AQUATICS: History of Water Polo at the Olympic Games

Reference document

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

March 2015

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Water polo

Introduction

Water polo was on the programme of the Games of the II Olympiad in Paris in 1900. It was not organised in St Louis in 1904, but it has been on the programme since the Games in London in 1908. Women’s water polo made its debut 100 years after the first introduction of this discipline at the Games, i.e. at the Games of the XXVII Olympiad in Sydney in 2000.

Key stages

<table>
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<th>Entry</th>
<th>• 1912: At the 15th IOC Session held in July in Stockholm, it was decided to divide the sports on the programme into three categories: indispensable, desirable and eligible. Water polo (included under swimming) was among the first category.</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Women’s water polo</td>
<td>• 1924: At the 23rd IOC Session held in Paris in June and July, the IOC drew up a list of obligatory and optional sports. Water polo was on the second list.</td>
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<td>Women’s water polo</td>
<td>• 1997: At the IOC Executive Board meeting held in September, it was decided to add women’s water polo to the programme of the Games of the XXVII Olympiad in Sydney in 2000.</td>
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Evolution in the number of teams

- 1900: 7 teams (men’s)
- 1908: 4 teams (men’s)
- 1912: 6 teams (men’s)
- 1920: 12 teams (men’s)
- 1924: 13 teams (men’s)
- 1928: 12 teams (men’s)
- 1932: 5 teams (men’s)
- 1936: 16 teams (men’s)
- 1948: 18 teams (men’s)
- 1952: 21 teams (men’s)
- 1956: 10 teams (men’s)
- 1960: 16 teams (men’s)
- 1964: 13 teams (men’s)
- 1968: 15 teams (men’s)
- 1972-1996: 12 teams (men’s)
- 2000: 18 teams (12 men’s and 6 women’s)
- 2004-2016: 20 teams (12 men’s and 8 women’s)
### AQUATICS: History of Water Polo at the Olympic Games

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Grey column total = number of times on the programme

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Olympic Studies Centre / studies.centre@olympic.org

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