

THE FORMATION OF THE SPANISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

by Juan Fauria í Garcia

The original date of the Spanish Olympic Committee (SOC) is quite controversial. This work brings to light several facts about its origin. It dates from 1905 and was formed to assist in sending a team to the 1906 Intercalated Olympic Games and the first president of the SOC was the Marquis de Cabrinana del Monte.

The origins of the Spanish Olympic Committee are rarely discussed anymore. Conrado Durantez, President of the Spanish Olympic Academy, has declared that he has discovered proof in the IOC Archives that the SOC was founded in 1912 at Madrid and “not in 1924 at Barcelona as was believed.” In his last declaration on 18 December 1994, ratifying what he said in earlier in the summer, he added that he was planning to present his documentation to the IOC and that “it is not possible to found the same thing twice,” which is correct.

The Spanish Olympic Committee was originally so certain of the founding date of 1924 that they did not allow another possibility, using the fact that they possessed the constitutional act from 1924 formally establishing the SOC, which was subsequently registered at the IOC. But doubts remained because of the presence of the Spanish team at Antwerp in 1920.

Newspapers and magazines of the time also mention the Catalanian Olympic Committee, which was led by the Marquis de Villamejor. This committee assisted in providing a Spanish team to compete at Antwerp in 1920 and was prepared to do so as well in 1916 prior to the cancellation of those Games.

In 1992, the Spanish Olympic Committee published a history entitled *Spain at the Olympic Games*. This book makes the following comment about the Spanish team at Antwerp, “Under the direction of an organism created for this object, thus not the existing Spanish Olympic Committee” It appears that the author had not examined the press of that period.

Reading the newspapers and sporting journals of the period from 1900-1920, one can see that the SOC was created for the very first time in November 1905, with the objective being to take part at the 1906 Intercalated Olympic Games. The SOC had as its original president the Marquis de Cabrinana del Monte, a member of an important Spanish family. The sources that we can mention as proof of this first existence of the SOC, are as follows:

1) The book *The Olympic Games at Athens 1906*, edited by James E. Sullivan, published by Spalding’s Athletic Library, which mentions this Spanish committee, even though no Spanish athletes took part.

2) The first number of *El Mundo Deportivo* (1 February 1906).

3) The newspaper *Heraldo de Madrid* on Monday, 13 November 1905.

4) The magazine *Gran Vida*, November and December 1905.

5) The letter that the Marquis de Villamejor sent to Narcis Masferrer dated 26 November 1913, where he states that he has been President of the SOC for four years and that he followed the Marquis de Cabrinana del Monte.