

GREEK OLYMPIC TEAM SEEKS AID

Marathoner Kyriakides Here to Solicit Funds to Buy Sports Gear for Countrymen

BY GERRY HERN

The lean looking man with the brief case under his arm needed no introduction but he seemed nervous as he came forward and said, "My name is Kyriakides. Does it happen you remember me?" Remember him? How could anyone forget him? That is anyone who saw him run the 26 miles from Hopkinton to Boston in April of 1946 with the flag of Greece sewed to his shirt and giving every bit of strength he had for the people of his sacked and pillaged country. Even those who had seen him in 1938 on the same Marathon course when, with his feet blistered and torn and his energy dissipated in a losing battle with the hills of Newton, he had taken a public transportation bus, couldn't forget this dark-eyed son of Greece.

No one in the history of the Marathon had taken a public bus before and none has since and what he did that day lifted him above the rest of the Marathoners in the world. He knew that even without the fare in his pocket, a Marathoner has the right to ride free on April 19. Who would demand a dime from such a footsore and weary traveler?

Stylios Kyriakides had not come to the sports department to discuss bus rides or winning the Marathon. He had come to ask for help—and not for himself. The help he wants is for the Greek Olympic committee.

"The committee needs money, oh, so very badly," he said. "Without help from our friends in America, Greece, the mother of the Olympic games, will not be in the 1948 Olympics. We need track shoes, rubber-soled shoes, pants and shirts. Our people are too poor to buy them. Our young men have no discus to throw for practice, not even javelins. Or any equipment for getting ready. We need \$50,000 and we have already been promised \$15,000 from Greek friends in Chicago and Detroit."

WOULDN'T ADMIT DISCUS PROWESS

It came to mind that the Greeks having no discus to practise with wasn't the worst twist of fate they could have. In fact the only thing track coaches have never forgiven the Greeks for is the invention of this flying plate and there were times in the past when coaches looked gleefully towards the day when a huge bonfire of discuses would light up the campuses of the world. Runners have been known to stand at the statue of Discobulus and vow oaths never to allow a stray discus to darken their door. We knew a young man who, having failed at every other track and field activity, took up the ignoble art of discus-throwing. He kept it a secret from his friends though and always alibied his college track letter by saying, "I was the assistant manager of the team."

Even if Stylios can't raise the funds for a few disci, which the scholarly guys say when they mean discuses, he still hopes to be able to raise enough money in this country to send 40 athletes to the 1948 games in London. Not just track athletes but all kinds. He will probably run the Marathon if he qualifies for the trip but he says, "I am 38 years old. That Korean boy is young, strong. Good runner. Keeps going. I do not expect to beat him or that Ted Vogel from here. Vogel is a very great runner. You will see for yourself two or three years from now. If he runs only a few races and rests a lot he will be world famous."

It was recalled that Stylios had shown a lot of early foot in the past Marathon but had been collared by quite a few of the other foot racers.

"Yes, I did well to finish 10th, but I am happy. I have won the race. I can never lose that. I will keep running. I train a little even now, but a few days ago in Detroit I pulled a leg muscle so I cannot train for a time."

He seemed to be getting around pretty well for a spavined old man of 38 and as he trotted around the corner a horse-player muttered, "If that guy runs next year I'm going to report him to the racing stewards. Why should we bet on a broken-down entry?"

He was assured that B.A.A. hadn't installed pari mutuel machines yet, but even with a spavin, Stylios would be the man to put the money on. A little thing like a bowed tendon wouldn't stop him.