

Editorial

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Editorial

I suppose all of you watched enthralled from time to time, as I did, the world's finest athletes competing against each other at the Olympic Games in August. But even before the athletes started their competition, I watched in admiration the beautiful opening show and ceremonies the Greeks had put together! This was followed two weeks later by an equally impressive closing show! Good on the Greeks! They did the Olympic Games proud! But we all know that the Greeks are a clever people, passionately loyal to their country and culture, and to their families and friends, and they love any good excuse to have a good party!!! And oh, boy, do they know how to party!!! In this, I think, they've got even the Swiss 'licked'!!!

But back to the 'business end' of the Olympics, between the 'parties'! One could only watch, sometimes with admiration and awe to the winners, other times with almost painful sympathy with the disappointed losers who, after years of hard training, lost

out on a medal by a tenth of a second, or a few millimetres, or one kilo, or one or two points in a hundred or more!!! But this is the Olympic Games!

Every competitor knows as soon as they are chosen into their country's team, that they are up against the world's best in their field of endeavour! Anything less than a polished, faultless performance will not gain you a medal, even a bronze one!! But even being chosen into one's own country's Olympic Games Team is a great honour and usually means one is already a national champion! But of course, there is something different about those Olympic medals!!! They designate the ultimate triumph in one's chosen sport!! So, as I said, one could almost feel the agony of the competitors concerned when things went badly wrong! Like one's horse baulking three metres from a hurdle at full gallop and crashing into the hurdle instead of jumping it, throwing its rider into the wreckage! Or, less of a danger but

equally embarrassing, a member of one's team of eight suddenly collapsing and not rowing anymore only about 80 metres from the finish line, or falling completely out of the boat!!! Or the gymnast who, at the end of an almost faultless routine, lost her balance on the final landing jump and tumbled heavily completely off the landing platform! (I think it was a lady?) Remember that one? Or one of our own best medal hopes crossing the start-line on her sail-board a half-second before the starter's gun, not once, but twice!! I shook my head in disbelief! How could this happen to Barbara, with her wide national and international experience? Needless to say, at that moment, any medal hopes we all had for her went truly 'down the gurgler'!!

But, on the bright side, I reckon our team finished quite well, given our population of just four million. What do you think? Finishing 24th on the medals table with five medals is a good result for a small country! By comparison, Switzerland finished 46th equal with Egypt! Both countries also won five medals each, the difference was each had only 1 gold, whereas NZ had three gold out of the five.

So, as I said, not bad, especially when one recalls how our 'mighty twins' knocked all other contenders out of gold position with almost clinical efficiency!!! Then came Sarah with her speed machine, she literally seemed to make those twin-wheels hum with speed and blitzed all opposition as efficiently as the Evers-Swindell twins!!! Then came the men's triathlon! What can I say? First and second! Gold and silver in the same event!! It can't get much better than that for a small country!!! And what made this climax even more thrilling for us Swiss-Kiwis was that through most of the final part of this event our two Kiwi lads were dogged hard on the heels by none other than a Swiss athlete!! Sven Riederer really seemed quite happy to be on the victory stand later with these two tough lads from some far-off land in the South Pacific!!! But did you watch him as he jogged across the finish-line in third place only metres behind Docherty and sauntered across to congratulate the two New Zealanders?

To me, there appeared to be a whimsical smile of awe on his face for these two Kiwis he just could not pass and I'm sure I read his thoughts at that moment -- "verdammt ---and I was sure I once read somewhere that Kiwis couldn't fly!!!"

Cheerio, Paul

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