

INDIAN MEDAL WINNER IN OLYMPIC (Individual)

					
Year - 1952	Year - 1996	Year - 2004	Year - 2008	Year - 2008	Year - 2008
K. D. Jadhav	Leander Page	R. S. Rathore	Abhinav Bindra	Sushil Kumar	Vijendra Kumar
Bronze	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Bronze	Bronze
Wrestling	Tennis (Single)	Shooting (Double Trap)	Shooting	Wrestling	Boxing
Helinki	Atlanta	Athens	Beijing	Beijing	Beijing

HISTORY OF OLYMPIC GAME

ANCIENT OLYMPIC GAMES

The origin of the ancient Olympic Games is lost the midst of pre-history, but for many centuries they were only a festival of the Greek people. The Games were first held in honour of the Greek God, Zeus in 776 BC in the plain of kingdom of Elis, nestled in lush valley between the Alpheus River and Mount Kronion, 15 km from the Ionian Sea. The Olympiad celebrated that year was considered as the first and was used to date subsequent historic events. But religious ceremonies and games were held in Olympia before that time. The oldest sanctuary of Greece was there, the altar of the Great Mother of Gods, Rhea (Earth). On the day of the feast, the priest stood in front of the altar, ready to perform a sacrifice. Women were forbidden to be present and the male contestants were naked. Young men waited at a distance on one stadium (about 200 yds). As soon as a signal was given they ran and the first to arrive at the altar received the torch from the priest's hand and lit the sacrificial fire

The old Olympiads were held after every four years and the Greeks measured time in terms of Games started on the first new moon after the summer solstice, around mid-July. The ancient Olympic Games lasted for five days and the events took place in a precise order. On the first day, there were sacrifices and opening ceremonies. On the second day there were special competitions for the "ephebians". The third day was devoted to events for adult competitors: dromos, diaulos, dolichos, pugilism, wrestling, pancratium. On the fourth day, there were equestrian events, pentathlon, and race with arms. On the fifth and the final day, there were closing ceremonies and proclamation of the heroes. During the first six Olympic games, however, the prize had been a portion of meat or 'meria' taken from an animal sacrificed to the Gods. It was only after VII Games that the olive crown was given to the winners and the moral significance of the prize was considerable. Once the prizes were awarded, a flock of pigeons was releases to carry the names of the champions to all the corners of the Greece.

The Games came to a sudden end when the Roman Emperor Theodosius banned the competitions and their attendant sacrificial offerings as pagan manifestations. From 395 AD onwards the fall of Olympia was very rapid. In that year the first damage was caused by the invasion of Alaric's barbarians. A year earlier the famous crysele-phante statue of Zeus had been taken to Constantinople. It was destroyed in 475 AD during the great fire. Following the attacks of the Goths, a fire destroyed the temple of Zeus; earth quakes from 522 to 551 and the most severe of all in 580 brought down whatever had remained standing. Glory had vanished and of the vast riches there were now left but a few ruins and the name of Olympia. Something immortal remained, however, and that was the Olympic spirit.

MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES

The revival work of the Games was undertaken by Baron Pierre de Coubertin nearly 1,500 years after the last of the ancient Games. He was born into a family of Italian origin which had settled in France. It was on November 25, 1892, during a conference at Sorbonne about the history of physical exercises, that he first pronounced those famous six words in public "The Restoration of the Olympic Games". He said that the games would ennoble and strengthen amateur sports, to give them strength and lasting quality for an essential role in the world of modern education.

It was at the International Congress for the for the Study of the Propagation of the Principles of Amateurism held in Paris in June 1894 that the delegates led by Baron Pierre de Coubertin and associates unanimously voted to restore the Olympic Games and to create an International Olympic committee to oversee them. De Coubertin had planned to propose Paris for the site of the first modern Olympics in 1900 but the enthusiasm and zeal of the delegates was so great that they insisted the first Games to be held in 1896. Athens was, there fore, the venue for the 1896 Games. Since then these Games are held very four years. The aims of the Olympic Movement are to promote the development of these fine physical and moral qualities which are the basis of amateur sports and to bring together the athletes of the world in a great quadrennial festival of sports. The honour of holding the Olympic Games is entrusted to a city ad not a country or area. The choice of a city for the celebration of an Olympiad is with the International Olympic Committee.

The XXII Olympic Games were held in Moscow from July 19 to August 3, 1980. Only 80 of the 140 member countries of the International Olympic Committee participated due to a Western-sponsored boycott of the Games. The XXIII Games were held in Los Angeles from July 28 to August 12, 1984. The Games were boycotted by the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries except Romania because of security reason. The Games also saw the re-entry of China after an absence of 32 years. It was America's year at the Games just as it was Russia's year in the XXII Games in Moscow in 1980 when Americans had boycotted. The XXIV Games were held in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, form September 17 to October 2, 1988. The Soviet Union was the biggest medals winner of the Games which was participated by 160 countries. The XXV Games were held in Barcelona, the second largest city of Spain, in July August 1992. Athletes from 171 countries participated and Olympic medals were awarded to a record 64 nations, breaking the mark of 52 set at the 1988 Seoul Olympic.

The XXVI Modern Olympic Games were held in Atlanta (USA) from July 19 to August 4 in 1996. Over 10,000 athletes from 197 countries participated in the 26 sports and 37 disciplines. The Mascot of the Atlanta Olympics was a computer-generated creature called 'Izzy'.

OLYMPIC SYMBOL

It comprises of five rings or circles, linked together to represent the sporting friendship of all people. The rings also symbolize the continents Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and America. Each ring is of a different colour, i.e., blue, yellow, black, green and red.

OLYMPIC FLAG

The Olympic flag created in 1913 at the suggestion of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, was solemnly inaugurated in Paris in June 1914 but it was raised over an Olympic stadium for the first time at the Antwerp Games (Belgium) in 1920. There is also a second Olympic flag, which is used for the Winter Games. These Flags are made of white silk and contain five intertwined rings. From left to right the rings are blue, yellow, black, green and red. The rings are meant to represent five continents viz., Africa (black), America (red), Asia (yellow), Australia (green) and Europe (blue). At least one of these colours is found on the flag of every country.

OLYMPIC FLAME

It was at the Amsterdam Games in 1928 that for the first time an Olympic flame was ceremonially lighted and burned in a giant torch at the entrance of the stadium. The modern version of the flame was adopted in 1936 at the Berlin Games. The Olympic flame symbolizes the continuity between the ancient and modern Games. The torch used to kindle the flame, is first lit by the sun's rays at Olympia, Greece, and then carried to the site of the Games by relay of runners. Ships and planes are used when necessary. On July 15, 1976, space age technology was used to transport the flame from one continent to another.

OLYMPIC MOTTO

The Olympic motto is "Citius-Altius-Fortius" (faster, higher, stronger). Rev. Father Didon (1840-1900), headmaster of a school near Paris and a great promoter of sports in the French Catholic colleges near the end of the nineteenth century, first used the motto and had it embroidered on the pennants of his school clubs. This succinct definition of the philosophy of sport appealed to father Didon's friend, Baron Pierre de Coubertin who was responsible for the revival work of the Olympic Games nearly 1,500 years after the last of the ancient games. It was adopted at his suggestion at the International Congress for the "Study and Propagation of the Principles of Amateurism" on June 23, 1894, the same day on which the restoration of the Olympic Games and the creation of the International Olympic Committee were also decided.

OLYMPIC PRIZES, MEDALS AND CERTIFICATES

While in ancient times the Olympic heroes received a crown of olive branches for their exploits, modern Olympic champions are rewarded with medals and certificates. The winning athlete now

receives a gold medal, the athlete in the second place is awarded a Silver medal and the third placed athlete wins a Bronze medal. In addition, all athletes ranking from first to sixth receive a certificate. Each medal is 60 mm in diameter and 3 mm thick. The first and second place medals are made of 92.5 per cent silver and the medal for the first winner is then plated with 6 gram of fine gold. Thus this medal is not of full gold. The third place medal is of bronze.

HARI OM MAURYA

19 July 2012