HISTORY

Since the first Games in Athens in 1896, the programme of the Games of the Olympiad has evolved considerably. Some sports have disappeared, like croquet, tug of war, lacrosse or jeu de paume; others have reappeared, like archery in 1972; and some have hardly changed, such as athletics, fencing, swimming or gymnastics, which have been on the programme since the start of the modern Games. The programme has also seen regular innovations in the sports which have joined fairly recently (such as judo or triathlon).

At the first editions of the Games, the official programme was quite complex, with the Games taking place over several weeks or even several months. The Games of the Olympiad were sometimes linked to universal exhibitions, as in Paris in 1900 and St Louis in 1904. On these occasions, numerous other sports events were held, which at times made it difficult to tell which events were in fact part of the Olympic programme. The organisers also had greater flexibility; and the rules and competition formats were not yet standardised as they are today. Some events were held with just three or four competitors, even if they were all from the same country!

Over time, the programme of the Games expanded, growing from around 40 events in 1896 to more than 120 at the 1924 Games in Paris. After the Second World War, the Olympic Movement grew stronger, and the Games became more structured. Fewer new events were added, with just 30 more joining the programme between 1948 and 1968, and 30 more at the next six editions of the Games of the Olympiad. In some cases the additions were new sports, new disciplines or simply women's events, to achieve a better balance. Since 1980, almost 100 new sports, disciplines or events have joined the programme, reflecting the huge increase in and diversity of sports practice around the world.

Since 2000, each new addition to the programme is studied carefully by the Olympic Programme Commission, meaning that there have been very few additions, but rather changes in events, in order to limit the size of the Games.

A FEW DATES AND EXAMPLES OF THE GAMES

1896: First edition of the Games of the Olympiad in Athens, Greece, with 43 events in nine sports: athletics, cycling (road and track), fencing, artistic gymnastics, shooting, swimming, tennis, weightlifting and Greco-Roman wrestling

1900: Football, rowing, sailing and equestrian sports made their Olympic debut. First events for women, in tennis and golf

1904: Freestyle wrestling joined the Games. Greco-Roman wrestling had featured in 1896.

1908: First field hockey competition

1912: Swimming added women's events; first modern pentathlon competition. Road cycling returned to the Games.

1920: Weightlifting reappeared, after being absent from two editions of the Games, this time with competitions by weight category.

1924: Foil became the first women's fencing event.

1928: First athletics competitions for women

1936: Basketball and canoe-kayak joined the programme, with both men's and women's events.

1952: Equestrian sports became mixed. In gymnastics, individual events for women were introduced.

1964: Judo joined the programme in Tokyo, and came back for good in 1972. The first volleyball medals were awarded.

1972: Handball rejoined the programme at the Games in Munich after an appearance in 1936. Canoe-kayak slalom made its first appearance.

1984: In Los Angeles, synchronised swimming made its Olympic debut with two events, and...
rhythmic gymnastics did likewise with one competition.

1988: At the Games in Seoul, the first Olympic table tennis tournament was held.

1992: Badminton entered the Games with four events in Barcelona.

1996: Mountain bike joined the programme, along with beach volleyball.

2000: Triathlon was added to the programme for the Games in Sydney, alongside trampoline and taekwondo.

2008: The first Olympic BMX medals were awarded.

2012: Women's boxing will make its first Olympic appearance at the Games in London, together with mixed doubles in tennis.


Between 1896 and 2016, the Olympic programme has grown considerably. From 43 medals presented at the first edition in Athens, the Games of the Olympiad in 2016 will feature 30X events in 26 sports: 162 men’s, 132 women’s and eight mixed.

Joining the Olympic programme

According to the Olympic Charter, “the programme of the Olympic Games (herein also referred to as ‘the programme’) is the programme of all competitions of the Olympic Games established for each edition of the Olympic Games by the International Olympic Committee (IOC)”.

The Olympic sports are those governed by International Federations (IFs) recognised by the IOC. Only sports that adopt and implement the World Anti-Doping Code can be included or remain in the programme. The components of the programme are sports, disciplines and events. A discipline is a branch of a sport comprising one or several events. An event is a competition in a sport or in one of its disciplines, resulting in a ranking and giving rise to the award of medals and diplomas.

Today, the Olympic programme is reviewed, and if necessary modified, after each edition of the Games. This is the job of the Olympic Programme Commission, which is made up of IOC members and representatives of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), IFs and the athletes. It studies the programme of sports, disciplines, and events at the Olympic Games. The Commission then makes its recommendations to the IOC Executive Board (EB) and reports to the IOC Session.

The inclusion of sports on the programme is subject to a number of conditions. Rule 45 of the Olympic Charter, “Programme of the Olympic Games” sets out the requirements.

The inclusion of any sport in the programme of any edition of any Olympic Games falls within the competence of the Session. This must be decided no later than at the Session electing the host city of that edition of the Olympic Games.

The decision to include a discipline or event in the programme falls within the competence of the IOC EB. The inclusion of disciplines or events in the programme of any edition of an Olympic Games is decided by the IOC EB no later than three years before the opening of the Olympic Games. The deadlines may be waived, in order to allow changes in the programme with the approval of the relevant IF, of the OCOG and of the competent organ of the IOC.

Sports on the programme of the Games of the XXXI Olympiad in Rio in 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year established</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAAF</td>
<td>International Association of Athletics Federations</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FISA</td>
<td>International Rowing Federation</td>
<td>1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BWF</td>
<td>Badminton World Federation</td>
<td>1934</td>
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For the 2016 Olympic programme, the EB, under the direction of the previous IOC President Jacques Rogge, addressed two proposals in August 2009: the list of 26 core sports and two additional sports, golf and rugby (rugby sevens). These proposals were submitted to the full IOC membership for a final decision at their 121st Session in Copenhagen in October 2009.

Seven sports — baseball, golf, karate, roller sports, rugby, softball and squash — were seeking to enter the Olympic programme.

The voting took place by secret ballot. The EB took its decision based on the work of the Olympic Programme Commission, which had undertaken a thorough evaluation of the potential added value to the Games of each of the seven sports. The seven IFs of the sports concerned were invited to present their arguments to the Programme Commission in November 2008 and to the EB in June 2009.

In line with the decision of the IOC Session, golf and rugby (sevens) will return to the Olympic programme after almost a century at the Games of the XXXI Olympiad in Rio, in 2016. The golf competition will follow the stroke play format, which involves counting the total number of strokes a player needs to complete the round. The player with the lowest number of strokes at the end wins the competition. For rugby, there will be two rugby seven competitions, one for men and one for women.

### Evolution of the programme of the Games of the Olympiad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport / Discipline</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Basketball 1936 1976
Boxing 1904 2012
Canoe - flat-water 1936 1948
Canoe - slalom 1972 1972
Cycling – track 1896 1988
Cycling – road 1896 1984
Mountain biking 1996 1996
BMX 2008 2008
Fencing 1896 1924
Football 1900 1996
Artistic gymnastics 1896 1928
Rhythmic gymnastics - 1984
Trampoline 2000 2000
Weightlifting 1896 2000
Handball 1936 1976
Hockey 1908 1980
Judo 1964 1992
Greco-Roman wrestling 1896 -
Freestyle wrestling 1904 2004
Swimming 1896 1912
Diving 1904 1912
Water polo 1900 2000
Synchronised swimming - 1984
Modern Pentathlon 1912 2000
Equestrian – dressage 1912 1952
Equestrian – jumping 1900 1952
Equestrian – eventing 1912 1952
Taekwondo 2000 2000
Tennis 1896 1900
Table tennis 1988 1988
Shooting 1896 1968
Archery 1900 1904
Triathlon 2000 2000
Sailing 1900 1900
Volleyball 1964 1964
Beach volleyball 1996 1996
Golf 1900 1900
Rugby 1900 2016

1- Rowing and sailing were on the programme of the 1896 Games, but the events were cancelled because of adverse weather conditions.
2- This discipline was included for the first time at the Munich Games in 1972. It was excluded from the Olympic programme between 1976 and 1988, but returned in 1992.
3- Handball was introduced (on grass) at the Berlin Games in 1936. It was then removed from the programme before reappearing in its current form (indoors) in Munich in 1972.
4- Since 1920, freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling have been two separate competitions. Prior to that date (apart from 1908), only one style was included, usually Greco-Roman.
5- Before 1952, only men participated in equestrian events at the Olympic Games. All riders had to be military athletes, in fact officers. These restrictions were lifted in 1952, since when men and women have competed against each other in the same events.
6- Tennis was included in the Olympic programme from 1896 to 1924. It was reintroduced in 1968.
7- Women participated in shooting events for the first time in 1968, in mixed events. It is only since the Atlanta Games in 1996 that the programme has included separate men’s and women’s events.
8- Archery was an Olympic sport several times between 1900 and 1920, before disappearing from the Olympic programme for more than 50 years. It was reintroduced at the Munich Games in 1972.
9- Women have always competed in the mixed Olympic sailing events, but separate women’s events were introduced in 1988.