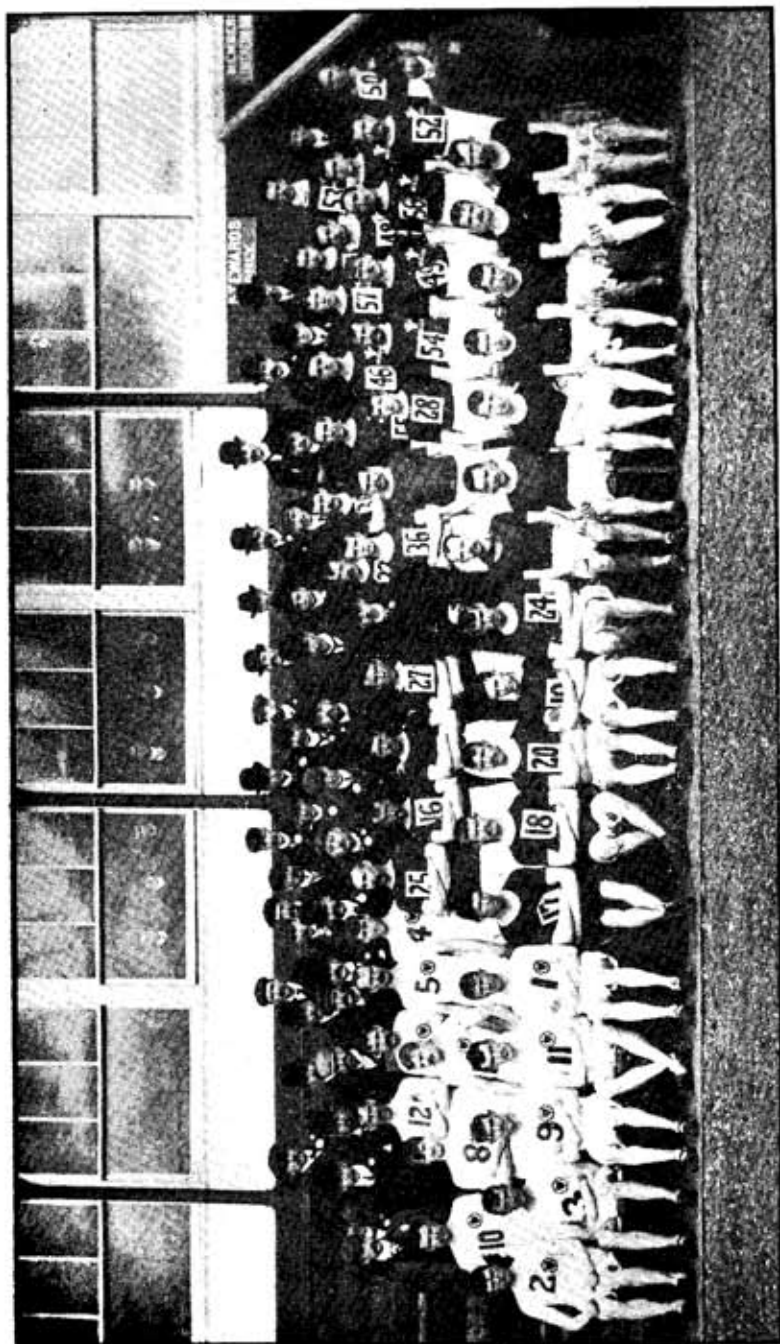




COMPETITORS AND OFFICIALS AT THE INAUGURAL INTERNATIONAL CONTEST AT HAMILTON RACECOURSE, 1903.

In 1902, arrangements had been made for an English team to meet an Irish team at the Cork Exhibition, but much to the disappointment of the athletes on either side of the Irish Sea, the project fell through.

1903

Mr. F. Liddington Johns, a prominent Welsh athletic legislator, in conjunction with Mr. R. A. Pritchard, the Hon. Secretary of the Welsh C.C.A., communicated with Mr. H. Dudley Fletcher, the Hon. Secretary of the Irish Athletic Association, and these enthusiasts planned the first International cross-country race; Scotland readily adopted the idea, but England at first held aloof, suggesting that their own National Championship was open to all amateur teams and could be used as a medium for settling international rivalry. It is interesting to quote the following extract from a letter received by Mr. J. H. Hardwick, the Organising Secretary of the English team, from Mr. Harry Barclay, an official of the Southern Counties Cross-Country Association (England):—

"I am of the opinion that if the National Cross-Country Union sends a team the expenses should be borne by the Union and naturally any profit accruing be paid them. I must say I fail to see why a 'special fund' should be raised, and I, for one, on the Southern Committee, should very strenuously oppose any outside subscription and refuse to subscribe towards any Special Fund, more especially as I do not see the good to be gained by such a race. It will be almost as much a farce as far as the first team is concerned, as our unfortunate trial with France a few years ago."

The other three countries (Ireland, Scotland and Wales) persevered with their plans and decided that the first International cross-country race should be held in Hamilton Park, Scotland, in 1903; eventually England agreed to complete the quartette, providing the race was postponed a week in order that Alfred Shrubbs—who was running in Paris on the original date—would be able to compete. The distance was eight miles over a two-mile lap. England had a comfortable win, placing the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, to score 25 points, the individual winner being Alfred Shrubbs in 46 mins. 22.6 secs.; Ireland was second with 78 points; Scotland third, 107 points, and Wales fourth, 140 points. At the dinner which followed the race, that keen Scottish sportsman, Mr. Fred A. Lumley, of Edinburgh, offered to present a trophy for annual competition, and thus the coveted Lumley Shield came into being. The race was so successful, the friendships formed so attractive that it was at once realised the race had come to stay. Discussions on the train journey between Hamilton Park and Glasgow, led to an understanding to promote a similar race the following year at Haydock Park, near Warrington, in Lancashire. It was arranged that three representatives from each country should meet on the morning of the contest to draft rules and regulations for the constitution of the International Cross-Country Union.