from Ms. Trilling to Ms. Sibley, April 24, 1922.  

2Ibid.  

3Ibid.
meeting in New York, another article appeared in the New York Times announcing the arrangements for the Paris Games. A series of preliminary tryouts for the Games were to be held in May in various sections of the country with the final tryouts to be held in July. The article indicated that the Paris meet would have the significance of a women's Olympiad and would serve as a preliminary for a series of competitions that Dr. Stewart hoped would be included in the 1924 Olympics.\(^1\) The Eastern trials were to be held at Oakesmere School in Mamaroneck, New York. Ms. Merrill, the principal and chairman of the advisory committee of Dr. Stewart's track committee, donated the use of her school and equipment for the tryouts. In addition, there was a branch of her school in Paris and she agreed to entertain the American team in Paris and pay all its expenses while it was there.\(^2\)

On April 17, Dr. Stewart wrote to Dr. McCurdy asking him to serve on his advisory committee, probably counting on him and other notables in the physical education profession to make the event more acceptable to women physical educators. Dr. Anderson of Yale and Walter Camp had already agreed to serve and lend their names to the


2.Ibid.
advisory committee. In closing Dr. Stewart stated:

I would greatly appreciate it if you would help me get in touch with a few persons with the interest and help us, so that we may give our American girls a chance to make the same fine sweep of these international games as our men have constantly done in the Olympic Games.¹

McCurdy refused to serve on the advisory committee, stating that the A.P.E.A. had a strong Women's Athletic Committee and that any advisory members from the national association should be recommended by Ms. Trilling, as president of the women's committee. He reiterated the feeling of many women leaders in physical education that the problem of the relationship of competitive athletics to the needs of women, physical, social, and moral, should be thoroughly thought out before wholesale participation in strenuous athletics became reality.² The same day, in a letter to Dr. Dudley B. Reed, President of the A.P.E.A., who had also been asked to serve on Stewart's advisory committee, McCurdy indicated his position on the whole matter:

It seems to me we want to assist in every way possible in the development of sane athletics for women, without exploiting

¹Copy of a letter from Dr. Stewart to Dr. McCurdy, April 17, 1922.

²Copy of a letter from McCurdy to Stewart, April 18, 1922.
them as men have been exploited too often, in the spectacular athletics.\footnote{Copy of a letter from McCurdy to Dr. Reed, April 18, 1922.}

Ms. Trilling indicated her pleasure at McCurdy's refusal to take a position on Stewart's advisory board and emphasized her disapproval of Stewart's action in a letter to McCurdy:

\textit{This action, on his part, has been not only independent of the wishes of the leading women in the profession, but is contrary, I am sure, to their wishes if they had been consulted. None of the best schools in the country will back a movement of this kind. There has always been great opposition to inter-collegiates for women. If we have been somewhat slow in our development of athletics for the women than has been true for the men, we at least have been fortunate in the fact that we have not had the traditions to fight such as the men have had to go up against.}

\textit{Practically nothing, up to the present time, has been done with track and field in the larger colleges and universities. No standards have been set and a very few definite records have ever been kept. Therefore a team which was sent over could not possibly represent American traditions and American sentiment regarding track athletics for women.}\footnote{Letter from Ms. Trilling to Dr. McCurdy, April 25, 1922.}
agreed to dissolve his committee. She justified her decision as follows:

If you will look over the personnel of his committee, you will notice that the more important schools in the country are not represented. His advisory committee is really almost ridiculous since you will notice that it is almost entirely composed of men with the exception of the two women principals who possibly have never had any experience with women's athletics. The mere fact that Dr. Stewart is so anxious to promote this work entirely from the specialized point of view is in itself, it seems to me, a very good reason for feeling that he is not the logical individual to head up such a committee.¹

Mr. Schrader, in a communication to Ms. Trilling, also stated his reasons for opposing the proposal of Dr. Stewart, namely that (1) it was a bad time to place under the auspices of the A.A.U. the functions of women's athletics when the control of men's athletics was so much in question; and (2) women should control their own activities. He intimated that public opinion was ready for action against the exploitation of boys and surely would not lend itself to similar exploitation of girls.²

Stewart's reply to Mr. Schrader indicated that before the meeting with the A.A.U. he did not know of (1) the opposition of the college men to the A.A.U.; (2) the formation of a Track Committee by the Women's

¹Ibid.

²Letter from Mr. Schrader to Stewart, April 25, 1922.
Athletic Committee of the A.P.E.A.; and (3) the proposed formation of the new amateur federation (the National Amateur Athletic Federation).\(^1\) Dr. Stewart also explained that when he was a member of the Women's Athletic Committee he had offered all the work of his Track Committee to Ms. Burchenal, who was then chairman.

You perhaps did not know that I was on the Women's Control Committee of the Physical Education Association; that I offered all the work of my track Committee and all the data I had to Miss Burchnell [sic] who was then Chairman, but her opposition and that of Dr. Burdick to the formation of a track committee on the supposition that a committee would imply approval of this form of athletics for girls resulted in nothing being done. My position was that we were not dealing with a theory as to whether or not girls should do track athletics, but with the unmistakable fact that they were actually doing it in large numbers. It was simply a question of controlling this sport or allowing it to go wild. Participation in this type of athletics has increased by leaps and bounds until it is estimated that between twenty and thirty thousand girls competed last year. Miss Burchnell [sic] did, however, urge us to continue our efforts to standardize and safeguard this sport, presumably until such a time when it would be wise for that committee to take over its control. I was very much surprised that I was not notified of Miss Trilling's chairmanship of this Committee or that she did not let me know that she was appointing a sub-committee on track. She knew of our

\(^1\)Letter from Dr. Stewart to Mr. Schrader, n.d. probably April 26, 1922.
work because she was formerly on this Com-
mittee.¹

Dr. Stewart then emphasized to Schrader that the A.A.U.
did not want to force its control upon the women and sug-
gested that Dr. Sargent, Dr. Reed, and Dr. Jesse F.
Williams along with Ms. Trilling and Mr. Schrader be
placed on a Committee to study the problem. Stewart
indicated that if the group felt as Mr. Schrader obvi-
ously did, he would go along with them.² Dr. Stewart
expressed his regret that the A.P.E.A. had earlier
refused to concern itself with women's track and field:

My feeling has always been that the
Physical Education Association should be
the controlling body as it now is in bas-
ketball and field hockey and I was much
disappointed at their refusal to take over
track.³

He also made it clear that the National Women's Track
Athletics Committee was committed to the Paris meet and
that it had nothing to do with the A.A.U.⁴

In another letter to Ms. Trilling, Dr. Stewart
stated that his meeting with the A.A.U. would never have
taken place if he had known she was forming a track com-
mittee. On the subject of the opposition of the leading
colleges to intercollegiate athletics, he was inclined to

¹Letter from Dr. Stewart to Mr. Schrader, n.d. but
probably April 26, 1922.
²Ibid.                  ³Ibid.                  ⁴Ibid.
agree with Ms. Trilling but stated that as far as preparatory schools were concerned this was not the case, according to the data he received from their numerous meets.¹ He assured Ms. Trilling that there would be no more exploitation of the girls at the Paris meet than in the recent Vassar-Smith alumni basketball game in New York, which had been such a huge success. He indicated that more than 100 schools had accepted his Committee's standards and that in one meet in California there were 5,000 entries. Finally, Dr. Stewart took note of the fact that on the new track committee appointed by the Women's Athletic Committee there was a woman from Philadelphia where track was not allowed, and a man from Wellesley, where track was not used.² He hoped that the new committee would assume the work of tabulating records, etc., and offered once again to turn over his data to the chairman, give her the help of the active members of his committee, and even relinquish his own position.

I always felt that the A.P.E.A. should share in the control of this sport when it was undertaken by those really interested, who would promote and direct, rather than try to suppress it. I have published three articles in our Review, the last is coming

¹Letter from Stewart to Trilling, April 29, 1922.
²Ibid.
out in the May and June numbers on this subject. Also, there are seven annual reviews of progress in the Athletic Almanac and I shall be glad to lay the burden down and see it placed in other hands, if we can work the problem out satisfactorily to that end.1

It seemed that periodically every national figure in physical education was opposed to "Stewart's plan." Dr. Charles W. Hetherington was among those who disapproved. In the Spring of 1922, he expressed his concern in a letter to Ms. Trilling in which he urged her to:

get the women together at once and set up a national women's association to control in every particular the women's and girls' athletics in America.2

He wanted to see athletics for women kept out of the hands of the "sporting elements"3 [the A.A.U. and possibly Dr. Stewart].

At some point in this time period, Ms. Trilling conferred with Dr. Hetherington, obviously on the subject of starting a new association for women. According to Ms. Helen Hazelton, he suggested forming a National Women's Athletic Association, much like the ones being organized in Europe and Canada, which would have its own

1Ibid.

2Eline von Borries, The History and Functions of the N.S.W.A. Special publication of the A.A.H.P.E.R., 1941, p. 10.

3Ibid.
rules making body and could control both in school and out of school athletics for women.\(^1\) Ms. Trilling's own notes on the conference indicate that Dr. Hetherington proposed the consideration of the constitution of the N.C.A.A. as a model for this new association's organization.\(^2\) The great need for supervision and control in the recreation field, the Y.W.C.A., and in industrial and church leagues where there were few trained women physical educators\(^3\) and the fear that the A.A.U. (basically all men) would become the controlling body for women's athletics made Hetherington's proposal one for serious consideration. Such a new association, he felt, could be accepted as a member of the National Amateur Athletic Federation,\(^4\) itself in the process of being formed and admittedly designed to limit the powers of the A.A.U. Hetherington appointed Ms. Trilling, at that time, to represent the A.P.E.A. in a conference with Colonel Henry Breckenridge, president of the N.A.A.F.\(^5\)

\(^1\)Helen Hazelton, "Intercollegiate Sport, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," Xeroxed copy of a speech to the N.A.P.E.C.W., October 14, 1972.

\(^2\)Ms. Trilling's notes on her conference with Dr. Hetherington, p. 1.

\(^3\)Hazelton, "Intercollegiate Sport . . .".

\(^4\)Ms. Trilling's handwritten notes on her conference with Dr. Hetherington.

A decision was made not to form an association to control both in school and out of school which would be administered by the A.P.E.A.'s Women's Athletic Committee. Instead, as a direct result of the conference with Breckenridge, a new organization was soon to be formed, the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation. This federation was to deal with the girls and women who participated in athletics outside the school setting. Members of the Women's Athletic Committee were in the future to serve on the executive board of this new organization. No differences existed in the philosophy and objectives of the two organizations. If the Women's Athletic Committee was to have its way, there would be no alternatives to the "play day" and "sports day" concepts which were in themselves alternatives to interschool and intercollegiate competition.

At the business meeting of the A.P.E.A. Convention in Detroit (May 1, 1922), the Women's Athletic "Section," with about 400 members present, took a stand against women's athletics becoming affiliated with the A.A.U. or with the Women's Olympics in Paris. Their resolutions, approved by the Council of the A.P.E.A., read as follows:

Since the Women's Committee on Athletics of the A.P.E.A. is the only logical organization to direct the policies in Women's Athletics, they go on record as disapproving of any affiliation with the A.A.U. with relation to athletics for women.
The Committee on Athletics for Women appointed by the A.P.E.A., representing the entire country, feel very strongly against participation by American women in the track and field meet in Paris to be held during August, 1922. We feel that field and track is in its infancy in this country, and that is so little organized, than no team can be properly chosen as representative of the United States.¹

It was also at this time that Dr. Stewart sent to Ms. Trilling a copy of a letter he wrote to the Secretary of the A.A.U., Mr. Frederick Rubien, in which he informed Mr. Rubien of the "widespread and determined objection" of not only the women, but also the officials of the A.P.E.A., to the A.A.U.'s taking control of women's athletics and sending a team to France, both of which had served as a spur to organize a sub-committee on track and field.² The objections of the people involved were also quite obviously related to their perceptions of the morality of women who competed in track and field. A comment made by Ms. Trilling in her notes on the conference with Dr. Hetherington was particularly revealing of her opinion and most probably the opinions of many women leaders of the "kind" of women who would take part in the Paris Games: "(It is most surprising the apparently nice


²Copy of a letter Dr. Stewart sent to Mr. Rubien, enclosed in a letter to Ms. Trilling, May 10, 1922.
girls that are planning to go over in August--I can't see it.) [sic]"¹

Dr. Stewart suggested to Rubien that he either place Dr. Reed, Dr. Jesse F. Williams, Dr. McCurdy, Mr. Schrader, Ms. Sibley, and Ms. Trilling on the study committee or let the matter settle down before any action was taken.² This seemed to indicate that Dr. Stewart was honest in his dealing with both the A.P.E.A. and the A.A.U. His honesty was further evidenced by the fact that he told Mr. Rubien his opinion of the situation much as he had described it to Ms. Trilling.

I cannot help but feel that the control of women's athletics, by preference, belongs to the groups of schools and colleges or associations of physical educators when they show constructive interest enough in the sport to assure its growth and development, rather than its suppression, and I have already offered the cooperation of my track committee to them and to all other organizations working toward this end.³

Dr. Stewart sent Ms. Trilling a copy of the constitution of the new National Women's Track Athletics Association. This constitution proposed 1) to cooperate with the Women's Athletic Committee, the college athletic

¹Notes of Ms. Trilling's Conference with Hetherington.

²Copy of a letter Dr. Stewart sent to Mr. Rubien, enclosed in a letter to Ms. Trilling, May 10, 1922.

³Ibid.
associations, and the proposed athletic federation in order to encourage, standardize and control track athletics for women in the United States, 2) to demonstrate the value of both intramural and competitive athletics under strictly controlled situations which would emphasize educational and competitive values rather than the spectacular, 3) to cooperate with the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale in the study, standardization, and participation in track athletics for women, and 4) to provide for the annual publication of Rules and Records for track and field athletics for women.¹

However, one must wonder about the motives of Dr. Stewart for changing the organization of his group at this particular time. Was he jockeying for a better position in the A.A.U. when it assumed control? (i.e. that his organization be taken into the A.A.U. with status as a separate section within that body, with power to make its own decisions). Could he have hoped that in their desperation to stay away from the A.A.U., the Women's Athletic Committee would turn to his group for leadership? With an alliance between the National Women's Track Association and the Women's Athletic Committee, enough opposition to the A.A.U. could have been

¹Constitution of the National Women's Track Athletics Association, effective May 1, 1922.
demonstrated to discourage any attempt by that body to take control.

Perhaps all these factors played a part in Dr. Stewart's decision to change the direction of his organization. However, another factor had entered the picture. In July of 1922, preliminary steps had actually been taken by the Metropolitan Association of the A.A.U. (which included the N.Y. area) toward taking the control and direction of women's athletics there. In its July meeting the Metropolitan Association had decided to take control of women's athletics in its own district and to promote a track and field meet to be held in September. The Metropolitan Association was to issue sanctions to hold games in the future and to furnish registration cards to contestants without fees.¹

The cast of characters in this whole drama did not know that in January of 1922 Secretary Rubien had received a letter from J. S. Edstrom, President of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (the controlling body for all international competition in track and field). Mr. Edstrom's letter was to the effect that the Belgian Athletic Federation had suggested that the I.A.A.F. assume control over track and field for women;

Edstrom wanted to know the opinion of the American A.A.U. on this question, as well as on the advisability of including events for women in the Olympic Games.\textsuperscript{1} After communicating with President Prout, Secretary Rubien advised Mr. Edstrom that the A.A.U. considered it advisable for the I.A.A.F. to take over track and field athletics for women and that in the United States the A.A.U. would do everything it could to put America on an equal footing with other countries.\textsuperscript{2}

In the summer another letter (dated June 20) came from Edstrom to the members of the Council of the I.A.A.F. which indicated that, by vote of the council, the I.A.A.F. had decided to study the adoption and governing of track and field for women. The appointed study committee was composed of 4 men (2 from France, 1 from Great Britain, 1 from Belgium) and 2 women (1 from the French Athletic Federation and one from the Amateur Athletic Association of Great Britain). The committee was to report on a number of questions:

1. Shall Athletics Field and Track sports for women be governed by the I.A.A.F.?

2. If so, what rules shall be used for competition between women?

\textsuperscript{1}Letter from Secretary Rubien to the Board of Governors, April 15, 1922, printed in the A.A.U. Minutes, 1922, pp. 193-194.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 194.
3. Shall international championships for women be allowed?

4. Shall Field and Track events for women be allowed on the program of the Olympic Games?

5. In what way shall the women's sports be organized?

6. Is it necessary to alter the fundamental rules of the I.A.A.F. to adopt the sports of the women?  

According to a New York Times article, amateur athletic authorities in this country felt that the aforementioned committee would report in favor of control and that recommendations would be made to place some competitive events on the program of the Olympic Games in 1928.  

It is evident, then, that there was activity within the I.A.A.F. to consider assuming control of women's track and field. It also seems that this interest had been prompted by the recent establishment of the F.S.F.I. Approximately three months after the organization of the F.S.F.I. the I.A.A.F. was beginning to reconsider its previous decision to ignore women's sports.

The American correspondence and publicity on the situation gave the impression that the A.A.U. was not

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1Letter from Rubien to Board of Governors, July 8, 1922, included letter from Edstrom dated June 20, 1922. A.A.U. Minutes, 1922, p. 198.

seeking control of women's athletics, but that, instead, control was forced upon it by the Women's Athletic Committee's lack of positive action; newspaper accounts told repeatedly of the need to stabilize women's athletics, which were then outside the jurisdiction of any national organization. Yet, very early in 1922, Mr. Edstrom had been given assurance that the A.A.U. would support any I.A.A.F. decision to control women's track and field at the international level and would itself assume control of women's track and field in the United States. Thus, it would seem that Mr. Prout knew more than he revealed publicly and that, indeed, it was the intention of the A.A.U. all along to assume control of women's athletics. Perhaps the, "well, we really don't want to, but . . ." was a way of softening the blow to make it more acceptable to the public.

It seems that Dr. Stewart had been kept out of the internal secrets and decisions of the A.A.U. in the same way he had been "bypassed" by the Women's Athletic Committee and certain male members of the A.P.E.A. He was probably sincere when he denied that the A.A.U. had any intention of taking over women's track and field. At any rate, Mr. Daniel Ferris, former executive secretary of the A.A.U., said in an interview that Dr. Stewart had absolutely nothing to do with the A.A.U.'s decision to
assume control of women's track and field.

The success of the American women in the Paris Games and Stewart's election as vice-president of the F.S.F.I. quite likely gave him the encouragement to take the initiative in promoting track and field sports for women. Obviously Stewart believed that he had found the support he had been looking for in this new international movement and, thus, no longer needed the support or approval of the Women's Athletic Committee. A change in his attitude at this point is clearly seen in a letter to Ms. Sibley in which he invited her, as chairman of the Track and Field Committee of the Women's Athletic Committee, to join his organization.

Our National Association has grown very rapidly from the small group of charter members listed. I feel that your schools should join us in a united organization to keep the control of the sport where it belongs—in the group who use it.

Neither the A.A.U. nor a professional teachers association are in as good a position to know what those in the work need. We have done the work, have the organization, and the funds and want to work with you in the best interests of the sport.

Those who spoke at the Detroit Convention and Mrs. Wesson who wrote in the "News Letter" of the A.C.A.C.W. of the growth of Field Hockey following the visit of the English team here gave the best possible argument for the international track meet.

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The whole future of the sport depends on the way we work the problem out this fall and we hope you will see your way clear to joining in with us in this effort.¹

In a letter written the same day to Ms. Trilling, Dr. Stewart lets it be known that, in his opinion, the newly formed Track Association should be the one to control track and field, as the United States Field Hockey Association controls its respective area. Here again Stewart invited the track committee of the A.P.E.A. to join his organization in a central association to keep the control of the sport in the hands of the organizations using it.²

In refusing the invitation to join Stewart's organization, Sibley states:

We are all convinced that the most competent and dignified backing any sport could have is the A.P.E.A. . . .

Since the track meet at Paris with its resultant reactions among the students in our schools and colleges, personally I am more convinced than ever of the necessity of this sport being regulated, standardized and controlled by women who are qualified to take over this responsibility.

I am inclined to think the whole future of the sport depends upon the work of this committee.³

¹Letter from Dr. Stewart to Ms. Sibley, October 4, 1922.

²Letter from Dr. Stewart to Ms. Trilling, October 4, 1922.

³Letter from Ms. Sibley to Dr. Stewart, October 11, 1922.
Ms. Sibley also wrote to Ms. Trilling on October 11, sending Trilling a copy of her reply to Dr. Stewart. In this same letter Ms. Sibley laments the effect that the Paris meet had in her area of the country:

I cannot tell you how very badly [greatly] this Paris meet has appealed to certain classes of women in and about Syracuse. Not college women—and I hear it is true pretty much throughout the state.¹

That there was a tremendously increased interest in track and field among women as a result of the Paris meet was reaffirmed by Ms. Catherine D. Meyer, one of this country's foremost female hurdlers of the mid and late 1920's, who told the writer she had heard about the meet at the time and "thought it was just wonderful," and that, in fact, it gave her the incentive to compete.²

In October Ms. Trilling wrote to the three physical educators (Dr. William Burdick, Mr. Lawrence Hill, and Mr. William Stecher) who had been appointed to serve on the A.A.U.'s study committee. In that letter she asked them to use their influence to combat the A.A.U.'s attempt to control women's athletics and to indicate their disapproval of women participating in both inter-collegiate and international games. She also informed

¹Letter from Ms. Sibley to Ms. Trilling, October 11, 1922.

them of her affiliation with the N.A.A.F. and that a
similar national organization was likely to be formed
by the women themselves, which in turn would probably
ally itself to the N.A.A.F.¹ (This new organization was
formed in January, 1923, and was called the Women's Divi-
sion of the National Amateur Athletic Federation.
Ms. Trilling was named to the Board of Governors of the
N.A.A.F. as one of the representatives of the A.P.E.A.²)

By this time Ms. Trilling had begun to demonstrate
openly her lack of patience with Dr. Stewart, because
she said in a letter to Ms. Sibley:

> I must say that I am completely out
of patience with the man. He does not go
about things in a straightforward manner,
and is certainly tricky and underhanded.
You may remember that Miss Burchenal was
always suspicious of him at Detroit, and
doubted whether he would keep his word
regarding backing up our organization and
continuing his own efforts for an individ-
ual one. It seems to me, that the only
thing for us to do is utterly disregard
him.³

Apparently Dr. Stewart had given his assurances at the
Detroit convention that, after the Paris meet, he would
dissolve his organization; at least, that is what the

¹Letter from Ms. Trilling to the following:
Dr. Burdick, Mr. Stecher, and Mr. Hill, n.d. but in
October of 1922.

²Letter from Ms. Trilling to Ms. Sibley, October 20,
1922.

³Ibid.
Women's Athletic Committee had understood. In this regard Ms. Sibley said to Ms. Trilling: "Are you not surprised to find that he has gone on with his organization when he told us he would give it up as soon as he had fulfilled his incurred obligations . . ."\(^1\)

Ms. Trilling wrote to Dr. Stewart on this subject on October 20 and received a scorching reply. The full text of this letter is presented here to communicate the intensity of feeling on Dr. Stewart's part.

My dear Miss Trilling,

Your letter of Oct 20th received. We were willing to work with your committee but no chance to do so was within a reasonable time, given by you. I am not surprised at this since you acknowledged that the committee on track was formed with the object of defeating our sending a team abroad or cooperating with the A.A.U.

You are correct in stating that I agreed to work against A.A.U. control of women's track athletics and I have done so ever since and up to receipt of your and Miss Sibley's letters. They show clearly no desire on your part to work with us and I shall do what seems to me best in the interest of the sport.

I am sure you are in error in the statement that I would "stop all activities as far as my committee was concerned." I spoke very plainly on this point to the effect that we had put in years of hard work when the group now headed by you stood back and would do nothing and that I personally would be only too glad to withdraw

\(^1\)Letter from Ms. Sibley to Ms. Trilling, October 11, 1922.
from the work when it was in the hands of those who would further the true interest of it and not try to suppress it. With your objection to all competition in a distinctly competitive sport I do not feel that your committee is doing this. I do not see how you have any claim to control a sport developed by the work of others.

Sincerely

Harry Eaton Stewart

Dr. Stewart's blistering comments hit upon a very real shortcoming of the Women's Athletic Committee. In their preoccupation with protecting the "morality" of women athletes and their almost exclusive interest in girls in the "best" colleges, they had failed to consider the needs and aspirations of the many women athletes who did not have the opportunity to go to college at all, let alone to one of the best institutions. As stated in Outing, these women were not going to remain idle while the men of science deliberated interminably on the advisability of their participation in sports. They were ready and eager to participate now. As the article from Outing related:

While the wise men of medicine are solemnly discussing the probable effect of too much athletics on the gentler sex, the sex aforesaid is going ahead in characteristic fashion and doing the things they want to do. Apparently their answer to

1Letter from Dr. Stewart to Ms. Trilling, October 30, 1922.
the long faces and the shaking of heads
is a gay "Well what are you going to do
about it?" And the proper sporting
answer is "Cheerio!"¹

It would seem, therefore, that any organization providing
the opportunity for women to compete was welcomed by
them. Regardless of the opinion one may have of
Dr. Stewart, it is to his credit to have sensed that
need and provided a channel for the aspirations of these
women.

However, Dr. Stewart's problems were increasing.
Not only did the A.P.E.A. at its May convention in Detroit
pass resolutions against his project, but the Recreation
Congress held at Atlantic City in mid-October of 1922
did the same. The principal themes cited in these reso-
lutions were, again, "exploitation of women athletes,"
"women's athletics should be directed by women," "physi-
ological concerns," and "decency in dress."² (The full
statement of the Congress can be seen in Appendix E.)
The Atlantic City Congress appointed a committee to
confer with similar committees of all organizations
interested in women's athletics, to make a study of the
problems involved.

¹"Girls of Track and Field," Outing (August, 1922),
p. 208.

²Xeroxed copy of Recreation Congress Statement on
girls' athletics, held in Atlantic City, October 9-12,
1922 [provided by Helen Hazelton].
At the meeting of the A.A.U.'s study committee at the A.A.U. convention the following month, strong opposition was demonstrated against the proposed A.A.U. control of women's athletics. Dr. Burdick, chairman of the study committee, called attention to the fact that members of many of the most representative women's organizations had written to the A.A.U. to indicate that women themselves had taken definite steps to control and regulate their athletics. He asked the A.A.U. not to assume control because of the various problems in women's athletics and because these problems could best be dealt with by women. Despite Dr. Burdick's intervention other study committee members (there were no women members on the committee) felt that the A.A.U. could and should handle women's athletics,¹ and their views prevailed, though by only a slim margin (5-4).

In President Prout's report to the convention body, it was indicated again that the A.A.U. was not anxious to take control over women's athletics, but that it was necessary for the sake of the many women athletes who were not in educational institutions.

The Amateur Athletic Union is not anxious to increase its burdens by accepting jurisdiction of this activity, but no

other organization in the United States has taken any steps to consider the matter in a broad way, and it devolves upon us to give matter our best thought. Some attention has been given to the problem by those interested in the athletic activities of girls and women in educational institutions but the problem of caring for the girls outside of such institutions has been consistently ignored by some who have hastened to criticize the Amateur Athletic Union for its interest in the matter. It is not a question of initiating a new movement for women's athletics but of solving a problem which is already existent and of most vital importance.\footnote{A.A.U. Minutes of the Annual Convention, 1922, p. 26.}

About two weeks later, December 2, the National Women's Track Athletics Association, which grew out of Dr. Stewart's Track Athletics Committee, held an organizational meeting at Mamaroneck, New York. Its purpose, as stated in its constitution, was to control and regulate all interscholastic and intercollegiate sports for girls and women. According to the \textit{New York Times} report of the meeting, Dr. Stewart was elected president, Katherine Montgomery of Florida State University was elected vice-president, Suzanne Becker, secretary, and treasurer, Joseph d'Angola of the New Jersey State Normal School at Newark. Dr. Stewart was quick to assure those concerned that the supervision of girls' and women's sports would in no way conflict with the A.A.U.'s control of open meets. He is quoted as saying:
The women's organization, while retaining separate identity in controlling interscholastic and intercollegiate sports, will cooperate with the A.A.U. in all open competition which the latter will direct.¹

According to the article, the A.A.U. and the new track association would "seek a harmonious footing in developing feminine athletics of all kinds."²

Dr. Stewart's announcement was sure to get a reaction and on December 27 at the Hotel Astor in New York, Ms. Trilling held an informal meeting of the Women's Athletic Committee. At that meeting disappointment was expressed that Dr. Stewart, upon his return from Europe, had started an independent organization without consulting anyone. It was also reported that the A.A.U. was asking a number of the leading women in physical education to serve on its women's athletics committee in an advisory capacity. Many of the women at the meeting felt that such a policy was undesirable and some had already refused to cooperate. Although it had been suggested that members of the Women's Athletic Committee accept positions on A.A.U. committees, Ms. Trilling, Ms. Burchenal and others thought that women should show disapproval of the A.A.U.'s actions and methods of organization by refusing to serve, or, if they were already

²Ibid.
on committees, by resigning. The feeling was widespread within the committee that they should cooperate with the N.A.A.F., whose ideals were more similar to their own.\footnote{"Women's Athletic Committee Report," A.P.E. Review, XXVIII (January, 1923), pp. 68-69.}

The writer asked Ms. Hazelton why the Women's Division did not work with the A.A.U. in trying to regulate and standardize this sport for women, thus improving the overall conditions for competition. Her response was as follows:

At that stage of the game, it would have been like bucking up against a stone wall. Women had to make their position very very clear, black or white, as to the conditions under which women should participate. You can't compare today with the 1920's . . . Women needed more protection. Then, too, the attitudes of men towards women and their ideas were different in the 1920's than they are today. The weaknesses in the men's programs did not sit too well, either, perhaps.\footnote{Interview with Ms. Helen Hazelton, March, 1973.}

At this time, the Women's Athletic Committee began to move in other directions as well. Some of the leaders felt that the YWCA should be represented on the committee. Helen McKinstry (who later came to a leadership position in the Women's Division of the N.A.A.F.), in charge of the Central Branch of the New York YWCA, was asked to accept membership. Ms. McKinstry was in sympathy with the cause of the women physical educators; she felt that the track
and field meets sponsored by the YWCA in various sections of the country (some staged under the direction of the A.A.U.) were ill-conceived. Ms. Julia Capen, field secretary for the YWCA, was also proposed as a member, but only because she needed "purifying." According to Ms. McKinstry Ms. Capen had favored these meets and should be given the opportunity to hear viewpoints from women opposing these kinds of events.¹

The attitude of the A.P.E.A. was now completely negative to anything which Dr. Stewart might try to do, but Stewart did not give up. In January of 1923, he wrote to Carl Schrader, the newly elected president of the A.P.E.A., about his interest in a proposed magazine called Sports Girl and asked Schrader to endorse the idea. The object of the magazine, as Dr. Stewart stated it, was:

> to foster wholesome recreational and athletic interests among girls, to give advice on matters of hygiene, to include bright articles and stories on outdoor life and athletics, and in both material and advertising keep a high tone and wholesome atmosphere.²

Mr. Schrader replied that he saw no place for such an additional sports publication; that there was already an

¹Ms. Trilling to President Schrader, January 13, 1923.

²Letter from Dr. Stewart to Carl Schrader, January 15, 1923.
overabundance of this type of magazine. He felt, also, that it would only embarrass the movement of athletics for women inside the profession to advocate such an enterprise.¹

Dr. Stewart's movement ultimately failed. The writer has not been able to ascertain what happened to the National Women's Track Athletics Association. Dr. Stewart, perhaps, did not have the power to fight against both the powerful A.P.E.A. in the area of schools and colleges and the A.A.U.'s control over all other competitions. It is ironic that there is no mention of Dr. Stewart or his organization in the history books of physical education.

The War Waged by the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation Against Competitive Sports for Women, 1923-1927

The establishment of the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation early in 1923 was a reaction to women's entry into competitive athletics. It would not be a gross exaggeration to say that it was a tool created by the physical education profession, which was the primary faction opposed to competitive athletics for women. Ms. Burchenal, who has been discussed previously, on the board of governors of the new

¹Letter from Mr. Schrader to Stewart, January 17, 1923.
Federation, was one of the best-known authorities on physical training for girls and women in the United States. As assistant supervisor of physical education for New York City, she helped to organize girls' athletics there and was instrumental in developing the resolutions on girls' athletics which were passed at the A.P.E.A. convention in 1906. She was also the first Chairman of the A.P.E.A.'s committee on Women's Athletics. Ms. Burchenal was resolutely opposed to Olympic competition for women, with their "attendant girl champions," breaking of records, and transatlantic jaunts! Physical educators who disapproved of competition for women could not justify their positions on the grounds of harmful physiological effects, however. Burchenal, herself, is quoted in an article by Sarah Addington as saying:

We don't stress it [the health aspect], not because it isn't important, but because we can't actually put our finger on the harmful effect of too strenuous athletics on women.  

Rather, Burchenal saw as the more "tangible evil" what was referred to as the "star system of specialized athletics." She highly disapproved of the "unnatural" selection of superior performers who then showed their prowess in public demonstrations of their athletic ability. She

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felt the emphasis should be on the masses of women who remained on the sidelines while the superior athletes perform. In other words, the philosophy of the day left no room for differing levels of performance among women and the perceived evils surrounding competition for women were more social or moral than physiological.

A quotation from an article by Ms. Mabel Lee, Director of P.E. for women at the University of Nebraska, shows the importance of the objective of moral or character training in physical education:

We must guard carefully the chances for character training, not allowing a passion for superior technique to blind us to these more worth while efforts. The field of men's athletics is full of many instances of this mad worship at the shrine of technique. Now that women's athletics are developing so rapidly all over our land; let us caution all our leaders to hold fast to the ideals of worthy citizenship even if at the expense of fine technique... 

The newly formed Federation, on January 15, 1923, went on record as saying that competitive athletics were "only an incident in the athletic activities of women."
The controversy over the control of women's athletics was based on honest, differing opinions of dedicated

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1 Ibid.

people. Though the philosophy of the Women's Division was progressivist in nature, the organization proved to be a conservative one having strong traditional and repressive overtones. It was designed to restrict the growth of women in a direction which was not socially acceptable, namely, competitive athletics. Those who are interested in the history of physical education and sports are led to believe that the physical educators of the country were overwhelmingly in opposition to American women participating in competitive meets, because of the extensive writing on the subject by leaders in the field. That the leaders opposed competition for women is certain, because of written statements and opinions on the matter; however little is known about the reactions of the average woman physical educator in the field.

Some of the Women's Division's most ardent supporters came from the church. The Charities Review of January, 1925, included an article entitled "Magna Charta," which emphasized the seamy side of athletics for girls. This article was included in the Women's Division's publication Women and Athletics. Some of the more descriptive illustrations are as follows:

Track events with paid public admission in which the girls are arrayed in "running pants" and receive much unofficial and impromptu individual coaching and encouragement from the male spectators.
Male masseurs and rubbers for feminine athletic stars. Illustrated supplement publicity given girl athletes to catch the eye of that section of the newspaper-reading public that is more interested in the scantily draped feminine form than in feminine athletic prowess.¹

The platform of the Women's Division in this article was seen as: "a voice of a self-possessed man in a panic-stricken mob; . . . a bill of rights, a magna charta, a declaration of independence that promises fair to free the girl and woman from thralldom to the hereditary lands of the athletic realm."²

After the A.A.U. assumed direct control of women's athletics, the Women's Division of the N.A.A.F. seemed to thrive and get stronger every day. Since its membership was institutional rather than individual, it had the backing of such organizations as women's clubs, the Girl Scouts (the first president of the Women's Division was Mrs. Herbert Hoover, then president of the Girl Scouts of America), the Y.W.C.A., the American Physical Education Association, etc. By the mid-twenties State departments of Education were beginning to outlaw competitive contests in schools. One example is that of Massachusetts where physical educators in 1926 voted in overwhelming


²Ibid.
disapproval of interscholastic competitions in sports for girls and advocated a broad system of intramural sports as a substitute. The opponents of competition gave such illustrations as: girls losing their tempers and swearing at their opponents, principals rushing on to the floor protesting referees' decisions, the "win-at-any-cost spirit," girls fainting during and after games and remaining emotionally spent for days afterward.¹ The state supervisor of physical education was Carl Schrader, who has been discussed previously and whose stand by this time is well-known.

In an article called "Is Competition Good for Girls?" William S. Packer, of the Park Board of Winchester, was given the opportunity to protest the actions of the physical educators. He stated that if the physical directors were really interested in providing more opportunities for greater numbers of girls, then they could do it by rearranging their working hours and opening the gymnasiums for use on Saturday. He charged that if character-building was afforded boys through competitive athletics, then any physical director worth her salt could make the same opportunity available to girls. An even stronger charge is made when Mr. Packer was quoted as saying:

The movement now on foot to restrict and abolish, denaturing sports for girls . . . is a part of the enslavement from which women have suffered through the ages. It cannot finally succeed although it may gain sufficient present vogue (because of the professional interest in easier work behind it) to cheat a generation of girls out of contact with the world which is their right.¹

In 1926, as well, interscholastic competition among high school girls in Wisconsin was banned and deemed detrimental to girls' morals and physical welfare by the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association. The association, which was the controlling body of all high school athletics, called a halt to competition for girls after certain "evils" had been cited; the worst evils cited were: improper chaperonage, lax moral discipline on trips to other cities, and the strain of excited competition.² Ms. Trilling was head of the women's department of physical education at the University of Wisconsin and her influence was probably a factor in the decision of the high school athletic association to stop interscholastic athletics for girls in that state.

¹Ibid., pp. 53-54.

The A.A.U.--1923-1928

The A.A.U. upon assuming control of women's athletics immediately named a Committee to take charge of them. Fred Steers, a fairly successful coach of men's track and field, was named chairman. The following year at the annual convention of the A.A.U., a number of regulations were adopted concerning medical examinations, the kinds of competitions permitted among women, i.e. women engaging in public wrestling, boxing, tug of war, weight lifting or water polo would be suspended for a given period of time, the number of events allowed within a given meet or period of time, dress, etc.\(^1\) Two interesting regulations were the following:

5. No coaches shall be allowed upon the track or field or upon being appraised of the presence of any coach upon the field it shall be the duty of the referee to remove, or have him or her removed immediately. No coaching of competitors while on the track or field is permissible.

6. No competitor shall permit herself to be massaged, or shall massage herself while on the track or field and no competitor shall take any exercise, or perform any feats not necessary to actual competition.\(^2\)

In 1923, although some A.A.U. members persisted in condemning track and field for women, even its supporters diverged greatly in their opinions on how women's track

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\(^1\)A.A.U. Minutes, 1923, pp. 104-106.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 105.
and field should be conducted. A national track and field championship was held for the first time (September 29, 1923) in Newark, N.J., in which a total of eleven events were included in the program. Representatives came from such diverse groups as: Prudential Insurance, Meadowbrook Club, City Bank Club, Philadelphia Turnegemeinde, German-American Turn Verein, Board of Recreation, Patty Shannahan Catholic Club, and The Savage School, among others.

In the 1923 Annual report of President Prout, he recognized that the question of track and field for women was still a "perplexing" problem, and although this sport for women was still in an experimental stage, the work already accomplished led to a feeling of confidence about future success.\(^1\) The Metropolitan Association in 1923 passed a rule which had to do with regulating competitions for women. This rule stipulated: (1) that women be members of committees in the sports in which they take part, (2) that all clubs registering women in any sport have women officers or officials to deal directly with women contestants, and (3) that chaperones must accompany girls' teams on overnight trips.\(^2\) Thus, it seems evident

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\(^1\)A.A.U. Minutes, 1923, The President's Annual Report, pp. 3-4.

\(^2\)A.A.U. Minutes, 1923, p. 76.
that efforts were being made to improve the conditions under which women competed and to allow them to control their own activities.

The A.A.U. in 1924 recognized the social, welfare and athletic organizations connected with businesses, banks, etc., as having done more to create and stimulate interest in women's athletics and to develop women athletes than any other class of institution. In both the 1923 and 1924 national championships, the women representing industrial concerns comprised the largest number of competitors and won the greatest number of points.¹

Chairman Steers concluded in his report:

Women's athletics, as such, would receive little response if it were not for industrial organizations. The great field of women outside of the various industrial organizations have little interest in athletics, and the A.A.U. should adopt a forceful program and go to some expense if necessary, in order to encourage athletics among this great class of women.²

Mr. Steers summarized the year 1924 as one in which the critics of women's athletics had dwindled to a very few. He attested to the fact that no physical harm for any competitor had come to the attention of the committee. "The consensus of opinion amongst competitors and coaches is that woman is able to withstand violent

¹A.A.U. Minutes, 1924, p. 73.
²Ibid.
exercise as well as man."¹ Mr. Steers' committee recommended that an appropriation be made by the A.A.U. to assist in paying the transportation fees of some of the more outstanding competitors so that the National Championships would, in a real sense, be national in character. Obviously, if many of the athletes were from the working class, few could afford the cost of transportation to national meets.²

To state in 1924 that the critics of women's track and field had dwindled to a very few was wishful thinking on Mr. Steers' part. In fact the opposition was gaining strength. Women, though, were so enthusiastic about the possibility of their entering Olympic competition in track and field in 1924 that the American Olympic Committee felt it necessary to advise the New York Times of the situation:

The unusually large number of requests for information about entries for women in Olympic track and field sports yesterday caused the A.O.C. to issue a statement correcting the erroneous impression that events for women are included in the track and field program, and emphasizing the fact that women's competition in the classic games is confined to tennis, swimming and fencing.³

The A.A.U. Chairman of the Women's Committee had

already observed that if the I.A.A.F. were eventually to take control of women's international competitions in track and field, and included women's events in the Olympic Games, it would be necessary to include races of longer distances in their meets. The longest event in American track and field was the 100 yard dash at this point. In Europe, women were running 800 and 1,000 meter races.  

At the 1925 annual convention of the A.A.U. President Prout told the assembly of the increasing activity of the Women's Division. He indicated that a representative of another organization had been devoting a lot of time addressing organizations throughout the country, denouncing the participation of women in competitive meets. President Prout hoped that the A.A.U. would be in a position during the next year to engage in some "good effective propaganda work," not only to offset that of the Women's Division but also to raise the interest and enthusiasm of women in track and field and in swimming.  

The 1925 report of Chairman Steers included a reference to the "so-called Olympic Games for women" to be

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1 A.A.U. Minutes, 1924, pp. 75-76.

held the following year. The matter was referred to the Foreign Relations Committee, which announced that the whole question of the jurisdiction over women's track and field would be on the agenda of the 1926 I.A.A.F. meeting.\(^1\) The United States was not represented at the 1926 Games in Gothenburg, Sweden, perhaps because the A.A.U. did not become affiliated with the F.S.F.I. until after the I.A.A.F. Congress at the Hague in August of 1926, too late for participation in the Games. The I.A.A.F.'s decision to cooperate with the F.S.F.I. in controlling women's track and field in 1926 effectively gave jurisdiction to the A.A.U. of the United States as the controlling body in this country for international competition in track and field for women. It was only left now for the A.A.U. to request affiliation with the F.S.F.I. The A.A.U., at its annual meeting in 1926, voted to apply for membership in the F.S.F.I. and elected Mr. William Prout, president of the A.A.U., Fred Steers, chairman of the committee on Women's Athletics, and Ms. Aileen Allen of Pasadena, California, active in swimming, as the three delegates to represent the A.A.U. in that organization.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 113.

\(^2\)"Annual Meeting of the Amateur Athletic Association (A.A.U.)," Mind and Body, XXXIII (February, 1927), p. 413.
In 1926, as well, the Chairman of the Committee on Women's Athletics was authorized to send out questionnaires to those people having the most to do with women's competitive athletics, requesting their opinions on the effects of competitive athletics for women. These were to be sent to women athletes, physicians, coaches, A.A.U. members, to the board of Governors of the A.A.U., etc., so that the consensus of opinion of the people most closely identified with women's athletics could be collected and reported upon by the committee at the next annual meeting.¹ The following year the Committee spent some of its time answering criticisms of women engaged in the more "violent" sports; obviously because the Women's Division had been so successful in its campaign to eliminate competitive sports for women.

The great increase in strenuous sports by women has caused exclamations of grief and concern to be made by certain individuals and organizations. These utterances are mere conclusions and are not based upon any logical premises. They seem to be inspired by the fear of the unknown and their proponents are unwilling to give an ear to either experience or reason.²

The 1926 national championships in track and field took on a more truly national and even international

¹Minutes of the A.A.U., 1927, p. 79. Although the Committee's study began in 1926 it was not reported until 1927.

²Ibid.
character. Three Canadian athletic clubs were represented. The Pasadena Athletic Club won the meet, with the Midwest Athletic Club of Chicago taking second place. Third place went to the Toronto Ladies' Athletic Club and fourth was won by the Paterson Recreation Center of New Jersey. Lillian Copeland, outstanding Olympic athlete in 1928, won the shot-put, the discus and the javelin at that meet. She represented the Pasadena club.¹

In 1927 the women's committee of the A.A.U., still controlled by men, pushed for successful women's participation, but not so much for the benefit of women as for the honor that would accrue to the country as a result.

Next year the duty of procuring a worthy representation for America in the five women's events on the Olympic program rests upon us. These events count as do the men's and it will avail us little to win points in the men's competition, if we permit some other nation to wipe out the advantage by the victories of their women.

Patriotism is on our side and it is time that we challenge those, who for imaginary and fantastic reasons seek to hinder us in the next Olympics.²

Let us not forget that the A.A.U. has always been a patriotic institution and at this point, perhaps, the performance of women was important to it if only to keep the total number of points high enough to "win" in the Olympic Games, even though point counting was not a

¹Ibid., pp. 70-72. ²Ibid., p. 81.
legitimate practice in the Olympic Games.

Mr. Steers admitted as much in July of 1928 when he wrote an article about women and the 1928 Olympics:

Women athletes, who have been on occasion the subject of much smiling behind the hand, a subject of horror among physicians and reformers, and an object of lifted eyebrows in the best circles have suddenly taken on importance in the United States. The reason is that the fair sex has been admitted to the track and field games of the 1928 Olympiad in Amsterdam, and some of the nations of Europe believe they are going to strike at Uncle Sam through the ladies and give us an overdue trimming.¹

On the popular front the responsibility of the girls to "Uncle Sam" was also of some importance. W. O. McGeehan, in an article entitled "Glorified Tomboys," made these comments:

Of course there is optimism as to the chances of the Americans to pile up an overwhelming number of points in these games, but the Germans, the Swedes, and the Finns will also make strong bids. So it might come to a point where the American victory would depend entirely on what the American girl athletes accomplish at Amsterdam.²

The Women's Athletic Committee of the A.A.U. felt that the Olympic Games of 1928 had served to popularize and to increase women's competition in track and field.


American girls were in competition with 24 other nations and won 1 of 5 Olympic events, taking 2 second places and one 3rd place.¹

The committee, because of the outcry over the apparent collapse of several competitors at the finish of the 800 meter event during the 1928 Games, urged that this event be dropped from the program of the national championship. The opinion was that American girls were not adapted for this event. Further, although there was no evidence of physical harm from the 800 meter event, it was believed that:

> the effort and fatigue of competitors does not conform to the American ideals of womanly dignity and conduct. It does not lead to the promotion of the sport, but on the contrary, because of its effect upon the spectators, is detrimental.² [italics added]

The Olympic Protest

The participation of American women track and field athletes in the Olympic Games of 1928 led to a protest voiced by the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation. The protest, though it was made in January of 1929, was a long time in coming. Not since the women had gone to the Women's Olympic Games in Paris

¹ A.A.U. Minutes, 1928, pp. 119-120.
² Ibid.
in August of 1922 was there such a great flurry of activity. The Paris Games had been instrumental in the establishment of the Women's Division in 1923. Now the 800 meters event of the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam provided the spark for the Olympic protest. It must be pointed out that the strong, organized opposition to women competing in sports was a phenomenon of the American culture. Such a movement had not and did not exist in Europe. It was purely initiated in the United States.¹ At the fifth annual convention of the Women's Division held January 3, 4, and 5 (1929) at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City, a decision was made to take a definite stand against the participation of women in the Olympic Games. The reasons given for the decision were:

(1) that Olympic competition required specialized training for a few, (2) that opportunities arose for the exploitation of girls and women, and (3) that there was a possibility of physiological damage through overstrain in training and during the contests.¹ Thus, the Women's Division recorded in writing and publicly stated its disapproval of Olympic competition for women. Other resolutions from that meeting concerned offering to

¹Interview with Avery Brundage, March, 1973.

²Proceedings of the 7th Annual Meeting of the N.A.A.F., 1929, p. 40—Excerpts from the Minutes of the 5th Annual Meeting, W.D.N.A.A.F.
assist in the entertainment of the women participants at the Games in Los Angeles in 1932 and asking for the opportunity to put on a Festival of some kind which could include such activities as dancing, singing, mass sports and games, banquets, and conferences.

All members of the Women's Division were encouraged to go home and spread the principles advocated by the Division, namely, a broad, diversified, all-inclusive program of sports and games, adapted to the special needs of the participants.\(^1\) The resolutions against the participation of women in the Olympic Games were later adopted by the National Board of the Y.W.C.A., the National Association of Directors of Physical Education for Women in Colleges and Universities, the Executive Committee of the Women's Athletic Section of the American Physical Education Association and the Athletic Conference of American College Women.\(^2\) In April of 1930, the Women's Division sent a petition to the President of the I.O.C., Le Comte de Baillet-Latour, so that it would be received in time for the I.O.C.'s session in Berlin in May. The protest was sent not only to the I.O.C., but to all 67 national Olympic Committees as well. The protest sent

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\(^1\)Alice Sefton, *The Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation* (Stanford University, California: Stanford University Press, 1941), pp. 82-83.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 46.
to the I.O.C. is as follows:

WHEREAS, The Women's Division, National Amateur Athletic Federation, believes wholeheartedly in competition and believes that competition is the soul of athletics and of sports and games, and that without it they could not exist; and

WHEREAS, It aims to promote such types and programs of sports and games as well,

(1) Include all members of a group rather than a limited number chosen for their prowess,
(2) Prohibit exploitation and commercialization,
(3) Stress enjoyment of the sport and the development of sportsmanship,
(4) Minimize the emphasis placed upon individual accomplishment and the winning of championships,
(5) Place well-trained and properly qualified women in the immediate charge of athletic activities,
(6) Secure adequate medical examination and medical follow-up as a basis for participation,
(7) Avoid countenancing the sacrifice of an individual's health for the sake of her participation in athletic competition; and

WHEREAS, Participation in the Olympic Games, particularly participation in Track and Field Events,

(1) Entails the specialized training of the few,
(2) Offers opportunity for exploitation and commercialization,
(3) Stresses individual accomplishment and winning of championships,
(4) Places men in immediate charge of athletic activities for girls and women,
(5) Offers opportunity for possible overstrain in preparation for and during the Games themselves; and

WHEREAS, Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games, said to the
Athletes and all taking part at Amsterdam in the XIth Olympic Games, "As to
the admission of women to the Games, I remain strongly against it. It was
against my will that they were admitted to a growing number of com-
petitions," and
WHEREAS, It is the understanding of the
Women's Division, National Amateur
Athletic Federation, that it is within
the power of this International Olym-
pic Congress to vote the participation
of women in track and field events, in
the XIth Olympiad at Los Angeles,
California, U.S.A., in 1932,
Therefore, The Women's Division, National
 Amateur Athletic Federation, petitions
this International Olympic Congress to
vote to omit track and field events
for women from the 1932 program.1

Thus the United States represented the two extremes
of a controversy in 1930 surrounding the battle to retain
or suppress women's track and field events. On the one
hand was the Women's Division of the N.A.A.F. with its
Olympic protest and on the other, the A.A.U.'s Gustavus
Kirby and Murray Hulbert, who were leading the movement
in the I.A.A.F. to declare a walk-out of all male ath-
letes if women's track and field events were not retained.
The I.A.A.F. stood ready to do just that; the abandonment
of women's track and field events would have been
accepted by the I.A.A.F. only if all women's events in
all other sports were eliminated as well.2

1Ibid., pp. 83-84.

The International Olympic Committee was not opposed to the elimination of women's events in the Olympic Games. Count de Baillet-Latour, president of the I.O.C., was at best luke-warm to the idea of women's participation in the Olympic Games.\(^1\) As has been stated in Chapter III, Coubertin was confident that Baillet-Latour's feelings were very similar to his own, and this was shown even more clearly in the proposal of Baillet-Latour to suppress all women's competitions in order "to reduce the program." But the vote of the I.O.C. in 1931 retained the women's program, though it kept the power to decide the events women were to participate in. One must wonder, here, whether retaining the women's program also provided an excuse to control or arrest the development of women's international sports competitions. There was a great deal of reluctance on the part of the I.O.C. and the international federations to augment the women's program. Abandoning women's competitions in the Olympic Games, on the other hand, would have amounted to giving the F.S.F.I. complete jurisdiction over all women's international competitions.

The controversy between the A.A.U. and the Women's Division caused Dr. Jesse F. Williams and William L. Hughes to comment on the pros and cons of the situation.

\(^1\) Interview with Avery Brundage, March, 1973.
Advocates of track and field for women in the Olympic Games, they said, would kill athletics for women; the policy of selective training retarded athletics for women. The standards for women's events were men's standards which ignored fundamental anatomical and physiological differences between the sexes. They blamed sportswriters, lay officials of certain athletic organizations and student groups for "squeezing the vital juice out of a movement of incalculable value to women."¹ But they also criticized the Women's Division for voting against women participating in the Olympic Games of 1932.

This is probably against the majority judgment of teachers and directors in the field . . . In their complete opposition to the participation of women athletes in the 1932 Olympics the Women's Division of the N.A.A.F. may have missed the opportunity to give leadership to the proper kind and amount of athletics for women.²

The writer mentioned this passage when interviewing Ms. Hazelton who responded in this way:

He [Dr. Williams] doesn't say women [teachers and directors in the field], and I think a lot of men would have criticized them [the resolutions]. When the resolutions were passed for the Games of 1932, they represented and would have gotten the support of the majority of women leaders in physical education. The leadership was

²Ibid.
the same in both organizations. The initiative for the resolutions came, however, from the Women's Division.\(^1\)

The Women's Division held a three-day conference prior to the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1932\(^2\) and continued to protest women's participation until the Second World War. In 1938 the Women's Division again sent a letter to the I.O.C., asking that girls under sixteen years of age be barred from competition in the Olympics and that track and field be completely omitted from the 1940 Games.\(^3\) The letter from the Women's Division was read to the I.O.C. at its March 16th meeting in Cairo.\(^4\)

Mayer, in his *A Travers les Annueux Olympiques* also commented upon the letter:

> The I.O.C. had just received a letter from the "Women Division National Amateur Athletic Federation" [sic] requesting the elimination of the women's track and field events from the Games as well as the liquidation of women's participation in all the other sports on the program. The only purpose of this intervention, the I.O.C.

\(^1\)Interview with Helen Hazelton, March, 1973.


\(^3\)Ibid., p. 56.

\(^4\)Revue Olympique, April, 1938. Published by the I.O.C., Edited by Carl Diem, Berlin, p. 37.
realized, was to bring all the women's events under the control of that Federation so that it could organize Women's Games later on. This request, added to the one which had been presented to the I.O.C. the year before, only helped to reinforce among the committee members the idea of the admission of women to other Olympic events. This is precisely what happened later. The above request was of course rejected.¹

This perception of the motives of the W.D. of the N.A.A.F. by Mayer, who was chancellor of the I.O.C., was obviously wrong, and one wonders if some of the other I.O.C. members had the same perception. In any case, Count Baillet-Latour replied to the Women's Division with the following:

The I.O.C. has heard with great interest the opinion expressed in your letter, which is shared by quite a number of my colleagues. Unfortunately the majority is in favor of the participation of women in track and field events, and the question of the right age for participation is in the hands of the International Federations.²

The A.A.U. After the Olympic Protest

The A.A.U. report on women's athletics in 1929, which had received extensive publicity, took exception to what it termed "a false and malicious propaganda regarding women's athletics as conducted by the A.A.U."³

¹Mayer, A Travers les Annueux Olympiques, pp. 163-164.
²Sefton, The Women's Division ..., p. 56.
The A.A.U.'s program had been represented as being highly selective, only favoring a select few who had the potential of becoming stellar performers, in order to train them for the coming Olympic Games. The report denied this and stated that such an intent had never been contemplated.

True enough, the best are selected for the Olympic Team, but without any effort to adopt a selective program or to specially train women beforehand. Selections for the Olympic Team are made only once in [sic] four years and not until the Olympic tryouts, a few weeks before the games are the members of the Team known. The organization nourishing and promoting this false propaganda seeks to displace the A.A.U. It seeks control of the events under the jurisdiction of the Amateur Athletic Union on the Olympic program. How can it do so when it is opposed to the point of eliminating competition by the United States in events on the program?

This committee recommends that the Amateur Athletic Union actively refute the false statements that have been made in regard to women's athletics and the nature of its work in that regard.¹

Though it is difficult to state with any great degree of certitude, the actions of the Women's Division probably had some effect upon the way in which the A.A.U. managed the affairs of women in sports which they controlled. In 1930, for example, the women's track and field committee of the A.A.U. recommended that a committee

¹Ibid., pp. 75-76.
be set up which would act as a central committee for all women's sports supervised by the A.A.U. The different branches of sport would be represented by subcommittees. The women's track and field committee felt that in this way, rules for the welfare of women's athletics and the promotion of them could be more uniform and more efficiently co-ordinated. Such a committee could provide the means to collect data, recommend rules changes, and provide supervision which would refute the attacks on women's athletics by its critics.¹

Early in 1932 President Avery Brundage requested that a study be made by the A.A.U.'s newly organized National Women's Sports Committee to try to determine the present-day standards of American women in athletics. That committee was to give recommendations deemed necessary to raise athletic standards for women at the 1932 annual convention of the A.A.U. A questionnaire was designed to determine the causes and effects of competition in athletics by women. The study was chaired by Mrs. Richard Folsom of Chicago.² A total of 850 questionnaires were sent out by the Women's Committee. One-hundred seven of the replies came from women who had held

²Ibid.
either Olympic or American honors (dating back to 1912); a total of 232 answers were received. On February 8, 1932, the Boston Herald carried a story about the formation of the Committee and what it was trying to do.

The formation of this all-women's committee is, as far as is known, the first occasion that the national organization has taken action to have the subject of women's athletics investigated by women alone. It is assumed that this is a definite answer to criticisms of such bodies as the women's division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation concerning the whole system of A.A.U. competition.¹

The above quotation clearly indicates the A.A.U. was affected by the criticisms levelled at it by the Women's Division. The formation of an all-women's sports committee was a direct result of these criticisms.

As a result of the study it was found that almost four times as many girls participated in track and field competitions than in swimming, mainly because of the accessibility of parks, playgrounds and schools which provided equipment and teaching for greater numbers. Swimming pools were still quite inaccessible to the masses. The questionnaire study also showed that competitive sports did not have a harmful effect on child-birth. Two-hundred nine of the 232 felt their physical condition improved; 186 of them had competed during their

¹Dorothy Lindsay, "Women in Sports," The Boston Herald, February 8, 1932.
menses. Most had been chaperoned (203) and 211 of the group stated that they favored competition for their daughters under proper supervision and in moderation.¹

The Committee recommended as a result of the study that more women be placed on committees; that no long-jumping, distance-running, or shot-putting be permitted for girls under 18; that limitations be made on number of events participated in on a single day; that regular physical examinations be given; that an investigation of the conditions under which girls play basketball be conducted; and that sleeves be omitted from jerseys, but with insistence of a robe when not competing.²

In the discussion following the report of the committee Ms. Epstein was somewhat adamant on the criticism by the public concerning the competition of girls while having their menses, saying: "What we need to do is educate the public on the subject rather than accept their criticism lying down."³ On the subject of more women on committees, Mr. Harry Maloney, a former president of the Pacific coast A.A.U., spoke saying that women's athletics were for women; that men did not belong there. Furthermore, he was resolutely opposed to women's

²Ibid., pp. 109-110. ³Ibid., p. 110.
track and field, saying that women did not belong in them, particularly in some events, and suggested that there were other sports which would serve as more ideal pastimes for women.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 111-112.}

President Brundage spoke later on indicating that for the past two years he had sat in on several informal conferences of the Women's Division of the N.A.A.F. and of those meetings he said:

When at first their attitude was distinctly antagonistic, as it always has been after these various conferences, I feel they are beginning to realize the position of the Amateur Athletic Union in this branch of sport. I tried to explain to them that from our point of view, there is going to be competition among women athletes, women and girls, whether the A.A.U. has supervision of it or whether they do not.\footnote{Ibid., p. 112.}

He explained to the women, whom he believed to be "a high type of womanhood earnestly interested in the welfare of young girls and women," that the problem would still be there if the A.A.U. stepped out of the picture.\footnote{Ibid., p. 113.} He seemed to be convinced that the two organizations, the A.A.U. and the Women's Division, would one day cooperate:

Someday, as I said in my annual report, this organization and that organization may get together, which will be a great advantage to both sides. They touch many
influential people in this United States
and many influential organizations. 1
Thus, it was moved and adopted that the report of the
Women's Sports Committee be received and adopted. 2
The following year (1933), for the first time in
the history of the track and field national championships,
all the officials were women, except the starter and
Mr. Brundage, who acted as referee. The women officials
were all former track and field or swimming competitors. 3
Furthermore, for the first time in history a separate
indoor championship was held for women on the afternoon
of the men's championships. 4 Thus, it would seem that
during the years of the early 1930's, the A.A.U. was
trying to standardize and regulate the activities of
women; women were beginning to be heard, and to demand
that more women be placed on committees and that they
be allowed to conduct their own competitions and activi-
ties. Perhaps the A.A.U. felt that to do this would
eliminate much of the criticism of the public and the
Women's Division in the administration of women's ath-
letics.

Some idea of the breadth of competition in the

1 Ibid. 2 Ibid.
3 "National Women's Sports Committee Report," A.A.U.
Minutes, 1933, p. 141.
4 Ibid., p. 82.
United States can be ascertained from the report of the Women's Sport Committee of the A.A.U. in 1934. That committee had sent out a short questionnaire to all the districts of the A.A.U. (29) to find out which districts held championships in the sports for women which they sponsored. Of the districts which replied, twenty-one held championships in swimming; 11 held championships in track and field; 4 districts conducted championships in gymnastics; and 7 districts held basketball championships. Several associations conducted no activities whatsoever for women members, and in a few, women's groups were just being organized. The Women's Committee in its report indicated that the idea of competition would be more acceptable to women and mothers of girls if the trainers, coaches, managers and officials were women. All women's athletic associations, they said, were strongly opposed to having male trainers, coaches, and officials.\(^1\)

The Women's Committee of the A.A.U. took exception, in the report of 1934, to the fact that the United States did not actively participate in the Women's World Games. It held that the United States was far behind other countries in sending teams to compete. The committee felt that:

This is a poor showing in view of the fact that the United States has had competition for women in the Olympics since 1926, and that the United States team as a whole is far superior to teams of other countries. In the last International Games in August of 1934, all large countries were represented, including the most distant. Japan sent a full team, with three attendants.¹

 Sending a team to these Games, it was felt, would provide the impetus to keep women interested during non-Olympic years. They believed that many girls whose goal was to participate in the Olympic Games gave up hope and dropped out because they considered four years too long a time to wait to try again.²

 A recommendation was made earlier (in 1933) by the Women's Track and Field Committee to make an effort to send a team to the women's World Games in London. There was a disposition on the part of the Committee that the United States should be represented,³ yet only a basketball team was sent.

Track and Field 1934

The Women's Track and Field Committee's Report to the Annual Convention of the A.A.U. in 1934 was rather disheartening. A large number of the clubs had disbanded;

²Ibid.
³A.A.U. Minutes, 1933, p. 84.
the depression had had its effect. In 1934, although solicitations were made and many organizations were contacted, no organization was willing to assume the responsibility of holding the National Outdoor Championships for women in a manner commensurate with the standards of previous years. In previous years, although none of the meets were ever self-sustaining, the meets had been national in character, with various parts of the country represented.\footnote{"Women's Track and Field Committee Report," A.A.U. Minutes, 1934, p. 150.} The committee urged greater publicity directed towards interesting the public in viewing the competitions. The Indoor Championship, though it was a great success athletically, was a financial disaster. The publicity provided for the meet was basically the same as for the men's championships, yet the poor turnout of spectators for the women's championship pointed to a fundamental lack of interest in the women's events.\footnote{Ibid., p. 151.}

Perhaps reasons other than the depression should be investigated briefly for the lack of interest in competitive athletics for women. One possibility was raised by Ms. Catherine D. Meyer, who said:

> At the time I was competing (about 1925-1931) there were no Negroes competing. In fact I can remember only one girl that
competed in a meet once. She was quite good, a broad jumper from Plainfield, New Jersey. I asked her if she were going to the Nationals, because her performance warranted it. She said, "Oh, I couldn't go there, I wouldn't." I don't know if it was because she felt she wouldn't be accepted, that she couldn't stay at the same hotels or that she couldn't be part of the team, but it was not long after that the big clubs, even Prudential, began disbanding their athletic associations.  

Another possibility could have been that the Women's Division began concentrating their efforts upon the girls and women in out-of-school situations, particularly those in industry. One of their projects was to promote intramural type programs in industrial concerns. Perhaps their ideals and objectives were also reaching industry. Ms. Meyer indicated that when Prudential disbanded its athletic club, possibly for financial reasons, it was replaced by a sort of athletic association which sponsored excursions for the employees, a dance perhaps once a year, and other minor events. However, they did not want a team which could compete outside the association.  

Financing the clubs became increasingly difficult and interest seemed to fall away. The big athletic clubs like the Millrose Athletic Club, the Meadowbrook club, the Pasadena Athletic Club, the Los Angeles Athletic

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1Interview with Ms. Catherine D. Meyer.

2Ibid.
Club, no longer sponsored a women's track and field team. When the writer asked Ms. Meyer if she could point to any one reason for the drop-off in women's track and field in the 1930's, she answered, "I think DGWS [formerly the Women's Athletic Section of the American P.E. Association] was the biggest factor; the blacks also had something to do with it."  

Summary

Numerous materials and documents have been presented in this chapter which show the extent of the involvement of certain organizations and individuals in the questions surrounding women's athletics in the United States from 1922 through 1934, particularly in track and field. The primary question during this period revolved around the control of women's athletics. The Women's Athletic Committee of the American Physical Education Association, the Amateur Athletic Union, and the National Women's Track and Field Committee were the main contenders for leadership in this area. The Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation was also influential in the controversy; their philosophy and ideals were similar to those of the Women's Athletic Committee.

The conflict over the direction of women's track and

\[1\] Ibid.
field was provoked by the announcement that a team sponsored by the National Women's Track Athletics Committee, led by Dr. Harry E. Stewart, would be sent to Paris for the Women's Olympic Games in 1922 and the suggestion that the A.A.U. was considering taking control of that sport. The rapid growth of interest and participation in track and field necessitated that a regulatory body assume the direction of the sport and the A.A.U. believed it was the organization most qualified to administer guidance and control.

Both the men and the women leaders in physical education were opposed to the A.A.U.'s taking control of women's athletics, but for somewhat different reasons. The men feared that the A.A.U. was making an effort to control all athletics in the United States and that women were only pawns in the game. The women, on the other hand, believed that the power to regulate and control women's athletics should remain in the hands of women. They were concerned about perceived physiological and moral dangers in intensive competition and fearful of the consequences of over-specialization and the exploitation of women athletes by male-dominated organizations. Their idea was to promote "sane" athletics for women, i.e. intramural activities, play days and sports days,
activities which fit the pattern of educational thought during that period.

The decision of the A.A.U. to assume the control of women's track and field in 1922 was met with hostility by women physical educators. Their opposition efforts were concentrated upon reducing competition at the scholastic and collegiate levels while the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation focused its attention upon out-of-school competitions. The extensive campaigns of the Women's Athletic Committee and the Women's Division moved many state high school associations to outlaw competitions for girls.

The efforts of Dr. Stewart to promote track and field as a sport for women were not appreciated by the physical education profession, though he was a member of it. His plan to co-operate with the A.A.U. aroused the enmity of leaders in the profession. His suggestion that his Track Athletics Committee come under the wing of the A.A.U. as a department was not acceptable to the A.A.U. either. The establishment of the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale, a separate international sports federation for the control of women's sports, was the avenue Dr. Stewart chose to take in order to do what he believed was best for the sport. The intervention of the International Amateur Athletic Federation into the
question of control ended in a decision (1926) which made the I.A.A.F. the controlling international body for women's track and field, in conjunction with the F.S.F.I.

The opposition of the women was such that in 1929 the Women's Division of the N.A.A.F. issued a protest to the International Olympic Committee calling for the elimination of all women's events from the Olympic Games. Women's track and field, however, came under particular attack. This protest was sent to all National Olympic Committees. The I.O.C. decided not to omit women's track and field from the program at the Los Angeles Games, however, it may have been only because the I.A.A.F. threatened to withdraw the men from competition. Had the I.O.C. been prepared to eliminate all women's events, then the I.A.A.F. might not have protested.

The publicity surrounding women's track and field during that period forced the A.A.U. to institute a number of changes within its structure to permit greater control of women's activities by women themselves and to improve the conditions under which women competed. Changes were made in rules to insure that the "moral integrity" of women athletes was protected, i.e. the designation of female chaperones, more women coaches and officials, etc. Studies were undertaken with a view towards countering charges that women athletes suffered
physiological damage as a result of their activity. Perhaps the A.A.U. would have taken measures to improve the conditions of women athletes anyway, however, improvement was assured by the constant criticisms levelled at it by the women physical educators and the Women's Division of the N.A.A.F. It is to the credit of the A.A.U., for whatever reasons, that women's track and field survived at all during this period.
CHAPTER VII

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SPECIFIC OLYMPIC SPORTS
1920-1932

The previous two chapters of this dissertation have dealt, to a large extent, with the leaders and the organizations which have influenced the evolution of women's participation in the Olympic Games at the international level and at the national level in the United States. This chapter investigates the specific sports in which women competed at the summer Olympic Games, beginning with the Games at Antwerp in 1920 and continuing through the Los Angeles Games of 1932. The topical approach is intended to allow the reader to follow more easily the factors which influenced the development of women's participation in specific areas of Olympic sports during this period. Sports which are investigated in this chapter are: (1) tennis, which was removed from the Olympic program for both men and women after the Paris Games of 1924, (2) swimming, a consistently popular Olympic sport for women, (3) fencing, which was introduced in 1924, (4) gymnastics, first admitted as a competitive sport
in 1928, and (5) track and field, also admitted for the first time in 1928.

Tennis, 1920-1924

Women's tennis was one of the few sports the International Olympic Committee considered acceptable for inclusion in the Olympic Games. Except for the exclusion of women in the 1904 Games, women were admitted in all Olympic tennis competitions from 1900 through 1924. Generally, the tennis world paid little attention to the Olympic Games competition, judging them rather insignificant as compared to the Wimbledon and Forest Hills competitions. This attitude was, perhaps, more prevalent in the United States. The United States Lawn Tennis Association, as an example, had accepted in 1919 the invitation of the American Olympic Committee to participate in the Olympic Games in 1920. However, when the schedule was announced for the Olympic tournament, the USLTA asked Belgian authorities to change the events from August to July, since the U.S. National Championships were to be held on the same dates as the Olympic tournaments. The Organizing Committee replied that it was unable to make such a change and the USLTA withdrew from the Games.¹

¹Joanna Davenport, "History and Interpretation of Amateurism . . .," p. 115.
Thirteen nations were represented in the Olympic Games at Antwerp in 1920. Since the Games in Stockholm, the indoor events had been abolished leaving only five tennis events for the 1920 Games. Women were represented in three: tennis singles, women's doubles (an added event), and mixed doubles.¹ France won the mixed doubles and the great Suzanne Lenglen, also of France, won the women's singles tournament. Miss Lenglen later became the world's first women's professional tennis player. Great Britain, the other tennis power in the early Olympic games, won both first and second places in the doubles tournament.²

In the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris, fourteen nations were represented in the tennis tournament with thirty-one competitors.³ The women's matches were played concurrently with the men's events on the Olympic courts at Colombes. The American women's team, appearing in an Olympic contest for the first time, won every event on the program in which they were represented.⁴ Suzanne Lenglen, the champion of the 1920 Games at Antwerp, was

¹Official Report of the Organizing Committee--Games of the VII Olympiad, Antwerp, Belgium, 1920, p. 36.
²Monique Berlioux, D'Olympic à Mexico, p. 629.
the great favorite for 1924. However, as the tournament approached, she claimed not to be feeling well and forfeited her games. The rising American tennis star, Helen Wills, won the singles' tournament over another French player, Mlle. Vlasto. The women's doubles team, composed of Helen Wills and Mrs. George W. Wightman, won the championship over the team from Great Britain. Mrs. Wightman, after whom the Wightman Cup is named, was also the female member of the mixed doubles team which defeated another American team for the gold medal.\(^1\)

The Controversy Between the I.O.C. and the I.L.T.F.

The International Lawn Tennis Federation dismissed the Olympic Games as rather insignificant and unimportant in the early twentieth century and in 1926 informed the International Olympic Committee that it would withdraw from competition in the Olympic Games unless a number of demands were met. On the other hand, the I.O.C. accused the I.L.T.F. of refusing to bow to the rules and organization of the International Olympic Games. The International Olympic Committee felt that to grant the demands of the I.L.T.F. would make the Olympic Games look like just another tournament in the I.L.T.F.'s schedule of events and the I.O.C. an appendage of the I.L.T.F.

\(^{1}\)Ibid., p. 95.
The demands of the I.L.T.F. do not appear to be outrageous. The I.L.T.F. requested at least one representative on the International Olympic Committee and asked to be allowed to cooperate in the technical and material organization of the lawn tennis competitions at the Olympic Games. The Lawn Tennis Federation also asked that the holding of Olympic competitions in tennis not cancel or supersede the officially recognized lawn tennis championships. In other words, the Olympic Games were not to be regarded as the "championship of the world in lawn tennis."\(^1\) However, the real bone of contention, as far as the International Olympic Committee was concerned, was the I.L.T.F.'s stand on the subject of the requalification of professionals.\(^2\) The I.L.T.F. demanded that the I.O.C. accept the I.L.T.F.'s definition of an amateur as far as lawn tennis was concerned.\(^3\)

The I.O.C. in its session at Monaco in 1927 decided to inform the I.L.T.F. that the I.O.C. was obliged to respect the "laws of qualification" acted on at the Olympic Congress of Prague in 1925 and that it was not possible to meet the demands of the I.L.T.F. The

\(^1\)Mayer, A Travers . . . , p. 124.

\(^2\)The I.O.C. did not approve of the I.L.T.F.'s practice of requalifying professionals as amateurs.

\(^3\)Mayer, A Travers . . . , p. 124.
following year at the session in Amsterdam, the I.O.C. adopted a resolution in regard to the problems between these two bodies:

The I.O.C., having considered all known facts since its meeting of Monaco regrets:

2. That the International Federation of Lawn Tennis has forbidden its members to take part in the Olympic Games in Amsterdam because the I.O.C. does not allow the requalification of professionals.

The I.O.C., desirous of maintaining Olympic amateurism in the Olympic Games and wishing them to remain open to all amateurs, (reminds you) that only the amateurs whose qualification is in accord with Olympic regulations can be admitted to the Olympic Games.\(^1\)

The I.O.C. further stated that it was their hope that the I.L.T.F. would make an effort, in good faith, to bring their rules in line with the principles of Olympic amateurism, or at least to allow those members of the I.L.T.F. who played under Olympic regulations to freely participate in Olympic competition. The I.O.C. indicated that failure to reach an understanding would mean that tennis would no longer figure in the program of the Olympic Games.\(^2\) The I.L.T.F. declined to pursue the matter at that time, thus, tennis was eliminated from the Olympic program and has not been reinstated for either men or women.

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 125. \(^2\)Ibid., pp. 125-126.
Swimming

The International Swimming Federation, which was organized in 1908 during the Olympic Games of 1908 in London, supported the inclusion of women in competitive swimming and diving right from the beginning and had taken an official position regarding the development of swimming for women.¹ The present President of F.I.N.A., Harold Henning, in a letter to the writer indicated that F.I.N.A. has been adamant in respecting the rights of all individuals and groups to participate in the disciplines of that organization.² Since its beginning, this sport has also enjoyed wholehearted support from the public and the competitors' progress was followed with keen interest. Whether the great strides in performance spurred public interest or whether that favorable attitude of the public was partially responsible for the progress of competitive swimming cannot be easily measured. However, it is probable that this supportive climate promoted greater acceptance of women's participation in that sport. The progress of women's performances at that time was so spectacular that it could not fail to arouse interest and enthusiasm.

¹Letter from Harold Henning to the writer, April 29, 1973.
²Ibid.
From 1912 to 1920 alone the record for the women's 100 meter freestyle was lowered by 8.6 seconds. That time had been lowered from 82.2 seconds in 1912 to 65.9 seconds by 1936. American swimmers made sensational new strides during the first World War, primarily because of the revolutionary new "American crawl." News of the new stroke had seeped through to Europe, but as Ernest Bland stated:

European Swimming circles did not appreciate the significance of the revolution until they saw the all-conquering American turn out in the Olympic fresh water lagoon alongside the Scheldt.¹

The Olympic Games at Antwerp in 1920 were the first Games in which any full team of American women athletes had participated. The changing social atmosphere during the eight intervening years between 1912 and 1920 had helped to make this possible. The main factor which permitted women's participation in 1920 hinged around the admission of women swimmers to registration in the A.A.U. in 1914 and the subsequent holding of national championships in the United States in 1916.

The Women's Swimming Association of New York produced practically all the American champions of 1920 at Antwerp and the 1924 Games at Paris. The New York

Association was the "hotbed" of the development of female swimmers during the 1920's. The American crawl was new and according to Aileen Riggin Soule, diving champion of the Antwerp Games, the New York Association did it better than anybody else. The person responsible for bringing the Association's swimmers to peak performance was their coach, Mr. L. B. de Handley, also coach of the women's Olympic team in 1920 and 1924.

Ethelda Bleibtrey was the female swimming star at the 1920 Games in Antwerp. Miss Bleibtrey won three gold medals, an outstanding accomplishment considering the fact that, including the two diving events, there were only five events on the entire program for women. The "stylish, flaxen-haired" woman was winner of the 100 meter freestyle, the 300 meter freestyle and a member of the winning 400 meter freestyle relay team. Of Ms. Bleibtrey's performance Bland says: "Hitherto women had been content to copy men, but Ms. Bleibtrey swam with the easy, rhythmical grace characteristic of her sex."

Interestingly enough American newspapers gave a

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2Interview with Aileen Riggin Soule, July, 1973; interviewed for the writer by Mr. Robert Miller.
4Bland, op. cit., p. 108.
great deal more publicity to the accomplishments of Aileen Riggin, the fourteen year old American girl who won the springboard "fancy diving" competition. She was one of the youngest, if not the youngest, participant in the Games and according to the publicity she dived with expertise inconceivable in a girl so young. The Americans, incidentally, won the first four places in that diving competition. The only event the American team did not win was the high diving competition, in which it was not entered.

The women's swimming program was augmented by two events for the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris to include the 100 meter backstroke and the 200 meter breaststroke. The American team was once again outstandingly victorious, winning first, second, and third places in the 100 meter freestyle, the 400 meter freestyle and the springboard diving events. Sybil Bauer, who had broken the men's record for the quarter-mile backstroke in 1923, won the gold medal in the 100 meter backstroke; Aileen Riggin placed third in that event. The only event won by another nation was the 200 meter breaststroke won by Lucy Morton of Great Britain. This was an event which was more traditionally European, yet Agnes Geraghty of the United States placed second.¹

¹Berlioux, D'Olympie à Mexico, Palmarés, pp. 575-582 passim.
The progress of the female swimmers was easily apparent. Of the 16 swimmers competing in the 100 meter freestyle, the times of 8 of them were superior to that of the great Australian champion of 1912, Fanny Durack, who held the world record for many years for that distance.\textsuperscript{1} In the 100 meter backstroke the superiority of the back crawl, used by almost all the competitors in 1924, was confirmed. Those competitors employing the old style were eliminated in the preliminary series of heats.\textsuperscript{2}

The bathing suits worn in the 1920's were a factor, perhaps, in the slower times of some competitors. Ms. Soule indicated that some of the "older" competitors (she was only 14) wore skirts and tights. The divers wore woolen suits, which although they were not as heavy as the older suits, still broke up the "line" of their bodies in their dives, unlike the modern latex suits which allow an unbroken line. Some of the swimmers, on the other hand, wore Italian silk outfits which allowed them to achieve greater speed.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1}Official Report of the Organizing Committee, 1924 Olympic Games, p. 473.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 474.

\textsuperscript{3}Interview with Aileen Riggin Soule, July, 1973.
The Concern of American Officials for the Swimmers' Morality.

In 1924 the women swimmers, instead of being allowed to live in Paris as they wished, were housed at Rocquencourt, about fifteen miles from La Tourelle where they practiced. According to Executive Secretary Rubien of the A.A.U., the American Olympic Committee did not want to take the responsibility of allowing the girls to live in Paris. Rubien reported that none of the hotels suggested as headquarters was considered suitable for their young girls.¹

The report of the swimming coach, L. de B. Handley, was very critical of the arrangement, saying:

It was the common report that the outstanding reason for the selection of Rocquencourt was the wish of the authorities to keep the athletes away from the temptations of Paris. It seems rather absurd. Certainly individuals who for years have been eagerly looking forward to the chance of reaping Olympic laurels are not likely to jeopardize that chance by indiscretions at the very time when their hopes appear about to be fulfilled.²

Mr. Handley indicated that the girls had to go to La Tourelle on buses in the beginning, which required from 5 to 6 hours of travel daily. When cars were


finally provided, each car carried seven passengers. Handley also criticized the handling of the food situation. He seemed to think the diet was totally unfit for athletes. Also, following the French tradition, anyone late for meals had to go without. Even legitimate delays were not taken into consideration. The coach further stated that the isolation of women swimmers at Rocquencourt had a negative effect on them in that there was little recreation or amusement available, which irritated the girls used to living in cities.¹

The Development of American Supremacy in Swimming

The accomplishments of the United States' swimmers in 1920 and 1924 aroused a great deal of interest and perhaps made it easier for other women to follow in their footsteps. The recognition received by the swimmers of that period, Ms. Soule felt, was greater than that received by the male athletes for similar accomplishments, perhaps because the participation in the Olympic Games by women was new and unique.² The swimmers, on the other hand, swam for the benefit of the United States and "just for the fun of it." Since there were no women in professional sports, those women who participated in Olympic

¹Ibid.

sports received the total attention of the people. Aileen Riggin and her associates were "invited every-
where."

One of the important considerations for Aileen R. Soule to compete was the prospect of travelling, which she enjoyed immensely. The A.A.U. was "very strict" concerning their accepting invitations to perform. An example of the A.A.U.'s policy was related in an incident in 1923 when Miss Riggin, Gertrude Ederle and Helen Wainwright were invited to tour Europe and give a series of exhibitions. The A.A.U. told them they were needed to raise money in the United States to send the American team to the 1924 Olympics and could not accept the invitation. They attempted to defy the A.A.U., resorting to legal action and accepting transportation from a steamship line. After arriving in Europe, however, the A.A.U. order forbidding their taking part in any sports activity, even exhibition, forced them to return to the United States to tour "Podunk."¹ Thus, it would seem that the exploitation of athletes by sports associations to solicit money for the organization or the Olympic movement was not frowned upon.

In any event American swimmers rose quickly to the forefront, because of outstanding coaches and coaching,

¹Ibid.
pre-eminence in the American crawl, because they captured the public fancy, and perhaps because the United States had better facilities, although quite lacking, than elsewhere. The lack of adequate facilities was a significant factor in the shifting of the seat of women's swimming from the East to the West Coast after the Olympic Games of 1924. Even Mr. de B. Handley, as excellent a coach as he was and credited with bringing so many top-notch swimmers to the fore, could not prevent the shift.\footnote{Interview with Daniel Ferris, March, 1973.} The California climate was more conducive to producing better swimmers and divers. There the women could practice out-of-doors practically the whole year round, whereas in the East the indoor facilities for women were grossly inadequate. Indoor Olympic standards hardly existed and women had to wait for summer to go outdoors to practice where the diving boards were the specified height for Olympic competition. The men, on the other hand, had clubs where they could practice all winter. The women's team was allowed to use the pool only one hour per day to practice both swimming and diving.\footnote{Interview with Aileen Riggin Soule, July, 1973.}
Women's Swimming: The Olympic Games, 1928

The team of American female swimmers going to Amsterdam in 1928 were coached by the famous Bob Kiphuth of Yale University. The team of 18 swimmers won five of the seven first places. Though they were outstanding in the freestyle swims and the relay, and the diving events, the backstroke and the breaststroke gave them problems. Some of the European countries, Holland in particular, had made great strides since the Paris Games of 1924, winning second place in the 400 meters freestyle, second in the 200 meter breaststroke, and first in the 100 meter backstroke. Martha Norelius of New York did a repeat performance by winning the 400 meter freestyle again in 1928. In Amsterdam, at the age of 19, she cut 18.4 seconds off her Paris time in 1924, and defeated her closest rival, Marie Braun of Holland, by a full 15 seconds.¹ Marie Braun was a fine swimmer in her own right, having won the 100 meter backstroke, which made Martha Norelius' victory seem even greater. In the diving events the United States' Betty Becker Pinkston and Georgia Coleman won first and second places in the high diving competition and Helen Meany, Georgia Coleman and Dorothy

¹Berlioux, D'Olympie à Mexico, p. 151.
Poynton won 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places in springboard diving.¹

Swimming, 1932

All the gold medals except one, that of the 200 meters breaststroke won by Claire Dennis of Australia, were won by the American swimmers in the Olympic Games at Los Angeles in 1932. Eleanor Holm who began swimming competitively at age 12 and was a member of the 1928 Olympic swimming team at age 14, was first in the backstroke at Los Angeles.² Helene Madison, who had broken 12 world's freestyle records from 1929 to 1932 and had established 29 American freestyle winning records, won the 100 meter freestyle race, the 400 meter freestyle and was a member of the winning 400 meter freestyle relay team.³ Her coach said of her: "... 'She has a certain fear of losing and that makes her extend herself. That is what makes her a champion.'"⁴ She defeated the young Dutch girl of 15 years, Willy den Ouden, in the 100 meters freestyle. In 1932 Helene Madison held 16 of the 17 freestyle world's records for women. The only one she did not

³Ibid., p. 87.
⁴Ibid.
hold was the 800 meters title held by Yvonne Godard of France.¹ Incidentally, if the Americans complained about French food and accommodations in 1924, then it was the French's turn in 1932. Mlle Godard was the only female representative from France in Los Angeles in 1932. A champion, Mlle Godard succumbed to "the heavy American food," and being the only French girl she felt completely alone in the hotel for women competitors. After a hard day of physical effort, there were not the opportunities for recreation, talking, and gaiety at meals which were typical of the Olympic Village,² which included no provisions for women competitors.

The coach of the New York Swimming Association and Olympic coach of winners like Aileen Riggin, Ethelda Bleibtrey, Gertrude Ederle, Eleanor Holm, and Helene Madison, L. de B. Handley, said that swimming really came into its own at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles:

So keen was the interest that the big natatorium stadium proved inadequate to accommodate the great crowds eager to witness the international contests. Tickets were sold out far in advance. Admission was at a premium throughout. Even the post-games meet, which offered a comparatively

²La Participation Francaise aux Jeux Olympique de la Xe Olympiade, 1932, French Olympic Committee Report, p. 56.
unimportant program, drew an overflowing 
swarm of enthusiastic fans.¹

In 1932, the A.A.U. appointed for the first time a Women's 
Swimming Committee as a separate group, a sign of the 
growing importance of women Olympic competitors in swim-
ning. In 1932 all women Olympic competitors were members 
of the A.A.U. clubs.²

The United States' team of 19 members was the 
largest contingent of girl swimmers, winning every event 
except the 200 meter breaststroke (the U.S. placed 5th, 
6th, and 7th). American competitors placed 1st, 2nd, and 
3rd for a clean sweep in both diving events. Australia, 
with its team of three swimmers placed first in the 200 
meter breaststroke and second in the 100 meter backstroke 
behind Eleanor Holm of the United States. The Japanese 
women's team of seven competitors did not follow the win-
ning example of the men's team although Hedeko Maehata 
managed to take second place in the 200 meters backstroke. 
The Dutch team, with only five members, showed Holland to 
be the strongest team behind the United States. Willy 
den Ouden won second place in the 100 meter freestyle and 
the 4 x 100 relay team placed second. Great Britain won

¹"Post-Olympic Feats and Cheers," Literary Digest, 
CXIV (Sept. 3, 1932), p. 27.

²A.A.U. Minutes, 1932, p. 76.
third place in the 100 meter backstroke and in the 4 x 100 meter relay.¹

Five of the thirteen countries represented in the Los Angeles Games entered only one contestant each in swimming: France, Germany, Austria, Sweden, South Africa, and Brazil. This fact alone tends to show the extent to which the travelling distance and the depression affected registration for the Olympic Games. Another strong factor may have been that the leaders in the swimming circles expected American women to dominate the competitions and did not send competitors for that reason.

**Fencing**

Fencing as an Olympic event for women was first proposed in 1921 at the International Fencing Federation Congress at Lausanne by the British representatives, Rev. de Courcy-Laaffan and Mr. Low. According to the 1920 Report of the American Olympic Committee, the feeling of most European representatives of the Congress was that the time was not ripe for women to enter the Olympic competitions in fencing. The report stated that if a real desire was shown by Americans to place foil fencing on the Olympic program, such a result could be realized

for the 1928 Games in Amsterdam.¹

Sometime between the 1921 Congress of the International Fencing Federation and the 1924 Olympic Games, foil fencing was approved for women as an Olympic event. The writer could find no mention of that approval in official International Olympic Committee documents. At the twentieth session of the I.O.C. in Paris (1924), however, a motion was adopted which stated that the participation of women in the Olympic Games would be maintained at the status quo, but that under no conditions would the International Olympic Committee accept as obligatory female competitions in fencing.²

The Olympic fencing events in Paris in 1924 took place in the Velodrome d'Hiver. Twenty-five contestants represented nine nations in the first competitions. Madame E. O. Osier of Denmark was the first female Olympic fencing gold medalist. Showing a clear superiority, she suffered no defeats: 16 victories with 80 touches given against 34 received.³ The commentary of the Paris newspaper Matin concerning that event praised


Madame Osier's feminine grace and her "masculine" qualities of judgment, precision, and control.\(^1\) Mrs. Davis of Great Britain was second with 13 victories and 3 defeats: 72 touches given against 48 received; Mme. Heckscher of Hungary was third with 12 victories and 3 defeats: 71 touches given against 36 received. The team from Denmark, starting out with four representatives, placed three in the finals; Great Britain placed 2. The average age of the participants was greater than 25 years. The three medalists in the tournament were 34, 31, and 23 years old, respectively, showing the importance of experience to the art of fencing.\(^2\)

In 1928 the United States entered two women in the foils competitions, Miss Marion Lloyd and Mrs. Irma Hopper. Though Mrs. Hopper was eliminated in the preliminary competitions, Miss Lloyd, the first American woman fencer to come through the preliminaries, failed to make the finals by only two touches. She fenced very well in the semi-finals, giving the Olympic champion, Helene Mayer, her only defeat.\(^3\)

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\(^2\) *Games of the VIII Olympiad, 1924*, p. 274.

At the Los Angeles Olympic Games there were seventeen entries in the individual foils event for women, three of whom were from the United States. All members of the United States' team were trained at the Salle d'Armes Vince in New York. The great Ellen Preis of Austria was the gold medalist, Heather Guiness of Great Britain won second place and Erna Bogen of Germany won the bronze medal. Marion Lloyd of the United States was ninth in the tournament standings.¹

Gymnastics

Although gymnastics had been part of the festivities accompanying the Olympic Games since the Athens Games of 1906, the socio-cultural atmosphere in the pre-suffrage era was not a favorable one for the development of competition for women in that sport. The demonstrations depicting the "natural approach" to gymnastics developing in Europe, particularly in the Scandinavian countries, was popular to organizers and spectators alike. Women were not represented in any official capacity in the gymnastic societies or federations, which prevented any development of competition for women. Dr. Margaret C. Brown, manager of the United States' Women's Olympic squad in gymnastics, also cited the devastation of World

War I, the inflation which followed it, and the lack of status of women as further contributory factors which prevented the development of competition in gymnastics for women.¹ Women in gymnastics were ignored by the federations in much the same way as women in track and field were ignored. Demonstrations of the "natural" gymnastics were popular because women were not portrayed in the competitive "masculine" gymnastics which required displays of strength.

In 1928, however, the International Olympic Committee approved for the first time a rather loosely organized team competition for women. Teams of 16 to 18 women per country were to be allowed to execute "general exercises, exercises and apparatus, and jumping"² and a woman's jury was to be on hand to judge the performances. Although the competitions were loosely organized, there was a "glimmer of an organization of a women's technical committee" which would later play a strong role in developing competitive female gymnastics. One of the problems at that time, as Dr. Brown stated it, was women's inability to coach and manage their own teams. She further indicated that the International Federation of Gymnastics

¹Material on tape from Margaret C. Brown, June, 1973.
²Games of the IX Olympiad: Programs, Rules and Regulations. Published by the Dutch Olympic Committee, 1928, p. 12.
had no definite opposition to the participation of women in the Olympic Games, but that since men had to handle both the management of the men's and women's teams, attention was directed toward the men's teams.¹

If women had felt that progress was made in competitive gymnastics in the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam, then they were surely disappointed when in June of 1931 the International Federation of Gymnastics decided to hold no competitions for women in the Los Angeles Games nor did it even propose holding group exhibitions as it had in the past.²

There were a number of possible reasons for this decision. First of all, there was no women's organization to promote a gymnastic competition in Los Angeles in 1932. The distance from Europe, where most of the teams would have been coming from, and the expense involved in transporting whole teams, was prohibitive, particularly since the Depression had also hit Europe by that time. Furthermore, the lack of interest in gymnastics in the United States in 1932 made the idea of competition somewhat futile.³ Dr. Brown gives this explanation of the situation in the U.S. at that time:

¹Tape by Brown, June, 1973.


1932 was a time of transition from the traditional formal gymnastics to the natural movement approach to gymnastics; 1932 was the height of the era of controversy between formal and informal gymnastics (whatever that means) in the United States. And in the bitterness of that controversy, gymnastics were eliminated from the school programs, indeed, there appeared to be a kind of stigma about the very word gymnastics. Thus, while Europe was developing a movement approach to gymnastics, they were abandoned in the United States. So we had nothing very much to show in the Los Angeles Games except perhaps some of the progressive turnverein gymnastics.

Professional women in physical education frowned on the Olympics at that time and only the amateur sportswomen supported them. The home people who should have been hostesses for foreign teams provided no hospitality and it was reported that the great athlete Babe Didrikson and other women who did participate in the Olympic Games were ostracized. So, without an invitation from the U.S. for women's teams to compete, without an organized international women's technical committee, and in consideration of the expense of transporting teams to the Olympic Games when there was no interest in gymnastics in the home country, I imagine the men decided to omit them at that time.¹

The decision in 1931 to exclude women's gymnastics from the Olympic program in 1932 was apparently not a very popular one, because at the meeting of the International Federation of Gymnastics in Prague in 1932 it was decided that women's participation in future Olympic Games would be included "without discussion." The Federation also confirmed that the directors of the

¹Taped material from Dr. M. C. Brown, June, 1973.
competitions and members of the jury must be women only. Yet when the Countess Zamoyska of Poland asked that women be given representation of the Federation's Technical Committee, the assembly refused the proposal.¹

Since the first international competitions for women in gymnastics were to be held in Budapest in 1934, it was important that some kind of arrangement be made to manage the competitions. The women then decided to form their own technical committee, whose work would come under the Executive Technical Committee of the F.I.G. for approval.² Concerning the women's program for the Olympic Games of 1936, the F.I.G. decided that it was to be studied and established under the care of a "special committee," which would submit it to the Technical Committee for approval.³

According to Dr. Brown, the motive for the organization of a women's technical committee at that time was "the general demand for women's participation in the 1936 Olympic Games to be held in Berlin." The organization was finally established in 1935 in Brussels when the proposal prepared by Madame Marie Provaznikova of

²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 20.
Czechoslovakia for such a committee was accepted.¹ Madame Provaznikova was the major force behind the organization of the women's technical committee. Czechoslovakia had for many years developed excellent women's programs, women teachers, and women judges; it was also most progressive in gymnastics. Provaznikova, head of the women's Sokol organization and teacher of physical education at the Institute of Physical Education at the University of Prague, and members of the Czech group were responsible for preparing the rules and regulations of the Women's Technical Committee.²

Track and Field

The Entry of American Women in Track and Field, 1928

The entry of American women in the track and field program at Amsterdam in 1928 drew a lot of attention. Women were competing in these events for the first time and their participation was still a controversial subject. Women athletes were at this point in time:

an occasion of much smiling behind the hand, a subject of horror among physicians and reformers, and an object of lifted eyebrows in the best circles . . .³

¹Taped interview with Dr. Margaret C. Brown, June, 1973.
²Ibid.
³Fred L. Steers, Chm., Committee on Women's Athletics,
During the winter before the Olympic Games, women's participation in some of the large indoor athletic events in the U.S. was looked upon with open derision by "the representatives of the stronger sex" in the galleries. Women were included in these meets to help prepare them for the Olympic Games. Female athletes were important in 1928, because it was believed that American supremacy in track and field hinged upon the performance of the American women in the Games. Fred Steers, Chairman of the Committee on Women's Athletics of the A.A.U. indicated that:

with the threat of the methodical, serious-minded Germans, added to that of the long-winded fish-eating Finns, who nearly licked us in 1920, it is important that our girl athletes give us some help in 1928, instead of proving the handicap they appear to be at this moment.

American women had not been exposed to the opportunities for competition that were available to European women, therefore, the projection for American success in the Olympic Games was not particularly good.

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2Ibid.


4Ibid.
Emphasis on the Masculine Aspect of Women Athletes

The European competition at the Amsterdam Olympic Games in 1928 had participated in the Women's Olympic Games of 1922 and the Second International Ladies' Games in Gothenburg, Sweden, in 1926. Their ability as competitors was not questioned, yet in the literature which described their performances, writers could not resist the temptation to either compare women to men or make them appear ridiculous.

All students of athletics who followed the women's competition could not help but be impressed by the excellent performances. The style employed by the women in all of their events was identical to that used by men.1

Spectators were aware not only of the use of the "masculine" style by female competitors, they also made much to do about the physical appearance of the women participants. All the women athletes at the Olympic Games in 1928 had abandoned the pleated skirts of their older sisters for shorts. The inappropriate dress had been discarded by most serious competitors soon after the English girl, Elaine Burton first competed in shorts in 1921, which caused quite a sensation. Although wearing short hair and shorts were far more practical for the

competitors, officials and spectators present remarked about the females' "masculine" characteristics. For example, Dr. Fr. Messerli, historiographer of the International Olympic Committee in the early 1950's, stated:

In the Stadium, dressed in sporting attire, women competitors presented an unusual masculine aspect, but they showed a very fine spirit of sportsmanship and were in splendid form ... 1

Louis Schroeder wrote in the American Physical Education Review that:

It was difficult from afar to distinguish the girl athlete from the boy athlete, as the costume was the same in most cases. 2

The way in which women athletes were characterized can further be ascertained from a comment by Dr. Messerli about Lina Radke, the German woman who won the 800 meter event in 1928.

We were very much interested to hear that Madame Radke, winner of the 800 m was actually married and mother of a child, she kept her own household while training for sports. 3

The Competitions in 1928

The Canadian team did quite well in all the events

1Dr. Fr. Messerli, Participation To [sic] the Olympic Games, Edited by the International Olympic Committee, Lausanne, 1952, p. 10.


3Messerli, Participation To . . ., p. 11.
in Amsterdam although one of the favorites, Myrtle Cook, in the 100 meters event was disqualified. The six Canadian athletes finished ahead of all other nations. The attractive Ethel Catherwood set a new world's record in the high jump of 1 meter 59. Though Myrtle Cook was disqualified for "jumping the gun" on the 100 meters dash, she came back to run the last leg of the 400 meter relay. So determined was she to make amends for the mistake she had made that Betty Robinson, winner of the 100 meters and the anchor leg for the American team, could not catch her.

The discus throw was won by Halinaa Konopacka of Poland, also the winner at the 1926 Games at Gothenburg, Sweden. She broke the previous world's record with a throw of 128' 11-7/8"; she was followed by Lillian Copeland of the United States, a member of the Pasadena Athletic Club.

In the 800 meter event, Germany had placed three girls in the final and ran the final as a team, setting the pace for Lina Radke. Radke won the 800 meters, setting a new world's record. Just behind her was Kinuye Hitomi, Japan's only girl athlete in the Games.

The Controversial 800 Meter Event

The women's event of the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam which received the most attention was the 800
meters run. This event was the one which caused Marie-Thérèse Eyquem to state that the world press fell upon the incident, not to deplore the lack of preparation of the athletes, but in order to condemn track and field and sports events for women.\(^1\) Indeed, this certainly seemed to be the case. Avery Brundage indicated that the event caused such a stir that the I.A.A.F. decided to delete it from the program for women (and it stayed deleted until 1960). The president of the I.O.C., Comte de Baillet-Latour used the publicity surrounding the event to gather support for the suppression of women's track and field and indeed to try to suppress all women's events in the Olympic Games. The Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation of the United States used the event as part of its rationale to protest the participation of women in the Olympic Games, particularly in track and field. The London Times said of this event:

Four athletic events were decided in the Stadium today, one of them, the final of the 800 meters race for girls, [note the exclusive use of the word "girl" rather than "woman"] rather tending to leave the impression that such things should not be. Perhaps in the course of time a race of highly trained girl athletes will arise who will not reveal or feel more distress than the male champions towards the end of a severe ordeal, such as the 800 meters at an Olympic meeting. In the meantime the

\(^1\)Marie-Thérèse Eyquem, La Femme et Le Sport, p. 56.
process of beating records, such as was achieved by a German girl, and very nearly by K. Hitomi, of Japan, this afternoon would appear to be not without its dangers. The half dozen prostrate and obviously distressed forms lying in the grass at the side of the track after the race may not warrant a complete condemnation of the girl athletic championships, but it certainly suggests unpleasant possibilities.\[1\]

The New York Times was a bit more descriptive about the condition of the girls after the race:

The final of the women's 800 meter run, in which Frau Lina Radke of Germany set a world's record, plainly demonstrated that even this distance makes too great a call on feminine strength. At the finish 6 out of the 9 runners were completely exhausted and fell head long on the ground. Several had to be carried off the track.
The little American girl, Miss Florence MacDonald, who made a gallant try but was outclassed, was in a half faint for several minutes, while even the sturdy Miss Hitomi of Japan, who finished second, needed attention before she was able to leave the field.\[2\]

To state that the women were not properly trained for the event is not completely accurate. According to Webster, there was no undue stress in the preliminary heats of the event; he had seen strong running and some first class tactics. Webster indicated that the pace for the final was much too fast for some of the competitors who had not

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had a great deal of experience with pacing.\cite{1}

Dr. Messerli, an official in that event, spoke of it as "an amusing little incident" which he described as follows:

> One amusing little incident occurred at the Finals of the 800 m flat, when reaching the winning post, two Canadians and one Japanese competitor collapsed on the lawn, the public and the journalists believed them to be in a state of exhaustion. I was judging this particular event and on the spot at the time, I can therefore certify that there was nothing wrong with them, they burst into tears thus betraying their disappointment at having lost the race, a very feminine trait!\cite{2}

It is interesting to note that in the 1904 Olympic Games at St. Louis, there was a similar situation in the 800 meters event for men which caused comment:

> Thursday afternoon at the finish of the 800 meter run, two men fell to the track completely exhausted. One man was carried to his training quarters helpless. Another was laid out upon the grass and stimulants used to bring him back to life.

> All that the officials said was that the race was a good one; "that Breitkreux was game"; that Range ran a good race; yet no one condemned the race as being a detriment to the good of mankind, to the welfare of the runners.\cite{3}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1] Webster, *Athletics of To-Day* . . . , p. 11.
\item[3] "Olympic Games Officials Condemn Marathon Race," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (Sept. 4, 1904) from *Newspaper*.
\end{footnotes}
Everybody condemned the 800 meters event for women as a detriment to the good of mankind and to the welfare of the runners.

Ms. Ada Sackett Taylor, a member of the National Swimming Committee, chaperone of the Olympic swim team for 1928, wrote an article called "Women in Athletics" in which she stated that all track and field had come under fire because a young lady collapsed at the tape and disclaims the validity of such a position.

(1) Some in authority believed that the young woman collapsed because of nervousness and because the tenseness of her task was relieved, and not because of physical exhaustion. She was herself almost immediately and did not display any ill after-effects.²

She did not think it was the time to raise a scare over competition in track and field for women and suggested wise training, carefully thought and worked out, which would result in healthy women and star athletes.²

Yet if the 800 meters race served as an example of physiological damage such competition could provoke, the 100 meters race provided ammunition for reporters to exploit the psychological implications of competition

Clippings: Games of the III Olympiad located in the Olympic House in N.Y.C.

²Ibid.
for women and played upon the so-called "emotionality" of women. An article by Wyethe Williams of the New York Times on August 1, 1928, clearly derides the efforts of women athletes.

The 100 meters dash for women was by far the most interesting event on the program, inasmuch as it provided, aside from the race itself, other scenes entirely feminine, and never before witnessed in any Olympic stadium. Six girls were at the starting line when the event was called. All were extremely nervous and jumpy, several breaking ahead of the gun. Myrtle Cash of Canada, the second favorite, a slight attractive lass, wearing red shorts and a white silk blouse, then made a second break. Under Olympic rules she was disqualified.

When the starter waved her out she seemed not to comprehend for a moment and then burst into tears. She soon had company on the sidelines when Fraulein Schmidt, a buxom German blonde, also made a second break. But instead of tears, the German girl shook her fist under the starter's nose and the spectators for the moment thought she might stage a face-scratching and hair-pulling act.

The harrassed official backed away, waving the irate sprinter off the track, at the same time trying to comfort Myrtle Cook, who had sat down too near the starting line and was sobbing lustily. The starter fearing the bad effect upon the other girls, succeeded in getting the Canadian girl removed to a pile of cushions on the grass, where she remained, her head buried in her arms and her body shaking with sobs, for at least half an hour.

After the race the other Canadian girl sprinters sat with their arms about her, trying vainly to comfort her. Meanwhile Fraulein Schmidt departed from the scene,
vowing vengeance upon the race official
the next time they met.¹

This kind of spectacular or sensational reporting
has been passed on through the years. In a book revised
as late as 1968 (Richard Schaap's An Illustrated History
of the Olympics)² the author related a story about a
German swimmer, which has strong sexual overtones.

Female swimmers, too, suffered their
share of upsetting incidents. When Hilda
Schrader of Germany won the 200 meter
breast stroke and set a world record, the
German lass swam so furiously that on the
last lap the straps of her bathing suit
broke. After the completing the course,
the buxom blonde, modest by nature, stayed
in the water until the suit was fixed. "I
would have gone even faster," she said, "if
I had not been so embarrassed."³

If reporting was not sensational, then it was at
best mildly condescending. In Weyand's book, for example,
the author says of this first encounter between women on
the track:

After the tense battles between the
male athletes, the little touches of femi-
ninity manifested in the events for women
provided a welcome relief. When the girls
kissed each other before a race, the spec-
tators were greatly amused. The girls took
their work seriously and so did their

¹Wyethe Williams, "Americans Capture Two Olympic
Events, Setting New Marks," New York Times (Aug. 1,

²Richard Schaap, An Illustrated History of the

³Ibid.
officers, particularly P. J. Mulqueen, the president of the Canadian Olympic Committee. He seemed always to be fighting for the girls. They won, too!¹

John Kieran and Arthur Daley's book does not even include the women's track and field results for the 1928 Olympic Games. The only mention of women athletes was to say that it was the first time women competed in the track and field events, while the glories of men's athletic performances went on for more than twenty pages.²

Track and Field--Los Angeles, 1932

Fifty-four women track and field athletes took part in the Olympic Games at Los Angeles in 1932. But of the eleven countries represented, four of them had only one contestant: Australia, Mexico, New Zealand, and South Africa. Other countries entered were Germany, Poland, Canada, Great Britain, Japan, Holland, and the United States; the United States had the largest team with fifteen members.³ At the end of the Games, the United States had won all events except the 100 meters dash,

¹Weyand, The Olympic Pageant (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1952), pp. 214-215. The women's track and field section was mentioned under the section entitled "Champions in Other Sports."


which was won by Stanisława Walasiewicz (Stella Walsh) of Poland. Furthermore, world's records tumbled: Stella Walsh lowered the world record time for the 100 meter dash to 11.9 seconds. The former world's record holder, Miss Tellina Schuurman of Holland tied the Olympic record of 12.2 seconds in her trial heat, but the pace was so great that she was shut-out in the semi-finals.\(^1\) Babe Didrikson bettered the world records in the 80 meter hurdles, and the javelin. Although she did not win the high jump, as second place winner, Babe Didrikson also bettered the previous world record. Jean Shiley of the Meadowbrook Club in Philadelphia set a new world's record for the high jump of 5' 5-1/4"; all three places in the javelin throw were better than the previous world record.\(^2\) Lillian Copeland of Pasadena Athletic Club who won first place in the discus set a new Olympic record of 133 feet 2 inches (40.58 m), but failed to tumble the world record of 139' 5-1/2" (42.43 meters) made by Edwige Wajsowna of Poland in June of 1932.\(^3\)

**Stella Walsh, 1932**

One of the United States' greatest hopes for the


Olympic Games of Los Angeles until July was Stella Walsh. Stanisława Walasiewicz or Stella Walsh, as she was known in the United States, was Polish born and lived in Cleveland, Ohio. She was the winner of the 60 meters, 100 meters events in 1930, at the Women's World Games in Prague, where she had represented Poland and accounted for 15 points out of a total of 26 points.

Yet according to the New York Times, less than 24 hours before she was to take out naturalization papers to become a citizen of the United States, she announced that she had accepted a position in the office of the Polish Consul in New York. Her job with the New York Central Railroad, under whose auspices she ran, was abolished on July 1 and she let it be known that she placed her running career secondary to earning a living.¹

Needless to say, the United States was in the middle of a depression. In accepting the offer to work for the Polish government, she turned down an offer with the Cleveland Recreation Department. Had she accepted the Recreation Department position, she would have been ineligible for Olympic competition. Olympic rules branded competitors employed in physical education type jobs as professionals.² The publicity which surrounded this

²Ibid.
incident provoked considerable criticism of amateur standards, and the demand was made that Miss Walsh be barred from the Games.¹

Stella Walsh went on to win the 100 meters at Los Angeles for Poland, setting a new Olympic and world's record of 11.9 seconds, the first time a woman had officially beaten 12 seconds for that distance. Had she competed for the U.S., American athletes would have won all events.

Mildred "Babe" Didrikson

The story of Babe Didrikson is legend. In 1932 in Chicago, she won the national A.A.U. track and field championship for the Employer's Casualty all by herself. She was proficient in the hurdles, sprints, distance-running, the javelin, discus and high jump. Since Olympic rules allowed her to enter only three events, she was entered in the hurdles, javelin and high jump. In her preliminary heat of the 80 m hurdles, she equalled the world's record, set by Marjorie Clark of South Africa in 1931. In the final, though Evelyn Hall also of the U.S. led her over the last hurdle, the last burst of speed to the tape brought her a new world's record. In the javelin throw the Babe beat the old world's record,

¹"Our Friends the Enemy in the Olympic Games," Literary Digest (July 30, 1932), p. 32.
held by Ellen Braumuller of Germany, by 1½ feet 2-3/4 inches.\textsuperscript{1} She placed but second in the high jump, because officials said her head went over the bar first which was illegal at that time. Although she had jumped the same height as her teammate, Jean Shiley, Miss Shiley won because she had taken a fewer number of jumps. Miss Didrikson, according to the Report of the Organizing Committee, used a western roll while Miss Shiley used the conventional style, namely the scissors.\textsuperscript{2}

Along with other athletes of the time, Babe, too, was plagued with critics who doubted her femininity:

> People are always asking me, "Are you going to get married, Babe?" and it gets my goat. They seem to think I'm a strange, unnatural being summed up in the words Muscle Moll, and the idea seems to be that Muscle Molls are not people.\textsuperscript{3}

After the Olympic Games, when Miss Didrikson went back to Dallas she got a raise in salary and got mixed up in an automobile endorsement which resulted in her being suspended by the A.A.U. for professionalism and later reinstated. The whole ordeal caused Avery Brundage, then president of the A.A.U. to say to the press: "You

\textsuperscript{1}Pallett, Women's Athletics, p. 46.


\textsuperscript{3}Mildred Didrikson, "I Blow My Own Horn," American Magazine, CXX (June, 1936), p. 104.
know the ancient Greeks kept women out of their athletic games ... They wouldn't even let them on the sidelines. I'm not so sure but what they were right."¹ The Babe, according to her story in This Life I've Led, had allowed an automobile company to use her photograph, standing beside their car for advertisement purposes. She stated many times and again in her book that she received no money whatsoever or any other consideration in exchange for the opinion she expressed about the car. Though she was reinstated, she decided to turn professional, for financial reasons.² It is interesting to note what Babe said in her book concerning sports for women as she lay ill with cancer. "Nowadays the big sports for women are tennis, fancy diving, swimming, and golf. And those are the best sports for women--some of the others are really too strenuous for girls."³

Though most sports writers were critical of women's entry into track and field, one in particular was not in agreement--Grantland Rice. The critics complained, because the girl athletes lacked the grace, smoothness, and rhythm of the men. They believed that women could


³Ibid., p. 36.
never throw properly or run and jump gracefully, therefore they did not belong in track and field sports. Mr. Rice, in citing the performances of Babe Didrikson and Stella Walsh, realized that the need for extra power created a diminution of grace. He believed that masculine superiority in sports could be measured only by greater strength and stamina, not by form and style.

Company Interest in Female Athletes

The criticism leveled at some sportswomen and some sponsoring companies, however, was not entirely unfounded. In the 1920's and early 1930's track teams were financed by companies like Prudential Insurance, the N.Y. Central Railroad, Equitable Life; the Meadowbrook Club of Philadelphia was financed by the John Wanamaker Stores.

Mrs. Catherine Donovan Meyer, a former athlete with the Prudential Insurance Company (then Prudential Assurance Co.) told the writer about those days:

The Prudential Insurance Company supported us very well. They bought us uniforms, shoes, and sweats, and sent us to meets. When we went we went first class, by Pullman, stayed at nice hotels, and were fed. When we went on any overnight

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1 Grantland Rice, "For Men Only?" Collier's, XC (Sept. 24, 1932), p. 19.

2 Grantland Rice, "Leading Ladies," Collier's, LXXXIII (April 6, 1929), p. 16.
trip, a nurse from the infirmary there always came along as a chaperone.¹

Large firms who sponsored teams of girl athletes actually practiced recruiting. One good example of how the recruiting was done was explained in an article about Lieutenant Colonel Melvorne J. McCombs, who was head of the engineering department of the Employers' Casualty Company, headquartered in Dallas, Texas. Colonel McCombs had "discovered" Mildred "Babe" Didrikson. Since the Employers' Casualty hired a lot of young girls and since the turn-over in jobs was high, Colonel McCombs established relations with the hiring department. As a result of his efforts a large percentage of new jobs for girls were held for young ladies of his selection. Furthermore, McCombs kept a card-index system on every girl whose name appeared in the sports section of Texas newspapers. When a girl seemed promising, he went to watch her play and asked questions about her education and training, etc. If he were still interested, he introduced himself to the girl and her parents and asked the girl if she would be interested in an office job in Dallas.² This kind of recruiting was no better or worse than the recruiting carried on and still carried on for


potential male athletes, whether for the Olympic Games or for athletes in colleges and universities. The implications for women athletes, however, were expressed in terms of exploitation and moral laxity.

Summary

During the period from 1920 through 1932, there was little really significant development of women's participation in the Olympic Games. Although archery and tennis were eliminated from the program (1920 and 1924, respectively), competition in fencing, gymnastics, and track and field appeared for the first time. In 1932 women competed in fourteen separate events in three different sports, fencing, swimming, and track and field. The number of events does not seem particularly significant, however, until they are compared to the number of events in which men were allowed to compete; men competed in approximately 101 different events in sixteen different sports. Six events were available for men in fencing, but only one was permitted for women, the individual foils. Seven of the fourteen events women were allowed to compete in were in one sport alone, swimming. In track and field, although women struggled to obtain a full program of events in the Olympic Games, they were restricted to six, as compared to 23 for men. Gymnastics for women
was not even on the program in 1932 for reasons which were explained in this chapter. Though it has nowhere been stated, one might wonder whether the decision of the men to hold individual contests in gymnastics for the first time in 1932 affected the decision of the organizing committee to omit women's gymnastics, including the demonstrations which had in the past held such a prominent place in the festivities.

The greatest progress of women as Olympic competitors during the period 1920-1932 came in 1928 at Amsterdam where women were admitted to compete in gymnastics and track and field for the first time. As was mentioned in the previous paragraph, however, gymnastics was completely omitted from the program for 1932. Women's track and field was saved after the disastrous 800 meters event only because the American contingent of the International Amateur Athletic Federation initiated a protest movement which threatened to pull the male competitors out of Olympic Games competition if the women's events were eliminated.

The status of female competitors after the 1932 Olympic Games did not appear to be significantly higher or different from that of the 1920 participants. In fact, admitting gymnastics and track and field sports for women, since they represented the more vulgar elements of
society, may have lowered their status. The International Olympic Committee was still a negative influencing factor in women's development as Olympic competitors and the opposition of some influential members of national Olympic committees and sports federations was an inhibitor to more rapid growth of the women's sport movement.
CHAPTER VIII

WOMEN IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES, 1936-1948

Introduction

In the United States in the early 1930's the achievements of women in sport were often the topic of various magazine articles. These articles were condescendingly complimentary at best, frequently derisive or both depending on the nature of the sport. For example in 1934 an article by Dick Hyland (a former All-American football player at Stanford, 1926) for Good Housekeeping, praised the courage and skill of women in sports. He extolled the accomplishments of women like Amelia Earhart, champion flyer, swimmers Helene Madison and Gertrude Ederle, diver Georgia Coleman, tennis players May Sutton Bundy and Helen Wills Moody, golfer Joyce Wethered, skater Sonja Henie, fencers Dorothy Locke and Ellen Preis, archer Dorothy Duggan, gymnast Consetta Caruccio and Ann Townsend, America's foremost woman field hockey player.1 However Mr. Hyland did not find women champions in track and field to be worthy of the same


348
consideration, a prevalent attitude of the period. He was present at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1932 and of these women champions, he said:

lots of folks laugh at lady athletes. I have seen seventy thousand people gaze tolerantly at a cinder track down which six girls scrambled during the Olympic Games in Los Angeles—seen them gaze and then break into a laugh at the girls' comical antics.¹

At these same Games, however, the author indicated that he watched some other events which clearly commanded the reader's respect; these were the fancy and high-diving contests.

But at these same Games, I watched a packed aquatic stadium marvel at the beauty and grace and courage and ability of a dozen girls who soared through the air in fancy and high-diving contests.²

Track and field, it would appear, was still the black sheep in women's sports.

The tremendous progress of women in closing the gap between the achievements of men and women in sports was for some a subject of serious concern. Fred Wittner, who wrote for the Literary Digest, expressed that concern:

probably the entire male population—have been viewing with alarm the rise of women in sport, because we've always pointed with pride to the playing

¹Ibid., p. 38. ²Ibid.
fields and waters as man's unassailable
domain.¹

Bea Gottlieb had recently won a golf match from the
Prince of Wales; Stella Walsh in 1932 at Los Angeles had
bettered the time of the gold medal winner in the first
Olympic Games in the 100 meters dash; Helene Madison was
swimming the 100 meters freestyle at a speed which in
1900 had been considered the epitome of masculine
achievement in that event.²

The Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic
Federation and the physical educators in the United
States were still quite active in their campaign against
women in Olympic competition. Dr. Frederick Rand Rogers,
formerly director of New York's Department of Health and
Physical Education and in 1934 dean of health and physi-
cal education at Boston University, was still very out-
spoken on the evils of sports for women. He called the
Olympics and other competitions the greatest enemy of
women because they would bring about the demise of their
womanliness. Competitive sports, he said, would develop
ugly muscles, scowling faces, and a competitive spirit.
As a consequence, they would not be able to attract
worthy fathers for their children.³

¹Fred Wittner, "Shall the Ladies Join Us?" Literary
Digest, CXVII (May 19, 1934), p. 42.
²Ibid. ³Ibid.
The arguments of Rogers' faction were sometimes supported by the scientific community. Although they conceded that women were closing the gap in tests of strength, resistance to fatigue, etc., they also claimed that scientific observers had noted that feminine muscular development interfered with motherhood. In this same article, which appeared in the Scientific American in 1936, the author encourages women not to build their muscles.

What woman needs—and has—is a good system of involuntary muscles, not bulging biceps or the hand-squeeze of a sailor. She has plenty of muscle and oxygen-carrying power for simple household tasks which take plenty of oxygen. She has ample development for a multitude of light office and factory work. But men should keep her away from the heavier tasks, both out of chivalry and good sense. [italics added]

The author then clinched his argument by saying that "women have more strength in their looks than we have in our laws, more power by their tears than we have by our arguments."3

The Women's Division of the N.A.A.F. with the aid of the American Physical Education Association was able to virtually stamp out intercollegiate competition for

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2Ibid.  

3Ibid.
women and to make serious inroads in preventing interscholastic competition in the United States by the 1940's. Radical feminism, which, in the view of the writer, had been at least partly responsible for the rapid growth of the women's sport movement in the early 1920's, was all but dead. Reformism and the so-called "social feminism" which best described the philosophy of the Women's Division and the physical education profession were very prevalent. These organizations turned their efforts more and more to communication media. In 1934 the publicity committee of the National Section on Women's Athletics outlined education of the press as one of its duties:

   Endeavor to educate press representatives, reporters, special feature writers, editors, etc., to place emphasis upon participation, sportsmanship, etc. in writing news of women's athletics, rather than upon accomplishments of individuals, stressing the personal, physical appearance of women athletes.¹

The writer would agree that the media's description of female participation in sports events emphasized the more tawdry aspects of that participation, but the position of the Women's Division also de-emphasized the importance of individual accomplishment on the part of

any female, a position which limited public interest in women's sports. The Women's Athletic Section was intent upon getting newspaper columns published about its new program and asked Janet Owen, a female sports reporter for the New York Herald-Tribune and editor of the Sportswoman, to speak at the 1936 A.P.E.A. convention on the subject. The new program in physical education fostered mass participation of girls and women in intramurals, and sports which would emphasize healthy development and produce good health and sports habits for its carry-over importance. Described in this way it was to benefit all girls, rather than the "few who needed it least."¹

Ms. Owen gave several suggestions, but ended by saying:

I might make one last suggestion . . . that the conservative papers always be tried first. The conservative papers already tend in varying degrees toward the goals of truth and dignity, and so half the battle is won.²

The Women's Division found a good spokesman in John Tunis, a critic of both men's and women's athletics. He was particularly critical of women's sports and although some of what he says may have been warranted, one must remember that he was vehemently opposed to any competitive athletics for women. In 1936 Tunis wrote an article


²Ibid., p. 521.
for The Delineator about a fictitious female track and field star named "Fanny Flash." All the arguments and accusations made by the Women's Division itself against women in track and field are included in the article. He accused women of professionalism, he criticized their seriousness in wanting to "uphold the honor of Uncle Sam," a quality admired in men, and was cynical about the delight of women in being provided with a free trip to Berlin for the Games.¹ What he declined to say, however, was that the women selected to go to the Games were not assured of financial support for the trip until a few hours before their departure. Tunis criticized the exploitation of athletes in post-Olympic contests and questioned the intentions of chaperones and managers who had more lucrative interests in mind.² These individuals, it must be remembered, were appointed by the A.A.U., the arch-enemy of collegiate athletics and the Women's Division. The text ironically exposed the double-standard, emphasized the lack of honesty in athletics, alluded to the low-class background of women in track and field, and deplored the "win at all costs" attitude,³ the latter a very strong point in the Women's Division opposition

¹John Tunis, "I Can't Afford to Lose," The Delineator, CXXIX (Aug., 1936), pp. 16-17.
²Ibid., p. 7.
³Ibid.
to women's competitive athletics.

In the latter part of the 1930's while the number of girls' and women's competitive athletic contests were being reduced year by year, some women in the physical education profession were beginning to openly question the prevailing policy. One such woman was Gladys Palmer, professor of physical education at the Ohio State University, who in 1938 pointed to the absence of uniform policies regarding women's athletics. She suggested that had the Women's Division lent its guidance in setting policies for conducting state, national, and international competitions for women instead of taking a stand against competitive athletics, there would not now be any problems. Considering the intransigence in the attitude of the Women's Division and the improvements taking place within the athletic community, Palmer emphatically stated that the Women's Division was not in a position to guide this development.¹ She openly suggested that it should be the business of the National Section on Women's Athletics (now D.G.W.S.) of A.A.H.P.E.R. and its affiliated organizations to "lead us out of our present confusion."²

²Ibid., p. 586.
The Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation continued its opposition to women's participation in the Olympic Games. In 1938, as has been discussed in Chapter V, pages 282-283, it again petitioned the International Olympic Committee to eliminate the women's program.

In 1941 the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation merged with the National Section on Women's Athletics of A.A.H.P.E.R., which only formalized their prior affiliation. The leaders of the Women's Division indicated that their organization was no longer needed, that its job was finished, and that it was leaving the future of women's athletics in good hands. This was not the opinion of all women physical educators, however.

Gladys Palmer dared to institute a national inter-collegiate championship in golf in 1941 at Ohio State for which she received a great deal of criticism. A few other voices were beginning to be heard. In 1946 Dorothy McLensch, writing on "The Woman-Power Shortage in Sports," stated that:

Girls are being penalized by the indifference of women whose professional responsibility it should be to promote sports. . . . We wonder if perhaps there is a carry-over from educational institutions which tends to make those coming into the field feel that women's sports
should be affiliated only with educational institutions.¹

Thus, it can be safely stated that in the United States sports for women grew very little during the period from 1936 to 1948. The combined influences of the opposition to women's competition in and out of school and the consequences of World War II did not provide the atmosphere needed for progress in women's athletics.

The European Situation

In Europe there was also a negative reaction to the feminist movement. The very conservative views concerning women's place in society fit right into the national socialist ideology of Germany, for example. In 1930 Alfred Rosenberg was calling for the "emancipation of women from the emancipation movement." This, he declared, was the first demand of the women of this generation, who would like to save the Volk and the race. While advocating educational and vocational opportunities, and physical training for women, he believed the leaders must prepare the way for a social order in which women would no longer be "forced" to enter the labor markets thereby using up "their most important feminine energies."²


²George L. Morse, Nazi Culture (New York: Grosset
Clearly, the primary purpose of women in Nazi culture was to produce strong, healthy, male offspring. Goebbels himself stated that the mission of woman was to be beautiful and to bring children into the world.¹

Reich Minister Hess in a mass meeting of the Berlin National Socialist women's organization (1936) described the type of woman Germany wanted to produce:

"We want women in whose life and work the characteristically feminine is preserved --women that we can love!

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
a woman who is capable of intellectually standing by her husband's side in his interests, in his struggle for existence, who makes the world more beautiful and content for him. This is the ideal woman today. She is a woman who, above all, is also able to be a mother."²

German women were encouraged to choose marriage over careers. They were, in fact, excluded from the practice of law, from holding office in government and from military occupations.

The idealization of women as mothers was a major theme of Nazi propaganda. Hitler created a Medal of Honor for "prolific" German mothers and in 1939, on the


¹Ibid., p. 41. From a speech by Goebbels, 1929.

²Ibid., p. 42. From an account of a mass meeting, published in the Völkischer Beobachter, May 27, 1936.
German Mother's Day, three million German women were awarded these badges for the first time. Young people were commanded to honor these women. The wearers of the medal were told they would receive such privileges as honorary seats at party and government sponsored gatherings, special treatment in government offices, and special seats on trains and in trolleys; old age care was to be provided and they were to be given priority for acceptance in homes for the aged already in existence.¹

Neither the woman as student nor the woman as politician had a place in the ideological structure of Nazism. She was told that the Führer did not want her to study, that intellectual work was harmful to her. The attitude was one which sent woman back to her job as wife and mother, away from intellectual activities which robbed her of her dignity.²

For the good of the Volk, women were encouraged to participate in gymnastics exercises for physical conditioning and admonished to renounce the use of "beauty aids and treatments." On May 31, 1937, the SS chief Group Leader Jeckeln, at a meeting of the women's

¹Ibid., p. 46. Völkischen Brabacher, Dec. 25, 1938 (Weiner Library Clipping Collection).

²Ibid., p. 47. From Englebert Huber, Das ist Nationalsozialismus (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1933), pp. 121-122.
organization, said that Germany did not need women who could dance beautifully at five o'clock teas, but women who had proved their health through their accomplishments in sport. "The javelin and the springboard are more useful than lipstick in promoting health,"¹ he said. Any girl who wanted to marry an SS man was required to have won the Reich sports medal.² The Nazi ideal of female comportment is further illustrated in an official decree from a labor organization (the National Sozialistischer Betriebs Obman) which excluded women who used make-up or smoked in public.³

It was Hitler's intention to make of the Olympic Games in Berlin (1936) a colossal tribute to Aryan supremacy. In a world already disquieted by Germany's rearmament, by the remilitarization of the Rhineland, and by the granting of military aid to Franco in the Spanish revolution of 1936, it was believed important that a pacific attitude be displayed. Hitler gave Goebbels strict orders to de-emphasize racist propaganda during the Games. The appearance of the newspaper Der Sturmer which was devoted to hunting down Jews was suspended for a time and signs in hotels and restaurants

¹Ibid., p. 43. From Frankfurter Zeitung, June 1, 1937 (Weiner Library Clipping Collection).
²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 21.
were taken down. Helene Mayer, the champion fencer on Germany's team in 1928, a Jewess who had taken refuge in the United States since the beginning of the Nazi campaign, was selected for participation on Germany's team in Berlin.\(^1\) All of these efforts by Germany led Olympic officials to proclaim to the world that the newsmen were wrong about conditions in Germany.

Women athletes were an important Olympic contingent for Germany in 1936; indeed, the first German to mount the victory stand was none other than Tilly Fleischer, champion in the javelin throw. One hundred and twenty thousand people stood, arms outstretched in a salute to the Third Reich as a chorus sang Germany's national anthem. When the anthem ended, the announcer terminated the presentation by saying: "'We salute and we applaud, as is appropriate, the victory of the great athlete of the Third Reich: Tilly Fleischer.'"\(^2\)

The Second World War cut off all communication between the athletic communities from 1939 to 1945. The Olympic Games of 1940 and 1944 were not held. Great


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 180. Bill Henry in *An Approved History of the Olympic Games* indicates that the German athlete, Hans Woellke, winner of the shot put, was the first German to ever win a championship in track and field and that Tilly Fleischer's accomplishment came later in the same day (p. 237).
Britain was praised by athletic officials around the world when it agreed to undertake the organization of the 1948 Olympic Games despite poor post-war conditions which existed there. Food was scarce, housing and training facilities were not good. The United States took along its own food for the athletes; much of that was given away or spoiled due to the impossibility of obtaining refrigeration for perishable food. Monique Berlioux, speaking of that experience, said that the badly nourished and badly lodged teams coveted the North American teams' plentiful provisions of bread and milk that passed constantly in front of their eyes.¹

Just as the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936 had been a great showcase for the magnificence of the Third Reich, the London Games exemplified the consequences of pursuing a policy which had ended in world conflict and destruction. Perhaps the 1948 Games could be viewed as characteristic of the obstinacy of the human species to continue its traditions, and to look to the future.

The remaining part of this chapter will investigate in greater depth the events occurring within the I.O.C. and within the various sports in which women participated in the Olympic Games from 1936 through 1948.

¹Ibid., p. 193.
Decisions of the I.O.C. Concerning Women's Events
1934-1948

The period before the Olympic Games of Berlin in 1936 was filled with proposals from many quarters for the introduction of women's participation in various sports. Since the Olympic rules and regulations specified that the International Olympic Committee would decide on the events in which women would participate, votes had to be taken on proposals from each international federation to include women's events in the Olympic program. At the I.O.C. session of 1934, the Committee voted unanimously to include swimming, fencing, and gymnastics in the Olympic Games of 1936. By contrast women's track and field was almost eliminated from the program. When a vote was taken, eleven favored inclusion and nine voted to exclude women's participation in that sport. Competition for women in track and field barely was approved; the admission of women to participation in field hockey and the equestrian events was proposed, but did not win approval.¹

Apparently the inclusion of women in the field hockey program in the Olympic Games had been seriously considered. The International Federation of Women's Hockey Associations appointed a committee in 1934 to

¹Mayer, A Travers ..., p. 144.
investigate the possibility of holding competitions for women in the Olympic Games. The most important consideration in the decision of the I.F.W.H.A. about whether to participate in the Olympic competitions, revolved around the question of whether they would be permitted to play Olympic hockey in the fall during the regular season instead of during the Olympic Games which take place in the summer. The Fédération Internationale de Hockey had already looked into the problem and was told that this would not be permitted. The refusal by the I.O.C. of the International Hockey Federation's request rendered any further investigation by the I.F.W.H.A. into the matter useless.¹ The I.F.W.H.A. expressed regret that negotiations with the I.O.C. could not be concluded favorably; it felt that women's hockey would have set examples of good sportsmanship in Olympic competition.

The Federation feels that much good would result to international sportsmanship if the Olympic officials could see some hockey matches conducted under Federation auspices, exemplifying the good feeling that prevails at its tournaments. Perhaps in the future it may be possible to come to an agreement with the Games Committee.²

²Ibid.
competition in the Olympic Games was raised again about ten years later at the International Olympic Committee session of September 4, 1946. The first issue of the Bulletin du C.I.O. (Comité Internationale Olympique) after the Second World War reported the statement of Avery Brundage on that subject. He told the Committee that attention should be focused on the request of the Fédération International de Hockey (F.I.H.) for the inclusion of women in Olympic competition and that if it were not possible to consider the request for the London Games of 1948, then it must be considered for the future. ¹ At an I.O.C. session nine months later (June 1947) in Stockholm, a negative vote was taken on the proposal and women were refused admission once again. ² In speaking with Mr. Brundage on this issue, he indicated that the primary reason for the rejection of field hockey for women by the I.O.C. was because it was not played widely in a considerable number of countries, that competition was fairly limited to Anglo-Saxon countries. ³ This, he acknowledged, was in spite of the fact that during the first few Olympiads in which field hockey for


³Interview with Mr. Avery Brundage, March 28, 1973.
men was played, the contest was practically a dual meet between India and Pakistan and although many more countries have begun to play it (partially because it is an Olympic sport) it still does not meet the Olympic rule that it must be widely played in at least forty countries to be included in the Olympic program.\textsuperscript{1} He was personally in favor of women's field hockey and felt that women instead of men should be admitted to Olympic competition.

After the refusal of the request of the Women's Committee of the F.I.H. by the I.O.C., a meeting was arranged between the Women's Committee and the International Federation of Women's Hockey Associations on the occasion of the World Festival of Hockey in Amsterdam. During that meeting the pros and cons of participation in the Olympic Games were discussed. The groups then considered the possibility and the advantages of having only one organization represent the countries of the world in women's hockey, run by women themselves. The chairman of the Women's Committee of the F.I.H. agreed to approach the F.I.H. to get permission to join the I.F.W.H.A.\textsuperscript{2} At the 1950 conference of the I.F.W.H.A. it was reported that the I.O.C. had decided that women's

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}"Hon. Secretary's Report," Minutes of the I.F.W.H.A. Conference 1950, p. 20.
\end{itemize}
hockey could not be included in the 1952 Olympic Games, at which time the Conference voted unanimously against participation in the Olympic Games.\(^1\) As far as the writer knows, the issue has not been raised since.

The question of the admission of women to the equestrian events in the Olympic Games was brought up for the first time in 1934; it was raised again at the I.O.C. session at Stockholm in 1947. The request for the admission of women to equestrian events was made by the Dutch Olympic Committee for the London Games in 1948. Mr. Moermans d'Emans, president and representative of the International Equestrian Federation to the International Olympic Congress stated that no formal request had been received for the admission of women. As a result, the Dutch Olympic Committee's request was denied.\(^2\) The question was brought up later, however, and women were admitted for the Games in Helsinki, 1952. It is of some interest to note that the equestrian events in the Olympic Games were dominated by the military and were not even open to non-military competitors until 1948.\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Minutes of the 1950 Conference of I.F.W.H.A., p. 18.


This fact makes it more easily understood why women were not admitted in 1948. Also, Mr. Brundage indicated that it was felt that equestrian events were too strenuous for women.\(^1\) Women are still not admitted to participation in certain events.

In the sport of yachting the representative from the Yachting Federation brought up the question of the participation of women at the I.O.C. meeting in July of 1948. According to Olympic rules women were not admitted to the competitions of the I.Y.R.U. (International Yacht Racing Union), yet women were currently participating in them.\(^2\) Furthermore, Virginia Heriot of France (Madame de la Mer) was a member of the crew of the 8 meter yacht which won the gold medal in Amsterdam in 1928. In the discussion which followed, Avery Brundage, then vice-president of the I.O.C., said that the strength of women should not be underestimated, that in the United States women in yachting are often victorious in regattas against men. The question, he felt, should be seriously considered by the Committee.\(^3\) The I.O.C. on July 27, 1948, decided that in future Olympic Games, women would be admitted to yachting competitions. The decision

\(^1\) Interview with Mr. Avery Brundage, March, 1973.


\(^3\) Ibid., p. 41.
indicated that the team could be mixed or entirely female.\(^1\) Thus, the I.O.C. finally formalized the participation of women to a sport in which they had been involved since 1928.

Another sport which was opened to women after World War II was canoeing. In July of 1947 the I.O.C. accepted the proposal for female competition in the London Games. This was approved only on the condition that the number of events not be augmented,\(^2\) a stipulation which has made the entrance of women into other sports at later dates (particularly in team sports) far more difficult.

An interesting political situation involving women arose in 1948 when two Israeli female athletes asked to participate in the 1948 Games. The request was the subject of a long debate at the 42nd session of the I.O.C. in July, 1948 (London). It was Otto Mayer's opinion that the question should never have been brought up since there existed no national Olympic committee in Israel and since its national federations were not affiliated with the international federations.\(^3\) Mr. Mayer further stated:

\(^1\)Mayer, A Travers . . . , p. 188.


\(^3\)Mayer, A Travers . . . , p. 186.
Everyone understood anyway, that it was clearly a demonstration for the sake of political propaganda, the two women athletes being a pretext. The important thing was to carry the flag of Israel in the procession. The organizing committee had no interest in this participation and even feared that unpleasant demonstrations might prevent the opening of the Games, in view of the political tension existing at that time between the two countries [England and Israel].  

The I.O.C. decided not to admit the Israeli women to the Games. Instead, to show its "good will," it invited the two female athletes from Israel to the Olympic Games at the I.O.C.'s expense.  

One other decision of the I.O.C. concerning women and the Olympic Games in 1948 went practically unnoticed. Women for the first time were allowed to enter the art and literature competitions which had been an integral part of the Olympic festivities since 1912.

Decisions concerning the other events in which women participated will be treated under the separate sports headings throughout the chapter.

Swimming 1936-1948

American swimmers in 1936 did not live up to the reputation they had maintained since their entry into the Olympic Games in 1920. The real champions at Berlin were the Dutch whose team had also done well in 1932 in

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1Ibid. 2Ibid.
Los Angeles. Willy den Ouden, the world record holder for the 100 meters freestyle in 1936 (1:04.6) was expected to win the Olympic contest, a feat she failed to accomplish in the 1932 Olympics. Her rather impressive world record time was not beaten for twenty years, until the 1956 Olympic Games at Melbourne, but in Berlin, Willy den Ouden placed a disappointing fourth place behind Ria Mastenbroek,¹ her countrywoman, the Argentine Jeannette Campbell and Gisela Arendt of Germany.

Ria Mastenbroek of Holland went on to win two more gold medals, in the 400 meters freestyle and as the anchor member of the freestyle relay; she also won the silver medal in the 100 meters backstroke. A born fighter, Mastenbroek took the 400 meters freestyle from the favorite, the fifteen year old Danish girl Ragnhild Hueger. The third place American, Lenore Wingard, had no official time; all timers failed to start their watches.² The United States had counted heavily on Eleanor Holm Jarrett to win the 100 meter backstroke in 1936; she would have been the defending champion had she competed, but her activities on board the ship transporting the American athletes to the Olympic Games were the

¹Hendrika Mastenbroek in American sources.
²Berlioux, D'Olympie à Mexico, p. 188.
object of a great deal of publicity and resulted in her being dismissed from the team.

Eleanor Holm-Jarrett was dismissed because she had broken training rules by indulging in champagne and defied Olympic officials. Officials charged that she had been warned, but persisted in drinking and was dismissed. Donald Fuoss in his analysis of the incident indicated that it proved to be "good copy" for newsmen and that hundreds of articles were written about the case.¹ From Avery Brundage's report, the decision of the American Olympic Committee was unanimous to drop her from the team. He concluded that the Committee's action was misinterpreted and brought about a "torrent of criticism."² Mrs. Jarrett's supporters, on the other hand, felt that as an adult, married woman, her private life when she was not competing should have been respected by the committee. She was used as an example to other athletes and reinforced the authority of the Olympic Committee. A rather comprehensive account of this incident is included in Richard Mandell's The Nazi Olympics.³ The Japanese woman, Hideko Maehata, who had placed


second in the 200 meter breaststroke in 1932 won the
gold medal in 1936.

Marjorie Gestring like her countrywoman, Aileen
Riggin, who in 1920 had won the springboard diving
championship at 13 years of age, repeated the perform-
ance in Berlin at the same age with the expertise of a
master. Although the United States was not as successful
in 1936 as it had been in the past in the swimming competi-
tions, the outstanding diving performances took away
most of the disappointment. Mrs. Dorothy Poynton Hill
won the platform diving competition. The only country to
win a medal in diving was Germany, whose competitor won
a third place bronze medal.

In 1948 the United States recovered some of its lost
prestige in the swimming competitions while managing to
maintain its dominance in the diving events. Both
Holland and Denmark succeeded once again in producing
outstanding women's swimming champions for the Olympics
in 1948. In the 100 meters freestyle event the American
Ann Curtis succeeded in defeating the European champion
from Denmark, Greta Andersen, in the semi-finals by 1/10
of a second. In the final Denmark provided three final-
ists, Holland and Sweden two each, and the United States
one. The exciting final was essentially between Ann
Curtis of the U.S. and Greta Andersen of Denmark.
Andersen touched first (66.6 seconds).1

The most exciting event in women's competition of 1948 came in the 400 meters freestyle. In the final Ann Curtis of the United States had allowed the others to set the pace for the event until the last 100 meters when she went ahead to win the event rather easily. The British swimmer, Cathie Gibson, almost overtook the silver medalist, Karen Harup of Denmark. It is significant that the first five finishers in this event all beat the Olympic record set by Mastenbroek in 1936 (5:26.4).2

The 200 meters breaststroke event record was another which was destined to be broken in 1948. The previous record was first broken by a Hungarian in the second heat; that time only stood until the next heat, when Nel Van Vliet of Holland reduced the time by an additional 3.8 seconds. In the final event the young Australian champion, Nancy Lyons, the silver medal winner, almost succeeded in overtaking Van Vliet. Eva Novak of Hungary was third. This was the only event in swimming in which a United States swimmer was not represented on the winner's podium. U.S. breaststokers did not even


2Ibid.
qualify for the semi-finals.

Denmark's Karen Harup, silver medalist in the 400 meters, established a new Olympic record in her victory in the 100 meters backstroke. Her performance, 1:14.4 was 2.2 seconds better than the Olympic record in 1936. Susan Zimmerman of the United States was second and Australia's Judy Davies was third.

The record-breaking performances of the female swimmers continued in the 400 meters freestyle relay. In the first heat, both Denmark and the United States shattered the 1936 Olympic record. In a later heat the Dutch team reduced the Danish time by more than 2 seconds. In the final Denmark led the event through the first 3 legs. On the anchor leg Ann Curtis passed the Dutch competitor and went after the Danish swimmer who was leading. With a powerful lunge Ann Curtis touched first in a record time of 4 min. 29.2 seconds. The first four finishers all defeated the previous Olympic record: the U.S.A., Denmark, Holland, and Great Britain.¹ The only record remaining intact from the 1936 Olympics was the one set by Mastenbroek in the 100 meters freestyle.

The diving events were again dominated by the United States, which won all three places in the

springboard diving and the first two places in the high
dive. The only competitor to place in the first three
was Denmark's B. Christoffersen who won a bronze in high
diving. Vicky Draves of the United States won both the
springboard and the high diving competitions. The only
other serious competitors were the European champion
N. Pellissard of France, two Austrians, and one Briton.¹
It is interesting to note that until this period there
were practically no serious contenders in diving from
continental Europe, and particularly from the Latin
countries.

**Gymnastics, 1936-1948**

Competition in gymnastics for the 1936 Olympic Games
consisted of a team competition only, quite unlike the
men's competitions where medals were awarded for each
event. The victory went only to a country, represented
by a maximum of eight women; eight nations were repre-
sented in Berlin. The competition consisted of eight
compulsory exercises and one optional exercise by each
competitor on the balance beam, the uneven parallel bars
and the sidehorse without pommels. A joint team exercise
was performed at the beginning of the performance and at

¹Ibid., p. 451.
the end.\textsuperscript{1} The group exercises consisted of a free exercise and an exercise with portable apparatus.\textsuperscript{2} Germany, which had developed a movement and rhythm approach to gymnastics, won first place in the Olympic competition, followed by Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Yugoslavia ranked in 4th place; the fifth place United States team was followed by Poland, Italy, and Great Britain.

Mr. George Gulack, a former vice-president of the International Federation of Gymnastics, indicated in a telephone interview that the reason women's competitive gymnastics were included in the program of 1936 was because Hitler wanted them included; Germany had good gymnasts and were interested in winning as many gold medals as possible.\textsuperscript{3} Dr. Margaret C. Brown, manager of the women's gymnastics team in 1936, refuted Mr. Gulack's statement with the following rationale. The leadership for the continued progression of gymnastics came from Eastern Europe, particularly from Czechoslovakia. Madame Marie Provaznikova, professor of physical education at the University of Prague, was responsible for


\textsuperscript{2}Official Report of the Organizing Committee, 1936, p. 866.

\textsuperscript{3}Telephone interview with Mr. George Gulack, New York City, March, 1973.
drawing up the proposals for establishing a Women's Technical Committee of the F.I.G. Germany, Poland, and France were also interested in competitive gymnastics for women. Countess Hedwig Zamoyska of Poland, for example, was the first president of the Women's Technical Committee and Madame Provaznikova was vice-president. The head of the women's turnvereins in Germany was an official of the technical committee and France provided the secretary. Dr. Brown said: "So you can see that it was a joint effort, not a Nazi one."  

It is significant that for the Olympic Games in Berlin women assumed the responsibility for their own gymnastic competition for the first time. From the beginning of its organization in 1935 the Women's Technical Committee firmly enforced its rules that women's gymnastics be coached by women, that women only do the judging, and that the whole management of women's competition be conducted by women.  

2 Putting these rules into practice was not easy, Dr. Brown said.

For years they had a struggle to preserve these principles, but they did and this women's technical committee became a shining example even for men's athletics.  

1 Dr. Margaret C. Brown, Taped Responses to Questions Posed by the writer, June, 1973.  

2 Ibid.  

3 Ibid.
American women competed for the first time in gymnastics in 1936. The *American Olympic Committee Report* indicates that twenty of the twenty-eight gymnasts were turners; thirteen of them came from the Philadelphia Turngemeinde.¹ The American team travelling to Berlin (paying their own expenses) was coached in the apparatus exercises by men and according to Mr. George Gulack, the women gymnasts of 1936 looked like men and did exercises like men.² Dr. Brown's statement tended to reinforce that assessment, but she also praised the group performance.

The judges were appalled by the performance of the United States team on apparatus... However, our women did very well in the group composition or free-standing exercises which was part of the Olympic competition at that time. George Miele of Panzar College [now Montclair State College, New Jersey] studied with both Bode and Logus in Germany. I believe it ranked second in the free-standing event.³

The interest in gymnastics in the United States in the mid-1930's was such that the only women performing came from the turnvereins. There was not a single

²Telephone interview with Mr. George Gulack, March, 1973.
³Taped interview with Dr. Margaret C. Brown, June, 1973.
college woman on the American team in 1936. When gymnastics were discontinued in public school programs in favor of play programs, the only organizations which supported gymnastics were the turnvereins and other national gymnastic societies. While the movement approach to gymnastics proceeded rapidly in Europe, basic body training in the U.S. was lost.\(^1\) Panzer College, of which Dr. Brown was president, sent its teachers to Europe to study the movement and rhythm approach to modern gymnastics.\(^2\)

After the Olympic Games of 1936, for some reason, certain countries began ruling against competitive gymnastics for women. Sweden and Switzerland were two countries to do so in early 1937; Finland, according to the report of Ray E. Moore, was endeavoring to work out a "special character" for gymnastics work for women.\(^3\) In 1938 the Japanese Organizing Committee (the 1940 Olympic Games were awarded to Tokyo) decided that no provision would be made for women's competitive gymnastics in the 1940 Olympic Games. At the meeting of the Women's Technical Committee of the F.I.G., June 27-July 1, of 1938, the group decided unanimously that a

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Letter from Dr. Margaret C. Brown, June 22, 1973.

protest be made to the F.I.G. with a request that the matter be taken into account by the I.O.C.\textsuperscript{1} In the summer of 1938 the Japanese withdrew their invitation to hold the Olympic Games in 1940\textsuperscript{2} and they were awarded to Helsinki. Soon word came from Finland that gymnastics for women might not be included in the 1940 Olympic program; the reason Finland gave for the omission was the necessity of limiting the number of events. The Gymnastics Committee of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States recommended that the A.A.U. join with other interested nations in petitioning the president of the F.I.G. to insist that women's gymnastics be listed on the program of the Olympic Games.\textsuperscript{3}

The upheaval created by the question of women's gymnastics gave rise to an article on the subject in the Italian publication \textit{La Stampa} on Dec. 13, 1938; it is perhaps more significant because it was included in \textit{La Revue Olympique}. \textit{La Revue Olympique} was at that time edited by Carl Diem and published in Germany. Translated from Italian to French, and now into English, the article reads as follows:


\textsuperscript{2}Taped interview, June, 1973.

The stir caused by the exclusion of feminine gymnastics from the Olympic program is far from quieting down, it seems, on the contrary, that it is getting louder as a consequence of the official reproaches uttered by the federations involved. This agitation raises a question of principle.

Considering their important development and their imposing membership, gymnastics which were already flourishing in Germany, thanks to Jahn and Speiss, in Sweden thanks to the work of Ling, in France following Amoros first, then Macy and Demeney, in Czechoslovakia thanks to Miroslav and Jorgner (as early as 1904, the number of gymnastic sokols was above one hundred thousand), in Italy, thanks to Baumann and Giuseppe Monti, gymnastics, as I was saying, seemed bound to obtain a place of honor in the program. Yet, the mother of all sports was not called to participate. That was the first injustice due to an unforgivable obscurantism.

In 1928, the error of the past was finally recognized, and feminine sport, thanks to track and field was finally in the limelight. Track and field was lucky, but gymnastics will only be granted "le jeu de la balançoire." Welcomed in Amsterdam (5 nations were represented), rejected in Los Angeles, triumphant again in Berlin (8 representatives), feminine sport is eliminated again from the programs of the Tokyo and Helsinki Games. The Finnish Olympic Committee appear not to want to do anything, at least officially. Who will have the courage to defend the rights of women's gymnastics? The international federation met last July at the Congress of Prague and we feel sure that it will not fail to intercede with the IOC and try to get the latter to change its mind concerning its decision of ostracism, before it is too late.

What are the reasons for this exclusion? Tradition, distance, systems, the technical program? All these are only pretexts which do not withstand serious
examination. From now on women have a definite place in world sport. The complete, useful, and artistic expression of their sport activity cannot be allowed to be absent from any Olympiad.¹

In March of 1939 the official publication of the A.A.U., the Amateur Athlete, announced that Finland had indeed omitted women's gymnastics from the Olympic program.² In July, 1939, the Revue Olympique reported that Helsinki representatives agreed, in response to the request of the president of the F.I.G., Count Zamoyski, to reconsider the question pertaining to the inclusion of women's gymnastics.³ The July, 1939, issue of the Amateur Athlete, on the other hand, included a report which read as follows:

Gymnastics for women is now definitely off the 1940 Olympic program by decision of the International Olympic Committee at their meeting in London, June 6-10. Protests by fourteen countries were of no avail in view of the Finnish Organizing Committee's opposition.⁴

The writer, in trying to clarify just what happened, wrote to the Finnish Olympic Committee to seek information. The Olympic Committee offered the following

¹"Ostracisme Olympique," La Revue Olympique (April, 1939), Carl Diem, Editor; published in Berlin.


explanation to the whole question.

The elimination of women's gymnastics in the Olympic program in Helsinki as planned 1940 [sic] met the mutual understanding of the international federations and the I.O.C.1

The Swedish Olympic Committee, when asked why it voted not to support competitive gymnastics for women early in 1938, responded that it was only because of "the very high costs."2 The writer referred the whole question to Dr. Brown, who gave several possible reasons for the whole chain of events in gymnastics for women which started with the Swedish and Swiss vote to exclude women's competitive gymnastics and ended with Finland's decision not to include them in the 1940 Olympic Games.

The Scandinavian countries were generally not favorable to competitive gymnastics. Rather did they stress educational gymnastics and the development of the scientific foundations for gymnastics. Furthermore, the historical and violent objection to German parallel bars still existed in Sweden and in Finland, particularly. Then, in Switzerland, women simply had no political status. It is only within the last year or so that they have even achieved a voting privilege. There were no prepared teams of women for international competition. [None of the Scandinavian countries were represented by

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1Correspondence with Jukka Uunila, president, and Carl Olaf Homén, general secretary of the Finnish Olympic Committee, August 6, 1973.

2Correspondence with Wolf Lyberg, assistant secretary, Swedish Olympic Committee, May 9, 1973.
women's teams in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin.]
The Japanese Organizing Committee may have eliminated women's gymnastics because at that time their own women had subservient positions and were not prepared in women's gymnastics. When the host country is not prepared to organize a gymnastics competition, naturally it would just as soon not schedule it. As I have said there was quite some opposition in the Scandinavian countries to Olympic competition and you will note that today teams from those countries are not always entered in the Olympic Games.¹

After the Second World War the place of women's gymnastics in the Olympic Games was still not secure. The rules of the I.O.C. still required that all women's programs be individually decided upon before each Olympic Games. At the I.O.C. meeting in Lausanne in 1946, the Committee decided that the events in women's gymnastics in the London Games should be the same as those in Berlin. The following year at the meeting in Stockholm (1947) the Count Goblet d'Alviella, president of the F.I.G., was before the I.O.C. on the subject of the admission of women to the gymnastics competitions in the 1948 Games. This I.O.C. meeting in Stockholm was the one in which venues for the XIV Olympiad were fixed. While it is not known just what the specific motion introduced by d'Alviella was, it is presumed that

¹Taped interview with Dr. Margaret C. Brown, July, 1973.
it favored including women's gymnastics and proposed augmenting the number of events. The request of d'Alviella was accepted unanimously, but with certain alterations as stated by Lord Burghley (Marquis of Exeter) of Great Britain, now president of the I.A.A.F. First, Lord Burghley indicated he would go along with the proposal only if at least ten nations practiced the sport widely and that six among them register for the Olympic Games. He added that an augmentation of events could not be permitted and that it was understood that the competitors be composed of teams only and not individual female gymnasts.¹

The gymnastics competitions for the 1948 Games were originally scheduled for the main stadium at Wembley, however, a rainstorm the evening before the competitions forced a three day postponement in order to move everything indoors to Empress Hall, Earl's Court. The large program made it necessary for both men's and women's teams to perform at the same time.² It is interesting to note that at the F.I.G. meeting just prior to the competitions, it was decided that the music for the women's


exercises would interfere with the men's concentration and therefore the men should cease work for the few minutes taken up by the music. Instead of the men being affected, however, when the Finnish men's team finished a particularly good exercise, the sudden roar of applause startled a British woman on the rings to such an extent that she almost fell, a mistake that "most surely caused her to lose points."

The events in the competition of 1948 consisted of the balance beam, flying rings, side-horse with spring board and two optional team drills—with and without hand apparatus. The organization and control of the competitions was assumed by the Women's Technical Committee. The international rules for 1948 stated that competitions would include elements of skill, grace and rhythm, rather than strength.

Czechoslovakia led the competitions with winning performances in the compulsory vault, flying rings and team drill with hand apparatus. Hungary, the silver medal winner, led in the compulsory and optional performances on the balance beam; Sweden, fourth place winner,

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led in the team drill (free) and the voluntary vault. The well-balanced United States team consistently scored well to win third place. Although Olympic rules forbade recognition of individual performances in women's gymnastics, the Organizing Committee felt that certain outstanding competitors should be mentioned: Z. Hansova of Czechoslovakia scored the highest mark on all apparatus, including a first place on the balance beam and on the rings. Another competitor mentioned was a young girl of 17, L. Micheli of Italy, who was third highest in the total number of points.

Credit for the outstanding progress and performance of the United States women's team was given to Roy E. Moore, the Chairman of the Gymnastics Committee, who appointed a sub-committee to take charge of the preparation of the women's team. Mr. George Gulack was appointed chairman of that sub-committee and served as manager of both the men's and women's teams in London. Coached by George Miele, who also coached the women in the free exercises in 1936, and George Salzman, female gymnasts trained for one and one-half years in such diverse places as Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, Elizabeth, New

\[1\] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

There was a great deal of criticism of the manner in which the women's events were administered at the Olympic Games in London. Manager George Gulack stated that: "... such confusion prevailed in the officiating and judging that the conduct of the women's events was little short of chaotic." Both Dr. Margaret C. Brown, a judge and U.S. Delegate to the Women's Technical Committee, and Mr. Gulack felt that the judges were nationally inclined; Dr. Brown issued four protests which were upheld by the Jury of Appeal. The judging was also criticized by Roy Moore, who indicated that in many cases marks given for performances showed a three to four point spread, pointing to either the inefficiency of the judges or to judges who mark nations instead of individuals. Mr. Moore recommended that the Women's Technical Committee "simplify their rules and organization and be guided by the more experienced men of the present Federation of International Gymnastics." 


Gulack was particularly critical, saying that members of the men's technical committee were called in throughout the competition by protesting managers when judges' marks varied up to five points. He pointed to the case of Clara Schroth (flying rings, U.S.A.) in which Count D'Alviella, president of F.I.G., Mr. Boddart and Mr. Hentges of the men's technical committee rated Miss Schroth's performance a 9.5, while actual marks given were 8.3, 8.4, 9.0, and 7.3, the average score was 8.33. According to Gulack, the officials mentioned above later admitted that women were not qualified to act as judges.\(^1\)

Part of the problem arose, apparently, because the men were not familiar with the women's technical rules. As an example, Mr. Gulack accused a woman judge of marking an event which had a maximum of 10 points with marking it a 13.1.\(^2\) If Mr. Gulack had been aware of the differences between men's and women's rules he would have known that women were marked on a 15 point basis in the voluntary exercises. Another significant difference was that while in the men's events the middle two marks given by the judges were added, in the women's events

\(^1\)George Gulack, "Gymnastics, Report of Team Manager," pp. 187-188.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 188.
they were averaged.¹

Dr. Brown indicated to the writer that women in gymnastics had fought long and hard to control their own sport. At the London Games, the men coaches attempted to dominate the Women's Technical Committee and disregard its regulations concerning that control.

I saw Miss Taylor [Miss Winnifred Taylor, Secretary of the Women's Technical Committee] in London actually put men off the floor when they came on regardless of the rules and persisted in directing some of the technical operations of their gymnasts.

... ...................................................
It was their [the women's] independent development which represented the results of a long struggle for the integrity of their own organization. And they were perfectly capable of managing their own affairs.²

After the Olympic Games of 1948 in London, the men tried to have males placed on the Women's Technical Committee. Their attempts were resisted and the women eventually won out. Dr. Brown described it this way:

France, Italy, and later Russia brought up propositions several times that men should be allowed on the Women's Technical Committee. These were defeated. The prize situation, however, came at the Finnish Games in 1952 when Germany proposed that men should serve on the Women's Technical Committee. That was quite a story,

¹E. A. Simmonds, "Gymnastics," p. 76.

²Taped interview with Dr. Margaret C. Brown, June, 1973.
in which the representatives from Scandinavia and I took a very active part, and eventually the Germans withdrew the proposition. It has not been proposed since, as far as I know.\footnote{Ibid.}

It would appear that women had to be aggressive, strong, and willing to fight for their right to organize and administer their own competitions in gymnastics. Little was given, it had to be taken.

**Fencing, 1936–1948**

As in the past, the Eastern European nations dominated the individual foils fencing event in 1936. Perhaps because of the lack of American expertise in that sport little information is available about performances in the Olympic events. In 1936, however, a great deal of political interest was aroused in fencing because of the German Jewess, Helene Mayer, who was residing in the United States. She had been the Olympic gold medalist in 1928 and at the end of the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1932, she decided to remain in the United States to go to school.\footnote{Mandell, The Nazi Olympics, p. 70.} The interest in Helene Mayer was aroused by anti-Nazi sentiment which opposed the participation of American athletes in the Olympic Games in Berlin. The Committee on Fair Play was established...
because of the growing concern over Nazi persecution of
the Jews. Perhaps to try to prove to the world that the
persecution was propaganda and to appease the opposition,
the German Government invited Helene Mayer to participate
on the women's fencing team without a tryout, "in recogni-
tion of her known ability." The Committee on Fair
Play's publication Preserve the Olympic Ideal asserted
that General Sherrill, a member of the I.O.C., pleaded
with the Nazis for two years to invite her to partici-
pate. The Committee on Fair Play suggested that the
reason she accepted the invitation was closely related
to the fact that her mother and family still lived in
Germany and subject to Nazi brutality and vengeance.¹
In any case Helene Mayer placed second in the competition
behind Ilona Elek-Schacherer of Hungary. In the official
report of the 1936 Games, Ms. Mayer was photographed
saluting the Nazi flag as she stood on the victory
podium.

In 1948 Ilona Elek had the distinction of retaining
the Olympic title she had won in 1936. It was the first
time that a woman fencer ever held the title for two
consecutive Games. She was hard-pressed by Karen

¹Preserve the Olympic Ideal: A Statement of the
Case Against American Participation in the Olympic Games
at Berlin (New York: Committee on Fair Play in Sports
[1935]), p. 20.
Lachmann of Denmark who won the silver medal. Ellen Preis, the winner in 1932, was third.¹ Maria Cerra of the United States was commended for her outstanding performance, the best any American fencer had ever done. At the end of the competition she was in a three-way tie for second place, but placed fourth on touch score.²

Canoeing

A 500 meter kayak singles race for women was put on the Olympic program for the first time in 1948. Denmark, one of the countries in which competitive canoeing is a very popular sport, was influential in putting pressure in the right places to secure a position for women on the Olympic canoeing program. There were a total of ten nations entered in the competition; all nations were European. Denmark's K. Hoff won the competition followed by competitors from the Netherlands, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Belgium, France. Sweden and Great Britain were also represented.³


Track and Field, 1936-1948

In the United States the great drop-off of interest in track and field was almost disastrous for the American team in the Berlin Olympics in 1936. The New York Times reported that the American women's track and field team was cut to four members by the American Olympic Committee because of a lack of funds. The coach-manager-chaperone of the team Ms. Dee Boeckmann announced, however, that five girls had been able to raise enough money in their home towns, two others had money pledged to them and others were optimistic about raising the necessary funds.\(^1\) Apparently some women had provided much of their own money and in Mr. Fred Steers' report on women's track and field, he indicated that this self-financing produced an attitude of independence which was not in the interest of the group.\(^2\) The following day the Times reported that after the tryouts in Providence there was no money to provide for the expenses of the team for the period between the tryouts and sailing time. Ms. Boeckmann said that the girls were virtually stranded in New York and on the verge of hunger.\(^3\)

\(^1\) *New York Times*, July 10, 1936, p. 23.


\(^3\) *New York Times*, July 11, 1936, p. 9.
It is interesting that while the Olympic trials at Providence drew only a crowd of 2,500 spectators, that the post-Olympic international track and field meet held at Wuppertal, Germany, in 1936 drew 35,000 spectators.\(^1\) An article by Maribel Vinson, a popular ice-skater, appeared in the *New York Times* which attributed the differences basically to two sources. First, she stated that there was no stigma of unsuitability attached to the practice of track and field sports in Europe and that often several hundred girls entered local meets. The other outstanding difference, she asserted, was attributable to the fact that training facilities for men and women were the same in Germany. Under the club system women were able to share equally not only in training facilities but in coaching instruction as well. Small meets were held jointly (most of the clubs were co-ed), but the national championships took place singularly so that men's records would not dampen enthusiasm for the accomplishments of women and thus suffer in the comparison.\(^2\) German women were exposed to scientific training methods just as men were.

Ms. Vinson expressed the general feeling in Germany

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2Ibid.
that it is a good thing for a woman to be able to run well, to jump in form and to hurdle expertly. Obviously, this frame of mind did not exist in the United States.

Mr. Steers, in his general report, said that the lack of support for the American women's track and field team was due to the fact that some were trying to use the Olympic movement as a pawn in international politics.¹

The only outstanding American female track and field champion in the 1936 Olympic Games was Helen Stephens from Fulton, Missouri. Her first real competitive race was run in March of 1935 when she defeated Stella Walsh in the 50 yard dash in the A.A.U. meet in St. Louis. In her trial heat in Berlin she shattered Stella Walsh's world record of 11.8 for the 100 yard dash, lowering the time to 11.4 seconds.² Helen Stephens was lauded by the London Times as one of the immortals of athletics who stood out along with Jesse Owens and the other "Negro phenomena."³ The British Olympic Report conceded that the performance was phenomenal, but it went on to criticize the inaesthetic quality of her style.

Miss Stephens' style was certainly not attractive, judged from the point of

¹Steers, "Track and Field Athletics . . .," p. 151.
view of the charm of Jesse Owens. She possessed a phenomenal stride and the power of a quarter-miler. From the aesthetic point of view the palm should be awarded to Miss Dollinger, who finished fourth.¹ [Dollinger was German.]

Competitors in other events were also portrayed in terms which emphasized the lingering importance of categorizing them "masculine" or "feminine" performances. For example, the British Olympic Report stated that Ms. Treboniska Valla of Italy, who won the 80 meter hurdles, gave "a most attractive performance,"² while the London Times talked about the remarkable prowess of the statuesque and graceful Fraulein Gisela Mauermayer. The Polish "girl," Ms. Jadwiga Wajsowna, the London Times said, was more feminine and sprightly in her appearance, but was not consistent in her performance as an athlete.³ Gisela Mauermayer at the 1934 Women's World Games in London won the title of best all-around woman athlete in the world. Until 1932 no man had ever reached 156 feet in Olympic competition in the discus throw.⁴

Continental European countries dominated the track and field events in 1936. Although the United States was

²Ibid., p. 93.
⁴"Modern Atalantas," p. 32.
unofficially placed second behind Germany (51.5 points to the U.S.'s 22.33), other formerly strong nations in the realm of women's track and field, Canada and Great Britain, placed behind Poland, Italy, and Hungary. 1 Olympic records were bettered in all events except the high jump, which was contested in a jump-off between Ibolya Csak of Hungary and Dorothy Odam of Great Britain. Csak won the jump-off.

Rumor had it that Dora Ratjen, the German performer in the high jump who placed fourth, was really Hermann Ratjen. 2 In 1937, he/she was still competing, having equalled the world record of 1.65 meters. 3 After the war, she said she had been forced into transvestite service for the Hitler Youth. 4

The only track and field event the United States won besides the 100 meters race was the 400 meter relay. That event was won only by accident; the German team broke the world record during the trial heat, but dropped the baton in the final and were disqualified.


4 Mandell, The Nazi Olympics, p. 194.
After the Olympic Games of 1936 the climate for track and field in the United States declined even further. Catherine Meyer indicated that nobody was bidding for a national championship and when one was held there were not as many girls competing in it as there had been previously in the Metropolitan Association A.A.U. competition alone. In the late 20's and early 30's there were more athletes in the local associations, good athletes, and good performers than were seen at national championships. When bids were made in the late 1930's and early 1940's, they consisted of only a few hundred dollars and were held on lumpy, pock-marked high school fields. The athletes who came to compete did so at great personal sacrifice, since they did so at their own expense. It was not until the women from the Tuskegee Institute began competing that the quality of performance improved.¹

During the war it was difficult to find places to practice. Men's as well as women's track and field suffered because of it. High schools had set up obstacle courses on the fields and they were used for military training rather than for athletics. As the 1948 Olympic Games approached, none of the American women had had any opportunity for international competition. It was not until the spring of 1947 that Mr. Ferris was able to

arrange a dual meet between the Eastern provinces of Canada and the Eastern district of the A.A.U. This provided the first international competition for men or women since the beginning of the war. ¹

Ms. Meyer was selected as the coach of the 1948 team even though she never really wanted the job. Instead she strove to have Mr. Cleve Abbott, coach of the women's team at the Tuskegee Institute, named to coach the women's Olympic team. Mr. Abbott was appointed to the United States track and field committee for the 1948 Olympics but when a meeting of that committee was held at the New York Athletic Club Mr. Sims and Mr. Ferris had to speak to the doorman so that he would be admitted to come to the meeting. When Ms. Meyer suggested that Mr. Abbott at least be appointed assistant coach, she was told that it could not be.² Mr. Abbott was black.

The American team did not do particularly well in the 1948 Games in London. Part of that was due to the problem of seeding. American women were not as well known as some of the European competitors and the seeding was not done as equitably as could have been expected. The first two places in each heat qualified for advancement to the next round. In the 100 yard dash, for example, Audrey Patterson and Mabel Walker both finished

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
third in their heats in 12.8 seconds, yet in another heat a second place time of 13.0 qualified. In the 200 meters Mae Faggs finished third in 26.0 and Nell Jackson finished third in 25.8. In other heats 27.0 seconds qualified. In the relay much the same kind of thing happened. The U.S. team was third with a 48.1 time and yet a 50 second time in another heat qualified. Ms. Meyer said she believes that if the U.S. women had gotten past the first round of competition they would have done much better; she attributed most of their problems to inexperience and fear.¹

Alice Coachman won the high jump and Emma Reed qualified in the long jump, though she didn't place in the first six. Ms. Meyer told the writer that Ms. Reed had done 18'4-5/8" in the trials which was just slightly better than the second place jump (18'4-1/2") in the Olympic competition.²

The poor showing of American women in track and field in 1948 prompted the A.A.U.'s president to suggest that the A.A.U. encourage or initiate a program to produce better female athletes. He thought that the association should work for the cooperation of industrial companies and municipal recreation departments to interest them in track and field as part of their athletic

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
activities. President Rhodes deplored the fact that for twenty-five years the A.A.U. had had jurisdiction over women's track and field and yet could not get anyone to hold the national championship.

It is interesting to note that the countries winning the greatest number of medals in the Olympic Games in London were those which were the most oppressed by German occupation during the Second World War; Holland, France and Great Britain are good examples. Fanny Blankers-Koen of Holland won four gold medals, a feat comparable to that achieved by Jesse Owens in 1936, an accomplishment no other woman in track and field had ever attained before. Micheline Ostermeyer of France won the shot put and discus throw and came in third in the high jump. Great Britain won second place in the 100 meters, 200 meters, 80 yard hurdles, and the high jump. It must be noted, however, that Germany was not allowed to compete in the Games and the Soviet Union, though it dominated women's track and field at the European Games in Oslo in 1946, decided not to enter the Olympic Games in 1948. At the European championships the Soviet Union placed first in the 100 meters, the 200 meters, the shot put, discus throw, and the javelin; it placed second in

2Ibid., p. 49.
the 80 meter hurdles, the long jump, high jump and javelin; third place winners were in the 80 meter hurdles, the long jump, and the 400 meter relay.¹

On this point it is significant that in 1946, acting on the proposal of Avery Brundage, the I.A.A.F. elected a special commission for women's sports. At the I.A.A.F. Congress of 1948 that special commission recommended, at least openly for the first time, that entries for the Olympic Games and European Championships be accompanied by a medical certificate as to sex; it also urged that medical certificates accompany applications for world and continental records. Doubtful cases were to be dealt with by the I.A.A.F.² The I.A.A.F. added three events for the 1948 Games: the 200 meters, the shot put and the long jump. The writer wonders why these events were added, particularly when important officials like Avery Brundage opposed the shot put so vehemently as an event for women. Brundage told the writer he did not think the shot put was an appropriate event for women.³ Perhaps it was the addition of this event that was responsible for the action to incorporate the sex-test provision.


²Pallett, Women's Athletics, p. 68.

The British Olympic Association's official report of the London Games concluded that it was not until the Games at Wembley stadium in 1948 that the public had taken seriously the endeavors of women in a sport which had been primarily regarded as "masculine." The credit for this change of attitude was given to Fanny Blankers-Koen, Alice Coachman, and Dorothy Odam Tyler. The manager of the British team said that the high jump duel between Coachman and Tyler proved that the sporting public would watch women's athletic events with absorbed attention and predicted that this development assured the beginning of a forward movement in track and field for women.\footnote{Jack Crump, "Women's Athletics," British Olympic Association Official Report of the London Olympic Games, 1948 (London: World Sports, 1948), p. 34.}

Women athletes can take considerable pride in the fact that their performances, their technique, their sportsmanship and general behaviour at Wembley, removed many of the objections which had been advanced by critics who opposed their inclusion in the Olympic Games.\footnote{Tbid.}

Undoubtedly the image of women in track and field was improved by the fact that Fanny Blankers-Koen of the Netherlands and Dorothy Odam Tyler of Great Britain were married and both mothers of families of two children. In addition, the beautiful performance of Alice Coachman in the high jump, America's first black female champion,
and the second place performance of Maureen Gardner of Great Britain in the 100 meters, who also happened to be a ballet instructor, could not help but make favorable impressions on the public and upon Olympic officials concerning the status of women in these events. The writer thought it would be of some consequence to give the readers a brief glimpse of two of these athletes, whose images were very different from those of athletes of previous contests: Micheline Ostermeyer and Fanny Blankers-Koen.

**Micheline Ostermeyer**

Micheline Ostermeyer in 1948 was the French champion in five track and field events: the high jump, discus throw, shot put, pentathlon, and hurdles. At the 1948 Olympic Games she became a double Olympic gold medalist. An exceptional athlete, she was also an accomplished pianist. She began performing publicly at age seven, and at age 13 began studying at the national conservatory in Paris. In 1941 she passed her baccalauréat, gave a recital, and a few days afterward broke several records in track and field in North Africa. In 1946 she won first prize in a competition at the national conservatory and a few weeks later broke the records in the shot put and the high jump.
For her performance at the Olympic Games in London, Micheline Ostermeyer was awarded the Grand Prix Virginia Hériot given her by the Academy of Sports. On being asked her favorite events in track and field, she indicated that she liked the high jump better than the shot put; that she had been fascinated by the hurdles; that the liberty, the flight of the discus had sometimes haunted her memories and her dreams. She had always had a passion for movement and competition. Her "gabarit" [build] had provided her with the maximum chances of success in track and field.

For certain more "esprits dogmatique" [conservative people], the incompatibility of a musical career and a career as an athlete was absolute. She knew she was living an exceptional period of her life. It demanded all her efforts, her will, and was often harassing.¹

The image of Micheline Ostermeyer as a powerful track and field athlete, tempered by her image as talented musician probably did a great deal to improve the public's concept of the track and field athlete. Micheline Ostermeyer, French Olympic champion in 1948, was a hero.

Fanny Blankers-Koen

Fanny Blankers-Koen of the Netherlands, born Francina Elsje Koen, was the winner of four gold medals in the 1948 Olympics. In 1948 she was thirty years old, a housewife and the mother of two children. Her first public competition was in August of 1935 and about one month later she defeated the Netherlands' 800 meter champion. Very soon after she was invited to join the 1936 Olympic team and was entered in the high jump. At Berlin she was not successful, tying only for 6th place with two other women.\(^1\) Her coach, Jan Blankers (who later became her husband) began to perfect her sprinting technique and in 1938 she was 3rd in the European championships' 100 meters event at Vienna (12.0 seconds). Gradually she added the long jump and in 1940 was started on the hurdles. During the war she took time out from training only to bear her children. She brought her infant along with her to meets in a basket, nursing him before and after her performance. When she trained she could be seen pushing a baby carriage to the Olympic stadium (in Amsterdam) at top speed. During the war years she lacked international competition. In 1946 she was entered in the European championships. Her youngest

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child was born just seven months before the competition but she still managed to win the 80 meter hurdles and helped the relay team to win.¹ In 1948 many people were saying that Blankers-Koen couldn't win because she was too old. After her victories she was tagged by the American press as the "Flying Dutch Housewife." She was given a hero's welcome by her native Amsterdam. In the article written by Hauser, she is quoted as saying that the reason she was given such an ovation was because people liked to see a housewife do something on her own and do it well. People applauded her, she said, because she did her training and winning between washing dishes and darning socks.² Perhaps her husband understood her best. He was quoted in the article as saying:

Can't you just see where Fanny would be if she didn't have her hurdles and her cinder track? She'd be all wrapped up in potato peels and cabbage steam. That's no life for anybody.³

Besides having won four gold medals at the Olympic Games Fanny Blankers-Koen also held the world record in the long jump and high jump. According to Olympic rules she was not allowed to compete in more than four events. Writers praised her exploits but could not resist describing her physical appearance in this way:

¹Ibid., p. 102. ²Ibid., p. 24. ³Ibid., p. 102.
"... this blonde, nervous girl, with masculine legs, but indisputably a woman and furthermore mother of a family."¹

**Summary**

By 1948 the previously somewhat negative attitudes toward women competitors had changed to more positive ones. Practically every sport which did not depend upon the display of physical strength or that was played by women in the higher echelons of society was viewed as beneficial to women. Not only were these sports regarded as beneficial to the health and well-being of women, they were also seen as factors in developing courage and skill. Track and field athletics did not fit into either category, however. It did not enjoy the dignity and respect granted to other sports. The participation of women in track and field was seen, at best, as amusing and at worst, as physiologically damaging and masculinizing. This attitude was seized upon by the press to project an image that tended to either discredit the women track and field athletes or to ridicule them.

The Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation continued to use its influence in the

United States to curtail expansion of public competition for women in all sports. It was able to accomplish much of its objective through the cooperation of physical educators in the schools and colleges, leaders in recreation and in the Y.W.C.A.'s, and through a rather extensive written campaign. Well-known writers of the period, such as John Tunis, who shared the views of the Women's Division, contributed their efforts in accomplishing the anti-competition objective.

European women were not burdened by the puritanical and Victorian concepts that Americans still harbored concerning the delicacy, dignity, and respect with which women should be treated. The hardships European women withstood as a result of World War II made American objections to women's competition in sports appear ridiculous. The European attitude toward women was tempered by constant reminders of their ability to withstand war or hard work in the fields. The determination of women to survive tragedy, to pick up the pieces and to start life anew is an often discussed phenomenon even now.

The expanding political manipulation of the Olympic Games was one of the major factors in the growing acceptance of women in the competitions in 1936. Countries had begun to develop strong women's teams to help
them either retain or obtain supremacy in the "unofficial" point tabulations in the Olympic Games. The 1936 Games also afforded the Naxis an opportunity to show the world how fascist ideology could benefit women and at the same time build the race. Yet, while there was a desire to develop women's teams for the Olympic Games, there was at least an equal desire to maintain control over them. There was a definite reluctance to relinquish the administration of women's activities to women. The assertion that women were not prepared to administer their own activities was valid to some extent, but the men in charge were not anxious to help them improve in these areas.

Regardless of political considerations, the International Olympic Committee in 1936 was generally opposed to augmenting the program for women in the Olympic Games. The Second World War has been pointed to as a prime reason in the decision to allow women admittance to an increasing number of events. Women in countries that were the most heavily occupied during the War were the most triumphant in the Olympic Games of 1948, particularly in track and field.

Another possible reason for the change in the attitude of some sports officials, the press, and the public, was the apparent change in the "type" of woman competing
in the Olympics in 1948. Fanny Blankers-Koen was a married woman with two children, Micheline Ostermeyer was an accomplished musician, and Maureen Gardner was a ballet instructor. The image these women projected was one more easily accepted by society. The image of women in track and field did not truly change, however, until the advent of the "gazelle noir," Wilma Rudolph, in the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome.
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The scope of this dissertation was quite broad. The intention was to delineate the main factors enmeshed in the complex structure we call the Olympic Games which have affected the progress of women's participation in them. Some of these factors had to do with social mores, customs and traditions of different societies while others arose from the intransigence of the governing structures of organized amateur sport in recognizing the aspirations of women to compete in high-level competitions. Still other influences which tended to affect women's participation in the Games were political in nature. These influences were only indirectly related to women and were the result of nationalistic or political fervor which extended to and enveloped women's athletic activities. One of the factors which is infrequently associated with the growth of women's participation in competitive sport, the influence of feminism, has also been invoked here as at least a partial explanation for the success of women in wrestling favorable
changes from those in positions of power within the amateur sport world. European sources researched for this dissertation clearly discuss feminism as a reason for the demands of women for representation in the Olympic Games; even Coubertin himself accused the feminists for some of his problems in this respect. American sources, however, have seemed reluctant to discuss the whole question in this light. Perhaps that is because the "feminist" issue in the United States was considered distasteful.

This dissertation encompassed a period in history which saw devastating changes in the political and social structures of all Western nations. Western society emerged from a Victorian culture with rather naive conceptions of political power to a culture in which the use of political power, prestige and military might were of primary concern in maintaining world stability. The Olympic Games evolved from the stated objective of creating international harmony into a political tool used by governments to gain prestige and recognition for their respective nations.

It seems natural that women, who make up half the human race, would want to share in the recognition and admiration given by nations to their Olympic champions. Partaking of the fruits of Olympic competition, however,
was not easy because of the social and moral restraints placed upon all women's activities. Though they were admitted to the Olympic Games, discrimination against women was manifested in many ways. Each time an international federation wanted to expand the women's program, there was substantial opposition to it from the International Olympic Committee, except in sports traditionally viewed as feminine in nature. There is no evidence, for example, that F.I.N.A. met strong resistance in expanding the women's swimming program whereas track and field met with repeated and sometimes violent opposition.

Sport was and still is regarded as activity appropriately virile and therefore naturally adapted to the capacities, attitudes and interests of men. While sports permit men to display their qualities of strength, agility, boldness and combativeness, the same demonstrations of "male" characteristics by women may yet be seen as unbearable if not abnormal and even repugnant. The prevalence of sport for men is viewed by many as a direct consequence of the physical dominance of men over women; that dominance was eventually transcribed into sociocultural patterns which forged traditional distinctions in the ascriptions of the sexes.\(^1\) Just as sports for

women were considered in light of their virile characteristics, sports for women were evaluated in light of their effect upon the image of women and the social values connected with "femininity." Superior women athletes, even in the more "accepted" sports, became suspect when they displayed the strength or prowess necessary for outstanding performance.

The acceptance of women in sport and women athletes depended to a large extent upon the attitudes of the communications media that wrote descriptions of their performances. Since most reporters were males, women were often portrayed in rather unsavory ways. Laura Kratz\(^1\) in her study of sports and the implications of women's participation in sports in modern society, stated that the masculine bias of some reporters prevented the discussion of a woman's athletic ability above an emotional level. This accusation is borne out in many of the excerpts of writings of selected reporters in the period studied here. The accusations made by the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation regarding sensationalism in reporting women's events were not unfounded, although the Women's Division itself used

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\(^1\)Laura Kratz, "Study of Sports and Implications of Women's Participation in them in Modern Society," unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1958, p. 58.
sensationalism in building the rationale for turning public opinion against competitive athletics for women. Track and field and competitive gymnastics, in particular, were sports considered inappropriate for women. The appearance of women on the track, attired in shorts and wearing their hair short gave them a "masculine" look. Matters were not helped when incidences such as Violette Morriss' decision (1920's) to have her breasts removed (in the manner of the Amazons) so that she could put the shot more easily.¹ The media seized upon these rather shocking events to ridicule women athletes and to turn public opinion against them. Remarks made by sports officials, sportswriters and competitors alike focused attention upon the questionable sex of female participants, particularly in track and field. Gaston Meyer, editor of the sports daily L'Equipe, wrote such a comment about Stella Walsh in his book on athletics:

> From the modest accomplishments of the female champions of the era one must single out the Polish-American Stanislava Walaciewicz—to the United States Stella Walsh—who haunted the track from 1928 to 1948. This large brunette, of whom it is said that she shaves every day, ran the 100 meters in :11.9 in winning the Olympic Games of 1932 at Los Angeles.² [italics added]

¹Marie-Thérèse Eyquem, La Femme et Le Sport, p. 64.
The attitude towards women track and field competitors did not begin to change until 1948 when Fanny Blankers-Koen, mother of two children, and other women competitors who typified to a greater extent the "normal" characteristics of the female sex, were successful in the Games. Track and field was not even completely accepted until 1960 when the crowds marvelled at the ability, beauty and grace of the "gazelle noir," Wilma Rudolph. Many people still feel, however, that some events in track and field, such as the shot put, are not appropriate for women. By the same token, gymnastics performances during the first half of this century called for the unmasked display of muscular strength, a quality which most assuredly did not exemplify the concept of femininity as did sports like swimming and tennis. The attitude towards gymnastics did not change until floor exercises and apparatus routines became more plastic, more "feminine."

Not only did sportswriters and officials point to the masculine image of women in certain sports, they also emphasized the disinterest people had in watching women compete, especially in track and field. A case in point is the choice of words Kieran and Daley used to describe the performance of Micheline Ostermeyer's winning discus throw in 1948.
There was one other final on that sweltering, overcast day. It was in the women's events, a branch of the Olympics which usually evokes loud yawns from the customers and other disinterested folks. Micheline Ostermeyer of Paris won the discus throw on her last toss with a heave of 137 feet 6 1/2 inches.¹

The performance of Fanny Blankers-Koen was somewhat better reported by Kieran and Daley in 1948 although, or maybe because, she was "a thirty year old Dutch hausfrau and mother of two."²

Dorothy Harris, as late as 1971, stated that sportswriters had done nothing to change the attitude of disrespect for the female athlete, if anything they had perpetuated it. She pointed out that men have traditionally been unimpressed with the athletic ability of women, and have had little appreciation of the skill and beauty of movement women demonstrate in sports competition. Men do not understand why women want to become athletes and take time away from the activities women should be concerned with.³ This idea somewhat parallels Pierre de Coubertin's assertion in the first decade of the twentieth century that women who were interested in going up in balloons or in flying airplanes did not have enough to

²Ibid., p. 313.
³Dorothy Harris, DGWS Research Reports, 1971, p. 3.
keep them occupied at home.

Marie-Thérèse Eyquem, in a speech presented at the International Congress of Physical Education for Girls and Women in 1949, said that it is the woman behind the athlete that the sports fan saw when he looked at a female competitor. A man will be made uncomfortable by a woman affecting "military stiffness, and graceless, angular gestures, or a careless and badly groomed appearance." The display of effort on a woman's face mars its beauty and is incompatible with a man's idea of femininity. Eyquem suggested that in order to avoid shocking the conception of the public, thereby undermining female sports, women should be trained to control their efforts, overcome their nervousness, thus appearing natural and without affectation in competition. The evolution of women in the athletic arena was such that in the section of Jokl's study dealing with women's involvement in the 1952 Olympic Games, he said:

The great women hurdlers and discus throwers, fencers, and divers, gymnasts and canoeists have introduced--unwittingly, of course--features of elegance and power,

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2Ibid.
of force and of competence such as had previously not been known.¹
He referred to these activities of women as significant elements of contemporary culture about to shake off millennia of prejudice and ignorance imposed on women.²

Shaking off a millennium of prejudice and ignorance was not easy. Women received very little assistance in trying to bring this change about. Dr. Fr. M. Messerli, the historiographer of the International Olympic Committee, in his conclusions to a brief history of women's participation in the Olympic Games (1952) makes the reader realize just how little real progress women made with members of the International Olympic Committee in gaining acceptance as athletes.

Women's sport is making steady progress, the number of women competitors is always increasing notwithstanding the fact that despite the repeated request of feminist milieux, a relatively limited number of competitions are accessible to women.

We are of the opinion, that these restrictions are all for the good, seeing that woman has a noble task in life, namely to give birth to healthy children and to bring them up in the best of condition.

It is wise, therefore to curb her natural impulse which often leads her to overdo sports, especially strenuous ones, thus

²Ibid.
restricting her accessibility to competitive performances.¹

It is the conviction of the writer that the personal beliefs of members of the International Olympic Committee regarding the proper place of woman in society played a large part in their reluctance to admit women to the more aesthetically displeasing or physically demanding sports. The International Olympic Committee, it must be remembered, was in the past a group of rich and titled men whose ideas tended to be quite conservative. Their attitudes toward women in general were tinted by their Victorian upbringing. The very forcefulness of some women to gain access to competition in the Olympic Games may have added to the I.O.C.'s resistance.

The I.O.C.'s negative attitude towards women was also exemplified in its refusal to admit them into its organizational structure. Women were systematically excluded at the level of administration. An effort was made by Madame Milliat to gain representation for women in 1935 when she made this one of her demands in negotiations with the I.A.A.F. The effort was made once again in Rome in 1960 when Zoya Romanova (U.S.S.R.), Frances Kazubski (U.S.A.), and Doris Magee (Australia) petitioned the I.O.C. for female representation on the

¹Dr. Fr. M. Messerli, Women's Participation To . . ., p. 16.
International Olympic Committee. In the middle 1960's Sara Staff Jernigan, Chairperson of the Women's Board of the United States Olympic Development Committee, criticized old traditions and taboos which kept women from serving on the U.S.O.C. and asked for a change.

Women need to have their rightful place in representation for human dignity on the United States Olympic Committee, associated with men on a plane of intellectual and professional equality, so that women may achieve full self-realization of their feminine role in the World Olympic Games.

It was not until the I.O.C. session in 1973, however, that action was taken to allow women to become members of that august body. One wonders how many more years it will be before a woman is actually appointed.

The rather astounding rate at which women athletes were improving in performance in the United States during the 1920's perhaps led them to believe that they would eventually become as good as men. Their great progress probably had more to with the fact that women had never been trained or coached with any seriousness before, rather than any tremendous increase in physical capacity.

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There were no qualified women coaches in the early period. If women were to become athletes and later proficient coaches, it was necessary to solicit men coaches for women's sports. These men coaches either treated them condescendingly or trained them as men which made them even more subject to societal rejection. The beneficial effect the establishment of the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation had upon the associations sponsoring women's athletics was in forcing the adoption of rules and regulations protecting women competitors which may not have been passed otherwise. Though the validity of some of these regulations may now be questioned, many of them were probably necessary to foster greater public acceptance for women's athletics. The opposition of physical educators was aroused by real or perceived moral and physiological concerns. One must realize that their role during that period was determined not only by medical opinion, but by the rules and demands of society as a whole. The ferocity with which the women physical educators attacked competitive athletics of all kinds is reflective of the social feminist position which emerged from the deathbed of radical feminism, a position which was basically revisionist in nature. This posture emphasized the importance of protecting the welfare of women. Social feminists were conscious of the injustices
fostered upon women by industry. The real or perceived exploitation of women participating in competitive sports sponsored by industrial complexes were part of their concern.

Although the United States Olympic Committee in a 1948 publication cited World War II as a strong reason for the emergence of the "not-so-weaker" sex, European attitudes were always more favorable towards the display of effort by women engaged in strenuous sports activity. It is probably true that in European cultures economic hardships, the effects of wars, varying political ideologies produced more favorable attitudes. Geography also played a part in the kinds of sports women participated in. Eastern European nations were more prone to compete in fencing, gymnastics, canoeing, and track and field while Western European nations showed predominance in tennis and swimming. That France and other continental European countries were not strong in swimming during the period under study is reflected to some extent in the economic conditions of the time. The lack of facilities for swimming was the big problem. The Anglo-Saxon countries and Scandinavia were generally strong in swimming, track and field, tennis and archery.

The "problem" of women's participation in the Olympic Games was so complex that even high Olympic
officials found it confusing. It was difficult for the writer to follow the decisions of the International Olympic Committee. One of the best illustrations of the offhandedness, unconcern, and condescendence with which women's participation was treated by public officials, is the fact that most of them knew very little about the events in the history of women's participation in the Olympic Games. Men officials with whom the writer talked were either evasive in their answers or simply could not recall much of what actually happened. They frequently displayed a covert reluctance to discuss the subject beyond a superficial level, if at all. This was particularly true in letters of correspondence where answers were not challenged. As a case in point, Lord Burghley, the Marquis of Exeter, who is now president of the I.A.A.F., in a letter to the writer made it quite clear that he would prefer people to look toward the future rather than bring old skeletons out of the closet.

In spite of lingering opposition to the participation of women in the Olympic Games, by 1948 the atmosphere appeared to be more favorable. Canoeing was admitted to the women's program for the first time, the track and field program for women was augmented, women were officially admitted to the fine arts competitions, and yachting was officially recognized as a sport for
women in the 1948 Olympic Games. The first photograph of a woman athlete to appear in an official I.O.C. publication appeared in 1948. Avery Brundage, who in 1947 was the vice-president of the I.O.C., in a speech included women as part of the youth to which the Olympic ideal wished to address itself. In 1949 in the United States, even the women physical educators were beginning to face the "inevitability" of competition in the post-war period. The National Section of Women's Athletics urged physical educators to be realistic about the issue. In essence, the women physical educators were dropping their fight to exclude the participation of women in the Olympic Games.\(^1\) All these events were demonstrations of progress towards acceptance of the woman athlete. Yet, complete acceptance, recognition, and equality of opportunity for sports competition have not been attained in 1974.

It would seem that the evolution of women's participation in the Olympic Games followed Marie-Thérèse Eyquem's formula for the evolution of women in general: "first, rowdy demonstrations to attract attention, isolated struggle, and finally a scant, token admission into the organizations directed by men and a half-hearted

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recognition of their rights until better times come.\(^1\) The parallel is quite evident: first, women entered into all kinds of sporting events they had never before attempted, especially spectacular ones such as flying, ballooning, and track and field, which were all considered outrageous for women to participate in. The isolated struggle and token admission to the men's organizations can be best exemplified by the work of Madame Milliat, who almost singlehandedly created an alternate structure for women and through her untiring dedication to her goal forced recognition and admission into the formerly all male I.A.A.F. and entry into the Olympic Games. Then, women waited for better times for more than twenty-five years before losing patience; with the renewed feminist militancy of recent years, the cycle has begun all over again.

Many questions still remain unanswered regarding the evolution of women's participation in the summer Olympic Games. The writer would recommend studying in depth the admission of each sport for women to the program of the Games. The archives of each international federation should be examined to find out what the attitudes of officials were regarding the admission of women to membership and what pressures, if any, were put upon

\(^1\)Marie-Thérèse Eyquem in *Jeux et Sports*, p. 1299.
the International Olympic Committee to include women's events. It would seem logical that the investigation of international federation archives would also give more insight into the attitudes and operation of the I.O.C. in general. It would also be interesting to study in depth the attitudes, the amount of control, and pressures presidents of the I.O.C. put upon its member organizations to keep women out of the Olympic Games.

Little is yet known in the United States about the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale and its effects upon the direction of women's sports internationally. An in depth study of this organization, a biographical account of its founder, Madame Alice Milliat, and a study of the series of "women's Olympic Games" would be of considerable consequence in enlightening the history of women in sport. Of particular interest to Americans, perhaps, would be an investigation of American involvement in the Women's Olympic Games and a study of the author of that involvement, Dr. Harry Eaton Stewart. Some American women who took part in the Women's Olympic Games of 1922 are still living and it would be interesting to examine in retrospect their perceptions of that experience. It would also be interesting to study the psychological motivations of the early Olympic
competitors and how the attitudes of society may have affected them.

An in-depth study of the evolution of each sport in the Olympic program for women could also be of importance to the history of women in sport. For American enlightenment, a study of the development and influences of the industrial leagues of the 1920's and 1930's upon the evolution of women in sport would be of considerable consequence.
APPENDIX A

LIST OF FEMALE OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS, 1900-1948*

Tennis

1900 - Paris

Singles (Outdoors)
1. Caroline Cooper, Great Britain
2. Hélène Prévost, France

Mixed Doubles
1. Caroline Cooper and Richard Doherty, Great Britain
2. Hélène Prévost and H. S. Mahony, France

1908 - London

Singles (Outdoors)
1. Dorothea Chambers, Great Britain
2. Miss Norton, Great Britain
3. ____ Winch, Great Britain

Singles (Indoors)
1. G. Eastlake-Smith, Great Britain
2. A. N. G. Greene, Great Britain
3. Märtha Adlerstråhle, Sweden

1912 - Stockholm

Singles (Outdoors)
1. Marguerite Broquedis, France
2. Dora Köring, Germany
3. Molla Bjurstedt, Norway

Singles (Indoors)
1. E. M. Hannam, Great Britain
2. Sophie Castenschiold, Denmark
3. M. B. Barton, Great Britain

*Olympic winners are listed by sport in chronological order of entry into the Olympic Games.
Mixed Doubles (Outdoors)
1. Dora Köring-Heinrich Schomburgk, Germany
2. Sigrid Pick-Gunnar Setterwall, Sweden
3. Marguerite Broquedis-A. Canet, France

Mixed Doubles (Indoors)
1. E. M. Hannam-C. P. Dixon, Great Britain
2. F. H. Aitchison-Herbert Roper-Barrett, Great Britain
3. Sigrid Pick-Gunnar Setterwall, Sweden

1920 - Antwerp

Singles
1. Suzanne Lenglen, France
2. D. Holman, Great Britain
3. Kitty McKane, Great Britain

Women's Doubles
1. H. J. McNair-Kitty McKane, Great Britain
2. Beamish-Holman, Great Britain
3. Lenglen-d'Ayen, France

Mixed Doubles
1. Suzanne Lenglen-Max Décugis, France
2. Kitty McKane-Max Woosman, Great Britain
3. Milada Skrbkova-Ladislav Zemia, Czechoslovakia

Golf

1900 - Paris
1. Margaret Abbot
2. ?

Archery

1904 - St. Louis

Short Distance  Double Columbia Round (50-40-30 yds.)
1. M. C. Howell, Cincinnati
2. E. C. Coolen, Washington, D.C.
3. H. C. Pollock, Cincinnati

Long Distance  Double National Round (60-50 yds.)
1. M. C. Howell
2. H. C. Pollock
3. E. C. Coolen
Team Championship
1. U.S.A. I, Cincinnati

1908 - London

National Round (60 and 50 yds.)
1. Q. Newall, Great Britain
2. A. Dod, Great Britain
3. Hill-Lowe, Great Britain

1920 - Antwerp

National Round (60 and 50 yds.)
1. Q. Newall, Great Britain
2. M. Dod, Great Britain
3. Hill-Lowe, Great Britain

Diving

1912 - Stockholm

High Diving
1. Greta Johansson, Sweden
2. Lisa Regnell, Sweden
3. Isabelle White, Great Britain

1920 - Antwerp

High Diving (4 and 8 meters)
1. Stefanie Fryland, Denmark
2. E. Armstrong, Great Britain
3. Eva Ollivier, Sweden

Springboard Diving (1 and 3 meters)
1. Aileen Riggin, United States
2. Helen Wainwright, United States
3. Thelma Payne, United States

1924 - Paris

High Diving
1. Caroline Smith, United States
2. Elizabeth Becker, United States
3. Hjordis Topel, Sweden
Springboard Diving
1. Elizabeth Becker, United States
2. Aileen Riggin, United States
3. Caroline Fletcher, United States

1928 - Amsterdam

High Diving
1. Betty Pinkston, United States
2. Georgia Coleman, United States
3. Lala Sjöquist-Larssen, Sweden

Springboard Diving
1. Helen Meany, United States
2. Dorothy Poynton, United States
3. Georgia Coleman, United States

1932 - Los Angeles

High Diving
1. Dorothy Poynton, United States
2. Georgia Coleman, United States
3. Marion Roper, United States

Springboard Diving
1. Georgia Coleman, United States
2. Katherine Rawls, United States
3. Jane Fauntz, United States

1936 - Berlin

High Diving
1. Dorothy Poynton-Hill, United States
2. Velma Dunn, United States
3. Kathie Kohler, Germany

Springboard Diving
1. Marjorie Gestring, United States
2. Katherine Rawls, United States
3. Dorothy Poynton-Hill, United States

1948 - London

High Diving
1. Victoria Draves, United States
2. Patricia Elsener, United States
3. Birte Christofferson, Denmark
Springboard Diving
1. Victoria Draves, United States
2. Zoe Ann Olson, United States
3. Patricia Elsener, United States

Swimming

1912 - Stockholm

100 meter freestyle
1. Fanny Durack, Australia 1:22.2 Olympic Record
2. Wilhelmina Wylie, Australia
3. Jennie Fletcher, Great Britain

4x100 freestyle relay
1. Great Britain (Bella Moore, Irene Steer, Annie Speirs, Jennie Fletcher)
2. Germany (Hermine Stindt, Louise Otto, Wally Dressel, Grete Rosenberg)
3. Austria (Margarete Adler, Klara Milch, Berta Zahourek, Josephine Sticker)

1920 - Antwerp

100 meter freestyle
1. Ethelda Bleibtreu, United States 1:13.6 O.R.
2. Irene Guest, United States
3. Frances Schrotth, United States

300 meter freestyle
1. Ethelda Bleibtreu, United States 3:34.0 O.R.
2. Margaret Woodbridge, United States & World Record
3. Frances Schrotth, United States

4x100 meter relay
1. United States (Ethelda Bleibtreu, Frances Schrotth, Irene Guest, Margaret Woodbridge) 5:11.6 O.R. & W.R.
2. Great Britain (C. Radcliffe, Hilda James, G. McKenzie, C. M. Jeans)
3. Sweden (Emy Machnow, Aina Berg, Jane Gylling, Karin Nilsson)

1924 - Paris

100 meter freestyle
1. Ethel Lackie, United States 1:12.4
2. Mariechen Wehsealau, United States
3. Gertrude Ederle, United States
400 meter freestyle
1. Martha Norelius, United States 6:02.2 O.R.
2. Helen Wainwright, United States
3. Gertrude Ederle, United States

100 meter backstroke
1. Sybil Bauer, United States 1:23.2 O.R.
2. Phyllis Harding, Great Britain & W.R.
3. Aileen Riggin, United States

200 meter backstroke
1. Lucy Morton, Great Britain 3:33.2 O.R.
2. Agnes Geraghty, United States
3. Gladys Carson, Great Britain

4x100 meter freestyle
1. United States (Ederle, Wehselau, Lackie, Donelly) 4:33.2 O.R.
   & W.R.
2. Great Britain (McKenzie, Jenas, Barker, Tanner) 5:17.0
3. Sweden (Berg, Everlund, Peterson, Topel)

1928 - Amsterdam

100 meter freestyle
1. Albina Osipovich, United States 1:11.0 O.R.
2. Eleanor Garatti, United States
3. Margaret Cooper, Great Britain

400 meter freestyle
1. Martha Norelius, United States 5:42.8 O.R.
   & W.R.
2. Marie Braun, Netherlands
3. Josephine McKim, United States

100 meter backstroke
1. Marie Braun, Netherlands 1:22.0
2. Elizabeth King, Great Britain
3. Margaret Cooper, Great Britain

200 meter backstroke
1. Hilde Schrader, Germany 3:12.6 O.R.
   & W.R.
2. Marie Braun, Netherlands
3. Lotte Mühe-Hildensheim, Germany
4x100 meter relay
1. United States (Lambert, Osipowicz, Garatti, Norelius) 4:47.6 O.R. & W.R.
2. Great Britain (Cooper, Stewart, Tanner, King)
3. South Africa (Russel, Rennie, Bedford, Goes)

1932 - Los Angeles

100 meter freestyle
1. Helene Madison, United States 1:06.8
2. Willemijnthe den Ouden, Netherlands
3. Eleanor Garatti-Saville, United States

400 meter freestyle
1. Helene Madison, United States 5:28.5 O.R. & W.R.
2. Lenore Kight, United States
3. Jennie Maakal, South Africa

100 meter backstroke
1. Eleanor Holm, United States 1:19.4 O.R. & W.R.
2. Philomena Mealing, Australia
3. Elizabeth Davies, Great Britain

200 meter backstroke
1. Clare Dennis, Australia 3:06.3 O.R.
2. Hideko Machata, Japan
3. Elsa Jacobson, Denmark

4x100 meter relay
1. United States (McKim, Garatti-Saville, Jones, Madison) 4:38.0 O.R. & W.R.
2. Netherlands (Vierdag, Ladde, Oversloot, den Ouden)
3. Great Britain (Davies, Cooper, Varcoe, Hughes)

1936 - Berlin

100 meter freestyle
1. Hendrika Mastenbroek, Netherlands 1:05.9 O.R.
2. Jeanette Campbell, Argentina
3. Gisela Arendt, Germany

400 meter freestyle
1. Hendrika Mastenbroek, Netherlands 5:26.4 O.R.
2. Ragnhild Hveger, Denmark
3. Leonore Wingard, United States
100 meter backstroke
1. Nita Senff, Netherlands 1:18.9 O.R.
2. Hendrika Mastenbroek, Netherlands
3. Alice Bridges, United States

200 meter breaststroke
1. Hideko Machata, Japan 3:03.6 O.R.
2. Martha Genenger, Germany
3. Inge Sørensen, Denmark

4x100 freestyle relay
1. Netherlands (Selbach, Wagner, den Ouden, Mastenbroek) 4:36.0 O.R.
2. Germany
3. United States

1948 - London

100 meter freestyle
1. Greta Andersen, Denmark 1:06.3
2. Ann Curtis, United States
3. Marie Vaessen, Netherlands

400 meter freestyle
1. Ann Curtis, United States 5:17.8 O.R.
2. Karen Harup, Denmark
3. Cathie Gibson, Great Britain

100 meter backstroke
1. Karen Harup, Denmark 1:14.4 O.R.
2. Suzanne Zimmerman, United States
3. Judy Davies, Australia

200 meter breaststroke
1. Nelly van Vliet, Netherlands 2:57.2 O.R.
2. Beatrice Lyons, Australia (semi-finals 2:57)
3. Eva Novák, Hungary

4x100 freestyle relay
1. United States (Coridon, Kalama, Helser, Curtis) 4:29.2 O.R.
2. Denmark (Riise, Harup, Andersen, Carstensen)
3. Netherlands (Schumacher, Marsman, Vaessen, Termeulen)
Kayak and Canoe

1948 - London

Single kayak 500 meters
1. K. Hoff, Denmark 2:31.9
2. Alide van de Anker-Doedans, Netherlands
3. Fritzi Schwingl, Austria

Fencing, Individual Foils

1924 - Paris

1. Ellen Osiier, Denmark
2. G. M. Davis, Great Britain
3. Greta Heckscher, Denmark

1928 - Amsterdam

1. Helene Mayer, Germany
2. M. B. Freeman, Great Britain
3. Olga Oelkers, Germany

1932 - Los Angeles

1. Ellen Preis, Austria
2. Heather Guiness, Great Britain
3. Erna Bogen, Hungary

1936 - Berlin

1. Ilona Schacherer-Elek, Hungary
2. Helene Mayer, Germany
3. Ellen Preis, Austria

1948 - London

1. Ilona Elek, Hungary
2. Karen Lachmann, Denmark
3. Ellen Müller-Preis, Austria
Gymnastics

1928 - Amsterdam - Team Competition

1. Netherlands (Radwijk, Berg, Polak, Nordheim, Bos, Rumst, Vegt, Burgerhof, Simons, de Levie, Stelma, Agsteribbe)
2. Italy (Ambrosetti, Giarangoni, Perressi, Pismoni, Giavotti, Masavani, Tognini, Vercesi, Vittadini)
3. Great Britain (Hartley, Pickles, Broadbent, Jagger, Smith, Desmond, Woods, Kite, Judd, Moreman, Seymour, Smith)

1936 - Berlin - Team Competition

1. Germany (Bärwirth, Bürger, Frölian, Pöhlsen, Söhnenmann, Meyer)
2. Czechoslovakia (Dekanova, Doblesora, Poltová, Hrebrinova, Pálfyoua, Vermirovska)
3. Hungary (Csillik, Mészáros, Tóth, Nagy, Torös, Voigt)

1948 - London - Team Competition

1. Czechoslovakia (Honsova, Misakova, Ruzickova, Srmcova, Mullerova, Vermirovska, Silhanova, Kovafova)
2. Hungary (Vásárhelyi, Kövi, Kárpáti-Karcics, Gulyás, Keleti, Tass, Fehér, Sándor)
3. United States (Schifano, Schroth, Elste, Barone, Bakanie, Lenz, Simonis, Dalton)

Track and Field

1928 - Amsterdam

100 meters
1. Elizabeth Robinson, United States 0:12.2 O.R.
2. Fanny Rosenfeld, Canada & W.R.
3. Ethel Smith, Canada

800 meters
1. Lina Radke-Batschauer, Germany 2:16.8 O.R.
2. Kinuye Hitomi, Japan & W.R.
3. Inge Gentzel, Sweden
4x100 meter relay
1. Canada (Rosenfeld, Smith, Thompson, Cook) 0:48.4 O.R. & W.R.
2. United States (Washburn, Cross, McNeill, Robinson)
3. Germany (Kellner, Schmidt, Holdman, Junken)

High jump
1. Ethel Catherwood, Canada 1.59 m. O.R. & W.R.
2. Caroline Grisolf, Netherlands
3. Mildred Wiley, United States

Discus
1. Heluina Konopacka, Poland 39 m. 62 cm. O.R. & W.R.
2. Lillian Copeland, United States
3. Ruth Svedberg, Sweden

1932 - Los Angeles

100 meters
1. Stanislava Walasiewicz, Poland :11.9 O.R.
2. Hilda Strike, Canada
3. Wilhelmina Von Bremen, United States

80 meter hurdles
1. Mildred Didrikson, United States :11.7 O.R. & W.R.
2. Evelyne Hall, United States
3. Marjorie Clark, South Africa

4x100 meter relay
1. United States (Carew, Rogers, Furtsch, von Bremen) :47.0 O.R. & W.R.
2. Canada (Mildred Frizzel, Mary Frizzel, Palmer, Strike)
3. Great Britain (Hiscock, Webb, Porter, Halstead)

High Jump
1. Jean Shiley, United States 1.65 m. O.R. & W.R.
2. Mildred Didrikson, United States
3. Eva Dawes, Canada

Discus
1. Lillian Copeland, United States 40 m. 58 cm. O.R. & W.R.
2. Ruth Osburn, United States
3. Jadwiga Waissowna, Poland
Javelin
1. Mildred Didrikson, United States 43 m. 68 cm. O.R. & W.R.
2. Ellen Braumüller, Germany
3. Tilly Fleischer, Germany

1936 - Berlin

100 meters
1. Helen Stephens, United States :11.5 O.R. & W.R.
2. Stella Walsh, Poland
3. Käthe Krauss, Germany

80 meter hurdles
1. Trebisonda Valla, Italy :11.7 O.R.
2. Anny Steuer, Germany
3. Elisabeth Taylor, Canada

4x100 relay
1. United States (Bland, Rogers, Robinson, Stephens) :46.9 O.R. & W.R.
2. Great Britain (Hiscock, Olney, Brown, Burke)
3. Canada (Brookshaw, Dolson, Cameron, Meagher)

High jump
1. Tbolya Csak, Hungary 1.62 m.
2. Dorothy Odam, Great Britain
3. Elfriede Kaun, Germany

Discus
1. Gisela Mauermayer, Germany 47 m. 63 cm. O.R. & W.R.
2. Jadwiga Wajdowoa, Poland
3. Paula Mollenhauer, Germany

Javelin
1. Tilly Fleischer, Germany 45 m. 18 cm. O.R.
2. Luise Krüger, Germany
3. Marja Kwasniewska, Poland

1948 - London

100 meters
1. Francina Blankers-Koen, Netherlands :11.9
2. Dorothy Manley, Great Britain
3. Shirley Strickland, Australia
200 meters
1. Francina Blankers-Koen, Netherlands :24.4 O.R.
2. Audrey Williamson, Great Britain
3. Audrey Patterson, United States

80 meter hurdles
1. Francina Blankers-Koen, Netherlands :11.3 O.R.
2. Maureen Gardner, Great Britain
3. Shirley Strickland, Australia

4x100 meter relay
1. Netherlands (Xenia Stad de Jong, Witziers-Timmer, van der Kade-Koudijs, Blankers-Koen) :47.5
2. Australia (Strickland, Maston, McKinnon, King)
3. Canada (Myers, MacKay, Foster, Jones)

High Jump
1. Alice Coachman, United States 1.68 m. O.R.
2. Dorothy Odam-Tyler, Great Britain
3. Micheline Ostermeyer, France

Long Jump
1. Olga Gyarmati, Hungary 5 m. 69.5 cm. O.R.
2. Simonetta De Portela, Argentina
3. Anne Leyman, Sweden

Shot Put
1. Micheline Ostermeyer, France 13.75 m. O.R.
2. Amelia Piccinini, Italy
3. Ima Schäffer, Austria

Discus
1. Micheline Ostermeyer, France 41.92 m.
2. V. E. Gentile Cardinale, Italy
3. J. Mazeas, France

Javelin
1. Herma Bauma, Austria 45 m. 57 cm. O.R.
2. Kaisa Parviainen, Finland
3. L. M. Carlstedt, Sweden
APPENDIX B

First Olympic Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of first participation in Olympic Games</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Events entered that year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>golf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>France</td>
<td>tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>tennis, gymnastics displays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>gymnastics displays (tennis in 1912)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>gymnastics displays (tennis, 1912)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>tennis, swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>year</td>
<td>country</td>
<td>events</td>
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<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>fencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>fencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>tennis, swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>India</td>
<td>tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>track and field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>track and field, fencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rumania</td>
<td>track and field, fencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>fencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>track and field, swimming, fencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>track and field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td>track and field, swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>track and field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bermuda</td>
<td>track and field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

Federation Sportive Feminine Internationale  
(F.S.F.I.)  
Statutes  

Article I  
The "Federation Sportive Feminine Internationale" is composed of one Ladies Sport Federation per nation.

Article II - Object  
The object of the F.S.F.I. is:

a - to fix the rules and conditions of international athletic competitions.

b - to elaborate technical rules and codes for ladies competitions in athletics and collective sports such as: association-foot-ball, hockey, basket-ball, hazena, nautical sports, etc. .......

c - to acknowledge ladies' world records.

Article III - Congress  
Each National Federation affiliated to the F.S.F.I. is represented by ONE delegate minimum, and THREE delegates maximum for the Great Powers.

The meeting of such delegates constitute the Congress.

The delegate must be a citizen of the Nation he (or she) represents but he can give a regular power to a representative selected by him.

The Congress is the only power qualified to alter the statutes and rules.

The Congress meet once a year.
The different Nations are entitled to the maximum number of delegates as follows:

United States of America ....... 3
France .......................... 3
Great Britain .................. 3
Sweden .......................... 3
Germany (under reserve) ........ 3
Tchecho-Slovaquie ............... 3
Japan .......................... 2
South America .................. 2
Australia ...................... 2
Italy ................................ 1 (u.r.)
Holland .......................... 1 (u.r.)
Turkey .......................... 1
South Africa ..................... 1
Belgium .......................... 1
Spain ............................ 1
Norway .......................... 1
Finland .......................... 1
Greece ........................... 1
Portugal .......................... 1
Roumania ........................ 1
Danemark ........................ 1
Russia .......................... 1
Youga-Slavie ..................... 1
Austria .......................... 1
Hungary .......................... 1
China ............................ 1

Article 4

The Federations affiliated to the F.S.F.I. acknowledge they are the only Power ruling ladies sports in their respective countries.

Article 5

Every penalty (suspensions, disqualifications, etc. ...) decided by an affiliated Federation holds good for all the others for execution on a mere notification of the Federation which issued same.

Article 6 - International Meetings

The Federations affiliated to the F.S.F.I. are the only powers to have the right to organize or authorize international meetings.
A - A meeting called "international" can be organized only if elements of at least two affiliated Federations compete together.

B - A club affiliated to one Federation can organize an international meeting if duly authorized by said Federation, provided notification is given in advance to the general secretary of the F.S.F.I.

C - No competitor, no club, of any Nation can compete or represent her country in a meeting which is not organized by a Federation belonging to the F.S.F.I.

D - All the international meetings must take place under the rules of the F.S.F.I.

E - A Federation can be represented in the international meetings only by its citizens by birth or by naturalization.

F - No title of "Championship of the World", "International", "Ladies Olympic Games", etc. can be given to a meeting or competition unless authorized by the F.S.F.I.

**Article 7 - International Committee**

The F.S.F.I. is governed by a Committee composed of ten members elected by the annual Congress. Each Nation cannot have more than three members in the Committee.

An International Board chosen amongst the members of the Committee of the F.S.F.I. is composed thus:

- One President,
- Three Vice-Presidents, with age priority,
- One General-Secretary,
- One Treasurer,
- One Assistant Secretary,

The Committee includes three more members, which makes altogether ten members maximum.

The Board decision are taken by a majority, the President having a casting vote.

The International Committee name members to vacate seats in the Committee but the appointment must be approved by the Congress.
Article 8 - Official Bulletin

The management of the Board of the F.S.F.I. is communicated each quarter, and as frequently as possible, to the affiliated Federations by means of an Official Bulletin printed in two languages: French and English.

Article 9 - Affiliation

The affiliation fee is fixed 100 francs for the Federations having three delegates, 60 francs for those having two delegates, and 30 francs for those having only one delegate.

Article 10 - Headquarters

The headquarters of the F.S.F.I. is fixed in Paris, in consideration of the long standing of the Federation des Societes Feminines Sportives de France.

Correspondence to be sent to headquarters.

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Paris, October, 1921.
APPENDIX D

Copy

Federation Sportive Feminine Internationale
(F.S.F.I.)
Headquarters: Paris, 17 Faubourg Montmartre

-------------------------------------------------------------

General International Rules for Athletics

Article I - Standard Events

The following events are considered as the only standard ones, and records will be classified for comparison between Nations.

Track events - Runs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Meters</th>
<th>Centimeters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75 yds.</td>
<td>68 m.</td>
<td>57 cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 yds.</td>
<td>91 m.</td>
<td>43 cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220 yds.</td>
<td>201 m.</td>
<td>16 cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440 yds.</td>
<td>402 m.</td>
<td>32 cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>880 yds. (1/2 mile)</td>
<td>804 m.</td>
<td>65 cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relay Races (4 runners)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Meters</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200 yds.</td>
<td>200 m.</td>
<td>(4x50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440 yds.</td>
<td>402 m.</td>
<td>(4x110 yds.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>880 yds. (1/2 mile)</td>
<td>804.65</td>
<td>(4x220 yds.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

451
Hurdles - Hurdles to have a uniform height of 0m, 75 [cm] (or 2 ft. 6 in., that is 0m, 76)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Hurdles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 yds.</td>
<td>64 m. 86</td>
<td>4 hurdles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 yds.</td>
<td>59 m. 44</td>
<td>6 hurdles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 yds.</td>
<td>91 m. 43</td>
<td>8 hurdles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jumping and Throwing - Running high jump
Standing high jump
Running long jump
Standing long jump

Throws

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Javelin</td>
<td>0 Kilo, 800</td>
<td>1 arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shot-Put</td>
<td>8 lbs. (3 Kilos, 625)</td>
<td>1 arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 kilos</td>
<td>1 arm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 kilos</td>
<td>1 arm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Article 2 - Acknowledgement of World Records

The best international performance made by the members of the F.S.F.T.I. is considered as Ladies World Record. To be considered as good the following rules must be complied with:

A - Track Events:

1° - Certificate showing that the performance was made during a regular competition announced in advance.
2° - Start certified good by the starter.
3° - Time taken by three acknowledged time-keepers, with official watches with both needles ("doublante" and "rattrepante") showing divisions not lower than one-tenth of a second.
4° - Certificate signed by someone accredited for that work stating the size of track.
50 - All distances (runs, jumps and throws) measured by a stamped steel rope.
60 - Certificate signed by Officials showing that no back wind helped the record woman in her performance. No record can be acknowledge if an appreciable wind is blowing.

B - Hurdles: All hurdles remained standing.

Throws: Certificate showing weight and sizes of instruments.

Jumps: Certificate of height jumped and material conditions of performance.

C - For every and all Records: Certificate signed by officials showing that the athletic rules were complied with, these rules mentioned in a special paragraph.

Article 3 - Claims, Disputes, Appeals - The International Committee is entrusted with the care of settling every question not mentioned in the present rules.

Paris, October 31, 1921
APPENDIX E

Summary and Discussion on Athletics for Girls
Atlantic City Recreation Congress, October 9-12, 1922

WHEREAS, athletics for girls and women have recently become of general interest and are in danger of exploitation and

WHEREAS, we believe that athletics may provide good health and physical and social education for girls and women and

WHEREAS, we believe that there are physical and social dangers which should be carefully avoided and

WHEREAS, under well-organized physical training and recreation systems real progress is being made in the development of wholesome athletic activities for girls

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

Conscious of our duty in the premises we recommend the appointment of a commission, representative of America's interest in girls' and women's athletics, to study the physical and social problems involved in competitive athletics for women and to report a policy and program.

During the course of discussion on the subject, it became evident that the following represented the consensus of opinion.

1) We disapprove strongly the exploitation of women in athletics

2) We stand for the maintenance of the amateur spirit throughout all girls' athletic competitions and sports

3) We believe that all girls' and women's athletics should be under trained direction and always under the immediate supervision or chaperonage of a woman.

454
4) We believe that an efficient and proper medical examination is required

5) We believe that there should be some effective safeguard against girls competing when physiologically unfit

6) We believe that proper and sufficient clothing should be required

7) We believe that suitable restriction should be made in the number and type of events girls may enter in any one meet

8) We regard the representation of America at the Women's International Athletic Games held in Paris in July, 1922, as inopportune and unauthorized by any national representative body and, in view of the present state of women's athletics in this country, we are not in favor of international competition at this time.

The committee appointed by the meeting to transmit to the Association these resolutions and conclusions consisting of

Miss Beulah Kennard
Dr. William Burdick of Baltimore
Miss Charlotte Stewart of Utah
Miss Anita Tarbell, Boston Y.W.C.A., Athletic Council
Miss Mildred Corbett, National Headquarters, Y.W.C.A.
C. Ward Crampton, M.D., New York City.

ask that these resolutions be transmitted for approval to all organizations interested in girls' athletics, their cooperation solicited and the conclusions published broadly.

Approved by Committee,
C. Ward Crampton, Chr.

"Result of meetings on girls' athletics held Wednesday P.M. Thursday, A.M. and Thursday P.M. at the Atlantic City Recreation Congress - October 9-12, 1922."

(Signed) Helen I. Jones
APPENDIX F

Constitution of the National Women's Track Athletics Association

Name: This organization shall be known as the National Women's Track Athletics Association.

Objects: The objects shall be:
1. To cooperate with the Women's Athletic Committee of the American Physical Education Association, College Athletic Associations, the proposed general Athletic Federation and other similar bodies to encourage, standardize and control track athletics for women in the United States.
2. To demonstrate the value of intra-mural and inter-school competition under strict control; by sectional meets, telegraphic meets, etc., emphasizing the educational and competitive values rather than the spectacular.
3. To cooperate with the Federation Sportive Feminine Internationale in the study, standardization and participation of track athletics for women throughout the world.
4. To publish annually in cooperation with the above named organizations the Rules and Records for this sport.

Membership: Any School, College, Normal School, University, Y.W.C.A. or Women's Athletic Club may become a member by the signing of the Constitution by the Director of Physical Education and the payment of the annual dues.

Dues: The annual dues shall be one dollar for each institution.

Officers: The officers of this Association shall be a President and a Secretary-Treasurer, elected by mail-vote November 1st, whose duties
shall be those usually pertaining to said offices and an Executive Committee consisting of the Director of Physical Education or other member designated by the Director, of each institutional member in good standing. This Committee shall by two-thirds vote pass on all claims for records, suggestions for new rules, etc., presented for mail-vote on November 1st of each year by the officers of the Association.

(NOTE: Because of the work already undertaken to send a team to the International Federation Meet in Paris, August 20, 1922, it is understood that Dr. Harry E. Stewart, 420 Temple Street, New Haven, Connecticut, shall be Acting-President and Miss Suzanne Becker, Director of Physical Education, Public Schools, Leonia, New Jersey, shall be Acting Secretary-Treasurer until the first regular election, November 1, 1922. They shall also act until that date as representatives of this Association to the Federation Sportive Feminine Internationale, at which time, two representatives shall, with the other officers be elected by ballot. Each member of the National Women's Track Athletics Committee, as of May 1, 1922, shall be acting members of the Executive Committee until November 1, 1922.)

Amendments: This Constitution may be amended by a three-quarters vote.

The undersigned having enclosed the annual dues for the fiscal year, ending November 1, 1922, applies for membership in the National Women's Track Athletics Association and will act on the Executive Committee for the Institution named.

Name:

Institution:
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