

RSFSR International Sports Tournament of 1920, Jeton for Winning a First Prize.

Copper, paint; 51.7 x 31.8 mm. Shows an athlete with red star above his head and stylized letters "RSFSR" (for Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic") under his feet. The writing in the scroll along the top edge is "July 1920". The semicircular line of writing in the lower portion of the center field is "International Tournament". On the reverse in its lower part is stamped maker mark The engraved lettering states that the award was given for winning the 1st prize, probably in a combined event in track and field, with further abbreviations for specific results (which we couldn't decipher).

In very fine condition. The sculptured details including the discus thrower and scrolls are amazingly well preserved, especially considering the age of this piece. Shows no visible scratches, dings or edge knocks. The reverse is similarly well preserved. Most of the paint on the star has worn off but some of it still remains along the edges. The eyelet is slightly twisted but still reliably attached.

The name Vseobuch is the Russian Newspeak acronym for Total Training. This organization was created by the Bolsheviks in as early as the beginning of 1918 with the explicit purpose of the basic military training of the proletariat. Part of this was of course physical fitness; therefore Vseobuch was the prime mover in organizing the grand "sporting festivities" regularly held in Moscow. The first such event took place on the first anniversary of the organization in May 1919 and it was presided over by Lenin himself (he was spotted wearing the first badge issued by the organization for the occasion). The 1920 Tournament was apparently the second big sports festival of this nature. Its "International" character was clearly to reflect the newly found confidence of the Bolshevik government now trying not only to woo the masses domestically but also to spread its influence and propaganda abroad.

This jeton is a rare representative of the dawn of the Soviet era in medallic art, a truly striking and unique piece!

/Vasiliy Ilyinskiy, "Sports Souvenirs", C. 1979 Moscow, Progress publishing house, pp.15, 16/.

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