

A Textbook of Physical Education Class 11

Chapter 2

OLYMPISM



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“My single achievement is that, with my sincere and honest approach, I inculcated the spirit of oneness and togetherness among players.”

- BISHAN SINGH BEDI

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ANCIENT AND MODERN OLYMPICS

Ancient Olympics

The Olympics began in Ancient Greece thousands of years ago. Though it is difficult to determine when exactly they did begin, what is known to us is the venue – Olympic, a valley in Elis on the Peloponnese Peninsula. The first recorded Olympics were held in 776 BCE. The only event was a single stadium footrace, won by a cook named Coroebus.

The Olympic Games were actually just one of four ancient Panhellenic Games held at two or four year intervals, but they were more prestigious than the other three – the Pythian, Nemean and Isthmian Games.

There are several myths to which the origin of the Olympics has been attributed. The myths of Zeus, Heracles and Hippodamia are some of them.



Figure 2.1
Ruins of
Olympia,
Greece;
the birthplace
of Olympic
games.

Rules of the Ancient Olympics

- Only freeborn Greek males could participate in the Games. However, athletes from the Roman Empire were later allowed to join.
- Slaves and convicts were banned.
- Women were not even allowed to enter the stadiums once they were married.
- Competitors had to stay in Olympia for one month and practice before the commencement of the Games. They also had to take an oath that they had already trained for ten months in their state before coming to Olympia.
- Professionals were not allowed to participate.

The Olympic Truce

The Olympic Truce, or '*Ekecheiria*', was a tradition established in the 9th Century BCE for the ancient Greece Olympics. The Truce guaranteed the players, their families, trainers and pilgrims from all participating nations safe passage, even through politically hostile territories. It was announced by the citizens of Elis. Then, three runners called the *spondophoroi* would spread the message to the other nation states. During the Truce, armies could not invade participating cities, legal matters were halted and death penalty suspended.

The Ceremony: The Games began with an opening ceremony in the auditorium. The players then marched into the arena and were introduced to the audience.

Awards: No medals were awarded in the ancient Olympic Games. The winners were instead honoured by the judges with a wreath made from the leaves of the sacred olive tree in the temple of Zeus. victory at the Games was thus a highly coveted goal for aspiring athletes.

Famous Olympic Champions: Leonidas of Rhodes, Milo of Croton, Cynisca of Sparta, Macedonian Bilistiche

Decline: abolished in 394 CE by the Roman emperor Theodosius I, Olympia was finally destroyed by an earthquake.

Modern Olympics

The credit for starting the modern Olympic Games goes to Baron de Coubertin. He called for a meeting of various countries in 1893, in which countries like Sweden, Greece, Italy and Spain spoke in favour of his endeavour. 75 representatives of 13 countries participated and resolved that “*sports competitions should be held every four years on the line of the Greek Olympic Games and every nation should be invited to participate.*” The first modern Olympics were organized in 1896. Athens hosted it and nine countries competed.

The Ceremony

The Olympic Games begins with the burning of the torch in Olympic village, Greece. The participants of each country conduct a march past, with the Greek troupe taking the lead and athletes from the host country take up the rear. After cultural and entertainment programmes, the Olympic Flag is hoisted and the flame lit by the torch. The leader of the host city then declares the commencement of the Games.

The Olympic Games are closed with an assembly of all participants. Three flags are then hoisted. First, the Greek flag to the tune of the Greek national anthem; second, the host country's flag with its national anthem and third, the flag of the country hosting the next Games, to the tune of its national anthem.

The Olympic Flag is handed over to the mayor of the city, who keeps it safe till the next Games. The flame is finally extinguished.



Figure 2.3 The opening ceremony of Olympic Games

The Olympic Oath: *“In the name of all the competitors, I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, committing ourselves to a sport without doping and without drugs, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams.”*

Rules for Competitors

- They should be the citizen of a participating country by law.
- Once a player has competed for one country in an Olympic, she/he cannot compete for a different country in future, the exception being the creation of a new state confirmed by a treaty.
- Previously professionals were not allowed. This was eventually rectified.
- There is no age limit and members of both sexes may participate.

Awards: The first, second and third position holders are awarded with gold, silver and bronze medals. The next five position holders are given certificates.

OLYMPISM – CONCEPT AND OLYMPICS VALUES (EXCELLENCE, FRIENDSHIP AND RESPECT)

Olympism is a philosophy of life. The word ‘Olympism’ refers to the philosophy of the Olympic Games.

Fundamental Principles of Olympism

The following fundamental principles of Olympism are explained in the Olympic Charter.

1. Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.
2. The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promote a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.
3. The Olympic Movement is the concerted, organised, universal and permanent action, carried out under the supreme authority of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), including all individuals and entities who are inspired by the values of Olympism. It covers the five continents. So, its symbol/emblem is five interlaced rings.

Olympic Values

According to the Olympic Charter, the initial values of Olympism were to 'promote effort,' 'preserve human dignity,' and 'build peace.'

They have changed over time and are now stated in more modern words as:

- Striving for greatness and helping others to achieve their full potential.
- Being unique and unusual, the Olympic Games celebrate friendship – an event that draws people together every few years.
- Respecting oneself, the rules, your opponents, the environment, the general public, and so forth.
- Setting your rivalries aside is the concept. We have more in common than we have differences.

The core ideals/values also include five educational values. These values have been incorporated from the three domains of learning:

Mental, Emotional and Physical. They are as follows: Joy of effort; Fair play ; Respect for others; Pursuit of excellence, and Balance in life between body, will and mind.

OLYMPIC SYMBOL, IDEALS, OBJECTIVES AND VALUES OF OLYMPISM

Olympic Symbol : *The Olympic symbol, designed by Baron de Coubertin (Pierre de Coubertin) himself in 1914, is made of five interlinked rings to celebrate the sporting friendship and cooperation between the people of all five continents.*

The symbol is painted on the Olympic flag against a white background of silk. The new Olympic motto in Latin words –Citius, Altius, Fortius – Communiter for Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together; is carved under the emblem. The flag was first hoisted in 1920 at the Antwerp Games, Belgium.

Olympic Ideals: *“The important thing in the Olympics is not to win, but to take part. The important thing in life is not the triumph, but struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered, but to have fought well.” – Speech from the Bishop of Pennsylvania in the 1908 Olympic Games held in London.*

Olympic Objectives

The objectives of the Olympic Games are thus:

- The development of team spirit, sense of loyalty, and honour not only among sportspersons, but also among humanity beyond the realm of sports.
- To promote competitive sports and preserve them for future generations.
- To bring international communities closer and call for peace and harmony to get rid of divisions of caste, creed, colour, race and religion.
- To highlight the importance of physical education and the positive impact it has on the youth's character and personality development.

Olympic Anthem



The Olympic Flag

For details about the Olympic games and its interesting facts refer Table 2.1 Chronology of the Modern Olympic Games.

The Olympic Anthem

“Immortal spirit of antiquity,
Father of the true, beautiful and good,
Descend, appear, shed over us thy light
Upon this ground and under this sky
Which has first witnessed thy unperishable fame.
Give life and animation to those noble games!
Throw wreaths of fadeless flowers to the victors
In the race and in the strife!
Create in our breasts, hearts of steel!
In thy light, plains, mountains and seas
Shine in a roseate hue and form a vast temple
To which all nations throng to adore thee,
Oh immortal spirit of antiquity!”

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

The IOC was founded by Pierre de Coubertin, on 23 June 1894, with Demetrios Vikelas as its first president. It is based in Laussane, Switzerland.

Main Functions of the IOC

- To encourage and support the promotion of ethics in sports as well as education of youth through sports
- To encourage and support the organisation, development and coordination of sports and sports competitions.
- To ensure the regular celebration of the Olympic Games.
- To act against any form of discrimination affecting the Olympic Movement, and many other functions.

INDIAN OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA), also known as Bharatiya Olympic Sangh, was established in 1927 by Sir Dorabji Tata and Dr A G Noehren as President and General Secretary. Its headquarters are located at New Delhi.

Main Objectives of the IOA

- Undertakes to respect of Provisions of the Olympic Charter, the Olympic movement, the World Anti-Doping Code and to abide by the decisions of the IOC.
- To promote and encourage the physical, moral and cultural education of the youth of the nation for the development of character, good health and good citizenship.
- To educate the public of the country as to the value of sports.
- In cooperation with National Sports Federations to guard and enforce the applicable rules and many other works.

SUMMARY

1. The first recorded Olympics were held in 776 BCE. The only event was a single stadium footrace, won by a cook named Coroebus.
2. The first modern Olympics were organised in 1896. Athens hosted it and nine countries competed.
3. Once a player has competed for one country in an Olympic, she/he cannot compete for a different country in future, the exception being the creation of a new state confirmed by a treaty.
4. The new Olympic motto in Latin words – Citius, Altius, Fortius – Communiter for Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together; is carved under the emblem.
5. The winners may belong to any country or community; it is their courage, skills and hard work that secure them their medals.
6. The Olympic symbol, designed by Pierre de Coubertin in 1914, is made of five inter-linked rings to celebrate the sporting friendship and cooperation between the people of all five continents.
7. Excellence, camaraderie (friendship) and respect are the three core ideals/values of Olympism.

SUMMARY

8. The Olympic Games are about spreading the spirit of friendship and solidarity among people from various countries of the world.
9. The IOC was founded by Pierre de Coubertin, on 23 June 1894, with Demetrios Vikelas as its first president.
10. Like the IOC, the IOA is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation; with its headquarters located at New Delhi.
11. IFs are independent sport federations recognised by the IPC. There are 17 IFs recognised by the IPC.