

JULY 2021

## Foreword from our President

*Even before its recognition by the IOC in 2002, it has been TWIF's ultimate objective to regain admission to the Olympic programme.*

*In this Magazine, some history on the Olympics, and participation of tug of war in the Olympics up to 1920, is provided as documented by Honorary TWIF President, Co Koren.*

**W**e re-publish these articles as we approach the 2020 Olympics (albeit 2021!) in Tokyo, Japan, given the global disruption of virtually everything in our lives by Covid-19. On behalf of TWIF I wish to express our best wishes to the IOC and the host nation, as well as all sporting codes and athletes who will be present in Tokyo. We trust that all the preparations and risk mitigation protocols and practices that has been developed and agreed for the Games will ensure success and top class performances will be possible.

As a global TWIF family we have a huge challenge to continue to grow and develop our sport to earn the privilege to also participate at this apex level. For this it is vital that we ensure not only top-class performance in the competition arena, but that we also present our sport at all levels in a professional and competent manner to prospective participants, spectators, the media and prospective sponsors.

Participation at future Olympics will remain our number 1 passion and purpose. Some of us may not be



Mr Co KOREN  
President  
Tug of War International Federation  
De Lepelaar 8  
NL-2751 CW MOERKAPELLE  
The Netherlands

Lausanne, 6 August 2003

Re: IOC Recognition

Dear Mr Koren,

It is my pleasure to inform you that, today, on the occasion of the 113<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Olympic Committee, held in Salt Lake City, **recognition** has been granted to the **Tug of War International Federation (TWIF)** as a **Recognized Federation**, pursuant to Rule 29 of the Olympic Charter. A certificate to this effect will be sent to you under separate cover.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that recognition by the IOC does not allow your federation to use the Olympic symbol.

May I take this opportunity to officially welcome you to the Olympic Family.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jacques ROGGE  
President

around when (not *if*, when!) it happens, but we need to ensure that we continue to lay the sound foundation for this dream to be realised.

As we continue to fight the global pandemic, we are aware of some return to normalcy in some countries, but also continued and huge disruption in many other countries. For those that have lost loved ones or themselves having contracted Covid, I wish to express my sincere condolences and trust that everybody will continue to observe the basic risk protocols of wearing masks, social distancing and sanitisation.

Don't become despondent or lax, but remain motivated and diligent. If not for yourself, but for those around you!

Please stay safe and healthy. **ANTON RABE**

# The Tug of War sport in the Olympic Games

*In 1996, during the centennial Olympic year, the media revitalised the sentiment of Tug of War's history in the Olympics. The following year honorary TWIF President, **Co Koren** wrote more about this interesting period in our history.*

Support officials of the national association are generally aware that the tug of war sport featured on the Olympic Programme from 1900 till 1920. However knowledge of details from this period in the tug of war sport is rather limited.



1900 Tug of War

During the World Championships in the Netherlands in 1996, pullers and officials were interviewed regarding the tug of war sport in the Olympics.

Time and time again the question was asked; "When will the tug of war sport be on the Olympic Programme again?" Pullers and officials voiced their hope and their dream that tug of war would soon return to the Olympic Programme. They were realistic however by admitting that it is not simple to get on the overloaded programme, even as a discontinued Olympic sport of the early

years of the modern Games. Top teams in tug of war work hard nowadays to qualify for participation in the World Games, a multi sport event which is held every four years and for which only the top six teams are eligible for participation. But although being realistic, all pullers still have the hope that one day the tug of war sport will be back where it belongs on the Olympic Programme.

## Pre-Olympic period

**Ancient Games** The history of the Olympics, that celebrated its Centennial Games in 1996, is far older than 100 years.

The early history of the Olympics started in Greece, where many Games were organised. Most famous were the Games at Olympia, which were held in the honour of Zeus. The history of that time has no accurate records, but a rough idea on the beginning of the ancient Olympic Games is that the first Games would have been around 1200 BC.



1906 Athens - Germany



The first sports on the programme were what are now called athletics (track and field) sports. The ancient Olympics started small; in the first edition of the Games, all events were completed within a one day programme. Later (400 BC) the Games expanded to a four day programme, with a one day closing programme for presentations of prizes and the enjoyment of banquets for the champions.

### Founder of the modern Games

In Paris, France, the idea to revive the ancient Olympics into Games of the new era came from a young man, Pierre de Coubertin (right). Sports at that time had just been structured through clubs and national associations and in 1892 at a meeting of the Union de Sports Athletiques, Coubertin for the first time voiced his idea to revive the Olympics.

As the response was not overwhelming, he tried again at an international sport conference in Paris in 1894. In that conference, where nine countries were present, he received support for his idea and Dimitrios Vikélas from Greece became the first President of the International Olympic Committee.

## The Olympics of the new era

**Athens 1896** Although the initial planning was to stage the first Games of the modern era in 1900, the newly formed International Olympic Committee could not wait six years to realise their dream and decided to stage the first Games in Athens, Greece, in 1896. It was not easy to get the event organised and it was a great relief for the IOC when, in the first week of April 1896, the King of Greece opened the Olympic Games of the new era in Athens.

The stadium of Athens, originally build in 330 BC for the ancient Olympics was restored by a wealthy Greece architect with beautiful white marble, and offered an appropriate setting for the opening of the modern Olympic Games.

The programme of the first Olympics encompassed 43 disciplines of which the athletic disciplines, like in the ancient Games, were prominent on the programme. The programme included a sport using a rope, rope climbing, but rope pulling -tug of war- was not yet in the Games in Athens. Participants in the first Olympics were not members of national delegations and qualifications for the Games did not exist at all, any one who had the desire to participate and the money to travel was welcome.



The total number of participants was less than 300 competitors, but a crowd of more than 60 000 spectators enjoyed the opening day.

## Tug of War on the programme

**Paris 1900** The early editions of the Olympics of the new era were surely not flawless in their organisation. In many sports, arbitration was still in its

infancy and fierce debates were sometimes needed to reveal the winner of the competitions.

At that time the Games were also not the compact Games, as we know them now. The Games of the second Olympiad in 1900 in Paris started on May 20 and finished on October 28 - a full six months were needed to run the programme of 17 sports with 1085 participants from 17 countries.

The Paris Olympics of 1900 were the first Games where the tug of war sport featured on the programme. It was basically the same format as now but the tug of war teams in those early days consisted of six persons instead of the present eight. There are several versions of the result of

### 1900 PARIS FRANCE

#### GOLD MEDAL

SÖDERSTRÖM  
STAAB  
NILSSON  
SCHMIDT  
AABYE  
WINCKLER

#### (Sweden/Denmark)

(SWE) Gustaf  
(SWE) Karl Gustaf  
(SWE) August  
(DEN) Eugen  
(DEN) Edgar  
(DEN) Charles

#### SILVER MEDAL

BASSET  
COLLAS  
GONDOUIN  
ROFFO  
SARRADE  
DE ZUBIRÍA

#### (France)

Raymond  
Jean  
Charles  
Joseph  
Émile  
Francisco Henriques



*Tug of War event at 1904 St Louis Olympics;  
St Louis Turners 1 vs St Louis Turners 2.*



the tug of war competition in the Paris Games. Some records indicate that the medals were won by the USA, Sweden/Denmark and France, whilst in other accounts of the Games, the Swedes are acknowledged as the Champions, with France winning the silver. Apparently there is a difference of opinion whether the matches in which the USA participated were official events of the Olympics or only exhibition pulls, which took place after the official event was finished. Such conflict now seems very absurd in sports organisation, however at those early Olympic events such incidents were certainly not unusual.

One American had less worries about the incident with the USA team - as John J. Flanagan won the gold medal in hammer throw in Paris and repeated this performance in 1904 and 1908. In these last Games, John Flanagan was also a member of the national USA tug of war team - however his team did not win a medal. Flanagan was an Irishman from County Limerick, who emigrated to the USA to become a policeman in New York. In the early Olympics policemen were evidently the top sportsmen and the performance of Irishmen in tug of war sport is a legend in itself.

## St. Louis

The modern Olympics in the early nineties slowly gained recognition and prestige, however they were still far away from the immense and prestigious media giant it has become in the present time.

The IOC had planned to stage the third Olympics in Chicago, USA, however the American organisers wanted the Games to be part of the large world fair, the Louisiana

Purchase Exhibition. As a result the Olympics had to move to St. Louis. The event suffered from this secondary role and only 680 participants from 13 countries competed in the event, which again was spread over a long period of five months. The event was totally dominated by national competitors, as only 100 participants from outside the USA had come to the St. Louis Games.

It is therefore no surprise that the medals in the tug of war competition were all won by teams from the USA. It is not certain whether the American organisers were very up to date on the rules for the tug of war competition,

however the three USA teams in the St. Louis Games consisted only of five persons per team. The gold medal was won by the Milwaukee Athletic Club, the silver by the West St. Louis Turnverein A and their colleagues from the B team of the same club took the bronze medal. In the Milwaukee Athletic Club one of the team members was Patrick Flanagan, who was possibly a relative of John J. Flanagan, the Irish-American hammer thrower. John Flanagan also won the gold medal in hammer throwing in the St. Louis Games. A fellow countryman of his, Marty Sherdian, born in County Mayo in Ireland, who immigrated to America and also became policeman, won the gold medal in discus throw. Both men would later become members of the USA tug of war team for the London Games in 1908.

### 1904 ST. LOUIS USA

#### GOLD MEDAL

(Milwaukee  
Athletic Club USA)

OLSON	Oscar
JOHNSON	Sidney
SEILLING	Henry
MAGNUSSON	Conrad
FLANAGAN	Patrick

#### SILVER MEDAL

(St. Louis  
Turnverein A USA)

BRAUN	Max
SEILLING	William
UPSHAW	Orrin
ROSE	Charles
RODENBERG	August

#### BRONZE MEDAL

(St. Louis  
Turnverein B USA)

HABERKORN	Charles
KUNGLER	Frank
THIAS	Charles
JACOBS	Harry
FRIEDE	Oscar

# The “inserted” Games in ATHENS 1906, were needed to restore the hope and fate in the modern Olympic Games

The “inserted” Games Sport officials and athletes were very displeased with the presentation of the Olympic Games in St. Louis. At the request of the organisers, the Olympic event had been integrated in the World Fair in St. Louis. The sport did not get the required recognition and appreciation; sport events in St. Louis were staged as side-shows of the World Fair and competitions were held alongside lemonade and farm stands. After the 1904 event, confidence in the future of the Games was lost and the spirit had faded - so the Olympics needed some reinforcement.

Olympic Games are staged at the beginning of each Olympiad, which is the four years period between the Olympic Games. The Athens Games of 1906 were therefore not considered “official” Olympic Games. The Games in Athens, however restored the fate and hope in the modern Olympic Games. Twenty nations competed with national sanctioned delegations bringing a total number of 884 competitors to Athens and the Panathenean Stadium. The “inserted” or “intercalated” Games, as they are named in many publications, were well respected by both spectators and participants and helped the modern Olympics survive and develop into an internationally respected sport event.

Tug of war sport featured in Athens for the third time on the Olympic programme. This time the participating tug of war teams competed in the regular eight persons per team con-



figuration. Germany and the host country Greece participated for the first time in the Olympic tug of war event. Being new to the international tug of war sport did not stop them competing for the top. The German team won the gold, leaving the silver for Greece. Sweden, after winning the gold medal in the Paris Games in 1900, participated for the second time in the Olympic

Games. Despite their experience, the athletes of the Swedish team had to be content with the bronze medal.

In the Swedish team there was a 26 year old puller, who would make sport history as javelin thrower - Eric Lemming - member of the Swedish tug of war team in Athens, became one of the greatest javelin throwers in Olympic history, winning his first gold medal in Athens.

**Twenty nations  
with 884 competitors  
competed in  
Athens 1906**

Eric Lemming set several world records in his career and won two more gold medals in the Olympic Games in London and in his home city Stockholm. In his last Games in Stockholm 1912, when he was 32 years old, he concentrated fully on the javelin discipline and was no longer on the Swedish tug of war team - if he still had been he would certainly have enjoyed the triumph of also winning a gold medal with the tug of war team.

## 1906 ATHENS GREECE

### GOLD MEDAL

### Germany

SCHEIDEREIT  
RONDI  
BORN  
DORR  
KALTENBACH  
RITZENHOF  
KRAMER  
WAGNER

Heinrich  
Heinrich  
Wilhelm  
Willy  
Karl  
Wilhelm  
Joseph  
Julius

### SILVER MEDAL

### Greece

VELLAS  
TRIVOULIDIS  
PSAKHOS  
PSAKHOS  
LAZAROS  
LAZAROS  
PAPACHRISTOU  
TSITAS

Spyros  
Panayiotis  
Vasilios  
Georgios  
Konstantinos  
Spyros  
Georgios  
Antonios

### BRONZE MEDAL

### Sweden

SVENSSON  
GUSTAFSSON  
NORLING  
WERSALL  
HOLMBERG  
GRANFELT  
GRONBERGER  
LEMMING

Carl  
Anton  
Axel  
Ture  
Oswald  
Erik  
Gustaf  
Eric

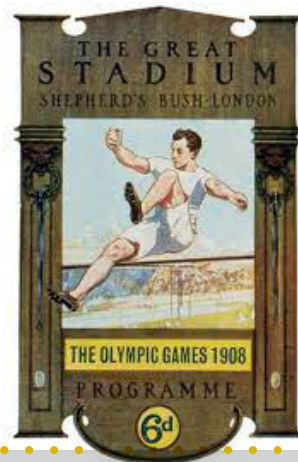
# LONDON 1908: originally the Games were supposed to be in Rome but with the eruption of Vesuvius in 1906 it was moved to Great Britain

In previous Games the organising was essentially done by bodies from outside sport, such as exhibition and fair organisers. The control of sport administrations on the organisation of the Games slowly increased and in the London Games the sport institutions played a substantial role in the management of the Games.

The now traditional Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games was introduced at the London Games. With the traditional parade of athletes during the opening at Shepherd's Bush, the problems of politics were introduced to the Games. The Finnish teams protested the Russians (who ruled Finland at that time) and the Irish refused to compete under the British flag. Despite the political controversies, the London Games were the first major sport event of the modern era of Olympic Games with 2000 competitors from twenty-two countries. The organisation of the sport competitions was still far from perfect and various incidents affected the contests for the Olympic medals.

The challenge between British and American athletes in the track and

**The London Games was the first major sport event of the modern era of Olympic Games with 2000 competitors**



field events, was very fierce. The British athlete Wyndham Halswelle became the 400 metre gold medal winner, after the American runners had refused to run again after the first race had been nullified by the officials. Another well known incident was the finish of the marathon, where the Italian Pietri

walked over the finish line supported by an official and the famous writer Arthur Conan Doyle. Consequently Pietri was disqualified, but later honoured by Queen Alexandra with a special cup for his achievement.

The tug of war event in London was totally dominated by the Great British teams. The teams were recruited from police divisions. The American and Swedish teams were completely bewildered seeing the performance of the British teams. The USA team consisted of a group of excellent athletes, with John J. Flanagan, Marty Sheridan and Marquis Horr, who all had won medals in discus and hammer throwing disciplines. Martin Sheridan and John Flanagan were both born in Ireland and emigrated to the USA to become policemen. Marty was an expert in discus throw, winning three Olympic gold medals and John won his three gold medals in hammer throwing and had won his first gold medal in the Olympic Games in Paris. The USA team of fine athletes were entirely defeated by the skill and technique of the British policemen, and found that strength alone is not enough to win a tug of war match.

## 1908 LONDON GREAT BRITAIN

### GOLD MEDAL

#### London City Police

HIRON	William
GOODFELLOW	Federick
BARRETT	Edmond
SHEPHERD	James
HUMPHREYS	Frederick
MILLS	Edwin
IRETON	Albert
MERRIMAN	Frederick

### SILVER MEDAL

#### Liverpool Police

PHILBIN	Patrick
CLARK	James
BUTLER	Thomas
KIDD	Alexander
SMITH	George
SWINDLEHURST	Thomas
McLOWRY	Daniel
GREGGAN	William

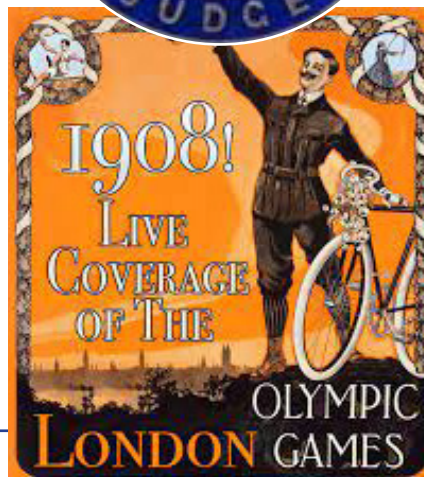
### BRONZE MEDAL

#### Metropolitan Police

TAMMAS	Walter
SLADE	William
MUNRO	Alexander
EBBAGE	Ernest
HOMEWOOD	Thomas
CHAFFE	Walter
WOODGET	James
DOWLER	Joseph



In the final match in London Games 1908, the London City Police, in their contest against the Liverpool Police, won in two straight pulls. The bronze medal in tug of war was a walkover for the K Division of the London Metropolitan Police team, as the Swedes were so dazed by the pure force and skill of the British teams that they did not dare to go to the rope. In the Champions team of the London Games, was Edmond (Eddy) Barrett, who proved his strength and skill not only on the rope, but also won the bronze medal in the heavy weight



wrestling competition. The British pullers were indeed fabulous and several pullers of the British teams participated in later Olympic Games.

Three pullers of the 1908 Olympic Champion team, James Shepherd, Frederick Humphreys and Edwin Mills participated in two more Games, winning Olympic medals in three separate Games.

**Strength alone is not enough to win a tug of war match**

## The Olympic Games in STOCKHOLM 1912: went into the history files as the “Swedish Masterpiece”

It is a natural incentive for the organiser of sport events to be remembered as the organiser of the best Games ever. The Olympic Games in Stockholm 1912 were certainly the best organised and most efficiently operated Games so far and went into the history files as the “Swedish Masterpiece”.

The use of modern equipment such as public address systems and electronic timing devices unquestionably helped the Swedes accomplish their “masterpiece”. The Games brought delegations from 28 nations with a total number of 2500 participants to Stockholm. Olympic Games makes stars and in the Stockholm Games, the American Jim Thorpe and the Fin Hannes Kolehmainen were definitely the stars of the Games, each winning multiple gold medals in track and field events. The



Swedes had not only prepared the event very well, they had also made sure that their national teams and athletes were very well prepared. So Eric Lemming, the famous javelin thrower, who had participated in the tug of war team in Athens, made his fame again in Stockholm by winning another gold medal in javelin throw.

In preparation for the Games, the Secretary of the Swedish Olympic Committee issued an appeal in the sporting

press of the country, requesting full support to ensure a good and strong representation for the tug of war sport in the Games. In response to his request a special committee was established with the task to arrange for systematic training of the competitors.

The training programme was completed with a set of four special trials in tug of war competitions, which were

held in October and November 1911. It was the Stockholm Police team that came out as the strongest and they were selected to represent Sweden in the Olympics.

At the closure date for entries five countries had announced their participation; Austria, Bohemia, Great Britain, Luxembourg, and Sweden. The Swedes were very well aware that their strongest opponents - the London City Police team, would be the winners of the gold medal in 1908 Games. The programme was set for five consecutive days starting on Sunday 7 July. The match between Sweden and Great Britain was planned for the second day of the programme.

The pulling arena in the Stockholm Stadium was a sand track of 40 meters long by an eighth of a metre wide, which was well prepared and had the required hardness. The stands of the Stadium were alongside the pulling tracks - near enough to provide a good spectator ambience during the contests.

When the teams from Austria, Bohemia and Luxembourg faced the skill and strength of the Swedish and the British teams, they had no desire to be defeated and did not turn up at the competition. So the real event was totally centred on the match between Sweden and Great Britain, both teams consisting of well trained police men. The match took place on Monday 8 July at a quarter past five in the afternoon. The stand in the stadium was packed



## 1912 STOCKHOLM SWEDEN

### GOLD MEDAL Sweden

BERGMAN	Adolf
ANDERSSON	Arvid
EDMAN	Johan
FREDRIKSSON	Erik
JONSSON	Carl
LARSSON	Erik
GUSTAFSSON	August
LINDSTROM	Herbert

### SILVER MEDAL Great Britain

MUNRO	Alexander
SHEPHERD	James
SEWELL	John
DOWLER	Joseph
MILLS	Edwin
HUMPHREYS	Frederick
HYNES	Mathias
CHAFFE	Walter

with thousands of spectators who breathlessly awaited the result of the big match.

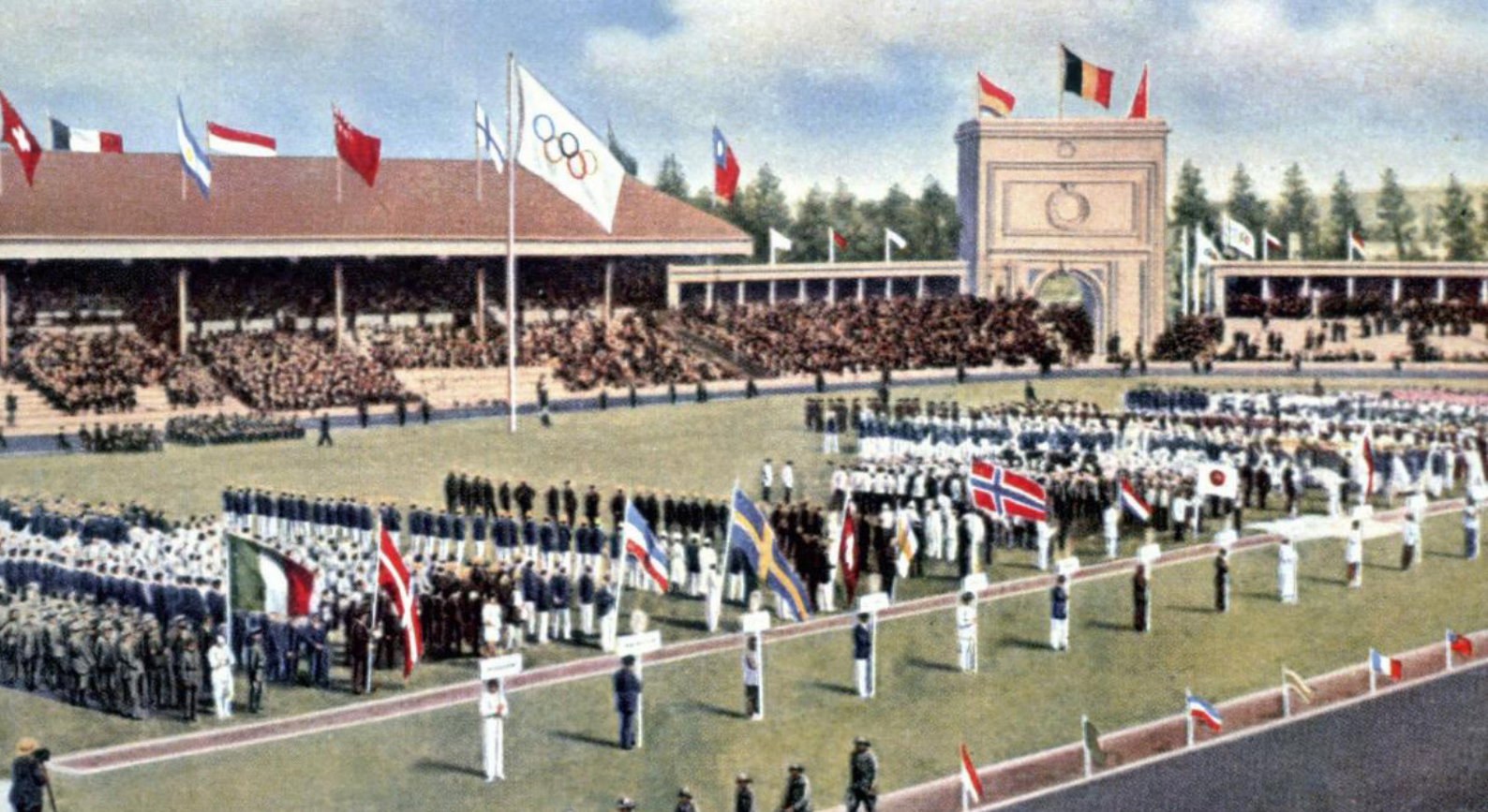
After the start in the first pull, the rope was absolutely tight and did not move for 30 seconds, then, with the characteristic powerful Swedish heaves, the Swedish team pulled their British opponents forward. The first pull was a clear victory for the Swedish team. The thunder of applause from the Swedish spectators helped the Swedish teams to restore their strength to be ready for the second pull which started after the regular 5 minute rest period.

In the second pull, the British started very strong, taking the Swedes very near the mark, but then the Swedes stopped them. Neither team could make much more ground - however the Swedish team proved to be more fit, and as some of the British pullers became exhausted they sat down on the ground. So the Swedes also won the second pull - after the judge disqualified the British team for sitting.



*The only tug of war bout at the 1912 Summer Olympics with Great Britain versus Sweden. GB is on the left.*





## ANTWERP 1920: this was the first time that the Olympic flag with the five rings was flown during the Games

**W**orld War I caused the International Olympic Committee to skip the Olympiad in 1916 and eight years after the Olympic Games in Stockholm, the Games were opened in Antwerp, Belgium. The City of Antwerp had a difficult task to organise an Olympic Games in a city that been damaged and distorted by the violence of the war. Although the defeated nations of World War I were banned from participation, 29 countries participated, bringing again 2500 competitors to the Official Opening Ceremony in Antwerp.

The Games in Antwerp, were the first where the Olympic flag with the five rings was flown during the Games. The track and field events in Antwerp were dominated by two countries, the huge delegation of the USA and the delegation of a small, but very sport minded, country

Finland. The famous Paavo Nurmi, earned his fame by winning three gold medals in running events. In the tug of war competition, three British pullers had already made fame before the start of the event. James Shepherd, Edwin Mills and Frederick Humphreys participated in their third Olympic Games. After winning the gold medal in London 1908, the silver medal in Stockholm in 1912, they were again prepared to go for the gold. The opposition for the British teams in Antwerp was definitely less than in the previous Games in Stockholm as the Swedish tug of war team did not participate.

The new opponents of the British teams came from Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands. The pulling arena was not a regular grass area, but was a special prepared surface of clay and slag, providing a very hard pulling track. The British teams were





## 1920 ANTWERP BELGIUM

undoubtedly the most experienced and had no problems with the compact surface. The first match against the Belgium team was certainly a simple start for the British team, while the Netherlands teams had a fierce battle with energetic Italians, but won both ends. In the second day the British team met the Netherlands team and also due to the extra 300 kg team weight of the London Bobbies, they had no problem whatsoever to beat the Dutch. In the last day of the competition, the British teams had to beat the Italians to win their second gold medal in the Olympic tug of war competition. The last contest was rather easy for the well trained and experienced London police team. For three of them, it was not only their third Games, but also their second gold medal, twelve years after they had won the first in the 1908 Olympic Games in London and eight years after they won the silver medal in Stockholm.

The match for the silver medal on the last day of the tug of war competition in the Antwerp Games between the

### **GOLD MEDAL** **Great Britain**

CANNING	George
HOLMES	Frederick
MILLS	Edwin
SHEPHERD	James
STIFF	Harry
SEWELL	John
HUMPHREYS	Frederick
THORN	Ernest

### **SILVER MEDAL** **Netherlands**

BEKKERS	Wilhelmus
HENGVELD	Johannes
JANSMA	Sytse
JANSSEN	Hendrikus
VAN LOON	Antonius
VAN LOON	Willem
VAN REKUM	Marinus
VAN REKUM	Willem

### **BRONZE MEDAL** **Belgium**

BOURGUIGNON	Edouard
DUCATILLON	Alphonse
MAERTENS	Remy
PICK	Christin
PINTENS	Henry
VAN DER BROECK	Charles
VAN HOORENBEEK	Francois
WUYTS	Gustave

Netherlands and Belgium was a real contest. Both teams had beaten the Italian team, but had not been able to take a point from the British team. The first pull was won by the Netherlands in 1 minute 3,4 seconds. In the second pull the Belgian team fought back very well and the pull took twice as much time as the first pull, but the Netherlands team won the second pull in 2 minutes and 3 seconds. Whilst the British teams were very much used to winning Olympic medals, the silver medal for the team from the Achilles Club in Arnhem was the first and only Olympic silver medal in tug of war for the Netherlands. The Belgium were very content with their first Olympic bronze medal.

The Antwerp Games were the last Olympics for the Tug of War sport, as the IOC in their session in August 1920 took the decision to remove tug of war from the programme "in order to bring about a reduction in the number of sports on the Olympic programme."

**TWIF is very much aware that it will not be easy to be re-included in the currently overloaded Olympic programme - even though it regained its Olympic recognition in 2002. Tug of War did not make it into the programme for the Tokyo 2021 Olympics nor in the planning of Paris 2024. Now we will work hard to be included in the Los Angeles Olympics that will take place in 2028.**