

Sports in russia
during 1905 to 1913
history essay



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The early twentieth century was a very important time for Russian sports history; many new types of sports gained popularity throughout the country and the nation took its level of athletic competition to an all time new level. Understanding the role of sports in Russia's history is significant because sports are more than a form of entertainment for spectators as well as those who participate in them. The reality is that sports are a great symbol of exercise, physical fitness, a healthy life style/society, and camaraderie between teammates and even opponents. Furthermore, when a nation competes in sporting competitions with other nations, this is a form of athletic socialization that suggests healthy and friendly relationships with other countries. For these reasons, understanding the role of sports during this time period in Russian history is valuable to understanding this time period in Russia. Among the sports that took center stage during this time period were tennis and soccer, although basketball, cricket, fencing, wrestling and various other sports did gain popularity during this time period as well. In addition to sports gaining popularity, the early twentieth century was also an important time for Russian sports for a different reason; during this period, the initial endeavors of Russia in the most popular sports competition in the world took place, the Olympic Games!

Tennis in Russia during 1910 (Nikolaev and Gazeta 1).

One sport that gained increased recognition during the first decade of the twentieth century was tennis. This sport, which was originally introduced in Russia during the summer of 1878, was even enjoyed by Tsar Nicholas II himself! In fact, " Tsar Nicholas II was a keen tennis player. " His diary entries are full of references to the sport: ' played tennis after breakfast until

5 o'clock', ' played a lot of tennis', ' enjoyed playing tennis,' ' I personally played seven sets', went to play tennis early and played and sweated a great deal" (Nikolaev and Gazeta 1). In addition to this famous leader, there were other proponents of the sport that also helped increase its popularity. For example, some men who are now considered by many people as the pioneers of professional tennis in Russia include Count Mikhail Sumarokov-Elston, who was Russia's champion in 1910-1914, as well as Arthur MacPherson, who was one of the founders of Russian lawn tennis (Nikolaev and Gazeta 1).

Soccer

During the later part of the nineteenth century, Soccer was gaining popularity in Russia; however, in the eyes of the Russian government, this was not perceived as a good thing. In fact, the Russian government actually went to great lengths in order to attempt to restrict the practice of soccer amongst the country's ethnic minorities. The purpose of this policy was to try and maintain the sport as something that was exclusively for the country's elite. In order to accomplish this, those who were considered of a lower class, could not be associated with the game. Not surprisingly, this policy failed, and the game's popularity spread quickly during the time when many Russian students were returning home from England. By 1905, the majority of Russia's clubs had already been established, and in 1912, according to the Russian National Football Ream website, " The Football Association of Russia was founded in 1912 and became affiliated to FIFA that same year". During this same year, Russia participated in an Olympic Games Football Tournament for the first time in its history.

Other Sports

Basketball was also popular in Russia during the early years of the twentieth century (Nelson 22). In addition to this sport, cricket was also appreciated throughout Russia. In fact, there were many popular sports clubs throughout the country during this time period where people could go to enjoy this game; there were even some clubs that were specifically dedicated to the game of cricket, such as the St. Petersburg Cricket Club (Nikolaev and Gazeta 1). Other sports played in Russia during this time include fencing, football, wrestling, racing, and gymnastics. Although there were other sports that were played and well-loved in Russia during this time period, these sports were among the most popular.

Olympics

Not only were many sports gaining popularity in the country during the early twentieth century, but it was during this time period that Russia began competing on an international level as well. Up until this point, the majority of Russia's sport activities were local. Indeed, the most noteworthy change in Russian sports history was that this nation began competing in the Olympic Games. Although this was a big change in Russian sports history, it is important to note that despite Russia's initial participation in these Olympic Games of 1900, the country did not compete in the Olympics again until 1908. Russia chose not to partake in the 1904 summer Olympics, but in the 1908 games, Russia not only competed, but the nation completed the games ranking in twelfth place.

The 1908 London Summer Olympics Photo of Nikolai Panin (Dolgoplov 33)

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"[About] one hundred years ago, at the fourth modern Olympics, held in London in 1908, Russia sent a team that was comprised of six athletes; three of them returned with medals. Nikolai Panin was the only one to bring home a gold medal - Russia's first ever. Panin won it in "special figures" figure skating (London was the first Olympics to include a non-summer sport). Nikolai Orlov and Alexei Petrov returned with silver medals in wrestling" (Dolgopolov 33). In addition to skating and wrestling, Russia also took part in racing that year. However, Russia only had one athlete competing in the the athletics segment of the Olympic games, which greatly decreased their chances of winning a medal. The Russian athlete who did participate in the athletics segment managed to take nineteenth place out of the twenty-seven racers who also competed in those games (The British Olympic Council 49).

The 1912 Stockholm Summer Olympics

Russia's commendable victory in the 1908 London Summer Olympics was followed by another great performance in the 1912 Stockholm Summer Olympics. Although Russia did not win any gold medals in these games, the country still managed to win two silver medals and three bronze medals, which was good enough to give Russia a ranking of sixteenth place in those games. One of the silver medals was won by a team comprised of Amos Kash, Nikolai Melnitsky, Pavel Voyloshnikov and Grigori Panteleimonov; the game was called Shooting, Men's Team 30m military pistol. In addition, the other silver medal was won by Martin Klein in the Wrestling, Greco-Roman middleweight games. In regards to the bronze medals, Mart Kuusik won one medal in the Rowing, Men's single sculls game. Also, Esper Beloselsky, Ernest Brasche, Nikolai Puschnitsky, Aleksandr Rodionov, Iosif Schomaker, <https://assignbuster.com/sports-in-russia-during-1905-to-1913-history-essay/>

Philip Strauch, and Karl Lindblom won a medal in Sailing, Men's 10m class. Finally, Harry Blau won a bronze medal in Shooting, Men's Trap. During these Olympics, Russia exhibited much more skill and willingness to compete than it did in the years previous; this is evident not only in the number of sports games that Russia took part in, but also the number of Russia athletes that competed that year in comparison to the 1900 Olympics in Paris and the 1908 Olympics in London (THE SWEDISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE 852-861).

(THE SWEDISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE 268)

Also worth mentioning is that the 1912 Olympics was Russia's debut in the swimming games. Another first for Russia that year was in the cycling part of the games; there were a total of ten cyclists competing on behalf of Russia that year. Diving was another first for Russia, although the nation only had one individual representing it in that segment. Furthermore, the nation sent a total of thirty-five athletes in order to compete on the nation's behalf in the athletics segment of the games (ex., racing), which was a huge improvement in comparison to the single marathon runner who competed for Russia in the 1908 Olympic Games. Other games that Russia participated in the 1912 Olympics included equestrian, jumping, fencing, football, gymnastics, rowing, sailing, modern pentathlon, shooting, rowing, tennis, and wrestling. Clearly, Russia has increased its interest in competing in the Olympic games over the past dozen years.

Taking a Break from the Olympics

Partaking in the Olympic Games was a very important part of Russian sports history, given that the Olympics symbolize global friendliness, fair-play, and <https://assignbuster.com/sports-in-russia-during-1905-to-1913-history-essay/>

unity. It is clear that Russia began taking the Olympics much more seriously with each subsequent visit to the Olympics; this is evident from the number of athletes that this nation decided to send to the Olympics in 1912. It seemed as though Russia's participation in these games would be long lasting; however, the camaraderie and national pride that Russian citizens gained during those three trips to the Olympics was short lived. This is because it would be decades before these Russian citizens could feel the national pride of a Russian winning a medal again. The 1916 Olympic Games were cancelled due to World War I and the 1940 and 1944 Olympic Games were cancelled due to World War II. Although these three Olympic Games were canceled as a result of global chaos, this only offers an explanation for three Games. Russia chose not to compete in the Olympics again until the 1952 Games, but this time, Russia was not considered Russia anymore; it was the Soviet Union that competed in its place. This brief time that Russia participated in the Olympics has gone down in history as Russia's first Olympic endeavors and a very important milestone in Russian Sports history.

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