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SOVIET ATHLETES SENSATION:

56/71.

Russia's top athletes had a date in Great Britain - among them Mrs. Nina Pomomareva, Olympic and European discus champion. Nina and her colleagues were looking forward to meeting Britain's Olympic hopes, and no sooner had they settled in their London hotel than they found Britain was glad to see them.

Gordon Pirie is one of the first visitors, and he's welcomed inside where the Soviet Team are relaxing at the Billiard table. Everything seems set for the big day, and for another of those increasingly popular international athletic contests. Pirie chats with his old friend and rival, Vladimir Kats.

But now comes an event which wrecks all these hopes. Nina Pomomareva is accused of stealing five hats - total value £1,12,11d. from an Oxford Street store. She is summoned to Marlborough Street Police Court, but fails to appear. A warrant is issued for her arrest. Within hours, a paltry incident becomes an international issue: The Russian team quit the games in protest and the Stadium lies empty. The man in the street, disappointed, may well ask why both sides did not find a tactful way to prevent the case of Nina Pomomareva from becoming a storm in a teacup.