

Scotland and Scottish Identity at the 1908 Olympics

By Luke J. Harris



Wyndham Halswelle's coach; Jimmy Curran starts a run for a group of hopeful athletes at Mercersburg College.

Photo: Mercersburg College, USA

Introduction

Recent political episodes such as Scottish Independence and the Brexit Referendum, along with the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games, have raised questions about Scotland's place in the United Kingdom and the identity of Scottish athletes. Tennis player Andy Murray came under particular scrutiny because of initial refusal to give his opinion on Scottish Independence, then on the eve of the vote came out in favour of it. At the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, Scotland's representatives in the British team were posed questions regarding their views on independence, and their identity as to feeling British or Scottish. This appears to be a debate that will continue for the foreseeable future.

Scotland's sporting identity has not always been so divided, and this article intends to determine the expressions of Scottish identity present at the 1908 London Olympics as seen through the press. For this, three aspects will be considered; Scotland's perspectives of the Games, coverage of Scotland's premier athlete, Wyndham Halswelle, and the views of the *Glasgow Observer*, a newspaper written for the Scottish Irish-Catholic.

Scotland and the Union

When reflecting on the Edwardian period, historians consider that Scotland had a stable position in the Union and primarily British identity, owing to Scotland's central position in the United Kingdom and British Empire. An example of this perspective comes from Iain Hutchinson: *The wars with France, which ended in 1815, helped bind Scotland closely into the idea of Britishness, as the menace of invasion unified opinion and identity. The prominent part played by Scots in acquiring and running the Empire cemented wholehearted identification with Britain. ... The presence in the settler colonies of hundreds of thousands of people with Scottish origins further underlined the identification. It was no coincidence that opposition*



Luke J. Harris PhD is an Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of History at the University of Birmingham (UK). His book, *Britain and the Olympic Games, 1908–1920: Perspectives on Participation and Identity*, won the 2015 ISOH Karl Lennartz Memorial Book Award. His primary research interest is in British Olympic History.

among Liberals to Irish Home Rule was especially strong in Scotland, for it was regarded as presaging the break-up of the Empire.¹

This quote comes from a chapter focusing on Scotland in the 19th century, entitled "Workshop of Empire", with a sub-section entitled "Scots or Britons". The conclusion reached was that Scotland considered itself as British. Hutchinson stated that Scotland presented "an unusual picture of a people who were intensely conscious of their distinct national characteristics but were uninterested in any outright form of separatism or independence." He continued by indicating that Scots felt no "serious grievance" towards England and this was because "their prosperity was intimately bound up with the union of the two countries".²

Other historians argue that Scottish people felt both Scottish and British. John Macintosh stated that many people across different periods of Scottish history felt a "dual consciousness or loyalty".³ Bernard Crick shares this view, believing the population had a "vivid sense of dual nationality", which gave them an "enhanced quality of life in being able to live in two worlds, enjoying two cultures and their hybrids."⁴ These perspectives indicate that although there was a Scottish identity, the dominant outward identity expressed was British.

Sport gave a different dynamic to Scottish identity, because the first sporting internationals were affairs between the nations of Britain, such as the inaugural international soccer match between Scotland and England in 1872. Contests in other sports such as rugby and hockey began shortly afterwards and ensured that the age-old rivalry between Scotland and England continued. Richard Holt states that "national rivalry in rugby was friendly but in football it was fanatical."⁵ In both sports, Scotland's independence allowed for a new Scottish identity to develop.

One aspect to this identity was an adversity to England, as stated by Derek Birley. He considered these clashes as an important force in the forging of British national identity; "it was not always a unifying influence, at least on the surface: in this it was a microcosm of the complex political and social relationships of the alliance."⁶ Football was the defining sport for Scotland and prior to the outbreak of the First World War the game provided a focus for Scottish national feeling.⁷ The identity expressed here was oppositional towards England, but it did not threaten or conflict with Scotland's broader British identity.⁸

While different sporting identities did develop in Britain, the principle of the "gentleman amateur", with the values of fair play and sportsmanship at the heart of this, together with the rejection of professionalism, went across national borders. Despite the acceptance of professionalism in some British sports, most



prominently soccer and cricket, there remained a dislike and distrust of professionalism. The aristocrats and upper-class governors of British sport believed it should be played by "gentlemen" and this meant not training hard and relying upon natural talent, known as "effortless superiority". Other important elements to this identity included treating the opposition with respect and accepting officials' decisions, a principle that was questioned during the 1908 Olympics.

The inaugural Olympic Games of 1896 opened the possibility for a different British sporting identity to emerge, as it represented one of the first times that Britain competed as one. Such was the minor impact of the Olympics in Athens, Paris, and St. Louis in Britain that there was no significant impact on Britain's sporting identity. Hosting the 1908 Olympics provided Britain with its first significant interest in the sporting festival.

The 1908 Olympics

London 1908 remains Britain's most successful Olympics, with 146 medals, of which 56 were gold. Despite Britain's domination, its poor performance in the athletic events,

Members of the British athletic team at the 1906 Olympic Games, Athens. Halswelle is in the back row, third from the left.

Top: Wyndham Halswelle (fourth from the left) before the start of the 400 m final at the 1906 Olympic Games.

Photos: Wyndham Halswelle's scrapbook, courtesy of his grand-nephew

Top: Wyndham Halswelle posted an Olympic record 48.4 seconds to win the 400 m semi-final at the 1908 Olympic Games.

Below: Halswelle after he received his medal.

Photos: Wyndham Halswelle's scrapbook, courtesy of his grand-nephew



featuring the Games largest overseas contingent, ensured that sections of the press believed this was another indication of British sporting decline which had been repeatedly brought into question during the Edwardian period. The USA concentrated its effort in athletics and won sixteen of the 27 titles. Consequently, the press attacked the weaknesses of the British amateur philosophy of effortless superiority, along with the morals and amateur status of the American athletes.

The focus of this article will be on athletics, as those events which took place outside of this period. Those which took place in the spring of 1908 were only briefly mentioned in the press, if at all. In total, Scotland only contributed a small percentage of the British medal haul, with nine medals. The most notable Scottish performance was that of 400 m runner Wyndham Halswelle, and the controversy which followed this race ensured that it was extensively covered in the press.

The decision to bring the Olympics to Britain in 1906 (after Italy pulled out), brought previously unprecedented interest from the British sporting associations. Following this decision, Scotland's Amateur Athletic and Swimming Associations (along with their Irish counterparts) stated in letters to the Secretary of the British Olympic Association (BOA) that they desired their own independent national teams for the Games (they also suggested that England and Wales had the same).⁹ Little is known about the political affiliation of the Scottish associations, but their desire for a Scottish team could be attributed to the regularity which Scotland competed by itself in sporting competition rather than any nationalistic tendencies.

Kevin McCarthy, author of *Gold, Silver and Green*, a book that examines Irish Olympic interest prior to its independence in 1922, notes that the Irish associations were not "vehicles of extreme nationalism", but rather "independent minded bodies".¹⁰ The same could be said of the Scottish associations, who were used to their independence.

It was the International Olympic Committee rather than the BOA that prevented Scotland from having its own separate Olympic team. At its 1907 Session it determined that a country is "any territory under one and the same sovereign jurisdiction",¹¹ ensuring Britain would compete as one at the 1908 Olympics. Following this refusal, McCarthy notes that "annoyed responses" were sent to the Secretary of the BOA. His opinion is that the Scottish associations were even angrier about this decision than their Irish counterparts.¹²

Despite the ruling, Scotland did have its own team in the Olympic hockey tournament (proposals for Scottish teams in the soccer and water polo competitions came to nothing, owing "solely to expense").¹³ This occurred after there was a lack of international entries for the event and consequently the numbers were made up by the four British nations entering their own team. All of the teams were called "Great Britain and Ireland" and competed alongside the nation's teams of France and Germany. The English team won the event and Scotland's team took the bronze medal after they lost to the eventual champions in the semi-final. Scotland's representatives defeated Germany in the first round, but with no bronze medal match, both the Scots and Welsh (the losers of the other semi-final), were jointly awarded bronze.

Scottish press coverage of the 1908 Olympics

Compared to the press across Great Britain, the Olympic coverage from Scotland was notably different in content. This occurred because the Scottish press made little comment relating directly to the Scottish athletes who competed. The preference within the Scottish press was to concentrate on a British perspective, and excluding the interest surrounding Halswelle, there was almost no mention of the performance of Scotland's competitors.

By comparison, in the most significant Welsh publications, the *Western Mail* and *South Wales Daily News*, there was inclusion of a British perspective, but when one of their own athletes, such as aquatics team member Paulo Radmilovic, came to the fore, the preference was to concentrate on and promote Welsh achievements.¹⁴ The tone in the English press was commonly of a British perspective, but such was the number of regional periodicals such as Birmingham's *Sporting Mail* and the *Manchester Guardian* for example, there was a concentration of their representative, in preference to the British perspective.

One of the most striking demonstrations of the British perspective in the Scottish press came via the belief in national superiority. As mentioned previously, the notion of British superiority in track and field athletics suffered a major blow during the 1908 Olympic Games. Despite these performances the British belief in her superiority remained a prominent theme in the press. The following quote is an example of this from the *Weekly News for Edinburgh and the South*, published after the first week of athletic competition: "The country over which King Edward rules is famed for its prowess in practically every sphere of sport, and there could be no more appropriate centre for such a gathering than London."¹⁵ This editorial is typical of the tone presented across the Scottish press, with pride in the nation's achievements, both in organisation and sporting performance.

A similar perspective was issued by the *Edinburgh Evening News* after the controversial tug-of-war competition. Here, the Liverpool Police, one of three teams representing Britain (City of London Police and Metropolitan Police K Division were the other two) defeated the sole team from the United States. This contest became clouded in controversy after claims from the Americans that the Liverpool Police had broken competition rules by wearing spiked boots, when only flat soled boots were permitted. The perspective here considers apparent British high morals in sport, despite what had happened:

*The Yankee team were apparently hopelessly out-classed, and the plea that the British team were wearing heavy boots will not explain their easy victory, it is an unfortunate fact that Americans are neither good winners nor good losers. In the first case they "crow" too much, write in the second case they are too ready to find excuses for defeat.*¹⁶

This editorial demonstrated sympathy for the United States team but considered this distinctly English team as its own. The undertone of this editorial focused on the British belief in its sporting morals, and the need to be good loser, a principle central to British sporting identity (although this was not often seen in the British press). Holt describes this moral as "playing the game", where sportsmen accepted defeat when it was handed to them. He defines this as "a combined physical and moral activity, an exercise in the art of being British".¹⁷ The *Edinburgh Evening News* also referenced the British belief in "fair play" on other occasions, such as after the controversial 400 m final:

*Such incidents as the foul in the 400 metres race at the Olympic Games cause doubt as to the healthiness of international rivalry in sport. Our British ideals of fair play appear to be too strict for our Yankee and colonial cousins.*¹⁸

This quote reinforces the notion that Scotland's primary identity was British. The principle of fair play was seen as a defining element of sporting Britishness. This perspective was further reinforced in the *Weekly New for Edinburgh and the South* editorial, with an emphasis on reinforcing the notion of British superiority:

*... the summary of results at the Stadium is entirely favourable to Great Britain. It shows that the representatives of this country have achieved far more successes than those of any other nation. Even after liberal allowance is made for contests in which the awards were disputed by the Americans, the number of wins credited to Great Britain considerably exceeds that allotted to the United States.*¹⁹

This editorial was published after the conclusion of the athletic events where Britain had endured numerous defeats to the United States. These defeats had encouraged some commentators to question British sporting prowess, such as Birmingham's W.W. Alexander who felt the Olympics "has had a most disastrous effect upon the reputation of British athletics."²⁰ A *Northern Athlete* columnist bemoaned that "England at the present time is a long way below her athletic strength of some twenty years ago."²¹ The London weekly, the *Sphere*, concluded that Britain's athletic performance was "disgraceful".²²

The material analysed demonstrates a divided opinion on how Britain had performed. The Scottish press was almost entirely supportive of the British performance, with no hint of the criticism that was prevalent in some English publications. For example, the *Weekly News for Edinburgh and the South* wrote solely of "British successes"²³ rather than failure. The indication was that the Scottish press remained positive about the performance.

A prevalent theme across the coverage by the Scottish press was the use of the terms "England" and "English" when "Britain" and "British" would have been more appropriate, a reflection of English dominance of Britain. Krishan Kumar states that "Englishness modulated into Britishness",²⁴ while Ben Wellings argues that the distinction between England and Britain became "blurred when the ideology of nationhood was beginning to emerge"²⁵ in the 19th century, so didn't emerge. Both of these perspectives were also apparent in the London press, who regularly referred to England and English,²⁶ when Britain and British would have been more appropriate.

The mixed use of these terms first appeared in the description of the opening ceremony by *The Scotsman*. It commented that "the Swedes and Danes were particularly well received, as were the Canadians, Australians, and Englishmen."²⁷ There is the possibility that only the Englishmen were given a good reception,

but with the British team coming out as one (apart from the Irish athletes that marched slightly behind in protest about the lack of an Irish team), it would have been incredibly unlikely that any national group would have been singled out by the small crowd that attended.

Another example of the mixed use of terms appeared in *The Scotsman* in an editorial, published shortly after the marathon race – the blue-ribbon event of the Games and a disaster for Britain with its first representative coming into twelfth position. It linked the failure to apparent British physical decline:

*But where were the Britishers? A fourth and fifth American, three successive Canadians, a Swede, and the Russian, a Finn, and another Canadian were cordially welcomed before the first of the few British survivors arrived. Only two others finished – a fact reflecting in no favourable manner upon the physical status of the Englishman of to-day.*²⁸

This article declares that the athletes were “Britishers” and “British” before concluding by calling them “Englishmen”. This could just be a prime example of the interchangeable nature of the terms “England” and “Britain” which was so common in press coverage of not only these Olympic Games, but also in reporting other matters, such as the Monarchy, always referred to as the King or Queen of England, not Britain. Alternatively, the reference to “Englishmen” used here could have been done so as to potentially separate Scotland from this English failure, as only English athletes competed in the Marathon.

The separation of Scotland and Scottish athletes from England was also apparent in an editorial reflecting on the tug-of-war competition. Here, the intention was to mock the three English police teams that had represented Britain in the event:

*Scotland is not equal to (now, so far as we know; is any home nation through their police forces) sending athletes to the Stadium. Not that they have not members able to engage in the various competitions, but that duty compels them to do their “bests”, and by all men’s, if possible, capture the lively, alter, and ubiquitous criminals who night and day prowl and plaque against the lives and property of decent, law abiding citizens.*²⁹

This editorial presents a different standpoint than given in the examples used previously, as there appears to be a divide between Scotland and Britain. The opinion here was that the Scottish police were employed to combat crime, not partake in sport. There appears to be frustration about the inequality, potentially about a discrepancy in terms of funding between the Scottish Police forces compared to their English counterparts.

From the coverage analysed there was only one significant reference towards a uniquely Scottish

perspective of the Olympics. This came in an athletic preview in *Scottish Referee* which bemoaned the small role Scotland would play:

*... we regret that Scotland in these is to play such an insignificant part. We have, sorry to say, only one representative likely to bring Olympian honour over the border, and he, of course, is Lieutenant Halswelle, upon whom we pin our faith to win the quarter-mile for Britain and Scotland especially.*³⁰

The opinion presented here should not be seen as an expression of individualism, but rather disappointment of the lack of Scottish representation, excluding Halswelle. The indication that his success was jointly for Scotland and Britain.



“Thomas Nicolson at the International match” (between Scotland and Ireland) Illustration: *The Edinburgh Evening News*, 20 July 1912, p 7

Apart from Halswelle, other Scottish athletic hopes came from weight thrower Tom Nicolson and 1,500 m runner J. M'Gough, winner of the British Olympic trial. Unfortunately for the latter athlete, he withdrew shortly before the Games owing to a foot injury.³¹ Nicolson, from Kyles of Bute, did compete, finishing fourth in the hammer competition, but failed to reach the final of the shot put.

The *Scottish Referee*, a sporting weekly, made little reference to the Olympics, but when it did, typically a British standpoint was projected, such as the comparison between British and American training methods: "Our systems of training compare badly with the Americans. For instance, we learn that daily an hour or more is spent by their athletes in starting off their marks alone, British training is antiquated and requires reforming."³² The argument here was one typically found in articles that bemoaned the British athletic performance. This comment and other Olympic related editorials in this periodical were pro-British in tone, although not always positive about the overall British performance.

The representation of Wyndham Halswelle

The 400 m runner, Wyndham Halswelle, received the most extensive coverage of any Scottish athlete at the Games. He entered the Games as the favourite for his chosen event and the universal feeling expressed across the British press was that he was certain to win gold. His depiction in the press makes for an interesting perspective of both Scottish and British identity.

Halswelle was London-born to Scottish parentage in 1882, but his nationality should be defined as Scottish. He was educated in Scotland and entered the army after leaving school and served as an officer in the Highland Light Infantry during the Boer War. When fighting in South Africa, his natural talent for running was noticed by former professional athlete Jimmy Curran, whom he served alongside. From this point onwards, Halswelle took up running seriously and in 1904, he won his first major title, the 880 yards at the 1904 Army Championships, followed by the 1905 Scottish and AAA 440 yards championships. The following year at the so-called Intercalated Games, he won the 400 m and bronze in the 800 m. Prior to the Olympics in 1908, he set two Scottish records on the way to collecting the 100, 220, 300, 440, and 880 yard races at the national championships. The man who was known as "The Flying Scotsman" or simply "Scot" also set a record in the 300 yard event that was to last for 53 years.³³

At the 1908 Olympics, Halswelle competed solely in the 400 m, an event run in four-man races without lanes. Consequently, the typical race was a physical affair and resembled a modern-day 800 or 1,500 m race, with all

the athletes jostling for position. In the events semi-final, Halswelle won the race in an Olympic-record time of 48.4 seconds. The events final pitted Scotland's finest against three American athletes: John Carpenter, John Taylor, and William Robbins. In this race physical contact occurred and in the view of the referees, Carpenter blocked the Scotsman unfairly. Consequently the officials "cut" the tape and deemed the race void, before the leader Carpenter reached the finish.

In the aftermath, the judges (who were all British) disqualified Carpenter and determined that the race must be re-run. In protest at the decision, both of Carpenter's compatriots boycotted the re-run, leaving Halswelle to race alone. The controversy of this event had ramifications upon both sides of the Atlantic, and was central to the American complaints that followed the conclusion of the athletic events. The consequence of this race was that lanes were introduced for 400 m competition and at future Olympics the officials would come from all nations, not just from that of the host.

The following passages are an examination of Halswelle's portrayal with regard to his perception in the press. A prominent theme found in the English press was to describe Halswelle as English. This could be an example of the use of the interchangeably used terms of "Britain" and "England" that was so common in the press.

An example of Halswelle's representation as an Englishman appeared in the London periodical *The Bystander*, which described: "there were three Americans to one Englishman."³⁴ This is just one of many examples of when Halswelle was referred to as being English in the Welsh and English press.³⁵ Keith Robbins offered a suggestion to why Halswelle, along with the institutions and people from Scotland, might have been considered English. To do this he used an example of an address by Lord Roseberry to an audience at the University of Edinburgh in 1882. Roseberry remarked that when the English set out to dominate Britain, their belief was that all parts of the nation were "England" – a concept that may help us explain why so many of the newspaper articles refer to "England" and the "English" when they should have referred to Britain: "He noted that Englishmen generally eschewed the terms 'British' and 'Great Britain'. They tended to think that every part of the United Kingdom was 'English'. This self-possession, characteristic, he thought, of dominant races, had indeed made England what it was."³⁶ The examples found regarding Halswelle suggest that he was perceived in a similar manner.

Not only did the English press refer to Halswelle as being English, but on occasion the Scottish press did the same, such as the following from *The Scotsman*:

It was known after his wonderful running of the last few days that Halswelle's chance of winning the

400 metres for England against his three American opponents was at least a good one. He lay back at the start, as usual, and was beginning to close up with the leaders at the corner, when Carpenter, who had started in the inside position ran right across the track, until finally the Englishman was almost off the cinder track altogether and on to the cement by the side ...³⁷

Throughout this article Halswelle was depicted as being English, which could be explained by *The Scotsman's* heavily reliance on the London-based *Press Association* reports for their articles. Although there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case in this instance, this article could have potentially been written by a journalist from this group, although it would not be an unrealistic expectation for a journalist from the *Press Association* to have background knowledge on one of Britain's premier athletes.

Such a report is an unusual example from the coverage analysed, as Halswelle was primarily viewed as British and only on rare occasions as Scottish. There were instances when he was represented as being both, such as in an editorial from Glasgow's *Evening Times*. It referred to the 400 m final as "the affair", and projected Halswelle as both British and Scottish:

To the enthusiast and the devote the shorter events of the week were indefinitely more interesting than the Marathon race. It was in these that Scotland, at all events, was chiefly centred, for although we had representatives in the big race, men who under more favourable circumstances, might have done well, yet

we knew exactly where we were in the 400 with Lieut. Halswelle. That race – the equivalent of the British quarter – was gradually installed as the real sporting culmination and climax of the fortnight's struggle between Britain and America. What actually took place is the best proof of that contention. It was Halswelle against the world, and the world, unfortunately, did not give him a fair and unfettered chance to win his laurels....

*... My sympathies are all with Lieut. Halswelle in the unfortunate position in which he was placed, and I am only a representative of 99 per cent of the country in this matter. He did not seek a cheap honour and in ordinary circumstances would have declined the walk-over, which completely spoiled the race of the fortnight.*³⁸

This article appears to be in no doubt of the nationality of Halswelle. He was stated as being Scottish and there appears to be pride in Halswelle's role in defending British honour via his victory and the manner in which he conducted himself.

Halswelle's nationality was also a theme in an article in the *Weekly News for Edinburgh and the South*. Its heading was "the Scotsman who broke the record", with a short accompanying article that made reference to his nationality:

*The rise to the front rank of athletes of that "Flying Scotsman," Lieutenant W. Halswelle, has been phenomenal. A couple of years ago he was practically unknown, and now he has broken the record at the Stadium for the 400 metres flat race.*³⁹

Captain Wyndham Halswelle in the uniform of the Highland Light Infantry. He was killed on 31 March 1915 near Neuve-Chapelle, France. Right: His gravestone at Royal Irish Rifles Graveyard, Laventie, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France.



Photos: The Royal Highland Fusiliers Museum, Glasgow.

This was the only reference of the Scottish press referring to him as the "Flying Scotsman" in its 1908 Olympic coverage. There was a genuine belief in his ability as an athlete, but in comparison to other articles that wrote of Britain's athletes, there was no expectation that he should be victorious, as was frequently expressed in the English press.

The representation of Halswelle in the British press fits in well with the conclusions reached by historians. Halswelle is identified as Scottish and British, and this keeps in with those historians quoted from who argue that British identity was a central part of Scottish identity during this period. The impact of these events and the controversy that followed the Olympics led Halswelle (still a serving officer in the British Army) to retire from athletics at the end of the 1908 season. He returned to serve in the army and was killed by a sniper at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle on 31 March 1915.

Anti-British sentiment in the Scottish press

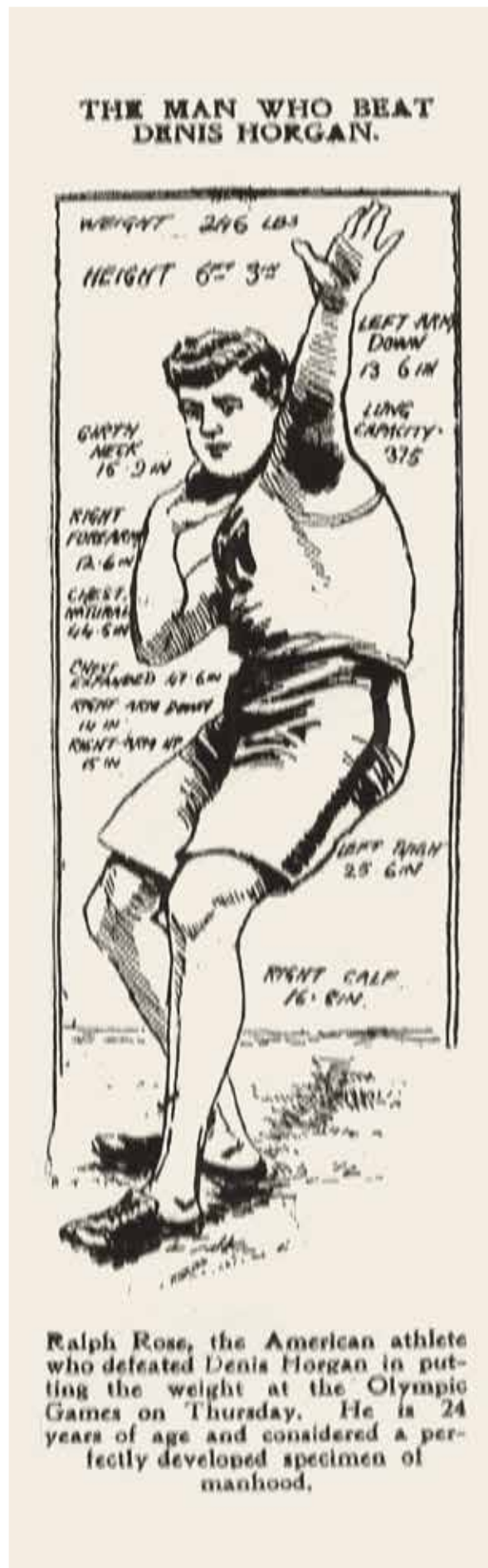
The indication from the publications mentioned in this article is that Scotland's identity was of Britain, and this was the widely acclaimed viewpoint of Scotland and its people, but this was not universal. The following section analyses the perspective of the *Glasgow Observer*, a daily newspaper for the Irish immigrant population, which wrote about the Olympics from the perspective of the Irish nationalist press, who were fiercely anti-British. This reflected the feeling amongst this group who "resisted wholesale assimilation"⁴⁰ into Scottish society. David McCrone believes that such divisions were important for Scotland's identity, arguing that "the image of Scotland as a divided and unhealthy society is a common one in Scottish literature, which has acted as a key carrier of Scottish identity."⁴¹

The Olympic coverage in the *Glasgow Observer* examined the fortunes of "Irish" athletes, both those that competed in the British team, but also the substantial number of men of Irish descent that competed for the USA. The closeness between this publication and the Irish nationalist press came through a cartoon which depicted Ralph Rose who had defeated Denis Horgan, an Irishman who competed for Britain in the shot put. This cartoon was the same as that which appeared in Irish nationalist daily *The Freeman's Journal*⁴² and depicted Rose as "the man who beat Denis Horgan".⁴³

The Marathon race enjoyed the most comprehensive press coverage, owing to its physicality and it being viewed as the ultimate test of human physicality and endurance. The belief was that victory would not only prove that Britain's sportsmen were not on the wane, but the entire British race was not becoming "degenerate" as was feared.⁴⁴ Such comments were commonplace during this period, due to international

American Ralph Rose:
"The man who beat
Denis Horgan"

Cartoon: *Glasgow Observer*,
25 July 1908, p. 13



sporting defeats along with the recruitment problems for the Boer War, where a large number of British volunteers had to be rejected because of their poor physical condition.

This publication's initial article on the race preferred not to highlight the success of Hayes, but to ask "Where was Duncan?"⁴⁵ – a reference to the leading English hope, Alexander Duncan, who failed to finish the race. Notably, it is England rather than Britain which is referred to (potentially done so not to include Scotland). This was comparable to the tone demonstrated across the Irish nationalist press throughout the Olympics and particularly after this event, which presented them with the opportunity to show themselves as separate and physically superior to Britain.⁴⁶

Throughout the entire Olympics, the *Glasgow Observer* included just five articles about the Games. It included no retrospective on the Games and the only article that made any reference to the Olympics after its conclusion came on 1 August 1908. The focus of this editorial was the plan by the Gaelic Athletic Association to send a team to the sporting events that were part of the Pope's Jubilee in late September 1908. Here, the sporting freedom of Ireland was on the mind of the author:

*Thinking its high time for a distinctively Irish turnout in the international athletic contest which are becoming so popular the world over. ... The Association gives the reasons why Ireland was not per se, represented at the London Stadium. Summarised, they are that the English Olympic Committee refused to recognise Ireland as a separate entity, and insisted that the only condition on which Irish athletes could enter for the contests was that they sink their nationality and allow themselves to be exploited under the Union jack. Such a condition was impossible (says the "Irish News"); and thus, while Irishmen scooped in most of the trophies, the glory of them went to the countries of their adoption.*⁴⁷

This editorial was more of a reflection of the perspective seen in the Irish nationalist press, bemoaning the lack of an Irish team and how the British only desired Irish representatives in order to "exploit" them. The most prominent examples of this were the *Cork Sportsman's* editorials of 25 July and 1 August. McCarthy believes this publication was "the most vocal publication when it came to Irish identity"⁴⁸ at the Olympic Games. Its articles posed questions such as "How long, then is Ireland to be exploited for the athletic development of other nations?"⁴⁹ and bemoaned that "Ireland's sons have helped materially to swell the list of victories of both the United States and United Kingdom."⁵⁰ This is comparable with the tone of this editorial.

The Glasgow Observer is an interesting source for analysis because it presented a prime example of the

differing identities that were present in Scotland. It revealed that, despite the overriding British identity in Scotland, this was not universal and imbedded amongst the pride being British, and there were those in Scotland that were set against this identity.

Conclusions

The indication from the sources examined demonstrate that Scottish and British identity were intertwined. Scotland considered itself to be British, and this generally came at the expense of the Scottish perspective. The exception to this was *The Glasgow Observer*.

Scotland only played a minor part in the Olympic Games, but there was pride in the performance of Halswelle aiding the British cause. In the early part of this article there was reference to how international sport had begun as matches between the nations of Britain and that this had allowed a separate Scottish sporting identity, one that was often averse to British development. From the coverage analysed here, it appears that the identity present at the 1908 Olympics was of Britain, and integral to this was the British characteristic of amateurism and fair play. ■

- 1 Ian Hutchinson, "Workshop of Empire: The Nineteenth Century", in J. Wormald, *Scotland a History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 238.
- 2 Ibid., 237.
- 3 John Mackintosh, *John P Mackintosh on Scotland* (London: Longman Higher Education, 1982), 148.
- 4 Bernard Crick, "A Tale of Four Nations", *Chapman* 67, (1991–2), 18.
- 5 Richard Holt, *Sport and the British* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 255.
- 6 Derek Birley, *Sport and the Making of Britain* (Manchester University Press, 1996), 339.
- 7 Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Pimlico, 1992), 361.
- 8 Grant Jarvie & I.A. Reid, "Sport, Nationalism and Culture in Scotland", *The Sports Historian* (1999), 114.
- 9 Kevin McCarthy, *Gold, Silver and Green* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2010), 169.
- 10 Ibid, 169.
- 11 IOC Conference, The Hague, 25/05/1907, quoted in McCarthy, *Gold Silver and Green*, 171.
- 12 McCarthy, *Gold, Silver and Green*, 169.
- 13 Second ASA meeting of 1907–08 Season. *ASA 1908 Handbook*, 126; Steve Menary, *GB United* (Durrington: Pitch, 2010), 41.
- 14 *Western Mail*, 14/07/1908, 6; *South Wales Daily News*, 25/07/1908; 6 & 23/07/1908, 7.
- 15 "The Olympic Games", *Weekly News for Edinburgh and the South*, 18/07/1908, 6.
- 16 "Editorial", *Edinburgh Evening News*, 20/07/1908, 2.
- 17 Holt, *Sport and the British*, 6.
- 18 "Editorial, Marathon", *Edinburgh Evening News*, 25/07/1908, 4.
- 19 "The Scotsman who broke the record", *Weekly News for Edinburgh and the South*, 01/08/1908, 7.
- 20 W.W. Alexander, "Athletic Notes", *Sporting Mail*, 01/09/1908, 1.
- 21 "Athletics", *Northern Athlete*, 15/06/1908, 2.
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