

## The Swedish Games of 1916

Swedish athletes in Olympic sports prepared seriously in view of the 1916 Olympics, to keep the top position from the Stockholm Games in 1912.

When, towards the end of 1915, it became clear no Olympics could be staged in Berlin the following year, Swedish officials started planning a replacement event, if small, at home.

In January 1916, an organising committee was formed for Svenska Spelen (The Swedish Games). The Games was held July 8–16, 1916, mainly in Stockholm with the 1912 Olympic Stadium as the prime arena.

Athletes from Denmark and Norway were invited to competitions in 51 events in athletics, cycling, fencing, shooting, wrestling and, as Nordic Championships, in rowing. The host country dominated with 40 wins, 28 second and 30 third places, while Denmark scored 8–9–6 and Norway 3–12–4.

Further, competitions with only Swedes were held in equestrian,



football, military sports and, as national championships, in swimming and tennis. Included in the programme was also a choir festival (as during the 1912 Olympics) with some 4,000 singers, and gymnastics exhibitions.

The first permanent Swedish Olympic Committee (founded in 1913) refrained from taking charge of the Games. Instead, specialized sports associations, headed by the Football Association, shared the (successful) organisation. Leading officials were Anton Johanson, for many years

on leading positions in the Swedish Sports Confederation and the Swedish FA, and Erik Bergvall, managing director of the Olympic Stadium. Johanson was also the driving force behind the second (and last) edition of The Swedish Games, July 14–17, 1922, with only Swedish participants in athletics, football and, as national championships, swimming.

Ove Karlsson

**Svenska Spelen 1916:**  
the logo shows the flame on the tower of the Stockholm stadium.

Photo: Volker Kluge Archive