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Notes on Sport

WHO WAS THE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR?

A Survey Of Last Season

Although New Zealand's past athletic season opened with the war, and was affected by the war, the full effect will not be noticed until summer comes again. Many of the athletes mentioned in this survey will be absent from the track next season; many will be away from New Zealand. Here then, is an evaluation of the pre-war vintage:

SOME years may pass before New Zealand has a season of athletics as promising as the one just past. When war came New Zealand athletes were reaching a peak period which might well have produced something really interesting. Although all the promise was not fulfilled, the season left behind it many performances which will be worth looking back upon when the sports ground once again replaces the military camp as a training centre. This article attempts to assess the record of the season.

Most promising of all our athletes were the milers. Pat Boot was fining down his times. Billy Pullar was still running strongly. Dickison was just beginning to prove himself a distance runner. Matthews, primarily a three-miler, could still be relied upon to keep the lap times down in a mile. Theo. Allen was working himself into place with the first two or three and might have done better still. Wade, of Auckland, made Boot hurry in the Centennial mile.

Masterton Did Its Best

And there were many others. Out of this fine crop something of note *must* have grown. Masterton Club did its best to produce it by staging the attempt on the world four-mile relay record. Although it failed, this race might well have provided the men with the necessary work-out before the championships, but in the national championships the mile field was not adequately represented and in the Centennial Mile it struggled through mud. Injuries, sickness, military service, reduced the representation of old-hands to Pullar. Dickison, who might have speeded the race, co-operated with Pullar in hanging back for so long that the race in the end developed into

a four-forty final lap which Pullar covered in 58.6 seconds. In the first two laps they had run as if in a marathon.

Promise Not Fulfilled

Out of this crop of mile runners might have come the athlete of the season. As it happened, the promise was not fulfilled. There were several fine in-



W. A. C. PULLAR

dividual efforts, but nothing especially above the average of the last few seasons, and nothing of the sort that might have been produced had those men been able to work in concert on a good track. It would be pleasant to think of Boot as the athlete of the year. Undoubtedly he could have been. His time in the Centennial Mile deserves the highest admiration. But he was just getting into the peak of his training when he entered camp. This must have upset his whole training programme. He still ran well, but he had no opportunities to run better. He retained his undoubted primacy in the half-mile, but it was in the mile that he would have found the opposition to make the sort

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