

Document Citation

Title	'Tokyo Olympiad'
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Pyramid Films</i>
Date	
Type	distributor materials
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	4
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Tokyo Orimpikku (Tokyo Olympiad), Ichikawa, Kon, 1965

FIRST CLASS
PERMIT NO. 39113
LOS ANGELES, CALIF



“TOKYO OLYMPIAD”

*The Greatest
Documentary
Motion Picture
of Our Time*

"Tokyo Olympiad" at the 1965 Cannes Film Festival



Newsweek

But the most remarkable movie was "Tokyo Olympiad," which Kon Ichikawa directed, and which was shown out of competition. This 150-minute-long documentary, culled from 70 hours of color film shot by 164 photographers, was the great hit of the festival, and throughout its showing, in wave after wave of applause, the jaded audience acknowledged its mastery of nuance as Ichikawa focused on such things as the trembling lips of a runner crouched for the 100-meter dash. The slight, bespectacled director said: "I tried to seize the instant when a man defies his own limits, to rediscover with surprise the marvel of the human when he fights against himself in order to conquer."

Weekly VARIETY

It was a good idea to give the filming of the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo to a proven filmmaker, Kon Ichikawa. He gives it a balance, drama and realism to make this exciting in its own right as a documentary feature as well as an exemplary look at massive competing sports and an eye-catching spectacle.

It is easy to understand that 164 cameramen were used. They have obtained close, long and medium shots that lay bare the competitive dash, the human endeavor and the beauty as well as the underside of sweat, suffering and hurt.

First, the torch being lit in Greece, the origin of the games; then being carried by plane, train, car and on foot to Tokyo to light up the fire that will burn throughout the 18th Olympic Games.

Naturally, with so many events not all could be included in full, but the most important are there. The races, the hurdles, pole vault, etc. get fine visual transference to the screen with slow motion enhancing an understanding of the beauty, tension, anguish and physical exhaustion of the athletes.

A rapid-fire volleyball game between femme Japanese and Russian teams is a highly suspenseful affair as are the swimming events and others. Intercut audience reactions are also knowingly used, and seldom overdone. The last event is naturally the marathon race and it brings this admirable pic to a glowing climax.

This seems easily the best film ever made on the Olympics and eschews lyric falsifying of happenings for their own sake. The many cameras patiently record and the footage expertly edited into a picture of a peaceful, competitive worldwide event.

This could be a fine worldwide playoff and arty item of its film knowhow. *Mosk.*



Sports Illustrated

A triumph at Cannes

The army of critics, producers, directors and distributors that dutifully trooped into the Riviera Festival Palace one night last week could not have cared less. On the bill for the Cannes Film Festival was a color movie of the 1964 Olympics, *Tokyo Olympiad*, directed by Kon Ichikawa. The picture had opened earlier this month in Japan, and it immediately caused a controversy. Ichikawa had spent \$1 million in government funds using 164 cameramen to shoot 400,000 feet of film, but a cabinet minister scorned the finished two-hour movie as "too artistic." Indeed, a committee was set to work to produce an acceptable film from Ichikawa's footage.

But in Cannes the audience, which expected to be bored by sports, was deeply stirred. Critics emerged from the showing with such comments as "magnificent," "a masterpiece," "Homeric reportage" and "one of the finest pictures ever made." SI's man on the scene reports that some fans may feel that the camera does not linger long enough on their sport, but millions of people will be moved as never before. The volleyball final between the Japanese and Soviet women is a thriller, and the 100-meter dash is so exciting that audiences ooh and aah in perfect harmony with the spectators in the Tokyo stadium. The high point is the marathon. Never has the character of that race been shown so accurately, movingly or humorously. There are Chaplinesque scenes of runners gulping water as if at a frenzied cocktail party while the tireless Ethiopian Abebe Bikila grinds his way to victory.

Director Ichikawa said, "I've tried to grasp the solemnity of the moment when man defies his limits and to express the solitude of the athlete who, in order to win, struggles against himself. I wished people to rediscover with astonishment that wonder which is a human being."

The film will be shown in the U.S. this fall. Meanwhile, back in Japan, where the Cannes raves got scant notice, the committee is still plodding ahead with its own film version of the Olympics. After, all, there are two *Harlows*.





London
THE TIMES

Perhaps the most entertaining film of the whole festival to date has been the least pretentious and what could easily have been one of the duller, the official film of last year's Olympic Games directed by Kon Ichikawa. Since the heroic picture has been given once and for all on Leni Riefenstahl's prewar classic, Mr. Ichikawa has chosen instead to stress the human details, often very funny, and to take a resolutely antipoetic line. And yet somehow the result is often both moving and poetic; in particular the end of the marathon achieves a strange intensity which involves one willynilly in the human drama being played out. *Tokyo Olympiad*, after a week of deceptions, has been a happy reminder that there are still real film-makers in the world, and that they can still occasionally make films which can surprise as well as delight.

Saturday Review

But in the atmosphere at Cannes it shone like a jewel, and even though entered out of competition (documentaries aren't eligible for the main prize) there was no doubt in anyone's mind that the two-and-a-quarter-hour film represented the best camera work, the best editing, the best use of color, and the most inspired use of film of anything viewed. And, since it was so evidently impressive to the large audience in the Palais du Festival, distributors from various countries immediately began to enter their bids.

As a result, it can be assumed that many more people will have the opportunity to see this stirring film, simply because Cannes had cleared the way for wide distribution. Kon Ichikawa, a prominent Japanese director, was responsible for the over-all handling of the immense amount of film material gathered from the coverage by 104 cameras of the Olympic events.

But it was not the individual national victories that stirred one as much as the remarkable human glimpses caught by the cameras. In slow motion one saw a young woman's expression of ineffable peace as she crossed the line a winner, something spectators at the games could not possibly have witnessed. The Ethiopian winner of the marathon was viewed in his rhythmic majesty as he ran his competitors into the ground. A women's volleyball match between Japan and Russia was an explosive contest of speed and endurance. Virtually all techniques, in and out of the laboratory, were employed with great art in making this landmark motion picture.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

JIM MURRAY

You might not otherwise hear about it. It has no chance to get banned in Boston. It will never have to be advertised "Call this theatre for title." There is no part for Bette Davis. It's not even another version of "Harlow."

You'll never be able to hum the title tune. Neither will Tony Bennett. After all, how many things are there that rhyme with "Tokyo Olympiad"?

There's some shooting in it, but not the type to interest Scotland Yard or The Man From U.N.C.L.E. It has sex in it but not the kind you see in "Splendor in the Grass." It's not only safe to take the kids, it's advisable. Liz and Dick couldn't even play a cameo.

If ever a picture had hardly anything going for it, this is it. It's the most wholesome thing to hit the screen since Rin-Tin-Tin, as circumspect as twin beds. I have given some thought to a come-on slogan for this picture to rescue it from its mire of propriety and worthiness — something like "The Picture That Dares to Ask the Question — Who Won?" or "Only the Japanese Could Make This Picture!" or "The Picture They Don't Dare Show in Peking!"

A CLASSIC ON CELLULOID

It is, of course, the motion picture record of the XVIII Olympiad in Tokyo. It's magnificent. If you go expecting to see a track meet in color, you'll be disappointed. It's a panoply of human emotion, a dimension in sports photography, not to say cinematography, that is almost literally breath-taking in its beauty and poetry.

You don't have to give a damn how we did in the javelin, or who won the shot-put. Like to cry? Wait'll you see the little blonde American swimmer begin to sob as they roll up the flag and play the Star Spangled Banner and give her a gold medal. You never really heard the anthem before. Like to laugh? Wait'll you see the field for the marathon crash into each other at the start and knock each other all over the track for position. They only have 26 miles and 385 yards to go.

The Japanese turned loose 164 cameramen and a half-million feet of film on their Olympiad. Out of 70 hours of three-color film they have brought out a document of human endeavor that will give you a new insight into what one reviewer calls "the wonder that is a human being — the solemnity of the movement when he defies his limits."

TOKYO



OLYMPIAD

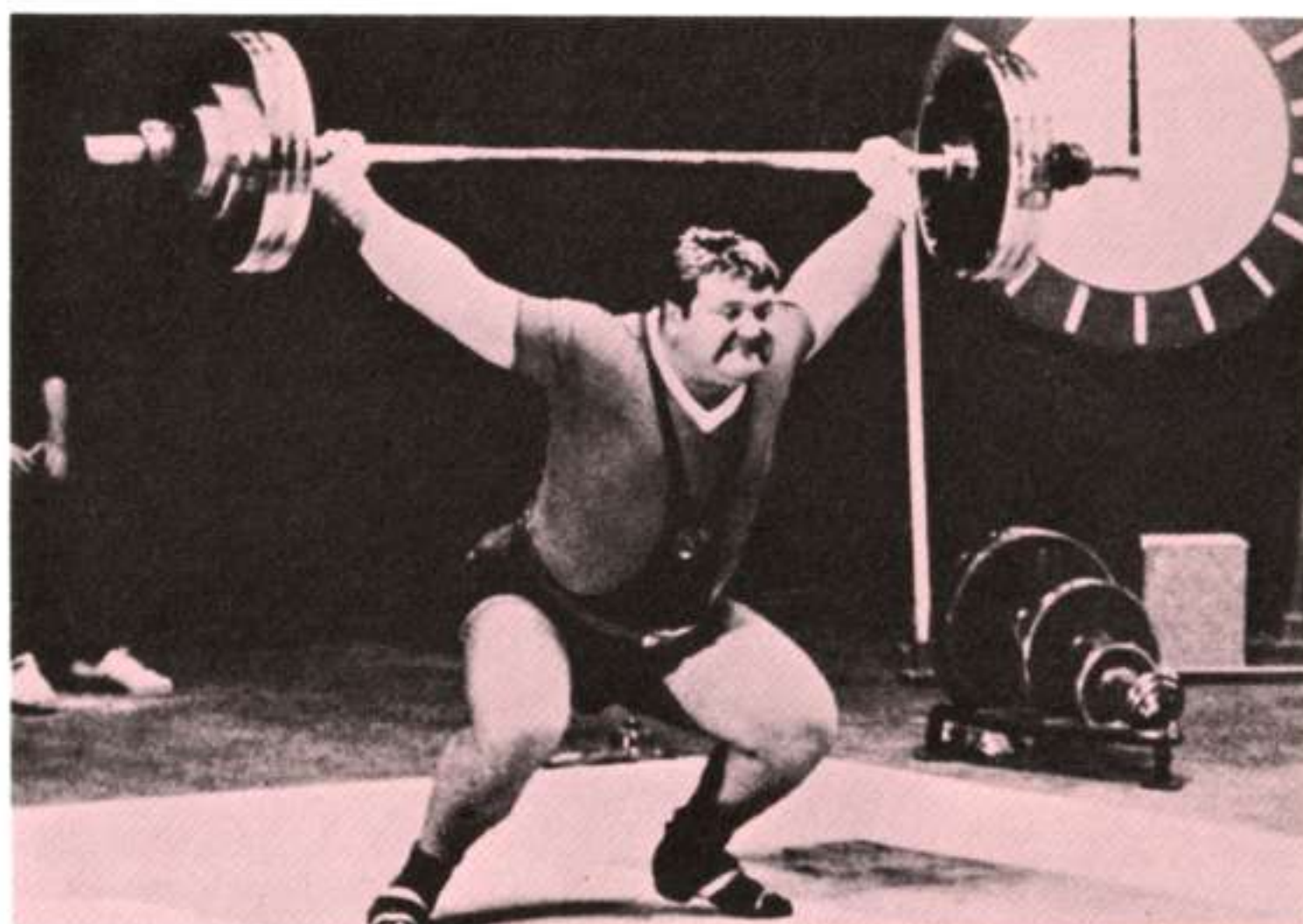
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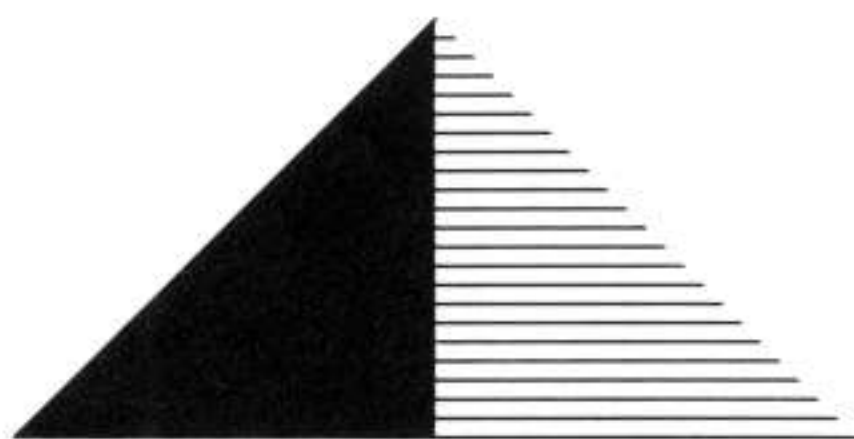
Minutes		Feet
2½	Torch Coming to Japan	92½
2½	Torch and Athletes Arriving in Japan	92½
4¾	Parade of Participants	175
5¼	Opening Ceremonies	194
2½	100 Meter Dash	92½
1	Fencing (Women)	37
1½	Weight Lifting	55
6	Gymnastics (Men and Women)	222
1½	100 Meter Backstroke (Women)	55
1	Shooting	37
½	Boating	18½
1	Horsemanship	37

REEL TWO — PART TWO running time — 31½ minutes

Minutes		Feet
5	Pole Vault	185
5	800 Meter Run (Women)	185
1	100 Meter Swimming Free Style	37
1	100 Meter Swimming Free Style (Women)	37
½	Javelin	18½
½	Shotput	18½
3	Shotput (Women)	111
3	Judo	111
4	Life in the Olympic Village	148
2¼	400 Meter Relay	83
1¼	Bicycling	46
½	Walking	18½
3	80 Meter Hurdles (Women)	111

REEL THREE — PART THREE running time — 31¾ minutes

Minutes		Feet
1	400 Meter Swimming Relay	37
1½	Long Jump	46
3½	Hammer Toss	129½
2½	Volley Ball (Women)	92½
4½	10,000 Meter Run	166
1½	High Jump (Women)	55
2¼	Triple Jump	83
10¼	Marathon	379
3	Closing Ceremonies	111



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