

George Orton



THE FIRST CANADIAN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST

George Washington Orton was born in Strathroy, Ontario in 1873. His father, Oliver Orton, was a carriage maker in Strathroy. George was crippled after a childhood accident and discovered his gift for athleticism during rehabilitation. At the University of Toronto George set record times for his completion of the mile, half-mile and quarter-mile races and set the Canadian mile record of 4:21.8 which lasted for 30 years. Orton entered the University of Pennsylvania to study romance languages in 1893, earning an MA and a PhD while captain of the track and field team.

In 1900 George competed at the Paris Olympics as a member of the Pennsylvania track team. George won a bronze medal in the 400 metre men's hurdles and a gold medal in the 3000 metre steeplechase, completing both events in the same day. With these victories George became the first Canadian medalist at the Olympic Games.

In addition to his expertise as a track athlete, George excelled at hockey, cricket and soccer. He played on the University of Toronto soccer team, edited *Spalding's Official College Soccer Foot Ball Guide* in 1916, and played for Toronto and Philadelphia's all-star teams in 1891 and 1910, respectively.

George authored athletic guides and books for boys, and established a number of summer camps in the United States. He continued competing athletically into middle age and eventually retired to New Hampshire, where he passed away in 1958 at the age of 85.



CITIUS ALTIUS FORTIUS

MUSEUM
STRATHROY-CARADOC

PHOTOS:

Top: Orton in his track uniform, c. 1893
Bottom: The University of Toronto Gymnasium Committee, 1891 (Orton: front row, 4th from left)

QUOTE:

"Citius, Altius, Fortius" is the Olympic motto, which translates from Latin to "Faster, Higher, Stronger"

Photos courtesy of the University of Toronto Sports Hall of Fame