

CHAPTER 2

The First Olympic Winter Games

CHAMONIX, FRANCE

January 25–February 5, 1924

In June 1922, the French Olympic Committee invited representatives from around the world to a special meeting outlining plans for an International Sports Week in Chamonix in early 1924 involving tournaments in hockey, skating, and skiing. Officially, the original title of the competition was “Semaine internationale des sports d’hiver,” but on May 29, 1925 the IOC amended its mandate to include winter games. Thus, the 1924 event is now considered the First Winter Olympics (hockey, remember, had been a demonstration sport at the 1920 SUMMER Games at Antwerp).



TEAM CANADA • 1924

TORONTO GRANITES

Jack Cameron, GOAL

Ernie Collett, GOAL

Dunc Munro, DEFENCE (CAPTAIN)

Beattie Ramsay, DEFENCE

Hooley Smith, CENTRE

Cyril “Sig” Slater, LEFT WING

Harry Watson, LEFT WING

Bert McCaffery, RIGHT WING

Harold McMunn, RIGHT WING

Frank Rankin, COACH

William Hewitt, GENERAL MANAGER

FINAL PLACINGS

GOLD MEDAL

Canada

SILVER MEDAL

United States

BRONZE MEDAL

Great Britain

FOURTH PLACE

Sweden

FIFTH PLACE (tie)

Czechoslovakia

France

SEVENTH PLACE (tie)

Belgium

Switzerland

THE TORONTO GRANITES

The Granites was a team formed by ex-servicemen from the Great War. From the time they began competing in the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) in 1919–20 until they disbanded (after the 1924 Olympics), the team was virtually unbeatable. They won the John Ross Robertson Cup in 1920, 1922, and 1923 (OHA Senior champions), and were runners-up to the University of Toronto in 1921.

The team qualified as Canada's Olympic representatives by winning the Allan Cup in successive seasons. In 1922, they beat the Regina Victorias 6–2 and 7–0 in games played in Toronto, and in 1923 they beat the University of Saskatchewan 11–2. However, some Granite players from these teams — Alex Romeril, Hugh Fox, Don Jeffrey, and Jack Aggett — were unable to make the trip overseas and were replaced by amateurs from the west (Harold McMunn from Winnipeg's Falcon Hockey Club) and east (Sig Slater from Montreal's Victoria Hockey Club).

Once the final roster had been established, the team played exhibition games against the best amateur teams in Toronto, Hamilton, Sault Ste. Marie, London, Niagara Falls, Ottawa, Kingston, and Montreal, finishing their tour with a sound 4–1 win over the Abeyweits of Charlottetown in a game played at Saint John, New Brunswick.

THE TRIP

The Granites left Toronto on Monday, January 6, 1924 and were joined in Montreal by Canadian champion figure skaters Melville Rogers and Cecil Eustace Smith. In Saint John, the contingent was completed by Charles Gorman, speed skating champion. The group left New Brunswick aboard the *SS Montcalm* on January 11, arrived in Liverpool on the 19th, and continued on to London and Paris, reaching Chamonix on the 22nd, where they booked into the Chamonix Palace Hotel, a short distance from the Olympic Stadium.

In an early attempt to get first-hand information for its readers, the *Toronto Telegram* hired left-winger Harry Watson to write two highly enjoyable journal-style reports for the paper, one while crossing the Atlantic, the other from Chamonix. The intent was to save the paper money by not sending a reporter overseas, to get one player's opinions and observations of the trip, and to provide social commentary on the international event. Watson's coverage was both playful and evocative.

Jan. 11, 1924 — Today is a memorable day in the lives of the Canadian Olympic team for, having finished up our Canadian tour, we are finally on our way on the *RMS Montcalm* for Chamonix to defend the world's championship against all comers from Jan. 29 to Feb. 5, 1924.

The trip started in a not too promising manner as the Bay of Fundy was on its bad behaviour and certainly showed its mean disposition with a wind, rain, and fog storm from the time we set sail till the morning of Jan. 12. The result was that most of us remained on deck till pretty late. Hooley Smith had bet me \$10 that he wouldn't be seasick, but about 11 P.M. was counted out by Referee

P.J. Mulqueen. At this time Hooley's main cry was "And we've got to come back!"

Breakfast on the 12th was a very sad affair, as Jack Cameron, Ramsay, Rankin, and myself were the only members to appear. This was the day of Dunc Munro's famous quotation: "Why the — don't they hold the games at Oakville?" He was afraid he was going to die; the next day he was afraid he wasn't going to die.

Sunday was a beautiful day, quite warm and sunny. All who were capable attended service in the dining room. Some stayed through the whole service; others walked, ran, or lurched towards the stairs at different intervals for reasons known only to themselves.

Monday the 14th, the majority of the team were able to sit up and take nourishment, but Dunc was still feeling the effects of the first night. A shuffle-board contest was arranged by Mr. Hewitt, which was won by Miss Edna Mulqueen and myself after some real battles. A deck tennis tournament was won by Jack Cameron and Maude (Jim) Smith. As usual, St. Andrew's College boys to the fore, as it should be.

Tuesday the 15th, the boys were all feeling pretty well, so a little exercise was indulged in, throwing the medicine ball, skipping, and a few jogs around the deck to finish off. Still perfect weather.

Wednesday the 16th was celebrated with a repetition of Tuesday's training and a concert by the crew in aid of Seamen's Charities. The concert was very good and ended in Mr. Mulqueen auctioning an autographed picture of the team for \$25 to Mr. Scott of the Montreal *Gazette*. Hooley told Mr. Scott he was crazy, as he would have sold him a dozen for \$5.

Thursday much of the same with Jack Cameron and myself still holding the record for not having missed a meal; also for Jack's winning of a progressive bridge party, the prize being a box of cigarettes, and the winner being a non-smoker, his room-mate H.E.W. has taken possession of the prize.

Friday the 18th — At 5:30 this morning we passed the Fastnet Lighthouse and so are practically in port. We dock at Liverpool early tomorrow and from there to London. It has been a wonderful and delightful trip, and our only hope now is that we can get to Chamonix at the earliest opportunity, so that we may start heavy training again and justify the confidence that has been placed in us and retain for Canada supremacy in the hockey world.

Chamonix, France. Jan. 24 — The Olympic team arrived at Liverpool on the 19th, and after much taking of pictures by the *Daily Mail*, etc., and hunting for baggage, we left for London at 11:00 A.M. arriving at 2:00 P.M. after a very enjoyable trip. Hooley Smith thought the English trains were toys but found out differently later, as we covered the 200 miles in less than four hours.

After registering at the Cecil we (Dunc Munro, Cameron, Hooley, and self) set out on a tour of inspection. At this stage two and six was the only coin the others knew and everything was figured in how many 2.6's. We had a lot of fun: bought a lot of stuff and arrived back at the Cecil satisfied and tired. I took the boys from there to the famous home of roast beef — Simpson's — and we sure did justice to England's finest roast. From there we went to see the "Beauty Prize" at the Winter Garden, which was very good. Bed at 11:45 P.M. as our train left at 10 A.M. the next day.

The next thing I knew was a voice over the phone informing Cameron and I that it was 9:40 and they were leaving the hotel. Needless to say, we thought our chances of catching the train very slim, but we arrived at the station at 9:59, no collars, boots undone — but in time. Capt. Munro was very annoyed but it turned out he had omitted our room number when giving instructions as to being called, so he had to take it back.

We had a wonderfully calm trip from Dover to Calais and from there to Paris, passing the Canadian cemetery at Etaples, which is wonderfully well kept by the French: also other places of great interest.

Arrived at Paris at 6:30 P.M. and immediately inquired for seats at the "Follies Bergères", which we obtained and the whole team trotted there *en masse*. Boxes, if you please, and a wonderful time was had by all, the best parts of which I will withhold until I hear from the censor.

Opening ceremonies,
Chamonix, 1924.



The following day, the 21st, we were treated to a wonderful trip all around Paris by the president of the French Olympic committee. It is surely a wonderful place and the new Olympic stadium is a splendid structure, having a running track 1,000 metres around and a seating capacity of 60,000.

We left Paris at 8:30 P.M. on the 21st, travelling all night in what they term a "couchette" or sleeping car. They supply the beds but no blankets, which we found out after we had left Paris.

We arrived at Chamonix about 11:30 A.M. on the 22nd after a wonderful trip by electric train through the mountains. So far we have been unable to get on ice, as it is very mild, but everybody is in good physical condition and as soon as we get ice, as Bert McCaffery says, from then on we go.

THE GAMES

All games were played outside, on natural ice, on a European size rink, quite unfamiliar to the Canadians who were used to smaller confines that created a more physical game. Also, the boards were only about a foot high, thus preventing the Canadians from using them with the skill they did back home, particularly for hitting and passing. Additionally, netting was put up at both ends to prevent the "loss" of pucks. Ice conditions were often so poor that the boards had to be relocated almost daily to ensure the best possible patch of ice was being used!

From the time the Granites arrived, the weather varied in the extreme, from warm sun to heavy rains. These conditions were not ideal for hockey, and the Canadians were unable to have even one practice to acclimatize themselves to the already alien rink. On January 25, they made an attempt to skate but were quickly whisked off the ice after complaints from Norway, Sweden, and Finland, all of which claimed Canada had not scheduled the practice. In order to stay in shape the Canadians did road work, running and the like. None of these obstacles hampered the team, which was vastly superior to the competition and easily retained the gold medal the Winnipeg Falcons had won for Canada at the 1920 Olympics at Antwerp.

SUPERFLUOUS TENDING OF THE GOAL

Such was the strength of the Canadian team that goaler Jack Cameron had a tough time maintaining his interest in games that saw him literally idle from start to finish. Legend has it that Cameron frequently skated to the boards to chat up the young ladies who were in attendance. Later in life, he denied the allegations but did impart one interesting anecdote by way of replacement gossip: "The only girl I remember," he recalled, "was a little blonde 11-year old figure skater on the Norwegian team. When she wasn't competing, she sat on our bench. Her name was Sonja Henie and she was a great booster of the Granites." The pulchritudinous Henie finished last in competition that year, but in the next Games dazzled the world with her gold medal-winning performance and went on to become both a professional skater and popular film star.



THE FINALS

Even before play to decide the gold medal between the Canadians and Americans began, there was controversy. Both William Hewitt and W. S. Haddock, managers for the Canadians and Americans respectively, refused the official proposal to draw the referee's name from a hat. Both men agreed that choosing an official from among the continental countries competing (Britain, France, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia) would likely leave this important game in the hands of an inexperienced man. In the end, negotiations resulted in Hewitt proposing Paul Loicq of Belgium and Haddock selecting La Croix of France. Hewitt objected that La Croix might be related to the American goalie of the same name. A coin toss settled the argument, and Loicq became the referee.

The weather for the game was perfect — clear and cold — producing hard, fast ice. The US won the right to choose which end they preferred after referee Loicq ruled that that choice belonged to the team whose captain was older! Irving Small bested Dunc Munro in that department and elected to defend the west end, meaning Canada had to play into the sun for the first and third periods. The start of play was further delayed while the captains argued with Loicq over his interpretation of body-checking.

There was clearly an air of animosity to the game, created in part by Harry Watson's remark earlier that Canada would win 10 or 12 to nothing. Less than two minutes after the puck had been faced off, Watson was bleeding from the nose and American Willard Rice had been knocked out by Smylie's stick. By the end of the game, the Americans were exhausted and gasping for breath, and the Canadians tired but victorious thanks to the heroic and skilful play of their star forward trio of Watson, Smith, and McCaffery.

THE HONOURS

At a sumptuous banquet the night of the victory, February 3, 1924, Count Clary, chairman of the French Olympic Committee, wrote a note to his Canadian counterpart that read: "Le Comte Justinien Clary presents his compliments to Mr. Hewitt with all his admiration for your splendid hockey team and your brilliant final victory."

The Canadians returned to Paris and agreed to play an exhibition match with Great Britain on a circular rink 120 feet in diameter. As Hooley Smith confessed, however, the tour was beginning to weigh heavily on the players, and this Paris match was particularly enervating: "Between the champagne parties, excursions to the Folies Bergères and the like, we were pooped out, and the only way we could get a rest during the exhibition game was to shoot the puck up among the champagne drinkers at the tables surrounding the rink. It was messy but effective."

The T. Eaton Co. entertained the team with a dinner and dance at the Claridge Hotel before the Granites carried on to London. There, the Canadian Club of Great Britain honoured them with a reception and dance at the British Columbia Hall. The team set sail for the Dominion on February 25th aboard the *SS Metagama* and received wonderful receptions on their arrival in Saint John, Montreal, and Toronto, where they were given a huge civic welcome and a grand parade from Union Station up Bay Street to City Hall, a fitting end to an immensely successful, 58-day Olympic trip.



The Competition

TOURNAMENT FORMAT

Eight nations were divided into two groups of four teams each and played a round-robin series within each group. The top two teams advanced to the finals. Preliminary round games between teams that advanced to the finals were "carried over." Thus, although there were four teams in the final round-robin, each only played two additional games versus teams in the other qualifying group. The preliminary games consisted of three 15-minute periods, but the finals were NHL-regulation: three 20-minute periods, and all were played at the Stade Olympique du Mont Blanc. Goalies were still not permitted to drop to their knees.

Interestingly, for these early Olympics, *players* often served as referees for matches they didn't play in. For instance, Dunc Munro refereed the Belgium–United States game, while Beattie Ramsay handled both the France–Great Britain match and the France–United States game. The aforementioned Loicq, who officiated the Canada–US game, was himself a player on the French team.

THE OPPOSITION

BELGIUM • Paul van den Broeck, Charles van den Driessche, Henri Louette, Andre Poplimont, Louis de Ridder, Frederick Rudolph, Victor Verschueren, Gaston van Volckxsom

CZECHOSLOVAKIA • Jaroslav Fleischmann, Miroslav Fleischmann, Ludvik Hofta, Jaroslav Jirkovsky, Jan Krasl, Vilem Loos, Josef Malecek, Jan Palous, Jaroslav Pusbauer, Jaroslav Rezac, Josef Sroubek, Jaroslav Stransky, Otakar Vindys

FRANCE • Andre Charlet, Pierre Charpentier, Jacques Chaudron, Raoul Couvert, Albert Hassler, Charles Lavaivre, Joseph Monard, Calixte Payot, Philippe Payot, Alfred de Rauch, Maurice del Walle, G.F. de Wilde

GREAT BRITAIN • William Anderson, Lorne Carr-Harris, Colin Carruthers, Eric Carruthers, George "Guy" Clarkson, Cuthbert Ross Cuthbert, George Holmes, Hamilton Jukes, Edward Pitblado, Blane Sexton

SWEDEN • Ruben Allinger, Vilhelm Arwe, Erik Burman, Birger Holmqvist, Gustaf Johansson, Hugo Johansson, Karl Josefson, Ernst Karlberg, Nils Molander, Einar Ohlsson

SWITZERLAND • Fred Auckenthaler, Louis Dufour, Emil Filliol, Max Holzboer, Maurice Jaccard, Ernest Jaquet, Bruno Leuzinger, Ernest Mottier, Peter Muller, Rene Savoie, Wilhelm de Siebenthal, Donald Unger, Andre Verdeil

UNITED STATES • Clarence "Taffy" Abel, Harry Drury, Alphonse Lacroix, John Langley, John J. Lyons, Justin McCarthy, Willard Rice, Irving Small, Frank Synnott

FINAL STANDINGS*

* Austria was supposed to participate but withdrew just before the Games began

PRELIMINARY ROUND • GROUP A

	GP	W	L	T	GF	GA	P
Canada	3	3	0	0	85	0	6
Sweden	3	2	1	0	18	25	4
Czechoslovakia	3	1	2	0	14	41	2
Switzerland	3	0	3	0	2	53	0

RESULTS

JANUARY 28	JANUARY 29	JANUARY 30
Canada 30 Czechoslovakia 0	Canada 22 Sweden 0	Canada 33 Switzerland 0
Sweden 9 Switzerland 0	Czechoslovakia 11 Switzerland 2	
JANUARY 31		
Sweden 9 Czechoslovakia 3		

PRELIMINARY ROUND • GROUP B

	GP	W	L	T	GF	GA	P
United States	3	3	0	0	52	0	6
Great Britain	3	2	1	0	34	16	4
France	3	1	2	0	9	42	2
Belgium	3	0	3	0	8	45	0

RESULTS

JANUARY 28	JANUARY 29	JANUARY 30
United States 19 Belgium 0	Great Britain 15 France 2	Great Britain 19 Belgium 3
		United States 22 France 0
JANUARY 31		
France 7 Belgium 5		
United States 11 Great Britain 0		

MEDAL ROUND

	GP	W	L	T	GF	GA	P
Canada	3	3	0	0	47	3	6
United States	3	2	1	0	32	6	4
Great Britain	3	1	2	0	6	33	2
Sweden	3	0	3	0	3	46	0

RESULTS

CARRY OVER GAMES	FEBRUARY 1	FEBRUARY 3
Canada 22 Sweden 0	Canada 19 Great Britain 2	Canada 6 United States 1
United States 11 Great Britain 0	United States 20 Sweden 0	Great Britain 4 Sweden 3

TEAM CANADA GAME SUMMARIES

(assists, penalties, and times not recorded)

JANUARY 28 • Canada 30 Czechoslovakia 0

IN GOAL

Canada — Cameron

Czechoslovakia — Stransky

FIRST PERIOD (15 minutes)

1. Canada, Watson
2. Canada, McCaffery
3. Canada, Smith
4. Canada, Watson
5. Canada, Smith
6. Canada, Smith
7. Canada, Watson
8. Canada, unknown*

* the goal was scored so quickly the statistician didn't see the shooter and was unable to give official credit to any particular player

SECOND PERIOD (15 minutes)

9. Canada, Ramsay
10. Canada, Watson
11. Canada, Munro
12. Canada, Slater
13. Canada, Slater

14. Canada, Smith
15. Canada, McMunn
16. Canada, Watson
17. Canada, Watson
18. Canada, McCaffery
19. Canada, Ramsay
20. Canada, Watson
21. Canada, Watson
22. Canada, Watson

THIRD PERIOD (15 minutes)

23. Canada, Watson
24. Canada, Ramsay
25. Canada, Munro
26. Canada, Watson
27. Canada, Munro
28. Canada, McMunn
29. Canada, McMunn
30. Canada, McCaffery

JANUARY 29 • Canada 22 Sweden 0

IN GOAL

Canada — Collett

Sweden — Ohlsson
(replaced for about five minutes
in the 2nd by Joseffson after
being hit by a shot)

FIRST PERIOD (15 minutes)

1. Canada, Munro
2. Canada, Smith
3. Canada, McCaffery
4. Canada, McCaffery
5. Canada, Ramsay

SECOND PERIOD (15 minutes)

6. Canada, Watson
7. Canada, Slater
8. Canada, McCaffery
9. Canada, Watson
10. Canada, Watson
11. Canada, Ramsay
12. Canada, Ramsay

THIRD PERIOD (15 minutes)

13. Canada, Watson
14. Canada, Watson
15. Canada, Ramsay
16. Canada, Smith
17. Canada, Smith
18. Canada, Watson
19. Canada, Smith
20. Canada, Munro
21. Canada, Munro
22. Canada, Ramsay

JANUARY 30 • Canada 33 Switzerland 0

FIRST PERIOD (15 minutes)

1. Canada, McCaffery
2. Canada, Watson
3. Canada., Watson
4. Canada, Watson
5. Canada, Ramsay
6. Canada, Munro
7. Canada, McCaffery
8. Canada, Watson

SECOND PERIOD (15 minutes)

9. Canada, Munro
10. Canada, Smith
11. Canada, Watson
12. Canada, Watson
13. Canada, Watson
14. Canada, McCaffery
15. Canada, Watson
16. Canada, McCaffery

17. Canada, Watson
18. Canada, Munro
19. Canada, Smith

THIRD PERIOD (15 minutes)

20. Canada, Smith
21. Canada, Smith
22. Canada, Watson
23. Canada, Watson
24. Canada, Munro
25. Canada, Watson
26. Canada, McCaffery
27. Canada, Smith
28. Canada, Watson
29. Canada, Ramsay
30. Canada, Munro
31. Canada, McCaffery
32. Canada, McCaffery
33. Canada, McCaffery

IN GOAL

Canada — Cameron
Switzerland — Savoie

FEBRUARY 1 • Canada 19 Great Britain 2

FIRST PERIOD (15 minutes)

1. Canada, McCaffery
2. Canada, Watson
3. Canada, Smith
4. Great Britain, C. Carruthers
5. Canada, McCaffery
6. Great Britain, C. Carruthers
7. Canada, McMunn
8. Canada, McCaffery

SECOND PERIOD (15 minutes)

9. Canada, Smith
10. Canada, Munro

11. Canada, Munro
12. Canada, Smith
13. Canada, Munro
14. Canada, McCaffery

THIRD PERIOD (15 minutes)

15. Canada, Smith
16. Canada, Munro
17. Canada, Watson
18. Canada, McCaffery
19. Canada, Watson
20. Canada, McMunn
21. Canada, Slater

IN GOAL

Canada — Collett
Great Britain — Carr-Harris

FEBRUARY 3 • Canada 6 United States 1

IN GOAL

Canada — Cameron
United States — Lacroix

FIRST PERIOD (20 minutes)

1. Canada, Watson • 5:00
 2. Canada, Watson • 8:00
 3. United States, Drury • 8:50
- penalties: Smith (Can) & Abel (US)*

SECOND PERIOD (20 minutes)

4. Canada, Smith • 11:00
 5. Canada, McCaffery • 12:00
 6. Canada, Munro • 16:20
- penalties: Watson (Can) & Abel (US), Smith (Can) & Abel (US)*

THIRD PERIOD (20 minutes)

7. Canada, Watson • 12:00
- penalties: Munro (Can) & Synnott (US)*

TEAM CANADA FINAL STATISTICS • 1924

	GP	G	A	P	Pim	
Harry Watson	5	36	—	36	2	
Bert McCaffery	5	20	—	20	—	
Hooley Smith	5	18	—	18	4	
Dunc Munro	5	16	—	16	2	
Beattie Ramsay	5	10	—	10	—	
Harold McMunn	5	5	—	5	—	
Sig Slater	5	4	—	4	—	
unknown	—	1	—	—	—	
IN GOAL	GP	W-L-T	Mins	GA	SO	Avg
Jack Cameron	3	3–0–0	150	1	2	0.40*
Ernie Collett	2	2–0–0	90	2	1	1.33*

* average converted for consistency based on 60-minute games