

Olympic Games

The Olympic Games is the greatest international sport event in the world, in which thousands of athletes compete in different types of sports. The Olympic idea means friendship, fraternity and cooperation among the people of the world.

The original Olympic Games began in ancient Greece in 776 B.C. These games were part of a festival held every fourth year in honor of God Zeus in the town called Olympia. It was a great athletic festival, including competitions in wrestling, foot racing and chariot racing, rowing and others.

The Olympic Games were very important for ancient world. In the period of Games all wars were stopped. The Games were accompanied by arts festivals. Poets recited their poems, singers sang hymns — all this in honor of God Zeus and the sacred Games.

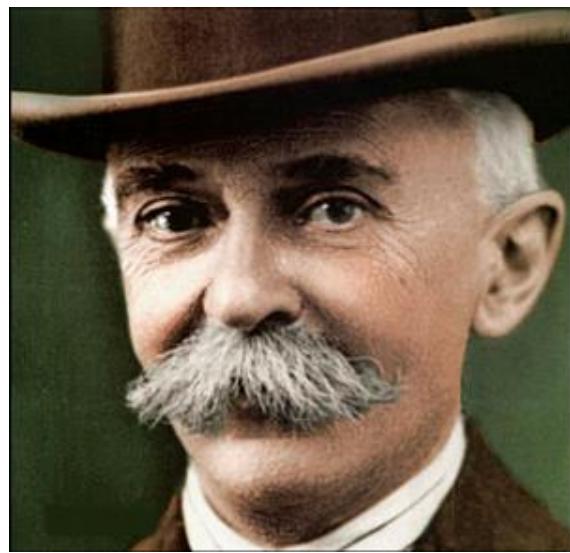
All athletes competed naked. The modern word "gymnastics" originates from the Greek word "gymos" that means "naked".

Only men could take part in the Olympic Games. Greek women were forbidden not only to participate but also to watch the Games. But there existed Games for women named Gerai (called after goddess Gera).

The Olympic Games took place from the 8th century BC till the 4th century AD. In 394 AD the Roman Emperor Theodosius banned the Olympic Games because he decided that these competitions are, in essence, pagan festival.



In the late 19th century, Baron Pierre de Coubertin decided to revive the Olympic Games. For this purpose, he founded the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894, and two years later, in 1896 the modern summer Olympic Games were established in Athens.



The Games are currently held every two years, with Summer and Winter Olympic Games alternating. The evolution of the Olympic Movement during the 20th century forced the IOC to adapt the Games to the world's changing social circumstances. Some of these adjustments included the creation of the Winter Games for ice and snow sports, the Paralympic Games for athletes with physical disabilities, and the Youth Olympic Games for teenage athletes.

The Olympic motto is "Citius, Altius, Fortius", which is Latin for "Swifter, Higher, Stronger". The motto was proposed by Pierre de Coubertin and was introduced in 1924 at the Olympic Games in Paris.

A more informal but well known motto, also introduced by De Coubertin, is "The most important thing is not to win but to take part!"

The symbol of the Olympic Games is composed of five interlocking rings, colored blue, yellow, black, green, and red on a white field. This was originally designed in 1912 by Baron Pierre de Coubertin. These five rings represent the five continents of the world: America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia.

