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The Olympic Games

The Olympic Games began almost 3,000 years ago in ancient Greece. The Games were initially held during a religious festival honoring the Greek god Zeus and were named after their location at Olympia.[1] However, the modern Olympic Games have grown to mean so much more to many all over the world.

The very first written record of the ancient Olympic Games dates back to 776 B.C., and there was only one event, a foot race. There are many who belive the Games may have existed much earlier than this. The ancient Games were mainly focused on athleticism. However, philosophies of fairness, peace, development and education were also incorporated into them.[2]

A young baron named Pierre de Coubertin of France was interested in promoting physical education and became inspired by the idea of creating a modern Olympic Games. At a meeting of the Union des Sports Athletiques in Paris in November 1892, Coubertin proposed reviving the Olympics as an international athletic competition held every four years.[3] Coubertin founded the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894, which is the governing body of the modern Olympic Games.[4] The first modern Olympic Games took place in Athens, Greece, in 1896.

A fanciful depiction of the Phidian statue of Zeus in Olympia, with the Olympic Games taking place in the foreground.

Today, the summer Olympics brings together athletes from territories of 206 National Olympic Committees (NOC). The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.[5] The hope is that we will one day be able to put all differences aside and become unified worldwide. This ideal may not be practiced in everyday life, but it is exhibited during the Olympic Games.

The original Olympic motto, “Faster, Higher, Stronger” was changed in response to the Covid-19 crisis. IOC President, Thomas Bach, proposed adding the word together to the motto. During the session, President Bach stressed the need for the change by stating, “Solidarity is at the heart of everything we do.

[1] https://www.history.com/topics/sports/olympic-games
[2] https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/nine-things-you-didnt-know-about-the-ancient-olympic-games-180984672/
[3] https://www.history.com/topics/sports/olympic-games
[4] https://www.history.com/topics/sports/olympic-games
[5] https://olympics.com/ioc/olympic-values

Solidarity fuels our mission to make the world a better place through sport. Because we can only go faster, we can only aim higher, we can only become stronger, if we stand together – in solidarity."[6]

The *Global Times* has noted, "The Olympic motto, 'Faster, Higher, Stronger — Together,' highlights the importance of surpassing national differences in development, political systems, and traditions, and competing fairly under common rules. In this way, the Olympics help bridge narrow-minded political, cultural, and ideological gaps and bring closer the people and societies represented by athletes from different countries and regions."[7] The Olympic motto is just one of many symbols of the Olympic Games, which all stress the same message to the world. We, as a people, need to come together, and through understanding and cooperation, can make the world a better place for our civilization now and for future generations.

In November 2021, the IOC released the Framework on Fairness, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations.[8] The Framework is IOC's guidance to sports bodies, and it aims to support them to provide pathways to inclusion in elite sport for all athletes, without discriminating on the basis of gender identity or sex variations, while defining disproportionate advantage in ways that preserve meaningful and fair competition. The Framework is yet another example of the concept that differences in gender, culture, and religious or political beliefs should not be used in discrimination or degradation of others. Instead, the differences should be accepted and celebrated together as it lends additional knowledge and perspectives from which we could grow together as a civilization.

Four days before the Opening Ceremony for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, hundreds of Olympic athletes representing the athletes of the territories of all the 206 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Refugee Olympic Team made a powerful call for peace. The event included athletes from NOCs whose countries are currently in conflict or at war with each other.[9] To sum up the message meant to be sent by the athletes' call for peace, IOC President Thomas Bach pronounced, "You, the Olympic athletes, will show us how our world would be, if we all lived in the same Olympic spirit of peaceful co-existence. You will compete fiercely against each other. At the same time, you are living peacefully together under one roof, here in the Olympic Village. You are respecting the same rules and most importantly you are respecting each other. In this way, you are sending a resounding message of peace from Paris to the world."[10]

We have shown what we can accomplish when the different nations of the world work together in the spirit of sports and competition. If all people would extend that notion of peace and solidarity into all of the areas of our lives, the world could meet the goal of the Olympic Movement. We can create a peaceful and

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[6] https://www.orissapost.com/covid-19-forces-change-in-olympic-motto-this-is-what-it-reads-now/
[7] https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202408/1318065.shtml
[8] https://olympics.com/ioc/human-rights/fairness-inclusion-nondiscrimination
[9] https://olympics.com/ioc/news/olympic-athletes-call-for-peace-from-the-olympic-village-ioc-president-bach-you-are-the-peace-ambassadors-of-our-time
[10] https://olympics.com/ioc/news/olympic-athletes-call-for-peace-from-the-olympic-village-ioc-president-bach-you-are-the-peace-ambassadors-of-our-time

better environment by rejecting discrimination of any kind and come to a mutual understanding of solidarity and working as one to build and better all countries around the world.