

OPENING OF THE TOURNAMENT OF NATIONS OF THE USSR.

The Lenin Central Stadium in the Inzhinski District of Moscow, on the banks of the Moskva River, was built in less than 18 months. On August 5, Soviet Physical Culture Day, thousands of sports fans from Moscow and elsewhere, were making their way to the Stadium, to watch the opening of the "Tournament of Nations of the USSR".

The Stadium itself has a seating capacity of more than 100,000. On the field, columns of athletes who had distinguished themselves in previous contests were lined up for the occasion. Each group represented a different republic of the Soviet-Union.

Among those taking part in the Tournament were workers, farmers, settlers of the as yet undeveloped agricultural areas within the Soviet-Union, students, doctors, engineers, etc.

At 1 p.m. - the time set for the opening of the Tournament - the leading members of the Soviet government and the Communist party Executive took their seats in the Central Box.

Nikolai Romanov, chairman of the USSR Sports Committee, took the salute.

On behalf of the athletes taking part in the Tournament and the millions of others throughout the Soviet-Union, Romanov thanked the Communist party and Soviet government for the care given by them to the training of the rising generation and the wonderful present made to Soviet sportsmen and sportswomen - the Lenin Stadium.

Then came a party of athletes, all of whom were taking part in the U.S.S.R. Star Relay Race, which took place in honour of the Tournament. They had come from eight different directions to Moscow bringing with them reports of their accomplishments in the fields of labour and sport.

A group of athletes representing the 15 Union Republics carried the state flag of the Soviet-Union to be hoisted on the main flagpole. The honour of hoisting it went to the best among them.



This then marked the opening of the Tournament proper.

A party of girls from all the Union Republics then made their way to the stand occupied by the leading members of the government and party Executive who as they presented with flowers.

The scene then moved back to the stadium track where all the representative groups, including the most outstanding athletes of the Soviet-Union, were marching past in an impressive parade. All nationalities from the 15 Soviet Republics participated in this display of youth, beauty and strength.

The march-past over, Moscow schoolchildren took their place on the field. A number of small boys and girls presented the Soviet leaders with bouquets of flowers. This was followed by a rush of the school - children towards the public stands where paper doves and flowers were showered on the spectators.

600 schoolchildren then gave a mass-display using coloured ribbons, signal flags and hoops. A feature of this display are the little boys in striped sailor outfits. The display is brought to a close with the children forming the words "Thank you, Motherland" in serried formations.

It is then the turn of the "Trudovye Rezervy Sports Club" to demonstrate their prowess. 2,500 members of this Club performed a flower dance, followed by intricate acrobatic figures. The number thereafter is a jolly "let's-all-join-in" dance by boys and girls, culminating in another "living figure" - the emblem of the Club.

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The first Track Event was the 10,000 metres race. Soon after the start, Vladimir KATZ, USSR record holder, representing the Moscow team, took the lead. He won an easy victory covering the course in 28 minutes, 57.8 seconds thus setting up a new Soviet record. Katz also became the first record holder of the new Stadium.



Another display by the Trade-Union athletes involved 2,300 participants performing a variety of figures. All the groups, after performing exercises of their own, combined to make up a continuous figure pattern.

A notable feature of the display was the entry of motor-cycles carrying banners with greetings for the athletes performing on the field.