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Olympic Studies Centre

RUGBY: History of Rugby at the Olympic Games

Reference document

Introduction, key stages and evolution in the number of events from this sport's beginnings to the present time.

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Rugby

Introduction

Rugby 15s appeared for the first time at the Olympic Games in [Paris in 1900](#) and was on the programme of the [1908](#), [1920](#) and [1924](#) Games. This sport subsequently did not feature on the programme, but has been reintroduced for the Olympic Games in [Rio in 2016](#) in its 7s format.

Key stages

Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1899: On 27 May, at the meeting of the Organising Committee for the 1900 Games, the group responsible for the Athletics Games included “rugby-football” in the list of sports on the programme of the Olympic Games in 1900 in Paris.
Removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1924: The Olympic rugby tournament in Paris was held in May. In June, in the framework of the IOC Session, a list of sports for the Olympic programme was established, including two categories: obligatory and optional sports. “Rugby-football” was on the second list, which meant that it was up to the Organising Committee whether to include this sport.
Return to the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2009: At the 121st IOC Session held in Copenhagen in October, it was decided to include rugby in the Olympic programme for Rio in 2016, with a men’s and a women’s rugby 7s tournament, each with 12 teams.

Evolution in the number of teams

- 1900: 3 teams
- 1908: 2 teams
- 1920: 2 teams
- 1924: 3 teams
- 2016: 12 teams

[Find out more](#)



Men's and women's events

Rugby	1896	1900	1904	1908	1912	1920	1924	1928	1932	1936	1948	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	Total	
Men																														5
Women																														1
Number of events	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	

Grey column total = number of times on the programme