

POLYGON - HAARLEM
HOLLAND

16/2/56

6x9
5 "

MARATHON SKATING-RACE IN HOLLAND

220 kilometres in 8 hours 46 minutes.

Length: 131 M.

For the 10th time the ~~XXXX~~ "Eleven-towns' Skating-race" was held in the province of Friesland, covering a distance of ~~198,5~~ ^{124 miles} K.M. 259 skating-cracks took part in the match.

At 5.30 in the morning (temperature ~~5~~ ^{10° F. below freezing} ~~below zero~~) they started in Leeuwarden (capital of the province). Everyone ran for a place on the ice, where the skates were fastened.

Then they were off into the cold and the darkness.

Half an hour later the first of the 6000 participants in the "Touring-section" started, in a blazing snowstorm, for the same distance.

Still in the darkness the match-riders arrived at Sneek (pronounce: "Snake"), where they passed the first control-post.

At Galamadammen in the Frisian lake-district dawn came.

The riders continued their journey in high tempo over a small course, which was cleared from snow by volunteers of the population.

The whole province is always enthusiastic about this already famous winter-sporting-event in Holland and everyone helps in the organisation.

After ~~60 kilometres~~ a leading group of 8 riders went ahead.

Thousands of people lined the track in every town where the riders passed. The ice was very bad for skating and in some places the riders had to walk over straw to pass a dangerous spot.

Nevertheless the speed in the leading group was terrific.

Now and then snow fell down, which made the difficulties greater.

At Franeker ("Fra" pronounced as in "Fra Diavolo") the favorite of the Frisians Van den Berg (Nr. 280) was together with De Koning (Nr. 262) still in the leading group.

Van den Berg won the last race in 1954.

) Poster: Berlikum - Dokkum)

Before Dokkum however he had to change his skates, and fell back.

He (van den Berg) continued the race alone.

Accompanied by some children, 5 remaining leaders began the last stretch back to Leeuwarden, where tens of thousands of people eagerly awaited their arrival.

The 5 who had shared all the misery and the cold and the difficulties of the race decided to pass the finish together. (They arrived at 14.16 hours). The jury, however decided that they, in doing so, had not sufficiently fought for their place and proclaimed them winners, without giving them a prize.

Exterior: We see one of the five laughing nevertheless (name: Wijnhout).

Furthermore the Frisian rider Nauta congratulated by his family, (Then follows interview in Dutch)

Finally we see the laurel-wreath which got no destination, owing to the decision of the jury.