

OLYMPISM AND THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT





WHAT IS OLYMPISM?

Olympism is a philosophy of life which places sport at the service of humanity. This philosophy is based on the interaction of the qualities of the body, will, and mind. In practice, the IOC has identified three Olympic values to follow both in sport and in everyday life.

Excellence

This value means giving one's best on the field of play or in life, without measuring yourself with others, but above all aiming at reaching one's personal goals with determined effort. It is not only about winning but more about participating, making progress against personal goals, striving to be and to do our best in our daily lives and benefiting from the combination of a strong body, will and mind.

Friendship

People are at the centre of the Olympic Movement and this value broadly refers to building a peaceful and better world through solidarity, team spirit, joy and optimism in sport. The Olympic Games inspire humanity to overcome political, economic, gender, racial or religious differences and forge friendships in spite of those differences. The athletes express this value by forming life-long bonds with their team-mates, as well as their opponents.

Respect

This value represents the ethical principle that should inspire all who participate in the Olympic programmes. It includes respect for oneself and one's body, respect for one another, for rules and for the environment. It applies to the fair play that each athlete has to display in sport, as well as avoiding doping.

*1. OG London 2012.
Athletics,
5000m Men –
Qualifications.
Mohamed FARAH
(GBR) 1st
congratulates René
Herrera (PHI) at the
end of the race.
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Olympic Committee
(IOC) / FURLONG,
Christopher*

It was Pierre de Coubertin who had the idea of an Olympic flag. He presented the rings and the flag in June 1914 in Paris, at the Olympic Congress. But as the First World War prevented the Games from being celebrated as planned in Berlin in 1916, it was not until 1920 at the Games in Antwerp that the flag with its five rings was flown in an Olympic stadium for the first time.



It was Baron Pierre de Coubertin who revived the Olympic Games. Born in 1863, he devoted his life to a better education system for youth in France. Fascinated by the English education system, which included sport in the teaching programme (a new idea at the time), he sought to convince his contemporaries in France that sport could be beneficial for young people. Not everyone shared this view, and so Coubertin looked for a way to make people change their views. That was when he had an idea: to revive the Olympic Games. But for him, the Games were not an end in themselves. Rather they were part of a much broader project: education through sport.

THE OLYMPIC SYMBOL: THE FIVE RINGS

The five rings are the visual symbol of Olympism. It was Pierre de Coubertin himself who designed the symbol. The five rings represent the five continents. They are interlinked to show the universality of Olympism and how athletes from all over the world come together for the Olympic Games. On the Olympic flag, the rings appear against a white background. Combined in this way, the six colours of the flag (blue, yellow, black, green, red and white) represent all the nations.

Today, the flag is a very powerful symbol and is one of the most widely recognised in the world. Its use is subject to very strict rules set out by the IOC, and it is important to note that there is just one Olympic symbol.



› The Flame and Torch Relay

With the flag, the Olympic flame and torch relay are the most well-known elements of the Games. The Olympic flame is a symbol of the positive values that human beings have always associated with fire.

The flame is lit at Olympia in Greece, recalling the Ancient Greek roots of the Olympic Games and also emphasising the link between the ancient and modern Games.

From Olympia, the flame is carried to the city hosting the Games by thousands of torchbearers. Wherever it goes, the flame announces the Olympic Games and transmits a message of peace and friendship to all those it meets along the way.

The Motto

- › The Olympic motto is composed of three Latin words:
- › **CITIUS ALTIUS FORTIUS**, which mean:
FASTER – HIGHER – STRONGER
These three words encourage the athletes to give their best when they compete.
- › To better understand the motto, we can compare it with the Olympic rule of conduct: The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part; the essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well.

The Olympic Oath

Like the athletes at the ancient Games, today's Olympic athletes take an oath. The words of this oath were written by Pierre de Coubertin, and it was spoken for the first time at the 1920 Games in Antwerp.

1. The Olympic Flame is passed between torches
© Getty Images

ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE GAMES

The mission of the IOC is to not just to celebrate the Olympic Games, but to also promote Olympism around the world, promote sport in society, and support sports organisations.

PROMOTION OF REGULAR SPORTS ACTIVITY AROUND THE WORLD

The Sport for All movement seeks to encourage the regular practice of sport by all people in society, regardless of sex, age, social background or economic status. Each year the IOC offers financial and moral support to sport for all events organised by the NOCs on the five continents. These events cover a wide range of activities, and the main selection criterion is that they are open to everyone.

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SPORT

To help build a better world through sport, the IOC devises programmes which offer answers to social inequalities and poverty.

An example of the IOC's work in this area is the "Giving is Winning" solidarity campaign organised in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) during the Summer Olympic Games. T

The members of the Olympic Movement are invited to donate clothing and sports equipment, which the UNHCR then distributes in various refugee camps around the world. Almost 100,000 items of clothing were collected during the 2012 Games in London alone.

*1. Sports and development.
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Evolution of women's participation in the Olympic Games

In Paris in 1900, 22 women out of 997 athletes (1.6%) competed in 2 sports: tennis and golf. In London in 2012, around 45% of the athletes were women.

What the Charter says about women...

"Today, the IOC's role is to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures, with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women"

(Olympic Charter, Rule 2, paragraph 7)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR POOR AND RICH, WOMEN AND MEN

Olympic Solidarity makes sure that all athletes have the same chance of participating in the Games. It gives scholarships to athletes so that they can access high-level sports facilities, benefit from a specialised coach or receive appropriate medical back-up. It also gives money to improve the sports infrastructure in various countries and to train sports leaders and coaches.

The Women and Sport Commission works to make access to sport in general and the Olympic Games easier for female athletes. It also works to increase the number of women in sports administration and management.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE THROUGH SPORT

Pierre de Coubertin believed that sport contributed to the well-balanced development of the body, personality and mind. As such, interaction between sport, education and culture is encouraged by the Commission for Culture and Olympic Education. It promotes Olympism and Olympic ideals throughout the world and reinforces cooperation with educational institutions and NOCs with projects especially targeting young people. The aim is to help create a positive change in society, with more active and fulfilled young people.

Women in the IOC
In 1981, the first woman was elected as an IOC member. In 2012, 21 women were active IOC members out of 106 (19.8%).

The Olympic Truce

The tradition of the Olympic Truce was established in Ancient Greece in the 9th century BC by three kings, who signed a peace treaty for the duration of the ancient Olympic Games, to guarantee safe travel and peaceful games for the athletes and the spectators.

Nowadays, the Olympic Truce is symbolised by the dove of peace, with the traditional Olympic flame in the background. It represents the IOC's ideals and its ambition to build a peaceful and better world through sport.

SPORT FOR PEACE

The IOC decided to revive the tradition of the Olympic Truce in order to preserve the interests of the athletes and sport in general and to encourage the search for peaceful and diplomatic solutions to the conflicts in the world.

To help achieve there, the IOC has set up the International Olympic Truce Centre (IOTC), based in Athens, to implement projects promoting a culture of peace through sport and the Olympic ideal throughout the world.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The IOC Sport and Environment Commission ensures that the Olympic Games respect the environment. The aim is to reduce or even eliminate environmental risks, in order to leave a positive Games' legacy for the host city, region and country.

PROTECTION OF ATHLETES' HEALTH

The Olympic Movement takes its responsibility to protect the health and well-being of athletes very seriously. **The Medical and Scientific Commission** was created to deal with the fight against doping but this today is taken care of by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). The Commission's other main goal is to support sports medicine, biomechanics, sporting physiology and nutrition research designed to protect the health of the athlete.

COMBATING ILLEGAL SPORTS BETTING

The sports movement is now facing a new threat to its integrity: cheating linked to sports betting. To monitor sports betting on Olympic competitions, the IOC uses an alerts system developed in cooperation with the main betting operators and various national online gambling regulators.

HISTORICAL MILESTONES

A HISTORIC DATE

The IOC was founded in Paris on 23 June 1894. To commemorate this date in 1948 the IOC introduced an Olympic Day, a sort of “birthday” of the Olympic Movement. Olympic Day is now an event held all over the world. In many countries, celebrations take the form of fun runs.

NINE PRESIDENTS

The IOC’s original idea was that the country in which the Games were to be held should also provide the President, so a Greek (Demetrius Vikelas) was chosen to be the first IOC President until the first Games in Athens in 1896. The idea was quickly abandoned and Pierre de Coubertin became the second IOC President and carried on in the role to 1925. To date, the IOC has had nine presidents. The current president is Thomas Bach from Switzerland.

THE IOC IN LAUSANNE

Lausanne in Switzerland has been the headquarters of the IOC since 1915. It was Coubertin who chose this city and the IOC headquarters found their home at the Château de Vidy in 1968. This is where the President’s office is situated. In recognition of the long history that unites the IOC and Lausanne, the city received the title of Olympic Capital in 1993.

1. Pierre de Coubertin
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Committee (IOC)

