



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

# FACTSHEET

## THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

### UPDATE - AUGUST 2016

## 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 AND WELCOME

Welcome to the audience

### 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 victory ceremony is held. The IOC, with the help of the OCOG, decides which event will have its medals presented during the Closing Ceremony (for the Summer Games, it is generally the marathon as it will be the case in Rio). 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, these new members then present a bouquet of flowers to representatives of the volunteers, as a tribute and mark of gratitude for their work carried out during the Games.



## **MOMENT OF REMEMBRANCE**

At Rio 2016, for the first time in modern Olympic history, a place of private mourning was provided for athletes in the Olympic Village. This included a stone from Olympia and allowed all athletes to mourn those who have passed away, in a special and dignified way. Equally, while we look back on 16 days celebrating sport, youth, the Olympic values and the wonderful host city of Rio de Janeiro, we would also like to take a moment of private recognition to allow everybody in the stadium, as well as those watching at home, to remember loved ones who are longer with us and have touched our lives.

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

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

### Olympic Winter Games

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

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

## IMPRINT

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