WINTER SPORTS AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES ??
DES SPORTS D'HIVER AUX JEUX OLYMPIQUES ??

In which type of sports were the first official world championships held? It was the skaters who blazed the trail for all other types of sports by carrying out world and European championships. This pioneer activity contributed considerably to skating being included in the list of desirable Olympic contests already at the historic congress of June 23, 1894, in Paris, at which the reintroduction of the Olympic Games was voted unanimously.

Skating was at that time the only type of winter sports which already arranged big international competitions. The International Skating Union, known to experts simply as ISU, had been founded in 1892 in Scheveningen. But as early as 1889, the first world speed skating championships had been held, 1891 the first European speed skating championships, and 1892 the first European figure skating championships. Thus skating is the winter sport with by far the longest tradition of international contests.

It is not clear, however, what kind of skating did Coubertin think of when he included skating: what it figure or speed skating? or both? Coubertin, at that time thought of having skating part of the summer games.

Coubertin produced a label immediately after the Paris congress to seal the mail of the newly-constituted International Olympic Committee. He was the pioneer of Olympic Para philately.