The History Behind the Modern Olympic Games

The Olympic Games have a long history dating back to Ancient Greece, where it became a huge festive celebration. The modern Olympic Games preserve the basic traditions that originated during the Ancient Games, such as the opening, closing, and victors ceremonies. The modern Olympic Games host more than two hundred participating nations competing in various winter and summer sporting events. No other sports competition compares to the enormity of the Olympic Games. The International Olympic Committee oversees every aspect of the Games, including which country hosts future events down to the pre-planned location of each venue. The International Olympic Committee ensures that each Olympic celebration adheres to the definitions outlined in the Olympic Charter of 1920.

The modern Olympic Games evolved past the influence of its ancient counterpart. For instance, the Olympic Games consist of biennial sporting events that include winter and summer-based competitions. In addition, the Olympic Movement has expanded its influence to create the Paralympic, Special Olympics, and Deaf Olympics for those with physical disabilities, cognitive disabilities, or hearing impaired. The Youth Olympics hosts competitions for young teenagers who qualify for the competition. Originally, the Olympic Games only featured amateur athletes who took pride in competing against other athletes. Due to the emerging technological advances of the early 20th and 21st centuries the International Olympic Committee shifted its perspective by including more professional athletes in competitions, especially after the Games started to receive media coverage and corporate sponsorship.

In 1896, the modern Olympic Games only represented 14 nations and 241 participants. In 2008, the Games have exponentially grown to include 204 countries and 10,500 athletes. The most predominant celebration occurs every four years during the summer months. A smaller celebration occurs during the winter.

During the Games, most of the athletes live in the Olympic Village, or a small furnished home that provides food, health treatments, and religious centers. The International Olympic Committee continues to strive to meet all of the cultural standards of the participating countries without exercising discrimination, although it has received criticism from those who do not feel that the Olympics should divide sporting events according to disability. In the past, disabled athletes have participated in the regular Olympics despite their disability. Today, the same opportunity exists; however, critics still feel that the division promotes social inequality at a sporting event meant to bring unity.

The modern Olympic Games had its share of cancellations at the height of the First and Second World Wars. For the Games that did commence during these turbulent times, a heavy sense of nationalism emerged that was well conveyed during the Games. In today's unstable political, economic, and social climate, the Games face potential cancellations from struggling countries as mirrored during the early 1900s. In fact, the International Olympic Committee raised their eyebrow as to whether London could host the 2012 Olympics after its flare of riots in 2011. As the Games continue to grow in scale of wonder, the IOC faces growing challenges that may include boycotts, bribery, doping, social upheaval, and terrorism. Counterterrorism units have responded to secure future celebrations from potential attacks, especially after the pipe bomb explosion that occurred at the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia.

Today the Olympic Games have become one of the biggest sporting highlights across the world, with 203 countries participating in the games. These games bring the people of various countries together in a way that nothing else has been able to do, with even more countries participating in the Games than in the United Nations. Today the Olympic Games are going strong and a record turnout is predicted for the 2020 Olympic Games.
Modern Olympic Events

The Olympic Games have come a long way and the Modern Olympic Games committees have added a lot more events than the ancient Greek Olympics of the past. The Modern Olympic Games we know today reemerged in Athens, Greece in 1896 where there where hundreds of athletes that came from fourteen countries and came to the Olympics to compete in forty three different events including events in aquatics, athletics, cycling, fencing, gymnastics, shooting, tennis, weightlifting and wrestling. The Olympic games of 1896 were organized and overseen by the first International Olympic Committee who first met as an organization in Paris in the summer of 1894, members of the Royal family of Greece also played a big part and they were also there to watch all ten days of the events. The Olympic games of 1896 was set up to be a big festival type event and that is what it was, there were many parades and ceremonies honoring the athletes that came from other countries. At the time the only country that sent their own national team to the Olympics was Hungary, and all of the other competitors were just different independent athletes that were drawn to such a big sporting event.

Winning a medal in Modern Olympic Games is one of the most prestigious and coveted honors in sports. The first place winner receives the gold medal; second place receives the silver and the third place receives the bronze medal. In modern Olympics there are usually over ten thousand competitors from over two hundred different countries and it is watched worldwide over television broadcasts.

What Events are featured at the Olympic Summer Games?

The Summer Olympic Games, a multinational competition that occurs every four years, encompasses forty three different sports. The International Olympic Committee awards three winners of each event according to their performance. For instance, first place receives a gold medal, silver for second place, and bronze for third. Not only has the Summer Olympics drawn international attention from the world’s finest athletes, it has grown into a tradition that continues in stride since 1904. In fact, the success of the Summer Olympics led to the formation of the Winter Olympics. Some of the sports of the Summer Olympic Games include:

- Fencing
- Football
- Archery
- Equestrian
- Golf
- Gymnastics
- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Badminton
- Boxing
- Cricket
- Martial arts
- Handball
- Field Hockey
- Polo
- Wrestling
- Swimming

The Summer Olympics increased from a mere forty-two event competition to a massive three hundred event sporting celebration that includes over ten thousand competitors from over two hundred nations. The 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics projected roughly ten and a half thousand competitors to participate in one of its three hundred and two sporting events. The 2012 Summer Olympics hosted in London, England, projects an estimated two hundred and five nations to be participating. In addition, the Intentional Olympic Committee estimates that roughly ten and a half thousand dual gender athletes with compete in one of its three hundred and two sporting events.
What Events are featured at the Olympic Winter Games?

The Olympic Winter Games take place every four years at different locations across the globe. Some of the most popular events of these games include Alpine skiing, the luge, figure skating, and curling. Although these are just a few examples of the many exciting events that take place, audiences love these events and come from all corners of the world to see top athletes compete. Alpine skiing first became a part of the Olympic Winter Games in 1936. Competitors race down a steep hill in hopes of having the fastest time from the top to the bottom. In order to compete, one must have excellent form and be in top shape, particularly with good upper and lower body strength.

The luge is a very different yet exciting game that happens during the Olympic Winter Games. The luge features both men and women's teams, and began as part of the games in 1964. It is considered to be one of the most dangerous of all Olympic games because of the potential for serious injury and even death in some instances. Athletes race down an icy track at speeds of up to 90 miles per hour on a contraption called a slider, which has no brakes and is made of fiberglass. The luge track is usually less than one mile long and has a drop of approximately 300-400 feet. A typical luge run lasts about one minute.

One of the most beloved and widely watched games is figure skating. A combination of glitz and glamour and athleticism, figure skating is extremely fun to watch. There are many different types of games within the realm of figure skating including men’s solo, women’s solo, and couples competitions. Players are judged on several different things including form, the tricks used in the performance, and how well they perform overall. This sport first became a part of the Olympic games in 1908 and has remained consistently popular ever since. Figure skating has spurred many famous stars including Michelle Kwan, Dorothy Hamill, Brian Boitano, Katarina Witt, Tonya Harding, Scott Hamilton, and many others.

An unusual yet popular Olympic Winter Sport is the sport of curling. This rather strange sport has taken off in popularity over the last few Winter Olympics. Curling is a Scottish sport that was first introduced in 1924 but was often overlooked by most fans. Now, it has become a widely recognized sport that has some serious competition. The sport involves using brushes on an iced surface and pushing a large stone made of granite. Team members must use the brush to create an ideal surface for the stone so that it drifts into the other opponent’s territory. The sport requires a lot of upper body strength and patience, as well as skill.

Meaning of the Olympic Rings

The meaning of the Olympic Rings is a very symbolic meaning and it was designed by Frenchman who was named Baron Pierre de Coubertin in 1912, he is also regarded as the father of the modern day Olympics, and the founder of the International Olympic Committee. Baron Pierre de Coubertin wanted there to be an important meaning of the Olympic rings and he wanted to ensure that the Olympic flag would be universally accepted for all the nations involved and he wanted to make this flag a part of the new Olympic Tradition. As you can see the flag is still flown today in both the winter and the Summer Olympic events, and this is just as important to the Olympics as the traditional Olympic torch.
The original thoughts as to the meaning of the Olympic rings on the flag of the Olympic Games is the symbolism of the five different colored rings, all interlinked together. These five multicolored Olympic rings stand for the five continents where the athletes traveled from to take part in the sporting competitions of these Olympic events. The reason for the interlocking rings on the Olympic flag is symbolic in showing that the Olympic Games are intended for all nations to be able to come and compete against one another in unity. The meaning of the Olympic rings colors is not of any important significance, but the five colors of the Olympic rings and the white background have at least one color of every nation’s flag in them. The design of the Olympic flag was first made in 1914 but it was not flown in the Olympic Games until 1920, when the games were held in the city of Antwerp, Belgium and it has been flown in every Olympic Event since that was not cancelled due to war.

The Olympics' Effect on the Host Country's Economy

When countries and cities bid on the Olympic Games, one of the main reasons they do it is for the chance to boost the economy in that city. The Olympic Games attract thousands of visitors and media attention. During the time that the games are held, you may see a sharp increase in tourism, revenue and a big boost to profits for all of the businesses in the area. However, hosting the Olympics may provide only a short-term economic benefit. It is important to fully understand how the benefits of hosting will work.

Before the Olympics - There is often a boost in the economy just before the games come to a country. Most areas need to create additional venues, improve road construction and take time to plan to handle the crowds. Government will fund not all of the costs, since many businesses, such as hotels and restaurants, will begin building in the area to take advantage of the increased sales. The added building and construction costs can boost a failing economy. It can help an area that may be lagging behind economically. However, the government may take on additional debt to cover some of the expenses, which may result in raising taxes. That may end up hurting the economy in the long run.

During the Olympics - The most noticeable upturn in the economy will be during the Olympics. During this time, visitors from all over the world will be coming to see the Olympic events. This will increase revenue in travel sales and in hotels and restaurants. This means that many small business owners may benefit from the Olympics being held in the area. Some private citizens may opt to rent out their home for the Olympics and may benefit from the additional money that will bring in. Nearly every type of retail business will benefit from having the Olympics in the area. Often the taxes collected during the actual Olympic events will be enough to pay back the additional debt the government accrued while preparing for the Olympics.

After the Olympics - If the tourism board works hard, they may be able to attract more conferences and sporting events to the venues that were built for the Olympics after the games have ended. Tourism may also increase to the area for a short time, as people are interested in seeing the area where the Olympic games took place. The big economic push may not stay, and some of the smaller businesses may suffer if chains are competing with them for business after the Olympics are over and the economy returns to the stat it was in before the Olympics. It is important that the city and state governments work on a plan to continue to attract tourists and conferences to the area.