

Centenary Federal Gymnastic Festival

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1932)**

Heft 561

PDF erstellt am: **06.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-694042>

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CENTENARY FEDERAL GYMNASTIC FESTIVAL

In Aarau, 9-11th and 15-18th July, 1932.

SIGNAL SUCCESS OF YOUTHFUL LONDON TEAM

(from our special reporter in Aarau)

Festplatz, Monday evening.

The Curtain has just rung down on what was unquestionably the most imposing and the most successful celebration ever held in Switzerland, with the Mass exercises executed by about 30,000 men with the usual precision and cohesion for which the organisation of the Federal Gymnastic Association is world famed.

Immediately upon crossing the border line into the Ruedliand it must have been clear to any, even the most casual observer, that the old myth, that Shooting and Football had taken preference over the now common form of Popular Gymnastics (volkstümliches Turnen) comprising Gymnastics, Athletics, Wrestling and even Swimming for both sexes, was given the direct lie by this magnificent congregation of the manhood of Switzerland coupled with contingents from Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Belgium, and U. S. A. A finer set of young men, it would be impossible to imagine, and above all "youth" was predominant in all competing teams. The now customary popular Gymnastic Movement is beyond contradiction the National Sport of Switzerland and all others are miles away "nowhere."

The Festival was a magnificent success in every way excepting that the weather clerk sulked and put up a dismal record, namely 9-11th (Ladies' days) rain, Friday 15th rain, Saturday fine, Sunday intermittent rain, Monday fine. The catering arrangements might very well have been entrusted to J. Lyons & Co., Ltd., who certainly would have fed the 40,000 men better and at the price than the catering firm of Koenig did in Aarau, where the food left a great deal to be desired.

The work shown, firstly individually, both in Artistic Gymnastics (Kunstturnen) and National type (Nationalturnen) was of the highest standard imaginable and certainly surpassed anything done before; the same can be said of Athletics which is comparatively young as yet in Switzerland. The audacity and the magnificent control of body, equilibrium and swing are such that one simply wonders where progress in this line is going to end and what the poor acrobat on the stage would do if these men ever went on the boards. The once quite occasional "Fleurier" is to-day common place done by almost everybody who works individually, the same as double somersaults on the Parallel Bars (doppelte Luftrollen) are done without much hesitation.

Eugen Mack (Basel Bürger), the same as in Lucerne in 1928, holds place of pride in Artistic Gymnastics with 98.10 points (a score never before attained) out of a possible 100 followed by G. Miez (Chiasso) the Olympic champion of Amsterdam fame with 97.35 pts., Steinemann E. (Flawil, an old Olympier) 96.6 pts. followed by two new stars Schmid (Wil) with 96.35 and the youthful Kleinbasler Naegelin (who is not yet 20 years old) with 95.5 pts.

In National type the four first results are:

1. Wernli, Bern-Bürger; 2. Fessler, Zurich a.S.; 3. Woodtli, St. Gallen; 4. Bürki, Bimpliz.

In athletics the four first results are:

1. Mack, Basel-Bürger; 2. Miez, Chiasso; 3. Landergott, Winterthur-Stadt; 4. Steinemann, Flawil.

RESULTS OF SECTIONS.

1. Stärkeklasse. (49 und mehr Turner): Lorbeerkränze 1. Klasse: Basel-Bürger, Basel; Kleinbasel, Basel; Bern-Bürger; Bern Kaufleute; Liestal; Mulhousina, Mulhouse; Olten; Zofingen.

2. Stärkeklasse. (33-48 Turner): Lorbeerkränze 1. Klasse: Balsthal; Basel-Abstinenten; Basel-Amicitia; Basel-Kaufleute; Basel Stadturnverein; Bern-Bürger; Rheinfelden.

3. Stärkeklasse. (25-32 Turner): Lorbeerkränze 1. Klasse: Biel-Kaufleute; Binningen; Birsfelden; Burgdorf-Technikum; Delsberg; Gretzenbach; Kleinhüningen; Muttentz; Riehen; Schönenwerd.

4. Stärkeklasse. (17-24 Turner) Lorbeerkränze 1. Klasse: Aesch; Arlesheim; Basel-Gundeldingen; Basel-Horbürg; Basel-St. Johann; Frenkendorf; Gelterkinder; Münchenstein; Pariser Schweizerturnverein; Pratteln; alte und neue Sektion; Sissach; Solothurn Amicitia und Kaufleute.

5. Stärkeklasse. (13-16 Turner), Lorbeerkränze 1. Klasse: Allschwil; Basel-Polizei; Basel-St. Jakob; Dornach; Luzern-Kaufleute.

6. Stärkeklasse. (10-12 Turner): Lorbeerkränze 1. Klasse: Brüssel-Schweizerturnverein; München 1860; Waldenburg.

7. Stärkeklasse. (9-10 Turner): Lorbeerkränze 1. Klasse: Antwerpen-Schweizerturnverein; Barcelona-Schweizerturnverein; Bettigen; Genua; Holderbank; Kaiserangst; Laufen; LONDONER SCHWEIZERTURNVEREIN; Mailänder Turnverein; Mannheim 1864; New-York T. V.; Nugar; Reigoldswil; Reinach (Bld); Sonceboz, Tramelan.

The sectional Contest included the following compulsory items:—

March and Drill exercises, Apparatus (to be selected by team) Relay Race there and back 120 m. and jump over colleague (Graetsche ueber Mitturner) with jumping board 1.50 and 2 m. distance away from the "human" horse.

Bern-Stadt and Olten worked with 144 men simultaneously, and what they did was very fine work indeed, although naturally with so many it is possible for slight defects in execution or cohesion to occur. The standard generally was unquestionably higher than ever, and the new relaxation exercises (Lockerungsuebungen) were certainly a great advance on Lucerne; to-day you must have a first rate team or you cannot compete.

LONDON TEAM.

The Swiss Gymnastic Society London (the same as most Swiss Societies and unlike Paris) had pinned its faith to youth, the team consisting of 3 members of 20 and under; the youngest being a promoted junior who is only just 17 years old, and the next only 18 years of age, both of whom competed for the first time in Switzerland. The team reached Aarau on Saturday evening 6.30 p.m., after first having had a rest and trim in Basel on arrival there. How different was their arrival compared with Lucerne, where the Union Helvetia Authorities and the Jodler Club "Edelweiss" met them at the station. In Aarau they were told, there was no member of the reception committee present, so they simply marched through the "Back" exit of the station to their quarters in the Cavalry barracks. In the evening a first visit was paid to the Festplatz for inspection and we had our first taste of the "Bratwurst." Sunday morning was spent in the most necessary training and final touching up, ready for the fray on Sunday afternoon. The bad luck which dogged the team from the start, did not desert us in Aarau as our best runner and greatest asset for the relay race, E. Burkhard, who had worked individually, on Saturday morning, had an accident and bad fall in the pole jump, due to wet ground and therefore was useless to us for the relay, where he was mostly needed, as sheet ancre.

After a quiet rest and meal the team got ready for their ordeal as 3 o'clock approached — cool, confident and ready to do their best for the society.—

The contest began with drill and marching exercises and before the first order was given a torrential downpour set in, drenching team and spectators, who were present in large numbers, to the skin; with the water streaming down on them, our boys could have been forgiven for lapses and slips, yet they executed their exercises without turning a hair (including the 17 year old) and stuck to it with grim determination; quite apart from the conditions and the rain, they worked magnificently, without the semblance of mistake, and with vigour and go in the marching. Richly deserved applause greeted their march-off from the ground and they had collected a probable 16½ to 17 pts. for the start. No tonic is better than success and the good beginning seemed to imbue everyone with the right spirit and confidence necessary for success.

At 3.30 p.m. parallel Bars (our freely chosen apparatus) began under the best auspices; the rain had ceased, and the sun tried to shine. Our work there, according to the audience composed of many old Gymnasts, was probably amongst the best seen at the competition; it was simply faultless; position, execution and cohesion were brilliant. Never before had the team done anything like it, yet now, when it was necessary to pull everything out, they did it in no uncertain fashion. For a Swiss audience, hardened to the very best that can be seen in Gymnastics, to applaud parts of the exercises and not wait till the end comes, is sufficient indication of what they thought of our work. At the end a regular ovation greeted the boys when they left the field with 19 out of a possible 20 pts. in their keeping. By this time the team was flushed by its apparent good fortune and success and nothing could hold them for the rest of their work. The jumps at 4.30 p.m. never went anything like as good as on this occasion, and although badly weakened by Burkhard's inability to run in the relay race, every other member of the team, plus our old friend P. Gysi who took the vacant place, ran for their lives, everybody anxious to do so much more than ordinarily in order to make good the loss, so that 19½ - 20 pts. were certainly earned and well deserved under the circumstances; may it be stated that the Swiss team running simultan-

eously with us was beaten about 10 - 15 m. in the end. The jumps probably realised 17 - 17½ pts.

There is not the faintest doubt but that the team put up a magnificent performance — well ahead of anything ever done by the Swiss Gymnastic Society London before — and probably collected about 142 pts in all with laurel first class.

The S. G. S. L. has kept its promise to worthily uphold the honour and prestige of all Swiss living in the U. K. and of the Swiss Colony in London to the very dot on the i.

Present at the time of working were the following:—

Mr. and Mrs. Gysi, Mr. and Mrs. J. Reimann (Birmingham) Mr. and Mrs. Weber, Mr. C. Vetterli (Stein a/Rhein), Mr. Matter, formerly from Baker Street, now Geneva, Mr. and Mrs. Froehlicher, Mr. Wegmann, Mr. Gysi Senr., Zofingen, Mr. Denbelbeiss Senr., Zurich, as well as wives and friends of the team. —

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