

THE BIRTH OF THE MEDITERRANEAN GAMES

By Gen. Sami Nigm El-Din



Mohamed Taher Pasha

His Royal Highness, Prince Mohamed Taher Pasha is the father of the Mediterranean Games. Born in Egypt in 1879, and with a doctorate in Political Sciences, he was to become a great

personality in the sports world. He founded the Egyptian Aero Club in 1931 after having a conviction that sporting activities can serve as an outstanding vehicle for peace and brotherhood. He was also the founder of the Egyptian Equestrian Federation in 1942 as well as the first president and Egyptian representative of the first International Olympic committee. His most significant contribution was in 1942

when he brought a foreign French trainer 'Colonel Le Farg' to train the Egyptian team. From 1934 to 1947 he was the president of the International Flying Federation and, from 1936 to 1952, he was chairman of the Egyptian Fencing Federation. His energies were rewarded with prestigious posts on the International Olympic Committee; having served for many years as the head of protocol, he became a member of the executive

Committee from 1952 to 1957. Between 1960 and 1964 he was the assistant to the *then* president of the International Olympic Committee, Avery Brundage. He died in 1970, the year before the Izmir Games, where the Turkish Olympic Committee rendered him a moving homage.

THE FIRST MEDITERRANEAN GAMES HELD IN ALEXANDRIA (October 5th - 20th 1951)

It needed the dynamic power and fierce perseverance of this popular leader in the sporting field, *H.R.H* Mohamed Taher Pasha, to carry out successfully this audacious scheme. As soon as the London Olympics were over, he began the build-up of a vibrant sports movement, which aimed to set up a meeting that would involve nations which were already linked by centuries of dialogue and culture. *H.R.H* Mohamed Taher's project was born in a climate of general rebirth after the ravages of the Second World War. Its conception was most original when it was considered that the land of the Pharaohs lies far away from its neighbors dwelling on the shores of the Mediterranean. The First Mediterranean Games are now past history, pointing out that they were an outstanding success thanks to the high spiritual standard of the organizers at the head of who stood *H. R. H* Mohamed Taher Pasha, member of the International Olympic Committee for Egypt. He contrived to select and assure the valuable assistance of worthy collaborators, who helped him to realize, in the face of great difficulties, the dearest wish of his life as a Maecenas. Amongst them is mentioned particularly *H. R. H* Chahine Bey, secretary of the Egyptian Olympic

Committee. Effectively, the following members foregathered in Egypt in order to represent the International Olympic Committee: Mr. Armand Massard (acting as deputy-chairman of the International Olympic Committee), Mr. Angelo Bolanaki, Mr. Jean Ketseas, Mr. Albert Mayer, Baron de Guëll, Mr. Giorgio de Stefani and the Chancellor of the International Olympic Committee. Ten Mediterranean countries were represented by their athletes who, on the opening day of the Games, paraded before his Majesty King Farouk. These countries were: France, Italy, Spain, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Malta, Greece, Egypt, while Monaco asked to be excused. The official program included the following sports: Athletics, Swimming, Gymnastics, Weight-lifting, Fencing, Wrestling, Boxing, Rowing, Basketball and Shooting. On the other hand, several International Federations sent their representatives to Alexandria with the purpose of supervising technical questions. Their work was much appreciated for it was partly due to their collaboration that the Games ran so smoothly. Amongst the members of the International Federation was Mr. Gaston Mullegg. ■



Some of the members of the Equestrian Showjumping Team
 Right to left : Omar Mansour, Ahmed Mazhar, Mohamed Selim Zaki,
 Mohamed Taher Pasha, Mohamed Khairy, Colonel Le Farg, and Farouk Al-Heiny.

General Results

| Tournament | 1 st Place | 2 nd Place | 3 rd Place |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Alexandria 1951 | France | Italy | Egypt |
| Barcelona 1955 | France | Italy | Egypt |
| Beirut 1959 | Egypt | France | Turkey |
| Naples 1963 | Italy | France | Yugoslavia |
| Tunis 1967 | Italy | Yugoslavia | Spain |
| Izmir 1971 | Italy | Yugoslavia | Spain |
| Algiers 1975 | Italy | France | Yugoslavia |
| Split 1979 | Yugoslavia | France | Italy |
| Casablanca 1983 | Italy | France | Spain |
| Latakia 1987 | Italy | Yugoslavia | France |
| Athens 1991 | Italy | France | Turkey |
| Languedoc 1993 | France | Italy | Turkey |
| Bari 1997 | Italy | France | Turkey |
| Tunis 2001 | France | Italy | Spain |

Egyptian Results

| Tournament | Final Rank | Gold | Silver | Bronze | Total |
|-----------------|---|------|--------|--------|-------|
| Alexandria 1951 | 3 rd out of 10 Countries | 24 | 31 | 20 | 75 |
| Barcelona 1955 | 3 rd out of 9 Countries | 13 | 21 | 25 | 59 |
| Beirut 1959 | 1 st out of 13 Countries | 34 | 26 | 30 | 90 |
| Naples 1963 | 5 th out of 13 Countries | 6 | 13 | 12 | 31 |
| Tunis 1967 | <i>Egypt refrained from participation due to the 1967 War</i> | | | | |
| Izmir 1971 | 7 th out of 14 Countries | 6 | 10 | 14 | 30 |
| Algiers 1975 | 7 th out of 15 Countries | 6 | 12 | 16 | 34 |
| Split 1979 | 7 th out of 14 Countries | 3 | 9 | 10 | 22 |
| Casablanca 1983 | 10 th out of 16 Countries | 1 | 9 | 12 | 22 |
| Latakia 1987 | 10 th out of 18 Countries | 4 | 4 | 6 | 14 |
| Athens 1991 | 8 th out of 18 Countries | 8 | 10 | 17 | 35 |
| Languedoc 1993 | 10 th out of 19 Countries | 4 | 9 | 16 | 29 |
| Bari 1997 | 11 th out of 21 Countries | 3 | 6 | 10 | 19 |
| Tunis 2001 | 9 th out of 23 Countries | 7 | 13 | 17 | 37 |