

Olympic



games

History of the Olympic Games



The Olympic Games are an international sports festival that began in ancient Greece. The original Greek games took place every fourth year for several hundred years, until they were brought to an end in the early Christian era.

The earliest record of the Olympic Games goes back to 776 BC, but historians think that the Games began well before then. The ancient Games were held in honour of Zeus [zju:s], the most important god for ancient Greeks.

According to the earliest records, only one athletic event was held in the ancient Olympics – a footrace of about 183 metres, or the length of the stadium. A cook, Coroibus of Elis was the first recorded winner. Only men were allowed to compete or watch the games.

When the powerful, warlike Spartans began to compete, they changed the programme of the Games.

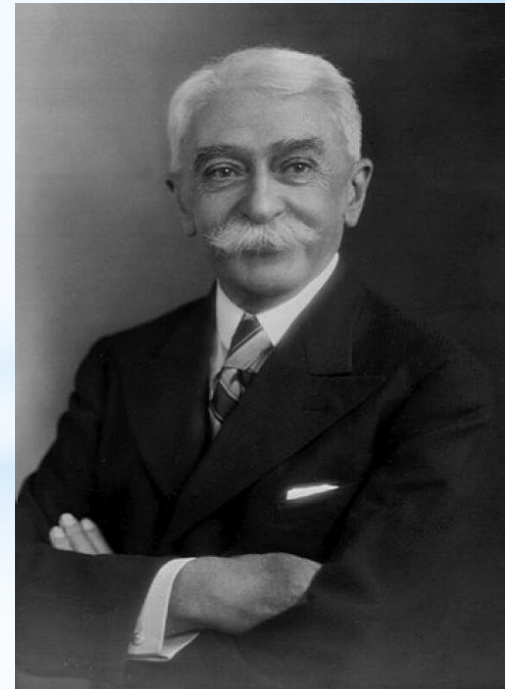
The 18th Olympics already included wrestling and pentathlon (пятиборье), and later Games – chariot races (гонки на колесницах) and other sports. The winners of the Games were highly praised and honoured for their results. In 394 AD the Games were officially ended by the Roman emperor Theodosius, who felt that they had pagan meaning.



PIERRE DE COUBERTIN

Pierre de Coubertin, a young French nobleman, had an idea to bring the Olympic Games back to life. With the help of the people who supported him he managed to organize the first modern Olympic Games in 1896.

Baron de Coubertin had planned to hold the Olympic Games in France, but the representatives from the nine countries that supported his idea decided that Greece was the right place to host the first Olympic Games.



The Olympic Games were renewed in 1896, and since then they have been staged every fourth year, except during World War I and World War II.

Perhaps the main difference between the ancient and modern Olympics is that for the ancient Greeks the Games were a way of saluting their gods, when the modern Games are a manner of saluting the athletic talents of people of all nations.



The Olympic Motto

In 1921, Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games, borrowed a Latin phrase from his friend, Father Henri Didon, for the Olympic motto:



Citius, Altius, Fortius
("Faster, Higher, Stronger").

The Olympic Creed



Pierre de Coubertin got the idea for this phrase from a speech given by Bishop Ethelbert Talbot at a service for Olympic champions during the 1908 Olympic Games. The Olympic Creed reads: *"The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part."*

The Official Olympic Flag

Created by Pierre de Coubertin in 1914, the Olympic flag contains five interconnected rings on a white background. The five rings symbolize the five significant continents and are interconnected to symbolize the friendship.

The Olympic flag was first flown during the 1920 Olympic Games.



The Olympic Flame



The Olympic flame is a practice continued from the ancient Olympic Games. In Olympia (Greece), a flame was ignited by the sun and then kept burning until the closing of the Olympic Games.

The Olympic flame is lit at the ancient site of Olympia by women wearing ancient-style robes and using a curved mirror and the sun.

The Olympic Torch is then passed from runner to runner from the ancient site of Olympia to the Olympic stadium in the hosting city. The flame is then kept alight until the Games have concluded.



Opening Ceremony



The First Opening Ceremonies

The first opening ceremonies were held during the 1908 Olympic Games in London.

Opening Ceremony Procession Order

During the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, the procession of athletes is always led by the Greek team, followed by all the other teams in alphabetical order (in the language of the hosting country), except for the last team which is always the team of the hosting country.

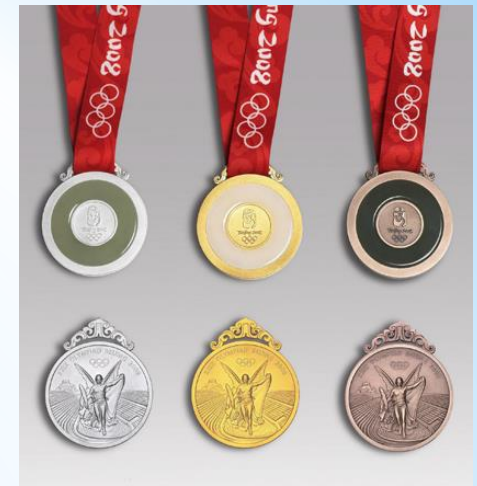




The Medals

The last Olympic gold medals that were made entirely out of gold were awarded in 1912.

The Olympic medals are designed especially for each individual Olympic Games by the host city's organizing committee. Each medal must be at least three millimeters thick and 60 millimeters in diameter. Also, the gold and silver Olympic medals must be made out of 92.5 percent silver, with the gold medal covered in six grams of gold.



Winter Games Begun



The winter Olympic Games were first held in 1924, beginning a tradition of holding them a few months earlier and in a different city than the summer Olympic Games. Beginning in 1994, the winter Olympic Games were held in completely different years (two years apart) than the summer Games.

Olympics in Russia

Russia hosted Olympic games
in *Moscow, 1980*,
and winter Olympics
in *Sochi, 2014*.

