

What are the Olympic Games?



***Konstantinos Kondylis during the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin
when the whole Olympic Torch Relay was first instituted***

As you know, Olympic Games are played after every four years and almost all the countries of the world participate in them. The history of Olympic Games is very old. Although much information about them is not available, it is certain that the first Olympics were played in the year 776 B.C. at a place named Olympia in southeast Greece from where, they take their name. The first Olympic Games were played for five days and were witnessed by many people of Greece.

In the beginning, only the Greek players took part in these games. At that time, these games were treated as a religious festival. They were played as a mark of honor for Zeus, the chief god of the Greeks. Every player would worship at the temple of Zeus before taking part in the competition. The winner of game used to be given a branch of an olive tree which was planted in the courtyard of the temple. During those days,

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women did not participate in the games. So much so that they could not even see the games as spectators.

The Olympic Games continued for almost 1100 years, but in the year 393 A.D. King Theodosius of Rome, put a ban on the Olympic Games after capturing Greece. This ban continued for 1465 years. After this, in 1859, Japas of Greece organized four Olympic Games in the years 1859, 1870, 1875 and 1896. But after his death, these games were again interrupted.

A French teacher named Baron Pierre de Coubertin started the old Olympic Games once again in 1896. These games were Steeple chase played in Athens, the capital of Greece. 311 players hailing from 13 countries took part, in them, 230 of them were from Greece alone.

After the first modern Olympic games in 1896, they have been held in different countries every four years ever since with the exception of 1916, 1940 and 1944 because of World Wars I and II.

The Winter Olympics are also held separately in a different country. The first winter Olympics were held in 1924 at Chamon in France.

Do you know which are the games included in the Olympics? Many games are played there, amongst which the main are: football, swimming, race, wrestling, hockey, basket ball, bicycle race, shooting etc.

The International Olympic Committee decides as to where the next Olympic Games will be held. The Head of State of the organizing country formally declares the starting of the games. The representative of the organizing country of the previous Olympic Games hands over the Olympic flame from the temple of Zeus, then it is brought to the main stadium where the flame is kept burning till the games are over. The participating countries take part in the march-past. The Greek team is at the head and the team of the organizing country is at the tail. In between, all the participating countries take part in the march-past one after another, in order of the English alphabet. After this, the players take oath. Then white pigeons, symbols of peace, are let off and balloons are flown. On the last day, there is a valedictory function in which the Olympic flame is extinguished.