



Ed Douglas--Olympic Judge

Stemming from a Legion project here ten years ago and a growing interest in track and field has led to a position on the summer Olympics judging team for Ed Douglas of 216 Spring Street, Almonte.

Mr. Douglas was one of several local residents who volunteered to act as judges at a track meet held at Gemmill Park in 1966 hosted by Branch 240 of the Royal Canadian Legion. That first experience, coupled with the fact that his wife, Mary has always maintained a keen interest in track and field since participating in these activities during her school years, led to his becoming involved in judging events throughout the province and other parts of the country where he gained a group four proficiency level that enabled him to be selected to work at the Olympic games in Montreal.

Mr. Douglas will be one of 185 judges at the games, 44 of which come from Ontario. Each province is represented with the majority of judges, 86, provided by Quebec.

Selections were made in Ontario two years ago and since that time Ed has been working with a team of four other judges in preparation for the 1976 Olympics. His team will specialize in judging the triple jump events but each member is qualified to fill in at several other disciplines if the need

Mrs. Douglas is a level three track and field judge and could have qualified for the next level last summer but unfortunately could not find the time.

On Olympic event that does not require level four or five judges is the Marathon, due to the large number of officials required to man all the check points. Ed's team will work this event as well.

In the past Ed has concentrated on judging the pole vaulting which he considers to be one of the more dangerous events, both for the participants and the judges. He recalls several incidents where he has been struck with a falling crossbar and was even knocked flat once when struck with a vaulter's pole.

His responsibility at the triple jump will be that of starter. He must line up the athletes in their proper starting order, see that they start their approach from the designated place and time each participant. Jumpers have two minutes to make their jumps after the clock has started. They can make as many false starts as they like provided they begin the final approach within the allotted time and they do not cross the

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line marking the start of jump area.

Gone are the tape measure and hand held stop watches. A new optical instrument measures the length of the jump and push of a button flashes the athlete's performance onto master board at the official scorer's table. Unfortunately, no Canadian athlete during the recent Olympic trials was able to register a triple jump good enough to qualify for the games but the host country has the prerogative to have a token entrant in the event.

Mr. Douglas is rather excited by the fact that his vantage point as triple jump starter enables him to be only 30 to 40 feet from where Queen Elizabeth will watch the games during her visit to the Olympic stadium. This, he says, will help compensate for the fact that the judges receive no pay for their services at the Olympics. They are reimbursed for their transportation costs and are provided with accommodation only. They also get to see the opening and closing ceremonies in the Olympic stadium.

Judges for various events will be easily recognized. Their official uniforms are basically the same but each discipline will have a group of judges resplendent in different colours of blazers. For example, Ed's group will wear bright yellow blazers along with white shirt, grey slacks and black shoes. Other groups will be attired in blazers of red, mauve, blue, green or orange. The tie is a combination of stripes of all the colours. All the track and field officials will be billeted at the Marie Victorian Girls' College in Montreal from July 14th to the 31st.

Mr. Douglas is extremely impressed with the facilities at the Olympic site. The main stadium, he said, "is incredible to see. You really have to stand inside of it to realize how impressive it really is". He said that the "stadium track and field and all the practice facilities surrounding it are absolutely first rate. All the Olympic training facilities in fact are first class", he added. The judges have already spent three weekends in Quebec judging the Olympic trials, two at Robillard Stadium in Montreal and one at Laval University in Quebec City, and all were impressed with the fantastic facilities. Every track, for example, is a "Tartan Track", the ultimate running surface according to European athletes, many of whom refuse to perform on anything else.

The only comparable track in Ontario according to Ed is at Laurentian University at Sudbury.

While in Montreal the judges were billeted at the new Olympic Village, which, says Ed, is a series of suites which will later become two bedroom apartments. Fourteen athletes will be housed in each suite during the games.

Being close to the Canadian track and field scene, Ed feels that although we shouldn't look for too many medals there will be a lot more Canadian athletes in the finals this time - both men and women. He credits a vastly improved track and field program and more stress placed on

the individual's training method in the improved performance.

He mentioned that mid-distance runner, Doug Scorrain formerly of Perth, has been running extremely well in recent meets and feels that two of the three members of the women team have a good chance to share a medal.

Being an Olympic judge doesn't help in getting tickets to the games. Mrs. Douglas stores in line for two days last year to obtain tickets for the track and field finals. She plans to drive back and forth for each of the three days.

What next for Ed and Mrs. Douglas? Well, they're already looking forward to the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton next summer and also hope to get a meet in Newfoundland.

Although Ed considers it a high point in his life that he would like a chance to watch the World Masters track and field meet once again. It was held last year in Toronto where hundreds of athletes 40 years of age and over still interested in keeping fit competed as fiercely as their young counterparts. The schedule for the week-long event was a grueling one they said the people they met were absolutely delightful and they would like to experience that again.