

# Olympic Games Stimulates Athletics And Other Sports Throughout World

Athletic activities during the year 1912 centered in the Olympic games at Stockholm. These international contests had a worldwide influence on the sport, indicated by the keen competition before the events and the marked revival afterward, especially in the European countries.

For America it was a succession of record breaking performances leading up to the games, a continuation of new marks in the stadium proper and finishing with the greatest total of prizes in the history of international competition. As was natural, America led in everything that pertained to track athletics. Other countries presented a star in some isolated event, but the tape breaking was monopolized by Uncle Sam's boys from start to finish. In only long distance running events could the rest of the world give pointers to Americans. In this department several countries excelled, noticeably Finland, England and France. It was the same in walking and it behooves American coaches to get busy before the next Olympic, as every point is likely to count more than ever before in the games at Berlin.

Rather unexpectedly America made a good showing in the marathon race, the classic among all long distance events. Few from this country had looked for victory in the gruelling race and even third place for Strobino came as a surprise. The running of K. K. McArthur of South Africa, taking everything into consideration, had probably never been equaled. From near the arctic circle came another wonderful long distance runner, Hannes Kahlmalen, now with his brother, in this country, and a prospective member of the Irish-American club in New York. Judged by his performance in the Olympic games, the world has never seen another like him. From 3,000 yards up to 12 miles he was practically unbeatable.

## American Performances.

The all-around athletic supremacy of the United States, however, was best illustrated by the great performances of Jim Thorpe, the Carlisle Indian, who at the close of the games was given the palm for the best all-around athlete in the world.

Taking Thorpe as a type of American athletes, his perfect physical condition showed why and how America could win against the combined athletic teams of the world. It was specializing which won for Americans, although an exception might be noted in Thorpe's case. This specializing and the strict training of the Americans opened the eyes of Europe. It was the consensus of opinion after the games that in these attentions to detail lies Europe's only chance in at least breaking even with Americans in the next Olympic.

As has been noted, the Olympic games furnished the stimulus to American athletics, and this was noticeable both among colleges and athletic clubs. As a consequence the marks set in college meets in the early part of the summer were far above the average and records fell by the wayside which had appeared safe from attack. As has happened before a Pacific coast team annexed the western intercollegiate title, the University of California team running away from the rest. In the east the University of Pennsylvania captured the collegiate championship.

It had been feared that the Olympic committee would draw almost exclusively from eastern material for the games at Stockholm, but due to the good work of Everett C. Brown and Professor A. A. Stagg the west was heavily represented at the big games and its athletes acquitted themselves with credit.

## Athletes-Specialize.

Although specializing has been practiced to a greater extent in the east than in the west the line of demarcation grows fainter each year and, without boasting it might be said that the west is but little behind the east in athletic prowess. With proper encouragement by the colleges and athletic clubs the lines cannot be far distant when the two sections will stand on an equal basis. There is no question but that the eastern colleges at present are ahead of the western in star athletes. One reason for this is the stricter scholarships rules enforced in the west and the practical elimination of "paid" athletes from both colleges and athletic clubs. That the ethical standard of athletes is on a higher plane in the west can hardly be disputed.

An encouraging feature in the west during the last year was the attention paid to athletics in preparatory schools, and this would, of course, include high schools. The chaotic

condition of former years was missing and the large number of state and interstate preparatory meets gave an added impetus to the sport. Such meets as given by the University of Chicago, University of Illinois, University of Wisconsin, Northwestern university and other colleges did wonders in putting secondary school athletics on a firmer basis. In these meets it was also noticeable that the average age of the contestants was much less than formerly and practically on an equality with the east.

There has been but little strife between the athletic bodies. The sharp line drawn between the Amateur Athletic union and the colleges has been observed by both, and at the same time each has worked in harmony with the other wherever their paths crossed. The Central A. A. U. showed progress, although its activities in the main were swallowed up in the preparation for the Olympic games.

The differences between the A. A. U. and the A. A. F. have not hurt either, and as a matter of fact there is no doubt but that the entrance of the new body has helped athletics materially.