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The Matchless Six: The Story of Canada's First Women's Olympic Team

Ron Hotchkiss

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It is July 1928, and Canada's first women's Olympic team — "The Matchless Six" — is heading to Amsterdam, the site of the ninth Olympiad of the modern era. Canada's finest female track-and-field athletes, having survived rigorous training and the grueling selection process at the Olympic Trials, were determined to take their big talent and big dreams to the top. Meet Jane Bell, Myrtle Cook, Bobbie Rosenfeld, and Ethel Smith, the "Flying Four" who comprised Canada's first relay team; Ethel Catherwood, the "Saskatoon Lily," who became the champion high-jumper and the most photographed female athlete at the Olympic Games; and Jean Thompson, the youngest member of the team at seventeen, who became one of the world's most outstanding middle-distance runners. It was an impressive achievement:

"A team of six from Canada, a country of less than ten million, competed against 121 athletes from 21 countries, whose total population was 300 million." Impressive indeed.

For many years, historian Ron Hotchkiss has been fascinated by "The Matchless Six," the conquering heroines who took Amsterdam by storm. His extensive research has led to this riveting account, full of black-and-white archival photographs, of the events leading up to and following that fateful summer in the history of Canadian sport.

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