

Advert for the 2012 Jubilee Marathon (above), and (below) poster for the 1912 Olympic Games

Then & now

by Anders Olsson

Sunday 14 July was the big day during the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm. Just as in London four years earlier the marathon seized the public's interest. For the organisers the weather was ominous: blue sky, sun and 30C in the shade.

In London the temperature had been in the high 20s and was largely what caused the drama at the finish, where Dorando Pietri collapsed several times before being assisted over the finish line and subsequently

100 police, 300 military personnel and a few hundred officials and scouts were in attendance.

The memorable race at the London Olympics, big hopes for the 12 Swedish participants and extensive publicity in the Swedish newspapers led to great public interest in the 1912 marathon. Despite high ticket prices 18,713 spectators paid to see the Stadium finish. There were another 2500 officials, pressmen and guests in the packed stands, and the course was lined with tens of thousands of spectators.

The northern tramlines which ran to the Stadium recorded 348,874 passenger journeys on marathon day – far more than the 262,207 recorded on the day of the opening ceremony. The marathon started at 13.48, with almost all runners wearing white hats or handkerchiefs to protect their heads from the sun.

The Swede Alex Ahlgren was first out of the Stadium and at 5km he shared the



lead with Tatu Kolehmainen from Finland and the Italian Carlo Seperoni. Ten metres behind were the green-vested South Africans Christian Gitsham and Kennedy Kane McArthur. Swedish favourite Sigge Jacobsson was in 12th, 50 seconds behind the leaders. Tatu was the brother of Hannes Kolehmainen, the most successful athlete at the 1912 Olympics who took gold in the 5000m, 10,000m and 8000m cross country. By 15km he was 13 seconds ahead of the two South Africans at Tureberg. The heat had already forced several runners to drop out.

Gitsham reached the turning point at Sollentuna Church after 20.1km,

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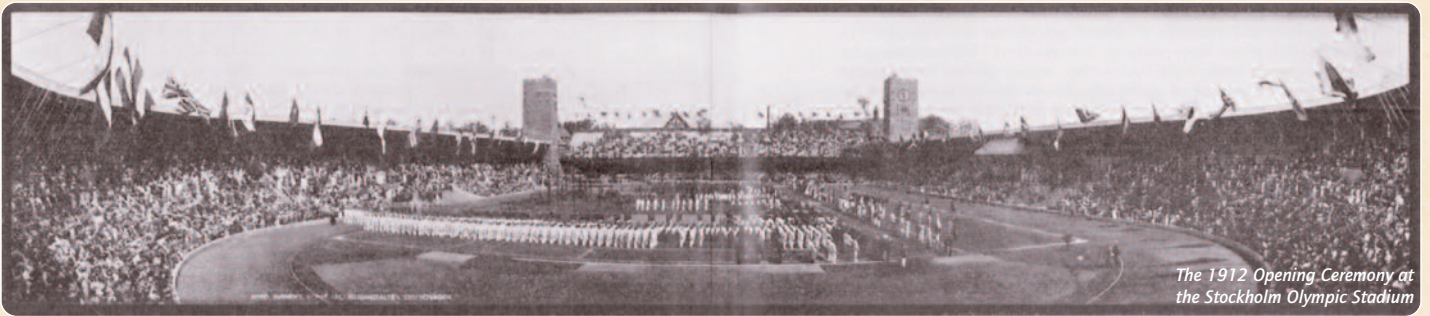
disqualified. In Sweden the Marathon was criticised as a dangerous event.

Consequently all 69 competitors had to present a medical certificate and undergo a medical examination. Eight doctors were positioned along the course, and three at the finish. Runners could drink at the official water stations and in many places between them. The marathon course was cleared of large stones and sections were watered to damp down the dust.



The start of the Marathon at the 1912 Summer Olympics

Stockholm's Olympic Centenary



The 1912 Opening Ceremony at the Stockholm Olympic Stadium

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15 seconds ahead of Kolehmainen. McArthur was third, 35 seconds behind the leader. Neither the South Africans nor the Finn gave themselves time to drink or rinse the dust off at the turning point, noted Sven Låftman in the official 1912 Olympic report. The Italian Seroni, in fifth, drank water and asked for a bucket of water to be poured over him. Most who reached the turning point behind him followed this example.

Gitsham, Kolehmainen and McArthur passed Tureberg at 25km within a second of each other. Kolehmainen, suffering in the heat, lost contact and dropped out of the race after just after 30km. Gitsam and McArthur led at 35km through Stocksund, 90 seconds ahead of Gaston Strobino from USA.



On Valhallavägen outside the Stadium McArthur looked back several times before being reassured that he had a clear lead, and then dropped his pace to save energy for the finish inside the arena. A trumpet signalled that the winner was on his way and McArthur's entrance into the stadium met with great cheers. He reached the finish in 2:36:48.8.

Of the original 69 starters 35 finished. The three doctors at the finish had a quiet day, but medical personnel along the course had to work hard to take care of all those who had problems with the heat.

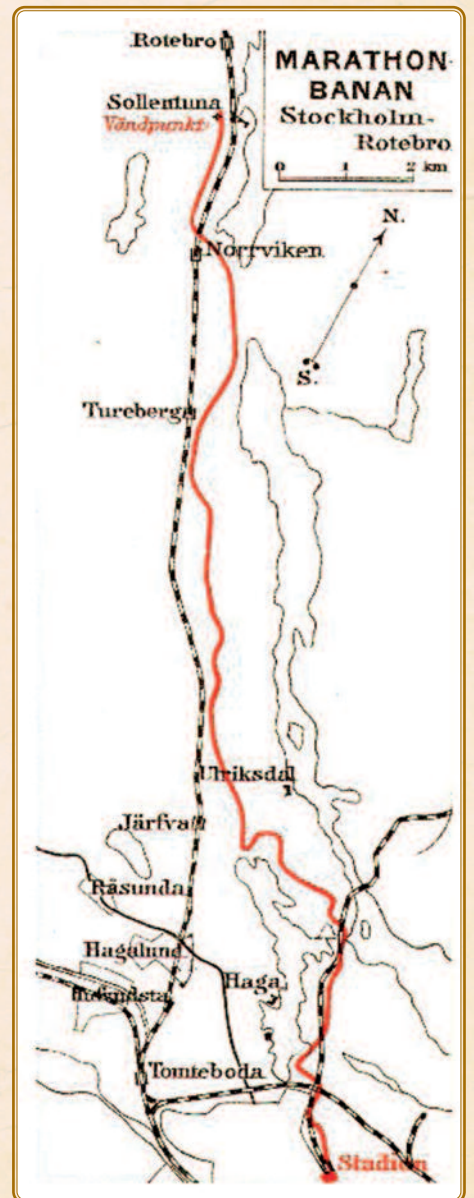
Worst affected was the 23-year old Portuguese, Francisco Lázaro – one of the few who wore no headgear. He lay in the middle

of the field at the Silverdal refreshment station after 30km and then fell on the steep downward slope at Överjärva Gård. He got up and continued to stagger before he collapsed and lay unconscious on the course at 32km. Despite prompt medical treatment Lázaro did not regain consciousness. He was sent to Serafimer Hospital where he died at 06.00 next morning, becoming the first fatality in an Olympic Games. It later emerged that he had covered much of his body with fat to protect himself from the sun, but this prevented him sweating and led to a dangerously increased body temperature.

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Kennedy Kane McArthur winning the 1912 marathon, and below, at the winner's ceremony



Stockholm's Olympic Centenary

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Exactly 100 years later, at 13.48 on 14 July 2012 the Jubilee Marathon Stockholm will give 10,436 runners from 65 countries a chance to re-live history. They will run a 40075m course that is as close as possible to the original route. It is a demanding course with some tough inclines. It could be warm on 14 July, as it was 100 years before.

The spirit of 1912 will pervade the event: officials in 1912 dress, refreshment stations according to the time; bands and choirs along the course providing music from 1912; grandstands filled with spectators in 1912 fashion; 100 year old cars, motorcycles and bicycles along the course.

In 1912 runners assembled outside the arena and walked together to the start. In 2012 runners will assemble at "Östermalms IP" and walk 800m to the start pens located just outside the Olympic Stadium. About eight minutes before the start, the groups will walk into the Stadium and 250m up to the start line.

The 1912 race started inside the Stadium in front of the royal box in the middle of the home straight. Participants ran 300m on the track before leaving the arena through the south gate towards "Valhallavägen". The start was meant to have been at 13:45, but it took longer than expected to assemble the participants so the race started three minutes late. The Jubilee race will also start from in front of the royal box. Only the first group will start at 13:48 but all "waves" will follow the same 1912 route out of the stadium to Valhallavägen. A hundred years ago there were 69 runners who all started at the same time, but with such large numbers the 2012



The Stockholm Olympic Stadium as it is now

14 July 1912–2012
OLYMPIC STADIUM



JUBILEE
MARATHON
STOCKHOLM

race will have five "waves" starting at 10-minute intervals from 13:48.

The course, then and now, runs from the Olympic Stadium on the main road north to Sollentuna Church and back. 21.6 of the 2012 course's 40.075 km is on the same route as 1912. It is just as hilly as 100 years ago. The difference between the highest and lowest point is 41m.

The course is 125 metres shorter than in 1912. There are three places in which it is different: after both 17km and 23km the course crosses a new highway and, to avoid stopping traffic in Sollentuna, the course now goes over a bridge to the south of the original route.

During the 1912 race runners turned around a wooden post placed in the road outside Sollentuna Church. After the race a memorial stone designed by Torben Grut was erected about 40m north of the turning point, on a hill next to a pedestrian and cycle path. Dedicated in November 1913, it is a six metre fluted doric column of black granite topped by a square stone block. On the side facing Stockholm are the words "turning point", on the opposite face "1912" and on the sides "Marathon". Before the Jubilee Marathon it will be moved to a position in front of Sollentuna Church, about 100m south of the Olympic turning point. The memorial stone will be the turning point for the Jubilee Marathon Stockholm 1912–2012. There will be much more room for runners when they turn around the stone and space has been created for many more spectators.

In 1912 runners turned to the left after they entered the Stadium to run 300m to the finish in front of the royal box. Jubilee runners will turn to the right and run 100m to the finish in front of the royal box. This makes it easier for the mass of runners to leave the stadium after they have crossed the finish line.

Runners who wish to run 42,195 metres – the official distance for a marathon race since 1921 – can choose to run an extra loop

before the finish. These runners enter the Stadium in the same way but turn left for 150m and exit through the gate near the 1500m start line of the stadium. They will run 910m to a turning point and return the same way. When they re-enter the stadium they will run 250m on the track to the finish line. There is one refreshment station on this extra loop. Runners can decide during the run which distance they want to cover, and those who choose 42,195m will also have their time recorded at 40,075m.

Official timing in 1912 was by stop watch but the Jubilee Marathon will be electronically timed by means of a datachip attached to a tab on the edge of the race number, which is made of cloth like the 1912 version. There will be two result lists, one for 40,075 m (include those who run 42,195m) and one for 42,195m. Split times will be recorded at 5km intervals but not including 40km (as in 1912).

There were four refreshment stations along the original course, passed both outbound and on the return: Söderbrunn (2km and 38km), Stocksund (5km and 35km), Silverdal (11km and 29km) and Tureberg (15km and 25km). Water, tea and coffee and orange and lemon quarters were provided. Water was also provided at the turning point after 20km and at other points along the route. The 2012 course will have 21 various types of refreshment stations, five of them in 1912 style.

Only the first three finishers in 1912 won Olympic medals but all finishers will receive a medal in the Jubilee Marathon. One side depicts the Olympic Stadium and the other the 1912 winner Ken McArthur.

In tribute to the 1912 runners those registering for the Jubilee Marathon will receive a large handkerchief which can be used as headgear during the race. After the finish of the Olympic Marathon runners were offered champagne on the Stadium infield. Finishers in 2012 will be offered a small glass of sparkling wine – or an alcohol-free alternative.



The Turning Point Memorial