

SCHOTT'S OLYMPIC MISCELLANY

MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES READY RECKONER

Season	Host city	Year	Sports	Male athletes	Female athletes	No. of nations	Flame lit by	GB golds	GB silvers	GB bronzes	Most golds
S	Athens	1896	9	241	0	14	n/a	2	3	2	11 USA
S	Paris	1900	18	975	22	24	n/a	15	6	9	25 FRA
S	St Louis	1904	17	639	6	12	n/a	1	1	0	77 USA
S	London	1908	22	1971	37	22	n/a	56	51	38	56 GBR
S	Stockholm	1912	14	2359	48	28	n/a	10	15	16	25 USA
S	Antwerp	1920	22	2561	65	29	n/a	16	15	13	41 USA
S	Paris	1924	17	2954	135	44	n/a	9	13	12	45 USA
W	Chamonix	1924	6	247	11	16	n/a	1	1	2	4 NOR
S	Amsterdam	1928	14	2606	277	46	HRH Prince Hendrik	3	10	7	22 USA
W	St. Moritz	1928	4	438	26	25	n/a	0	0	1	6 NOR
S	Los Angeles	1932	14	1206	126	37	n/a	4	7	5	41 USA
W	Lake Placid	1932	4	231	21	17	n/a	0	0	0	6 USA
S	Berlin	1936	19	3632	331	49	Fritz Schilgen	4	7	3	33 GER
W	Garmisch-Partenkirchen	1936	4	566	80	28	n/a	1	1	1	7 NOR
S	London	1948	17	3714	390	59	John Mark	3	14	6	38 USA
W	St Moritz	1948	4	592	77	28	n/a	0	0	2	4 NOR
S	Helsinki	1952	17	4436	519	69	Nurmi & Kolehmainen	1	2	8	40 USA
W	Oslo	1952	4	585	109	30	Eigil Nansen	1	0	0	7 NOR
S	Melbourne	1956	17	2938	376	72	Ron Clarke	6	7	11	37 USSR
W	Cortina d'Ampezzo	1956	4	687	134	32	Guido Caroli	0	0	0	7 USSR
S	Rome	1960	17	4727	611	83	Giancarlo Peris	2	6	12	43 USSR
W	Squaw Valley	1960	4	521	144	30	Ken Henry	0	0	0	7 USSR
S	Tokyo	1964	19	4473	678	93	Yoshinori Sakai	4	12	2	36 USA
W	Innsbruck	1964	6	892	199	36	Joseph Rieder	1	0	0	11 USSR
S	Mexico City	1968	20	4735	781	112	Norma Enriqueta Basilio de Sotelo	5	5	3	45 USA
W	Grenoble	1968	6	947	211	37	Alain Calmat	0	0	0	6 NOR
S	Munich	1972	23	6075	1059	121	Günter Zahn	4	5	9	50 USSR
W	Sapporo	1972	6	801	205	35	Hideki Takada	0	0	0	8 USSR
S	Montreal	1976	21	4824	1260	92	Préfontaine & Henderson	3	5	5	49 USSR
W	Innsbruck	1976	6	892	231	37	Josef Feistmantl	1	0	0	13 USSR
S	Moscow	1980	21	4064	1115	80	Sergei Belov	5	7	9	80 USSR
W	Lake Placid	1980	6	840	232	37	Dr Charles Morgan Kerr	1	0	0	10 USSR
S	Los Angeles	1984	23	5263	1566	140	Rafer Johnson	5	11	21	83 USA
W	Sarajevo	1984	6	998	274	49	Sandra Durbavcic	1	0	0	9 GDR
S	Seoul	1988	25	6197	2194	159	Chong Son-man, &c.	5	10	9	55 USSR
W	Calgary	1988	6	1122	301	57	Robyn Perry (a schoolgirl)	0	0	0	11 USSR
S	Barcelona	1992	28	6652	2704	169	Antonio Rebollo	5	3	12	45 (Ex-USSR)
W	Albertville	1992	7	1313	488	64	Michel Platini	0	0	0	10 GER
W	Lillehammer	1994	6	1215	522	67	Prince Haakon	0	0	2	11 RUS
S	Atlanta	1996	26	6806	3512	197	Muhammad Ali	1	8	6	44 USA
W	Nagano	1998	7	1389	787	72	Midori Ito	0	0	1	12 GER
S	Sydney	2000	28	6582	4069	199	Cathy Freeman	11	10	7	40 USA
W	Salt Lake City	2002	7	1513	886	77	The US ice hockey team	1	0	1	13 NOR

SWIFTER, HIGHER, STRONGER

Men's	1900	1920	1960	1980	1992	2000
100 metres	11-0s	10-8s	10-3s	10-2s	9-9s	9-8s
800 metres	2m01s	1m53s	1m46s	1m45s	1m43s	1m45s
Marathon	2h59m	2h32m	2h15m	2h11m	2h13m	2h10m
Long Jump	7-185m	7-15m	8-12m	8-54m	8-67m	8-55m
Discus	36-04m	44-68m	59-18m	66-64m	65-12m	69-30m
Women	1900	1920	1960	1980	1992	2000
100 metres	n/a	n/a	11-0s	11-0s	10-8s	10-7s
800 metres	n/a	n/a	2m4s	1m53s	1m55s	1m56s
Long jump	n/a	n/a	6-37m	7-06m	7-14m	6-99m
Discus	n/a	n/a	55-10m	69-96m	70-06m	68-40m

CREED, MOTTO, OATH

Although usually attributed to Pierre de Coubertin (1863–1937), the first President of the International Olympic Committee, it seems that the Olympic creed was inspired by a sermon given in St Paul's Cathedral by Ethelbert Talbot, the Bishop of Central Pennsylvania, on July 19, 1908:

The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.

De Coubertin is also responsible for instituting the Olympic motto:

citius · altius · fortius
swifter · higher · stronger

This time de Coubertin borrowed from the French Dominican preacher Father Henri Didon (1840–1900) over whose door the motto was carved. The Olympic Oath, instituted in 1920 and updated in 2000, is taken on behalf of all athletes by a member of the host team. While holding a corner of his national flag, the athlete declaims from the rostrum, the following:

In the name of all the competitors, I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, committing ourselves to a sport without doping and without drugs, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams.

OLYMPICS & POLITICS

According to Avery Brundage, former IOC President, "the Olympic movement is a 20th-century religion where there is no injustice of caste, of race of family, of wealth". However, only four countries have competed at every summer Olympics – Australia, Greece, Great Britain and Switzerland.

1948 London · The first Olympics since the war and Europe was still recovering from the devastation. Food shortages meant that each country was asked to bring food for its own athletes. Neither Japan nor Germany was invited.

1952 Helsinki · USSR rejoined the Games, having absented itself since 1912 due to the capitalist and bourgeois nature of the Games. A cold-war atmosphere dominated the games as the Soviets set up a rival Olympic village for Eastern Bloc countries.

1964 Tokyo · South Africa was banned by the IOC from taking part due to its oppressive apartheid regime. This ban lasted until 1992.

1968 Mexico City · 10 days before the Olympics began, students protesting against the government were surrounded by the army who opened fire, killing 267 and injuring more than 1,000. During the Games, American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos were expelled for raising their fists in a "black power" salute on the winners' podium.

1972 Munich · 11 Israeli athletes were taken hostage by Palestinian terrorists "Black September", to protest against the holding of 234 Palestinian prisoners in Israel. The terrorists murdered two of their captives, then, as the result of a bungled rescue attempt by the authorities, the remaining nine captives were killed alongside three of their captors.

1976 Montreal · 26 African countries boycotted the Games in response to New Zealand's inclusion. Earlier that year the Kiwis had undertaken a three-month rugby tour of segregated South Africa, but the IOC refused to ban them.

1980 Moscow · The biggest boycott in Olympic history blighted the Games when 62 countries including USA, West Germany and Japan refused to attend in protest at the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan. The USSR won 195 medals, but allegations of cheating tainted this astonishing result.

1984 Los Angeles · 14 countries, including the USSR, boycotted the Games in what was widely seen as revenge for the Moscow Games four years earlier. Ironically, China chose this year to return to the Games after a 32-year absence.

1988 Seoul · After failing to be recognised as co-host of the Games, North Korea (which was still technically at war with the South) boycotted the event, taking Cuba and Ethiopia with it.

1992 Barcelona · A rare Olympic games with no boycotts. The Soviet Union had broken up, and the new Russian republics competed under one banner. The Berlin Wall had been torn down – so East and West Germany competed together as a united country. And South Africa returned to the Games after the end of apartheid and 32 years of sporting isolation.

MONTREAL'S DEBT

In 1973, the Mayor of Montreal Jean Drapeau declared that "the Olympics can no more have a deficit than a man can have a baby!" He came to regret this analogy when the Montreal Games amassed a staggering \$1 billion deficit. Inflation, corruption, bad planning and spiralling costs meant that, despite all promises to the contrary, the citizens of Quebec ended up footing the bill. There are hopes that the debt will have been cleared by 2006.

THE OLYMPIC HYMN

The Olympic Hymn was composed by Spirou Samara in 1896, the words were added later by the celebrated Greek poet Costis Palamas. The Hymn was officially adopted by the IOC in 1957, and it is now played at every opening ceremony as the Olympic flag is raised.

*Immortal spirit of antiquity,
Father of the true, beautiful and good,
Descend, appear, shed over us thy light
Upon this ground and under this sky
Which has first witnessed the unperishable fame.*

*Give life and animation to those noble games!
Throw wreaths of fadeless flowers to the victors
In the race and in the strife!
Create in our breasts, hearts of steel!*

*In thy light, plains, mountains and seas
Shine in a roseate hue and form a vast temple
To which all nations throng to adore thee,
Oh immortal spirit of antiquity!*

MARATHON

In 490BC, Pheidippides, a Greek soldier, ran from Marathon to Athens, a distance of approximately 25 miles, to tell the Athenians the good news that the Persians had been defeated in battle. After imparting this news, Pheidippides dropped dead. At the first modern Olympic Games in Athens 1896, a race was held of approximately the same length to commemorate Pheidippides' achievement, thus the marathon was born. At the first few modern Olympics, the marathon was run over a distance of 26 miles. At the "suggestion" of Queen Alexandra (consort to Edward VII) the marathon at the 1908 London Olympics was extended by 385 yards so that it started on the lawn of Windsor Castle on its way to the Olympic stadium in White City. This allowed Princess Mary and her children to watch the start from the nursery window. To this day some of the more sarcastic marathon runners shout "God Save the Queen" as they pass the 26 mile mark. In 1924, this arbitrary distance became the standard length.

SOME OLYMPIC QUOTES

Ronald Reagan
speaking to the US team in 1984
"You will be competing against athletes from many nations. But, most important, you are competing against yourself. All we expect is for you to do your very best, to push yourself just one second faster, one notch higher, one inch further."

Daley Thompson
winning the decathlon in 1984
"This is the best moment of my life, since my Granny caught her tit in the mangle."

Yun Lou
explaining a low pommel score
"Suit too big. Grabbed pants instead of pommel."

Jesse Owens
"If you don't try to win you might as well hold the Olympics in somebody's backyard."

Herbert Hoover
declining an invitation to attend the 1932 Los Angeles Games
"It's a crazy thing, and it takes some gall to expect me to be a part of it."

Norman Harris
"Murphy's Law and Parkinson's Law have both contributed to an Olympic Law which says that the bigger a thing becomes, the more problems it attracts and the sooner it hastens its own demise."

Pete Newlands
"The Olympics is always an exercise in misery. Ten thousand people around the world start thinking it is going to be them in two years, but only one person ends up on the rostrum."

Daley Thompson
"At the Olympics I love watching almost anything at all that's special, as long as it doesn't have a horse in it."

OLYMPIC ELK

The Olympic Elk is found on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State, USA. The peninsula was named after the home of the Greek gods by Captain John Meares in 1788. The area is a national park, which protects the Olympic Elk, the Olympic Marmot and indeed the Olympic Chipmunk.

Conceived, written, & designed by BEN SCHOTT © 2004
www.miscellanies.info · Email comments to olympic@miscellanies.info
Schott's Food & Drink Miscellany and *Schott's Original Miscellany* by Ben Schott (Bloomsbury) are available for £9-99 each, plus £2-25 p&p per book. To order, please call Telegraph Books Direct on 0870 155 7222.
Schott's Sporting, Gaming, & Idling Miscellany will be published by Bloomsbury in October 2004.