



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

FACTSHEET

THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

UPDATE - SEPTEMBER 2014

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The modern Olympic Games encompass more than just the drama and excitement of a sporting competition. Thanks to the vision of their founder, Pierre de Coubertin, and the creative efforts of various host city organisers, the ceremonial aspects of the Olympic Games have served to set them apart from other international sports competitions. The protocol and splendour of the Olympic ceremonies, which go hand-in-hand with the celebration of the Games as everyone knows them today, make this event a unique and unforgettable festival. Although there was a Closing Ceremony at the Games of the Olympiad in 1896 in Athens, it bore only the slightest resemblance to today's ceremonies. In fact, some of the elements of Olympic protocol that have become a part of today's traditions were only gradually established over time through a series of adaptations to the ceremonies of early editions of the Games.

PROTOCOL ELEMENTS

A Closing Ceremony must be organised on the last day of the Games. It must be held in the Olympic stadium, normally after all the events. Here are the protocol elements which are now an integral part of the Closing Ceremony:

ENTRY BY THE HEAD OF STATE: The first element is the entrance of the head of state of the host country (or his/her representative), accompanied by the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the President of the Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG).

PLAYING OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM: Then the national anthem of the host country is played and its flag hoisted in the Olympic stadium.

ENTRY OF NATIONS' FLAGS: One of the key moments of a Closing Ceremony is the parade of flags of the countries participating in the Games. The Greek flag opens the march, and the host country's flag brings up the rear. Each flag is generally carried by an athlete chosen by his/her National Olympic Committee (NOC).

PARADE OF ATHLETES: This is immediately followed by the athletes' parade. They walk *en masse* and in no particular order during this parade. For the Games of the Olympiad, the athletes enter the stadium after the artistic programme, and remain in the centre of the field. For the Winter Games, the athletes' march is near the beginning of the Ceremony, and the athletes take seats reserved for them in the audience. The idea of having all the athletes parade in no order comes from a young Chinese man, John Ian Wing, an apprentice carpenter in Australia for the 1956 Games in Melbourne. Before these Games, the athletes had always marched behind their flag-bearer, as at the Opening Ceremony.

VICTORY CEREMONY: After the athletes' parade, a medals ceremony is held. The IOC, with the help of the OCOG, decides which event will have its medals ceremony during the Closing Ceremony (for the Summer Games, it is generally the marathon). For the first few editions of the Games, all the medals were presented on the last day.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ATHLETES' COMMISSION'S NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS AND RECOGNITION OF THE VOLUNTEERS: The next protocol element is the presentation of the athletes elected by their peers to the IOC Athletes' Commission during the Games. On behalf of the athletes, one of these new members then presents a bouquet of flowers to a representative of the volunteers, as a tribute and



mark of gratitude for their work carried out during the Games.

PLAYING OF THE GREEK NATIONAL ANTHEM: The seventh protocol element is the Greek flag being raised to the left of the Olympic flag. The Greek national anthem is played simultaneously. This is a symbol of the link between the Games of Antiquity and those of the modern era.

LOWERING THE OLYMPIC FLAG AND FLAG HANDOVER CEREMONY:

Then comes a solemn moment, as the Olympic flag is lowered to the sound of the Olympic anthem. The mayors of the current host city and next host city join the IOC President. The mayor of the host city hands the flag to the IOC President, who hands it on to the mayor of the next host city. The flag of the next host country is then raised to the right of the flag of the current host country, to the sound of its anthem. This handover is a symbolic highlight. The flag will usually be displayed in the town hall of the host city over the next four years.

NEXT HOST CITY ARTISTIC

SEGMENT: To further mark this transition from one city to another, an artistic segment of the Closing Ceremony, lasting eight minutes, is devoted to the next host city. This segment is an invitation to the youth of the world to attend the next Games.

OCOG PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AND

IOC PRESIDENT'S SPEECH: After this segment of the Ceremony, which projects us into the future, the OCOG President delivers a brief speech thanking the athletes and volunteers, before giving the floor to the IOC President, who declares the Games closed and invites the youth of the world to come together for the next edition of the Olympic Games four years later.

EXTINGUISHING OF THE OLYMPIC

FLAME: The last protocol element is undoubtedly the most moving: the Olympic flame is extinguished in the stadium. With this last element, this time it is certain: the Games are over.



LIST OF MAYORS WHO HAVE HANDED OVER AND RECEIVED THE OLYMPIC FLAG

Games of the Olympiad

Olympic Games	From	To
Los Angeles 1984*	Tom Bradley	Bo Hyun Yum (Seoul)
Seoul 1988	Kim Yong-nae	Pasqual Maragall (Barcelona)
Barcelona 1992	Pasqual Maragall	Maynard Jackson (Atlanta)
Atlanta 1996	Bill Campbell	Frank Sartor (Sydney)
Sydney 2000	Frank Sartor	Dimitris L. Avammopoulos (Athens)
Athens 2004	Dora Bakoyannis	Wang Qishan (Beijing)
Beijing 2008	Guo Jinlong	Boris Johnson (London)
London 2012	Boris Johnson	Eduardo Paes (Rio de Janeiro)

* Before 1984, this protocol element was part of the opening ceremony

Olympic Winter Games

Calgary 1988*	Ralph Klein	Henri Dujol (Albertville)
Albertville 1992	Henri Dujol	Audun Tron (Lillehammer)
Lillehammer 1994	Audun Tron	Tasuku Tsukada (Nagano)
Nagano 1998	Tasuku Tsukada	Deedee Corradini (Salt Lake City)
Salt Lake City 2002	Rocky Anderson	Sergio Chiamparino (Turin)
Turin 2006	Sergio Chiamparino	Sam Sullivan (Vancouver)
Vancouver 2010	Gregor Robertson	Anatoliy Pakhomov (Sochi)
Sochi 2014	Anatoliy Pakhomov	Lee Seok-rae (PyeongChang)

* Before 1988, this protocol element was part of the opening ceremony

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