

# The Controversial Olympic Games of 1908 As Viewed by the *New York Times* and the *Times* of London

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The British industrial revolution, beginning in the early nineteenth century, provided England with the economic base to dominate world trade and become one of the wealthiest nations on earth. By the beginning of the twentieth century however, the steam of industrialism was waning in Britain and the United States, with a seemingly endless supply of national resources, was beginning to rival and, indeed in some respects, surpass the economic achievements of England. This economic rivalry between the United States and Great Britain was manifested in the social realm as well. Sport competition between the two rivals was viewed, at least by the newspapers, as a means of demonstrating the overall cultural superiority and promoting nationalism within both the United States and Great Britain.

The Olympic Games of 1908, held in London, provided an international arena in which the United States and Great Britain sought to establish athletic supremacy and thereby demonstrate the superior national vigor of each respective nation. The athletic competition resulted in serious and numerous confrontations between the American and British representatives. Indeed, the intensity of the controversy generated at London in 1908 between the Americans and British was clearly indicative of the athletic and cultural rivalry between the two nations. Paradoxically, the international confrontation in London was also a blessing in disguise for the Olympic movement.

After the successful revival of the Olympic Games in 1896, hosted by Athens, the Olympic movement suffered two consecutive setbacks in Paris (1900) and St. Louis (1904). In both instances the Olympic games were organized as a component of an international fair (Paris and St. Louis Expositions). As a consequence, in both cases the Olympic Games became mere sideshows to

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the more established and prestigious world fairs. The establishment of the Olympic movement as a force in international affairs received a tremendous blow in 1900 and 1904.

The international confrontation at London in 1908 served a dual purpose. On the one hand, the hard feelings generated between the Americans and British were hardly conducive to promoting the Olympic ideal of brotherhood and understanding among the nations of the world. On the other hand, the Olympic games were recognized as an international entity in their own right, permanent changes were made in Olympic organization, and a degree of credibility was reestablished for the Olympic movement. A review of the *Times* (London) and the New York *Times* serves to illustrate the controversial and developmental dual nature of the 1908 Olympic Games.

Since the inception of the modern Olympic Games in 1896, the organization and control of the actual competition for each event had been the responsibility of the host country. Therefore, all officials, judges, and scorekeepers were citizens of the host nation. The situation in 1908 was no exception. The control of the competition was solely in the hands of British officials.

The management of each branch of the games is exclusively in the hands of the association governing that sport in this country (Britain). They provide all officials, and are responsible for the proper conduct of the competitions. The representatives of foreign countries will take no part in the management . . . but each nation . . . competing has the right to appoint three members of a Comité d'Honneur through which any protests or objections may be conveyed to the proper authority.<sup>1</sup>

The Americans, among others, felt that some of the decisions, practices, and rulings of the British officials were less than impartial. The number of protests and the amount of animosity generated by this situation during the London Games of 1908 are astounding.

The Games were held in connection with the Franco-British Exhibition. The arrangement was similar to that of the games of 1900 and 1904 in which the games were staged in conjunction with world fairs at Paris and St. Louis, respectively. Fortunately, unlike the Paris games of 1900, exhibition officials were ardent advocates of the Olympic movement, and unlike the St. Louis Games of 1904, an international field of athletes was assembled for competition. The organizers of the exhibition agreed to build a stadium and accompanying facilities for the games solely at their expense. The British Olympic Committee readily accepted the offer which included the provision that only one half of the gross receipts were to be paid to the British Olympic Committee.

The philosophy of the Olympic Games was supposedly set forth in the Olympic creed, but an analysis of the statements of various nations reveal, if not a

different philosophy, certainly a different emphasis upon the games. In a manner of truth, the statements reveal the existing reality of the games—the promotion of nationalism. A report by the *Times* (London) on the departure of the French delegation from France supports this contention.

General Picquant, Minister of War, who was present, congratulated the team and wished it good luck. Subsequently, the Minister, amid cheers, made a speech in which he said that the efforts of all the young men of the gymnastic societies would be in vain were not the eyes of those young men always fixed on the flag which was the symbol of the Fatherland, the symbol of all the sacrifices France had the right to demand of her children.<sup>2</sup>

The Americans were most concerned with winning. International cooperation was a worthwhile objective as long as America could claim an athletic victory. The headlines of the *New York Times* prior to the Games are indicative of this feeling: “American Athletes Sure of Success: Trainer Murphy and Manager Halpin Confident That Premier Honors Will Be Won By U.S.”; “Britishers Fear Yankee Athletes”; “We Will Knock The Spots Off The Britishers.” There was no lack of competitive spirit or uncertainty as to the outcome of the Games among the American delegation.

Only the English expressed a philosophy consistent with the Olympic creed.

It is commonly said, and, indeed is put forward as a conclusive argument in favor of the modern Olympic movement, that international athletics encourage international amity. This is only the case if they are organized in so orderly and impartial a manner that every competitor, whether he has won or lost, goes away satisfied and feeling that every opportunity has been given and every courtesy shown to him. That this will be the case at the Olympic Games of London no Briton and, we feel sure, none of our foreign visitors can doubt; and, if that be so, the Games cannot fail to be an immense value both to those who take part in them and to the nations to which they belong.<sup>4</sup>

The British had set their sights high and even if these sights were not quite reached, their expectations are significant if for no other reason than that they predicted the exact opposite of what was actually to occur.

. . . this record gathering of the world’s finest athletes is not only likely to be conducted from beginning to end in a spirit of perfect harmony, but will, it is expected, result in the formation of a universal code, governing the conditions of all kinds of amateur athletics.<sup>5</sup>

Some day it may be possible to look back on these Olympic Games of 1908 as having given a powerful impetus to the brotherhood of the world.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, events would not allow these idealistic hopes to be fulfilled.

Before looking at the events which caused such an international turmoil, the method of organization and management of the Olympic Games as published by the British Olympic Council (B.O.C.) on June 29, 1907 will be reviewed. There were eighteen general regulations which were to govern the conduct of

the Games. The most prominent regulations most likely to arouse international controversy were regulations twelve and seventeen.

Regulation twelve concerned the eligibility of athletes. "The British Olympic Council (B.O.C.) reserves to themselves the right to refuse the entry of any competitor without being bound to give reasons for their decision."<sup>7</sup> Regulation seventeen was the elastic clause for the B.O.C. "The B.O.C. shall be invested with full power to make in case of absolute necessity such changes as may be desirable in these regulations."<sup>8</sup>

The 1908 Games were divided into four phases: (1) The first part of the Summer Games, including such activities as golf, tennis and polo; (2) the stadium events, primarily track and field events; (3) the rowing and yachting events; and (4) the Winter Games, including skating, association football (soccer), and football (rugby). In all, the four phases of competition extended from late April until the end of October, a period of slightly over six months. A complete listing of the categories of events for all phases of the Games are as follows<sup>9</sup>: athletics—track and field, archery, cycling, fencing, soccer, rugby, golf, gymnastics, lacrosse, lawn tennis, motor boating, polo, boxing, riding, racquets, rowing, shooting, skating, swimming, wrestling, and yachting. (Note: Motor boating and riding were ultimately deleted from the program.)

Of the various Olympic competitions, the stadium events were considered to be of the greatest significance. "These competitions outside the Stadium do not appeal to either patriotic pride or the imagination in the same way as the Games proper, and more particularly, the running events."<sup>10</sup> Few nations participated in the events outside the stadium and many of these events were exclusively English affairs, such as the yachting regatta.<sup>11</sup>

A stadium had been built at Shepherd's Bush, a London district, solely for the Olympic Games. The seating capacity was 68,000 with room for 23,000 more. The scale of the preparations for the Games was equalled by the number of competitors. "The number of foreign entries have been astoundingly large, so large as to make these Games by far the greatest athletic gathering of which there is any record."<sup>12</sup> Appropriately, the Games were officially opened by King Edward VII.

Before the actual competition even began the state was set for the remainder of the Games as several nations were insulted by various political events. Finland was under the political domination of Russia in 1908 as were the Irish politically subjugated to the British. The Russians insisted that the Finns carry the Russian flag in the march of nations. The Finns refused and marched flagless during the opening procession. The Irish, were upset because they had been informed that their athletic victories were to be tallied as victories for the British.

In addition, while the flags of the competing nations were flying as part of the colorful decorations around the stadium, two banners were conspicuously absent—the flag of the United States and that of Sweden. This last incident received notice in the *New York Times*. “An incident which is causing much talk in sporting circles is the failure of the Olympic committee to have either the American or Swedish flags displayed in the Stadium.”<sup>13</sup> This apparently was simply an oversight of the committee and the situation was soon rectified when both the flags of Sweden and the United States were added to the display of flags.

The *Times* (London) failed to mention any of these developments. Their reporting of the first day’s events was limited to a description of the parade of nations (without mentioning any of the flag incidents), the opening ceremonies presided over by the King and Queen, the poor weather, and the low attendance. These last two items, the poor weather and attendance, were to be the main concerns of the reporting of the *Times* (London) throughout the Games, until the events become so controversial that they could no longer be ignored.

The main highlights of the second day were the competition in the 1,500 meter race, the American impression of the Olympic atmosphere, and the British view of the American delegation. In the 1,500 meter race the British were fairly confident of victory. When the favorite English runner, Wilson, was beaten by the American, Sheppard, the *Times* (London) wrote:

It must have been a bitter moment for Wilson when he shook hands with his conqueror knowing how confidently his fellow countrymen had looked forward to his success. But it is significant of the sportsmanlike spirit which is happily a characteristic of these Olympic Games that this is by no means the only example of this interchange of congratulations and sympathy which has already been seen in the Stadium. All the nationalities cheer each other for pluck and skill with the utmost impartiality.<sup>14</sup>

The *New York Times* added an interesting dimension to the American victory in the 1,500 meter race:

Melvin Sheppard, the American who won the 1,500 m race was rejected last May as physically unfit for the police force of New York. Not unusual say experts: Might be fine athlete, but drop dead any time, says a surgeon who examined him last May. Most athletes have weak hearts. A man may be able to run a race and yet not be good enough for the Police force.<sup>15</sup>

The *New York Times* also offered an image of the Olympic atmosphere.

The games were as bewildering to watch as a 3-ring circus. At one time a dozen bicyclists were wheeling along the outer edges of the oval, while 20 runners were racing on the cinder path just inside of it.<sup>16</sup>

While the Americans were impressed with the myriad of simultaneous Olym-

pic events, the British were just as amazed by the behavior of the American delegation.

The enthusiasm of the Americans is a noteworthy feature of the Games. They keep everything and everyone alive with their shouts of encouragement and applause; and even the phlegmatic natives of these islands are stirred by their example.<sup>17</sup>

The dismal weather and low attendance were causing concern among the British Olympic Committee and the promoters of the Franco-British Exhibition. Even the *New York Times* acknowledged the economic concerns of the British: "Unless the attendance greatly increases the Franco-British exposition, which built the Stadium and receives 70% of the receipts will be heavy losers."<sup>18</sup> In the midst of all these events an Olympic record was set. John J. Flanagan of the United States won the hammer throw by establishing a new Olympic record of 170 feet, 4¼ inches. The next day was uneventful in so far as protests and official complaints were concerned. While the weather improved somewhat, at least temporarily, the low attendance continued to plague the British promoters. The only notable athletic event saw the javelin throw being won by the Swede, Lemming.

A resumption of the protests began the following day. Americans became aroused over the English system of scoring to determine the overall winner of the Olympic games. Due to the fact that American athletes were entered almost solely in the track and field competitions, the American contingent wished the "Games Trophy" be awarded for the winner of only these events. The English, however, wished to include all competitive events, many of which included no American entrants, in determining the overall championship. This controversy was completely a one-sided affair. While creating a great deal of fury in the *New York Times* there was no mention of the American protest in the *Times* (London). The American view was revealed in the following headline: "Athletes Aroused Over Point Scoring: English System of Marking Olympic Victories Would Make England Sure Winners."<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, the Americans devised their own system to gauge their success at the Olympic Games of 1908. James E. Sullivan, President of the American Olympic Committee, stated the American system as follows:

We came here, as we went to Paris and Athens, with a field team, and are making a fight in the field events, caring nothing for the other sports. We asked that the championship trophy be put up for the field sports separately, but this request was not acceded to. So, we will simply take the score in the field events counting first 5 pts., second 3 pts., and third 1 pt., and figure out the American score on this basis.<sup>20</sup>

The above discussion points out the nationalistic reality of the Olympic games. Officially, countries cannot "win" the Olympics. Athletes supposedly compete as individuals and no official team scores have ever been tallied

or national standings announced. In reality, however, nations send teams to compete in the Olympic Games and while scores may not be officially sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee, each participating nation utilizes Olympic victories to promote nationalism with the news media as the primary agents of such promotion.

While the Americans were complaining about the methods to determine the Olympic victor, the actual competition saw United States' athletes win both the discus and shot put events. The break in the weather of the previous day gave way to a return of the wet and cold environment and athletes had come to expect. The day's events were held in a steady downpour with the contestants fortunate to keep their footing while competing in the various events.<sup>21</sup> Inclement weather and low attendance continued to plague officials, spectators, athletes and promoters. The *Times* (London) reported that attendance was so low that officials were meeting to discuss possible courses of action to increase the number of spectators. A reduction in ticket prices was mentioned as a possible alternative.<sup>22</sup> While the weather and attendance problems occupied the pages of the *Times* (London), the *New York Times* was reporting on the most controversial issue to date, the dispute over the tug-of-war event between the United States and Great Britain. The point of contention was the shoes that the British were allowed to wear in the competition. The rule regarding footwear in the tug-of-war event read:

No competitor shall wear prepared boots or shoes, or boots or shoes with any projecting nails, tips, point, hollows, or projections of any kind. No competitor shall make any hold in the ground with his feet or on any other way before the start.<sup>23</sup>

The Americans complained that the British wore heavy boots with steel rims, thus violating the rule regarding footwear. The heated protest and aftermath are reflected in the headlines of the *New York Times*: "English Unfair In Olympic Games. U.S. Protests Against Method of Holding the Tug-of-War. Complaint is Dismissed. Liverpool Team Wears Monstrous Shoes That Arouse Ire of Americans Who Kick In Vain."<sup>24</sup> The *New York Times* further elaborated upon the incident.

A serious controversy has arisen between the American athletes and the BOC America's chief cause of complaint is the arbitrary manner in which their protest against the flagrantly unfair method of conducting the tug-of-war is dismissed.<sup>25</sup>

The British Olympic Committee ruled that the British team, who were all Liverpool policemen, wore the same footwear in performing their daily duties. Therefore, the boots worn were justified as ordinary footwear.<sup>26</sup> The arbitrary manner in which the American protest was dismissed is evidenced by the reporting of the *Times* (London). The only discussion of the controversy was a one paragraph segment which gave the impression that any friction generated by the event was certainly insignificant.

In the tug-of-war a team of eight stalwart policemen easily pulled the great hammer and discus and weight-throwers of the U.S. over the line. The Americans protested against the result of the first bout on the grounds that their conquerors were wearing boots, but this objection was, of course, overruled.<sup>27</sup>

The American feeling was summarized in this manner: "The members of the American Committee, the American athletes, and everybody connected with the team are thoroughly disgusted and almost disheartened but they are going to fight it out to the end."<sup>28</sup> The American protest was in the final analysis of no avail and the tug-of-war event was officially recorded as being won by the British team.

A brief review of the first five days of competition reveals that the United States had lodged four official protests. Controversy had arisen over the failure of the British Olympic Committee to display the American flag in the opening ceremonies; America had mildly protested the regulations for the pole vault competition; the English method of scoring to determine the Olympic victor was protested; and, the tug-of-war controversy aroused a great amount of dissatisfaction among the American delegation. It would seem that the limit had been reached in regard to American protests. But, such was not the case as American bitterness and protests continued throughout the Games and indeed became the prominent feature of the 1908 Olympic Games.

Emotions were high following the tug-of-war controversy. The following day was a rewarding one for the English. The end of the day saw the English victorious in the 3,200 meters, the steeplechase, and the five mile run. America claimed only one victory, the Greek-style discus throw, but the protests continued. James Sullivan, the President of the American Committee, filed a protest against the drawings for the 800 meter run. The drawings placed American runners in the same heat in the preliminary trials, thus ensuring the elimination of several American competitors. The British Olympic Committee defended their method of random selection by citing the luck of the draw as responsible for the fate of the Americans.<sup>29</sup> The Americans were somewhat skeptical of the part played by "lady luck."

The next day was Sunday and there was no competition. It was hoped that a day of rest would allow tempers to cool and return a degree of normalcy to the games. There were no protests in the first three days of the new week and it appeared that a return to normalcy had been achieved. The *New York Times* restricted their reporting to the results of the various events and this lull in protests allowed the British time to consider steps to be taken to attract spectators to the events and to reply to the many protests previously made.

It is perfectly natural and wholesome that we, like the other countries with whom we are competing in the Stadium, should take especial delight in the victories of our own representatives. But our high reputation for sportsmanlike behavior is of course vastly more important to us than any

number of gold and silver medals, and the one thing above all others which we desire as a nation in respect to these Olympic Games, is that, as far as is humanly possible, our visitors should be unanimous in agreeing that our treatment of one and all is absolutely impartial and fair.<sup>30</sup>

The following day saw the weather improve slightly and the attendance finally began to meet expectations. There were no protests filed and the *Times* (London) expressed further optimism. "It is much to be hoped that the improved state of the weather may exercise a pacifying influence on the troubled spirits of some of the competitors."<sup>31</sup> Wednesday saw the United States win two of the three events contested—the running broad jump and the 400 meter hurdles. Only the 100 meter sprint eluded the United States, as this event was won by a South African, R. E. Walker. This was the first time an American had failed to win the 100 meter sprint in Olympic competition.

The next two days included the most controversial and memorable events of the 1908 Olympics, namely the 400 meter race and the marathon. Thursday was the day of the 400 meter race. This contest had been promoted as a highlight of the Olympic Games by the British as it was expected that the honor and glory of England would be upheld by Lt. Wyndham Halswelle, the athletic idol of the British.<sup>32</sup> There were four finalists, three Americans and Halswelle. The *Times* (London) offered this account of the race:

Two Americans were leading with the Englishman Halswelle third. Halswelle closed until almost even when the American who was next to him began to run wide, with the result that soon after Halswelle turned the bend he was forced very nearly on to the bicycle track. The interference with Halswelle appeared to the judges so palpable that they broke the tape while the race was still in progress before the runners reached the winning-posts. It certainly seemed as if the Americans had run the race on a definite and carefully thoughtout plan. It was not as if Carpenter, the one who forced Halswelle to run wide and elbowed him severely as he tried to pass him, had himself taken a wide curve at the bend and then run straight on. He appeared rather to run diagonally, crossing in front of the Englishman so that he was obliged to lose several yards. That is a fair and impartial account of what happened as far as it could be judged from the stand.<sup>33</sup>

The *New York Times* did not offer a detailed account of the event but summarized the American point of view as: "Carpenter of Cornell Easily Beats English Crack, but is Disqualified for foul. Officials Claim Bump-Race to be Re-Run, English Crowds Boo American Performers for No Reason Whatsoever."<sup>34</sup> The English further expressed their view of the American tactics:

The only thing which can be said is that interfering with another runner is considered fair in America, and that Carpenter saw nothing wrong in acting on that principle. However, as the race was run in England, where tactics of this kind are contrary alike to the rules that govern sport and to our notions of what is fair play, the committee had no choice but to punish the offender and order the race to be run over again.<sup>35</sup>

The British officials declared the race void, disqualified Carpenter, and ordered the race re-run on Saturday, the last day of competition. The Americans refused to abide by the British ruling and, as a protest, did not compete in the

re-run race. As a consequence, the Englishman Halswelle was the sole competitor in the re-run 400 meter race. The British view of the event, however, lost some of its validity when the *Times* (London) made the following comment. "It is much to be hoped that both countries will agree to say as little in the future as possible about this most unfortunate incident, which no one can regret more than the English."<sup>36</sup>

Friday, the next-to-last day of competition, was the day of the most prestigious event of the Olympic Games, the marathon. As it turned out, the marathon was also the most memorable event in the 1908 games. The *Times* (London) gave extensive coverage to the marathon describing the history of the event and the course to be run in England. The *New York Times* was concerned primarily with the classical prestige associated with the event and the results, which saw an American awarded the victory.

The Americans lodged a protest prior to the running of the marathon. The basis of the protest was the participation of a Canadian Indian runner, Tom Longboat. The American delegation claimed he had been declared a professional by the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States.<sup>37</sup> But, since the country of nationality was the only authority empowered to determine amateur status, and whereas Canada declared Longboat an amateur, the British Olympic Council disallowed the American protest and Longboat was allowed to compete.

A description of the conditions under which the marathon race was conducted was offered by the *Times* (London):

A glorious, hot July afternoon, with hardly a breath of wind, ideal for a bathe or a game of cricket perhaps, but terrible for a feat of endurance of mind, stamina, muscle, and feet, and the task of the men—26 odd miles over roads in many places hard and dusty, and with the sun blazing down for long times together—seemed to the writer perfectly appalling.<sup>38</sup>

The finish of the marathon became the hallmark of the 1908 Olympics. Dorando, an Italian, reached the stadium first, but in such an exhausted state that the remaining distance around the track inside the stadium was too great for him to travel without assistance. A description of the scene at the finish is provided by *Times* (London):

And at last he comes. A tired man, dazed, bewildered, hardly conscious, in red shorts and white vest, his hair white with dust, staggers on to the track. It is Dorando, the Italian. He looks about him, hardly knowing where he is. Just the knowledge that somehow, by some desperate resolve of determination, he must get round the 200 yards to the tape of the finish keeps him on his feet. Fifty yards, and it cannot even be that. He falls on the track, gets up, staggers on a few yards and falls again, and yet again; and then he reaches the last turn. The goal is in sight, though his closed eyes cannot see it. He is surrounded by officials almost, if not quite, supporting him, urging, and cheering him on. If they were not there he would fall. He cannot run straight and yet 50 yards from the end he suddenly bursts into a pathetic almost a horrible, parody of a spurt, drops again

ten yards from the tape, rises, staggers forward over those last few yards, and has reached the goals.<sup>39</sup>

The second man to enter the stadium and cross the finish line was the American Johnny Hayes. Dorando was not immediately disqualified for receiving assistance so the American delegation proceeded to lodge an official protest. The protest was sustained and Johnny Hayes was awarded the victory.

The Olympic Games of 1908 came to a close on Saturday, July 25, 1908. Finals were held for several events in the morning, the most notable being the previously contested 400 meter race. Halswelle, the Englishman, with no competition from the protesting Americans, scored a hollow victory in this event.

The closing ceremonies were of the greatest interest on the last day. The Queen of England, Alexandra, was to present a special award to the Italian Dorando for his magnificent effort in the marathon. The compassion and sympathy for this man's efforts are documented by the following report of the *Times* (London):

Suddenly, as the Queen was taking the medals from Lord Desborough and handing them to the winners, there was a great shout "Dorando," and the man by whose name the marathon race of 1908 will always be remembered came out from the gangway under the competitor's stand, and walked around the track by himself, til he was joined by an Italian admirer breaing the national flag. A mighty roar went up from the whole assembly as he made his way to the tailend of the procession of prize winners, and the shouts and cheers and applause and sympathy were renewed again and again when it came to his turn to climb up the broad red carpeted steps, placed almost exactly where he had fallen for the last time at the end of his gallant struggle, and received from the hands of England's Queen the beautiful cup, her own personal gift.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, the 1908 Olympic Games came to a close.

The turmoil caused by the events of the 1908 Olympics stimulated a great deal fo thought concerning the value and future of the Olympic Games. Serious doubts were expressed on both sides of the Atlantic concerning the continuation of the games. The British acknowledged the shortcomings of the Games, but felt that the Games could contribute to international harmony and understanding if all nations kept this purpose in mind and made a sincere effort to obtain this end. The American viewpoint was more direct and more negative. Changes had to be made or American participation in the Olympic movement would be terminated. The *Times* (London) had this comment:

The games have not been all plain-sailing. The perfect harmony which everyone wished for has been marred by certain regrettable disputes and protests, and objections to the judge's ruling . . . Let it be granted then, in the immortal language of an old and common friend, Euclid, that there have been mistakes on all sides. What else could be exptected and what after all, does it matter, as long as we part friends? That, fortunately, we may and will do. We have seen each

other, all we of the 20 nations who have competed in the games, face to face, and learnt, as we did not know before, what manner of men we all are. We have seen wonderful feats of athletic skill accomplished, many of them greater than any that have been recorded in the history of the world. . .<sup>41</sup>

The American feeling as reported by the *New York Times* took a somewhat different view:

The Olympiad leaves minor heart burnings with the representation of other nations, and altogether, while an athletic success, as a means of promoting international friendship it has been a deplorable failure.<sup>42</sup>

The president of the American Olympic Committee, James Sullivan, further stated:

. . . so far as I personally am concerned this is the last international meeting I shall recommend the Americans to take part in until assured that every country competing shall have some say in the management, so that we shall not hereafter be placed in the false position that we have here.<sup>43</sup>

The Americans were victorious in the stadium events, while the British were the victors in the overall competition. National prestige, however, was based on the stadium events and as such the results here were of more significance than the other events. The attitude of the American winners was, as could be expected, jubilant. The *New York Times* proclaimed: "Official Reception and Civic Parade Planned for Victors at London;" "Parade in honor of Victorious Athletes to Rival the Dewey Celebration, the parade in honor of the American Olympic team will be the greatest event of its kind this country has ever witnessed. It will be a national celebration."<sup>44</sup>

The British on the other hand, were somewhat more philosophical, reserved, and dignified in their view of the results of the stadium events:

We have learnt some useful lessons. We have learnt that in speed and strength we are far behind the Americans, and even our last confident hope that the older nation was endowed with greater powers of endurance than its mighty rival received a rude shock when our chosen long-distance runners were hopelessly outclassed in the severest test of all (marathon). When we analyze the results of the strictly athletic contests our national pride receives a severe blow.<sup>45</sup>

After reviewing the American and British viewpoints, as reported by the *New York Times* and the *Times* (London) respectively, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the games certainly did create a great deal of international controversy and hard feelings, with both nations claiming the unofficial title of Olympic victor. Second, the number of protests and degree of dissatisfaction generated among the visiting nations, most notably the United States, was justified. There is little doubt that English competitors were the beneficiaries of national prejudice and bias on the part of British officials. This being said and substantiated, a further comment must be made concerning the attitude of

the American delegation. The impression generated by the reporting of the *Times* (London) as well as the *New York Times* suggests that the antagonistic attitude of the Americans did little to reconcile the disputes which arose. If anything, the American attitude added “fuel to the fire.”

Certainly one must keep in mind the political atmosphere at the time. As previously discussed, the prime international rivalry during this period was between the United States and Great Britain. With the promotion of nationalism as a recognized aspect of Olympic competition, it was inevitable that serious confrontations would arise between these two nations. The actual amount and intensity of this dissatisfaction, however, was far greater than anyone anticipated.

The tumultuous discord generated at the London Olympic Games of 1908 resulted in permanent changes in Olympic organization. Regulations were adopted and implemented which altered the responsibility for the day to day management of the athletic events. No longer would the host nation provide all the judges, officials, and scorekeepers. After the quarrelsome episodes at London, management of the athletic events was delegated to the international governing body for each particular sport.

Thus, because of the “protests,” the Olympic Games of 1908, while certainly the most controversial games up until that time, also served as a vehicle for change and, more importantly, provided the impetus to restore a sense of dignity and credibility to the Olympic movement after the ludicrous and somewhat farcical games of 1900 and 1904. The Olympic movement had progressed from infancy through the adolescent years to reach young adulthood at the quarrelsome Games of London in 1908.<sup>46</sup>

## Notes

1. *Times* (London), July 11, 1908, p. 17
2. *Ibid.*, June 10, 1908, p. 11.
3. *New York Times*, July 12, 1908, p. 10
4. *Times* (London), July 11, 1908, p. 17
5. *Ibid.*, July 13, 1908, p. 14
  
7. *Ibid.*, June 29, 1908, p. 17
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, July 11, 1908, p. 17.
10. *Ibid.*, July 16, 1908, p. 12.
11. *Ibid.*, July 30, 1908, p. 10.
12. *Ibid.*, July 11, 1908, p. 17.
13. *New York Times*, July 14, 1908, p. 10.

14. *Times* (London), July 15, 1908, p. 12.
15. *New York Times*, July 15, 1908, p. 7.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Times* (London), July 15, 1908, p. 12.
18. *New York Times*, July 15, 1908, p. 7.
19. *Ibid.*, July 17, 1908, p. 11.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Times* (London), July 20, 1908, p. 7.
23. *New York Times*, July 18, 1908, p. 8.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Times* (London), July 21, 1908, p. 13.
27. *Ibid.*, July 18, 1908, p. 9.
28. *New York Times*, July 18, 1908, p. 8.
29. *Ibid.*, July 20, 1908, p. 11.
30. *Times* (London), July 20, 1908, p. 7.
31. *Ibid.*, July 22, 1908, p. 15.
32. *Ibid.*, July 24, 1908, p. 6.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *New York Times*, July 24, 1908, p. 7.
35. *Times* (London), July 24, 1908, p. 6.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, July 11, 1908, p. 17.
38. *Ibid.*, July 25, 1908, p. 12.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, July 27, 1908, p. 7.
41. *Ibid.*, July 27, 1908, p. 15.
42. *New York Times*, July 29, 1908, p. 9.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*, August 29, 1908, p. 7.
45. *Times* (London), July 27, 1908, p. 7.
46. While the London Games were certainly "Olympic" in terms of organization and representation, the firm establishment of the Olympic movement as an international entity would not become a reality until the Stockholm Games of 1912.