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## The Olympic Games - The History Of The Olympic Games

By Lucy Bartlett

Olympics or The Olympic Games is a multi-sports event which takes place once in four years and comprises of winter and summer games. It is an international event and almost all the countries in the globe participate in the games.

The first Olympic game was held in the year 776 BC in Olympia, Greece. The games were held in Greece till 393 AD. Subsequently in 1896, Pierre Fredy, Baron de Coubertin, a French nobleman revived the games which heralded the beginning of the Modern Olympic Games.

Starting from 1896, Games of the Olympiad or The Summer Olympics were held once in four years except during the World War 1 and 2.

The Olympic Winter Games, a special edition of winter sports was first held in 1924. In the beginning, both summer and winter editions of The Olympic Games were held simultaneously. >From 1944 onwards the summer and winter games have been held two years apart.

The origin of the ancient Olympic Games was surrounded by many legends. The ancient Greek concept of Olympic Truce is one such legend associated with The Olympic Games. The Olympic Games reached their zenith during fifth and sixth century BC.

The Olympic Games were held in honour of Pelops a mythical king and divine hero of the Greeks. Poems were written and statues were created immortalizing the winners of the events in the Olympic Games. Milo of Croton, a wrestler in the sixth century BC, was the only victorious athlete in six Olympic Games.

After the Romans captured power in Greece, there was a gradual decline in the importance of the Olympic Games. The Emperor Theodosius banned the Olympic Games in 393 CE citing the games as a Pagan Festival not suitable for the Christian Ethics.

Even though the Greek ceremonies included the bearing of a torch as its integral aspect, it was not included in the ancient Olympic Games. This was introduced later as a part of the modern Olympic

Games.

In the 2004 Summer Olympics held in Athens, nearly 11,100 contestants from 202 countries participated in various events whereas there were only 245 participants from 15 nations in the 1896 edition of the Olympic Games. The Olympic Games has become one of the biggest events for the media. In the Sydney Olympics held in 2000, more than 16,000 journalists presented the events in various media format while 3.8 billion people watched the games on Television.

Munich Olympics held in 1972 saw the first act of terrorism in the .Olympic Games. Subsequently the Summer Olympics held in Atlanta, Georgia in 1996, and the Winter Olympics held in Salt Lake City, Utah in 2002 were also subjected to acts of terrorism.

For the Olympic Games scheduled to take place in London in 2012, 26 sports are included.

Lucy Bartlett is a proud contributing author. Find more articles at

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### **The Politics Behind Olympics Games**

**By Jonathon Hardcastle**

Among the Greeks, fitness competitions and games were nationalistic in spirit; states were said to have been prouder of Olympic victories than of battles won. Women, foreigners, slaves, and dishonored persons were forbidden to compete. Contestants were required to train faithfully for 10 months before the games and had to take an oath that they had fulfilled the training requirements before participating. At first, the Olympic Games were confined to running, but over time new events were added. The winners of the Olympics were crowned with chaplets of wild olive, and in their home city–states male champions were also awarded valuable gifts and privileges.

As a visible focus of world energies, the Olympic Games have been prey to many factors that have thwarted their ideals of world co–operation and athletic excellence. Like in ancient Greece, nationalistic fervour has fostered intense rivalries that have at times threatened the survival of the games. Although officially only individuals are able to win Olympic medals, nations routinely assign political significance

## The Olympic Games – The History Of The Olympic Games

to the feats of their citizens and teams. For example, between 1952 and 1988 rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, rooted in mutual political antagonism, resulted in each boycotting games hosted by the other (Moscow, 1980; Los Angeles, 1984).

Politics has influenced the Olympic Games in other ways, from the propaganda of the Nazis in Berlin (1936) to pressures leading to the exclusion of white-ruled Rhodesia from the Munich games (1972). At Munich, nine Israeli athletes were kidnapped and murdered by Palestinian terrorists.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), which sets and enforces Olympic policy, has struggled with the licensing and commercialisation of the games, the need to schedule events to accommodate television networks, and the monitoring of athletes who seek illegal competitive advantage, often through the use of performance-enhancing drugs. In 1998 a scandal erupted with revelations that bribery and favouritism had played a role in the awarding of the 2002 Winter Games to Salt Lake City, Utah, and in the selection of some earlier venues.

But, regardless of the Olympic Games tensions, it is historically proven that sports have acted as a liaison between nations and have greatly contributed to their evolution. Beginning with the sociological, psychological and physiological aspects of the human nature, sports have gained the praise of people worldwide, as they have contributed to their well being. Group-oriented, since in order to be a winner one has to compete, sport brings people closer together and generates team-spirit along with mind and physical awareness. But, whether or not the contemporary Olympic Games act as an opportunity for nations to learn from one another and cooperate or are just another opportunity for people to engage in competitive and hostile rivalries, only historians of the future will be able to judge with some certainty.

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