

Summaries

"Vanhat mestarit" (The old Masters). The Yearbook of the Finnish Society for Sport History, 2007 (FSSH)

Pauli Heikkilä:

Olympic torch in Berlin – *Torchbearers* in Finland

The *Torchbearers* (Tulenkantajat) was a centre-leftist cultural weekly newspaper in the 1930s. This article deals with its attitude towards the Olympic Games in Berlin 1936. The opposition started well before the games and it was one of the few newspapers, which told about potential boycotts of the games. The stand of *Torchbearers* was based on the view on sports as a way of exercise rather than competition between nations. Nevertheless, the paper was impressed by the achievements of Finnish sportsmen and annoyed on the decision of admitting the next games to Tokyo instead of Helsinki what it considered a political manoeuvre. On the other hand, despite the criticism *Torchbearers* did not have problems to exploit sport news to the political ends: for instance *Torchbearers* admired liberal democracy and therefore emphasized Sweden and USA as great sport nations as well. In overall, sports as such were not vital in *Torchbearers* and the critics on Berlin Olympics were mainly reactions to themes presented in other newspapers.

Leid Yttergren:

The Paavo Nurmi affair: the greatest sports scandal of the century?

The Nurmi affair was not only about Nurmi. It must be seen in its context. It was the result of an intensified struggle against violations of the amateur regulations around 1930 within international sport at the highest level, primarily in the IOC and IAAF. The idea of this idealistic new order was that sport should be a sphere of its own, with as little contact with society as possible. Sport represented something that was clean, innocent, non-commercial, non-political, while society was something that was evil and dangerous which was imbued with commercialism and politics. The international breakthrough of amateur fundamentalism around 1930 proved to be fatal for Nurmi and others. This fundamentalist and uncompromising ideology had preferential right of interpretation within international sport at the highest level up until the 1970s. The definitive break came when Juan Antonio Samaranch became the IOC President in 1980. With him the forces of commercialism were unleashed within the IOC as well.

Edström's position must be understood in this context. He had been the IAAF's undisputed chairman since 1913. He was also very active in the IOC, with the amateur question as his special domain. Edström, Brundage and the IOC were driven by an inner passion in their struggle against corruption within sport and during the period between the two wars this struggle was started in earnest. Nurmi and others had the misfortune to be active just at this very time. Previously they had never been banned, in spite of the fact that they accepted considerable sums of money. There does not appear to be any doubt about Nurmi's guilt. Most writers, both then and now, seem surprised and impressed by the large sums of money that he earned. However, it should be pointed out here that there is little if any watertight evidence that really proves that he accepted money. Clear parallels can be seen here with today's problem of doping. The fact is that formally the IAAF could not ban Nurmi; only the Finnish Athletics Association could do that. However, Edström and the IAAF did not worry about this. He considered that they were right as far as the issue was concerned and then no legal paragraphs were to get in the way. It was

precisely this legal technicality that Kekkonen pointed out time and time again in his attempt to get Nurmi acquitted, but in vain. In summary, it can be said that Nurmi was definitely guilty of violating the amateur regulations, but wrongfully banned by the IAAF.

It is well known that there was an unofficial, almost official, culture in the world of sport before the amateur rules were done away with that violated the official rules and regulations, but this cannot justify the actions of Nurmi and other great runners. They cheated, they violated the rules and regulations! In the same way the actions of all of today's sportsmen and women who have been banned for doping cannot be neglected today either, in spite of the knowledge that doping is widespread and almost accepted in certain circles. Without drawing too many parallels between doping and violating the amateur regulations, it can be noted that there are certain similarities, in particular with respect to what the official regulations say and harsh reality.

Esko Heikkinen:

Who wrote the commemoration speech?

Paavo Nurmi, who has won the record of nine Olympic gold medals and is one of the worlds renowned athletics, died 2.10.1973. "The Flying Finn" as he was called, was buried in Turku, in his town of birth but his Memorial Service was held at Helsinki Old Church.

The commemoration speech was presented by The Minister of Education, Marjatta Väänänen. Afterwards it was speculated that the actual speech was prepared by the renowned sports commentator Sulo Kolka. In his diary, President Urho Kekkonen states, that the father of the speech is Matti Kurjensaari! Marjatta Väänänen informs that she actually wrote the speeches sketch herself. On the other hand, the officials from The Education Ministry report in detail, that the speech was given birth by them.

It is apparent that the speech was prepared by separate individuals or groups not knowing of the others. This is how then, this famous and praised commemoration speech was born. The above mentioned President however, declared the whole speech as to be "inferior quality". It

is apparent that Kekkonen regretted afterwards for not presenting this speech, although it was asked from him to do so.

Annu Mäkelä:

Changing image of women in the press? Female athletes in *Helsingin Sanomat* during the World Championships in 1983 and 2005.

Female athletes entering the field of sport has been a long process. Despite the fact that there has been a great deal retention, female athletes have managed to make their way to the same level than men in several sport events. Although women can compete almost in every sport events, the field of sport is still considered rather masculine. This article is based on newspaper articles about female athletes in *Helsingin Sanomat* during the track and field world championships in 1983 and 2005. There can be noticed considerable underestimation of female athletes in the 1983 articles. For example highlighting of good-looking women athletes was obvious. Correspondingly, in 2005 women were represented as true athletes, some even as heroes. In general, there has been a shift in journalism, towards more objective and neutral direction. The change in newspaper articles can be explained by the increasing equality between genders both in society and media.

Tero Matkaniemi:

The Kuopio-Joensuu swimming matches

Swimming emerged as a hobby in Finland at the beginning of the 20th century. Short after founding the local swimming clubs with more and more members were seeking contact with neighbour towns. United efforts of the two important Eastern Finland swimming clubs Kuopion Uimaseura (founded in 1904) and Joensuun Uimaseura (founded in 1907) were started in 1915 to promote competition swimming as the members of these swimming clubs competed for the provincial championship. The series of contests between the towns of Kuopio and Joensuu, which were

organised before the indoor season from 1930's until 1960's, were the highlight of the cooperation and activities of the swimming clubs. The social club evenings with dancing and walking trips strengthened the feeling of togetherness among the swimmers of Savo-Karjala region. Even today many swimmers of the open water era look back at the warm memories of the splashes decades ago.

Mika Levy: **Japanese aikido-teachers in Finland**

Japanese martial art aikido arrived in Finland in the spring 1970. Japanese aikido-teacher Toshikazu Ichimura introduced the art and was the head teacher of aikido in the Nordic countries during years 1966—1986. In addition to Ichimura, there were several other Japanese aikido-teachers who visited Finland annually. However, their influence on Finnish aikido was emphasized not until 1980's and 1990's. This was because of Ichimura's strict and rigid attitude towards other teachers. Nevertheless, Ichimura created a strong basis for Finnish aikido.

After Ichimura, Finnish and Swedish aikido evolved into more independent direction. Finnish black-belt tests were led by two Japanese teachers (Kobayashi and Igarashi) who were named as leading teachers in Finland by Aikido World Headquarters in Tokyo. However, the Nordic countries were now able to invite foreign aikido-teachers freely without limitations. During 1980's, Finnish and Swedish aikido began to co-operate in different levels. Aikido federations in both countries invited Japanese teachers to the Nordic countries at the same time. This was due to the possibility of splitting the expenses. Furthermore, aikido clubs in both countries organized common activity and many Finnish and Swedish trainees upheld contacts to each other.

In the 1990's Finland Aikikai (Finnish aikido federation) changed its role into a less central as an organizer of aikido-seminars. At that time, Finnish aikido clubs through the country started to create relations to Japanese and other foreign aikido-teachers on their own. However, Finland Aikikai supported its members (clubs) as an umbrella organisation and as an organizer of dan-tests.

Japanese aikido-teachers had an essential role in the development of Finnish aikido. Especially, they were responsible of training Finnish aikido-teachers and raising the skill level of Finnish trainees. They also had a substantial part in forwarding new values, habits and patterns into Finnish sport culture. For example particular code of behaviour (etiquette), system of belt-tests and the holistic view in the development of individual were previously undervalued or unknown in the competition-orientated sport culture.

Jari Kanerva: Finnish Downhill Championships at Salla

The first Finnish national championships in downhill skiing were held at Salla in the spring of 1937. The race took place at the north slope of Sallatunturi Fell on a 1 350 metre long course with a vertical drop of 250 metres. The icy track took its toll on the inexperienced racers, who were "out of breath, sweaty, numb-footed and covered with snow". The crowd cheered enthusiastically, excited about the new sport which makes "grown men so exhausted in just two minutes". The title was won by Erkki Penttilä by a clear margin ahead of Esko Järvinen and Aarne Valkama. Finnish championship races in downhill skiing were held in 1937—1939 and 1941 but were then discontinued and not resumed until 1965.

The first Finnish championship title in slalom was decided on the following day (4 March 1937). Penttilä won again, but this time only by a narrow margin before Martti Uosikkinen. The bronze medallist, Gunnar Stenfors, lost to Uosikkinen by almost 20 seconds. The 425 metre long course at Välitunturi Fell had 22 gates and a vertical drop of 135 metres. It was marked out by the Austrian Dr. Anton Obholzer who also served as the pre-race test skier. The number of participants was 20 in the downhill race and 19 in the slalom.

Erkki Vettenniemi: A Firemen's Festival with a Twist. Did Football Arrive in Finland in May 1876?

According to conventional wisdom, English residents in Turku, the former capital of Finland, started kicking a ball in their adopted hometown in or about 1890, and by the end of the decade the English game had been welcomed by a few gymnastics teachers, too.

Prompted by a curious but not very informative newspaper item, I set out to rewrite the arrival of this particular sport in Finland. On May 27, 1876, a Swedish-speaking daily listed "football" among the pastimes witnessed in a festival organized by the Voluntary Fire Brigade of Helsinki. While the function was held in the popular Kaisaniemi Park and attended by about 7,000 people, I have not been able to locate any commentaries regarding the football game.

Previous research has established the crucial role played by the fire brigades in the dissemination of gymnastics and rowing, for example, and the Helsinki branch apparently picked up the ball game from a textbook published by Viktor Heikel in 1874. Born in 1842, Heikel had already studied gymnastics in Sweden and acquainted himself with modern sports in England. His football rules allowed for a limited use of hands, as was still the case in many other countries; and even in England the association football had only very recently parted ways with rugby.

My conclusion is that football did indeed arrive in Finland in the year 1876. The new game did not take root, however, since there is no evidence that it was practiced anywhere else in the 1870s. Further research will presumably cast new light on the next phase of football in this country.