

Archery

An outdoor game where players shoot an arrow from a bow towards a target. The aim is to get your arrow closest to the middle of the target.

How it started

The oldest remains of a bow were found in Egypt from around 2800BC, made from wood. It would've taken two people to string it and light arrows could be shot 400 yards.

Bows and arrows were starting to get replaced by firearms by 1588 when the Spanish Armada tried to invade England. Only one-third were bowmen and the rest soldiers with guns.

Although numbers using bows and arrows went down, they are still used in hunting and fighting in central Africa and South America today.

The oldest archery tournament held was founded in Yorkshire in 1673 and was called 'Ancient Scorton Arrow'. Archery was introduced as a sport in The Olympics in the Paris Olympics of 1900.

Rules of the sport

Competitors must follow rules on equipment and not raise their bows until a signal is given. Penalties can be given if rules are broken.

Olympic debut

Paris 1900

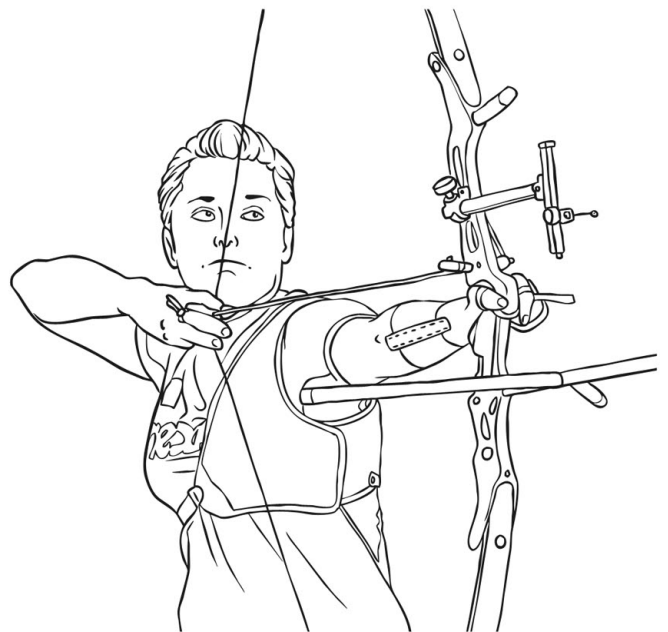
Rio 2016 venue

Sambadrome Marquês de Sapucaí

Interesting Facts

Women were only allowed to compete in the Olympics from 1904 and archery was the only sport they were allowed to play in.

So far, South Korea has won the most gold medals in archery at a total of 19.



Athletics

Fact Sheet

Across the different events the aim is always the same: to outperform your opponents, whether in running, jumping or throwing.

How it Started

At the first Olympic Games in 776 BC, Coroebus of Elis won the running race of 192m to become the first ever Olympic champion.

Significant People

Usain Bolt has won gold medals in all 6 Olympic events in which he has competed and he holds the world record in all!

Finnish runner Paavo Nurmi is the most decorated Olympic track and field athlete, with 9 gold and 3 silver medals.

Rio 2016 Venues:

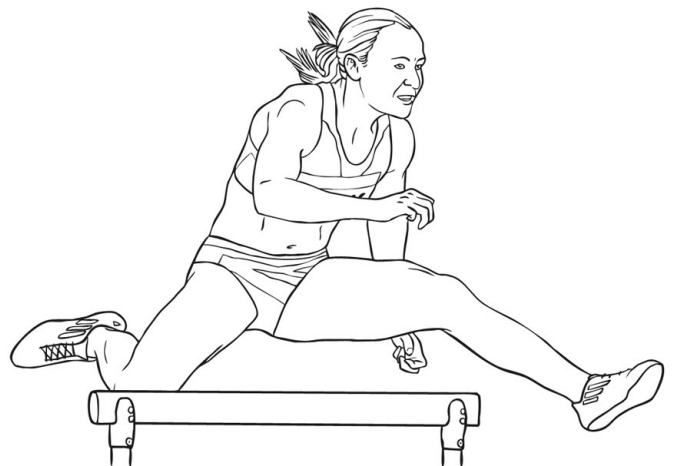
Olympic Stadium
Sambódromo (marathon)

Olympic Debut:

Athens 1896

Did You Know?

When there is no measurable time difference between the first runners over the line, the winner is decided by a 'photo finish', using the image from a camera set up on the finish line.



Badminton

Fact Sheet

Badminton is a racket sport played on an indoor court.

Players score points by hitting a shuttlecock over a net and on to the floor inside the opponent's court.

History

Badminton was developed in the mid-19th century. It was named after English nobleman, the Duke of Beaufort's country home, Badminton House.

About the Competition

Badminton is the fastest racket sport in the world. Professional matches are played at an intense pace.

A player wins a game by scoring 21 points. If the score is 20 - 20, the player who takes a two point advantage wins the game.

A match is the best of three games.

Rackets are lightweight and smaller than a tennis racket.

Rio 2016 Venue:

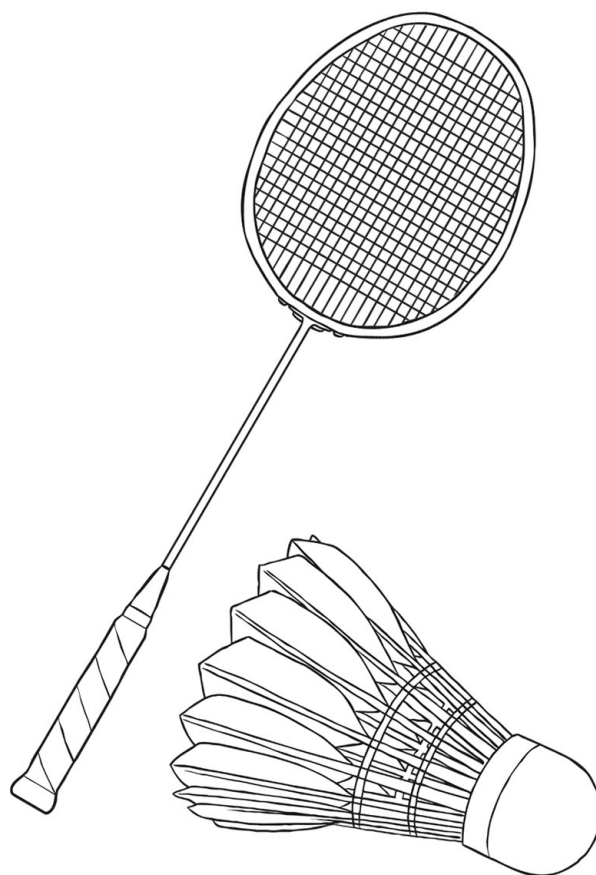
Riocentro - Pavillion 4

Olympic debut:

Barcelona 1992

Interesting Fact

Within 20 seconds, the shuttlecock is usually hit around 40-50 times.



Basketball

Fact Sheet

Two teams of five players try to score points by putting the ball into the opposing side's basket to score points.

How it Started

Basketball started when it was too cold for students to play outdoor sports in the USA.

Significant People

Oscar 'Mão Santa' (Holy Hand) Schmidt of Brazil holds the record for the most points scored. With a career which has lasted over 5 Olympic games, he has scored 49,737 points!

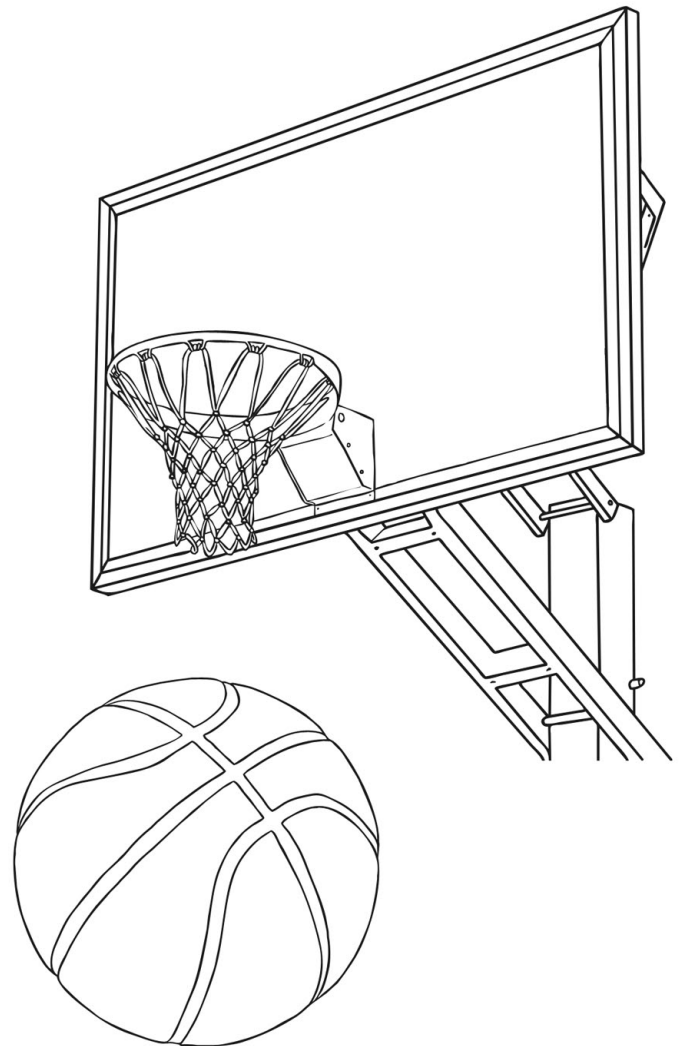
The tallest basketball player to have participated in the Olympic Games is China's Yao Ming, who is 2.29m tall.

Rio 2016 Venues:

Carioca Arena 1
Youth Arena

Olympic Debut:

Berlin 1936



Beach Volleyball

Fact Sheet

This is played in a sand court divided by a net. There are two teams of two players who must try to hit the ball on the ground of their opponents' court to score a point.

How it started:

In the 1920s the first beach volleyball games were played on the beaches of Santa Monica.

Interesting Facts:

Most matches go ahead even in rain or wind, only lightning or strong wind and rain can cause the game to be stopped.

The referee can decide if the ball has landed in or outside taking into account the ball's mark in the sand.

Rio 2016 venue:

Beach Volleyball Arena

Olympic debut:

Atlanta 1996

Olympic Medalists:

Americans Kerri Walsh Jennings and Misty May have won gold over the last three Olympic games.



BMX Cycling

Fact Sheet

Eight BMX cyclists race each other over an obstacle course. The first to cross the finish line is the winner!

How it Started

Bicycle motocross, or BMX, started in the 1960s in California.

Significant People

Anne-Caroline Chausson and Laëtitia Le Corguillé won gold and silver for France in the first Olympic BMX competition.

Maris Strombergs of Latvia won men's gold in both Olympic Games that have so far featured BMX: Beijing 2008 and London 2012.

Rio 2016 Venue:
Olympic BMX Centre

Olympic Debut:
Beijing 2008

Did You Know?

From the age of five, BMX riders can compete for the world #1 spot!



Boxing

Fact Sheet

This game involves two boxers who try to dominate each other by landing punches on each other's upper body or head. This sport is one of the only one-versus-one events at the Olympics. It requires great strength, speed, intelligence and endurance.

How it started:

Boxing has been in the Olympics since 1904, except in the 1912 Stockholm Games where it was banned under Swedish law. Women's boxing debuted at London 2012.

Interesting Facts:

A boxer receives 10 points for winning a round, while the loser gets between six and nine. Unless one boxer is disqualified, knocked out or stopped for their own protection, the fighter with the most points wins. Boxers are scored on quality techniques, tactics, landed blows, domination, competitiveness, and adherence to the rules.

Rio 2016 venue:

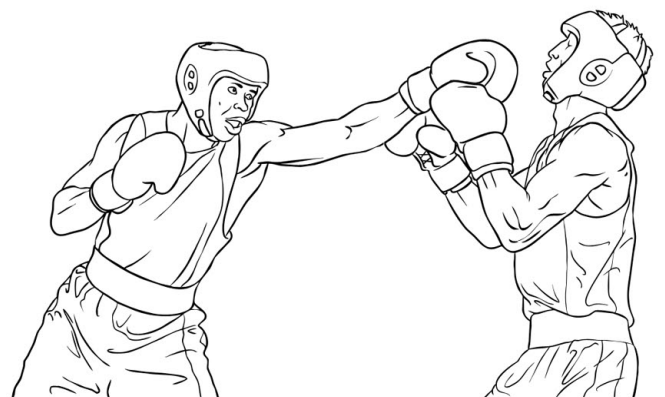
Riocentro - Pavilion 6

Olympic debut:

St. Louis 1904

Olympic Medalists:

The 2012 Olympics was a great year for gold medals in boxing for the UK: Luke Campbell of Great Britain was awarded gold in the bantamweight category at the 2012 Olympics; Anthony Joshua also won gold for Britain in the super heavyweight category; Nicola Adams won gold in the women's flyweight event. Nicola Adams is the first woman to win an Olympic boxing title. She has been awarded an MBE!



Canoe Sprint

Fact Sheet

In canoe sprint, athletes race canoes or kayaks on calm water for distances ranging from 200m to 1000m.

Race Categories:

Canoe sprint has different race categories such as:

- the length of the course
- whether the boat is a canoe or kayak
- how many athletes are in the boat (1, 2, or 4).

About the Competition

Canoe sprint takes place on a straight course divided into lanes. The distances recognised for races in the Summer Olympics are 200m, 500m, and 1000m.

Each boat has its own designated number and lane.

For each race a number of heats, semi-finals and a final may be necessary, depending on the number of competitors.

Rio 2016 Venue:

Lagoa stadium

Olympic Debut:

Berlin 1936

Interesting Fact

Boats are identified by the letter 'K' (kayak) and 'C' (canoe), followed by a number indicating how many paddlers there are, and the distance of the event.



Canoe Slalom

Fact Sheet

In canoe/kayak slalom, the aim is to navigate a decked canoe or kayak through a course of river rapids with hanging gates in the fastest time possible.

Race Categories:

There are currently 4 Olympic Medal events:

- C-1 (canoe single) Men
- C-1 (canoe single) Women (to be added in 2020)
- K-1 (kayak single) Men
- K-1 (kayak single) Women

About the Competition:

Each gate consists of one or two poles hanging from a wire above the river. There are 18-25 gates which are numbered and coloured as either green (downstream) or red (upstream).

Most slalom courses take 80 to 120 seconds to complete depending on the course and degree of water turbulence.

Rio 2016 Venue:

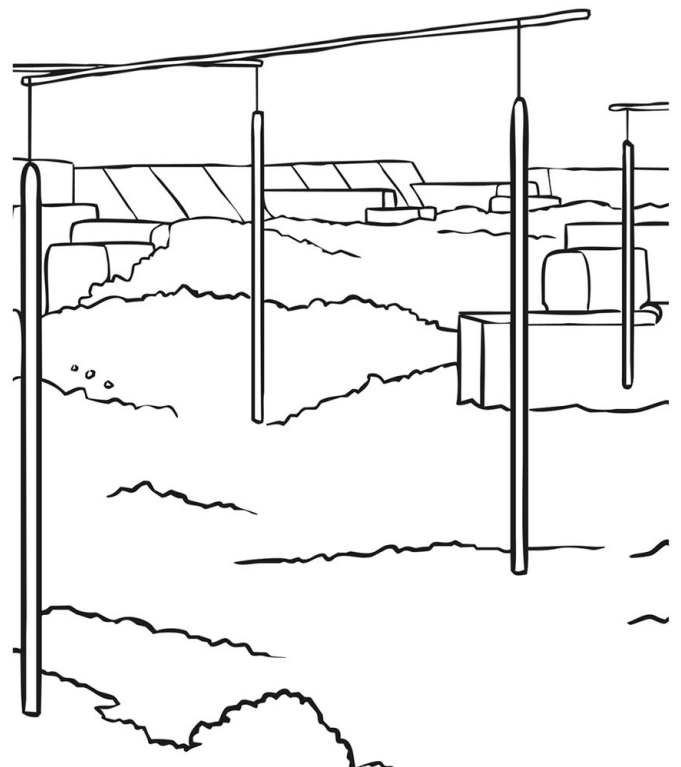
Whitewater Stadium

Olympics Debut:

Munich 1972

Interesting Fact

For safety, athletes must wear helmets and life jackets.



Cycling Fact Sheet

Cyclists compete against one another to achieve the fastest times on an oval-shaped 250m wooden track.

How it started

The very first velodrome buildings were built in Europe for athletes to train in during the winter months. Cycling has featured in every Olympics since 1896, however women didn't compete until 1988 at the sprint events in Seoul.

Interesting facts

There are five events in cycling which include the sprint, team sprint, keirin, team pursuit and omnium. The bikes are lightweight and robust and are designed to reach maximum speed as quickly as possible. They only have one gear and no brakes. Any sudden change in direction or speed can result in a crash.

At the London 2012 Games, Sir Chris Hoy from Great Britain won two gold medals before retiring from the sport. He is eleven times a world champion and six times an Olympic champion, with a total of seven Olympic medals, six gold and one silver. This also made him the joint holder of most medals won by any British athlete in the Olympic Games with fellow cyclist Sir Bradley Wiggins.

Rio 2016 venue:

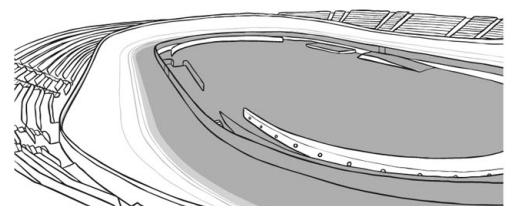
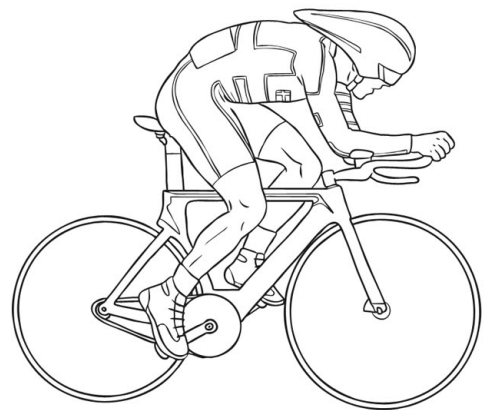
Rio Olympic Velodrome

Olympic debut:

Athens 1896

Olympic medalists:

Great Britain won 7 of the 10 golds awarded in the London 2012 Games. Laura Trott from Great Britain is one of the upcoming stars from the new generation of cyclists, as she won two gold medals at London 2012 at just 20 years old.



Diving

Fact Sheet

Divers jump from a platform or springboard, performing acrobatic manoeuvres into a large pool. The performance is graded out of 10 by judges. The diver with the most points is the winner.

How it started:

The sport's Olympic debut in Saint Louis introduced distance diving. The diver who remained underwater for the longest distance was the winner.

The format of the sport was typically modified until the Sydney 2000 Games, where synchronised events from the platform and springboards were included.

Interesting Facts:

In recent years, China has won the most medals, taking home 25 of the 31 medals awarded since Atlanta 1996.

At Beijing 2008, Matthew Mitcham from Australia performed a near perfect twist, receiving four scores of 10 points and a total score of 112.10. This is currently the highest ever score in Olympic Diving.

Diving scores are recorded out of 10 by a panel of judges. The highest and lowest scores are discarded and the remaining points are added together and multiplied by the degree of difficulty of the dive. Seven judges score the individual events and 11 judges score the synchronised events.

Rio 2016 venue:

Maria Lenk Aquatics Centre

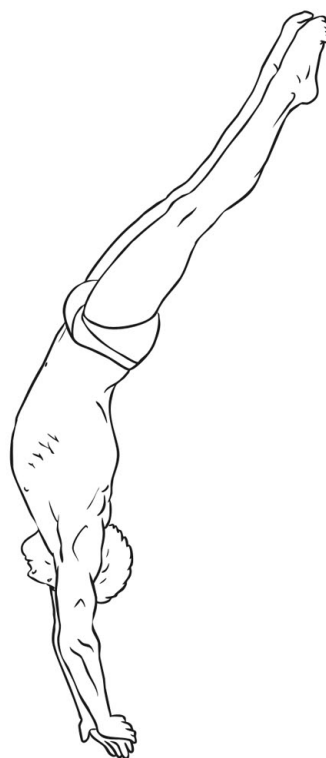
Olympic debut:

St. Louis 1904

Olympic Medalists:

The first ever 10 metre platform Olympic Gold Medalist was American George Sheldon in 1904 in St. Louis.

The most recent Olympic 10 metre platform Olympic Gold Medalist is American David Boudia. This was at the London 2012 Olympic Games where Tom Daley from Great Britain landed Bronze.



Fencing

Fact Sheet

A form of combat sport between two fencers in which the aim is to land blows on the opponent's target area body with a blunt-ended blade as many times as possible during a match.

How it started:

Fencing originated from épée fights and became a sport in the fifteenth century, when duels were bloody and occasionally fatal.

It is one of the longest-running sports in the Olympics, and has featured in the programme since the Athens 1896 Games, the first of the Modern Olympic Era.

Interesting fact:

Fencers must greet each other before every bout, and a failure to do so can lead to disqualification.

Fencing dictionary:

Balestra - footwork move comprising a jump towards the opponent.

Flèche - rapid attack to surprise the opponent.

On guard - the referee's words to start the bout.

Piste - fencers move on a metal piste (playing area) 14m long and 1.5m-2m wide.

Olympic debut

Athens 1896

Rio 2016 venue

Carioca Arena 3

Events

Men's - 3 individual, 2 team

Women's - 3 individual, 2 team



Football

Fact Sheet

Two teams of 11 players compete for the ball and try to score in the opponent's goal. They must defend their own goal to avoid defeat. Only the goalkeeper is allowed to touch the ball with their hands as the other players must use their feet or heads.

Rules of the sport

There are many rules in football such as fouls, free kicks, penalties, handball and the offside ruling. One referee and two linesmen oversee the game in two halves which each last 45 minutes.

Teams earn three points for a win, one point for a draw and zero points if they are defeated.

Interesting Fact

The Olympic football event is the only major international competition the Brazil men's team has not won. With Brazil hosting the Olympics, expect them to field a strong team.

Rio 2016 venue:

Amazônia Arena (Manaus)
Corinthians Arena (São Paulo)
Fonte Nova Arena (Salvador)
Mané Garrincha Stadium (Brasília)
Maracanã and Olympic Stadium (Rio de Janeiro)
Mineirão (Belo Horizonte)

Olympic debut:

Paris 1900



Golf

Fact Sheet

Players use a selection of clubs to get their ball from the teeing ground into a hole in the fewest number of shots possible – the player who completes the 18-hole course with the lowest shot total wins the round.

How it Started

Golf began in Scotland in the Middle Ages, but the game was initially banned by King James II for interfering with archery practice.

About the Competition

A competition golf course consists of 18 holes of varying length and is played four times during a championship.

Par is the pre-determined number of shots that an elite golfer should take to complete a single hole:

- Par 3 - 130-250 yards
- Par 4 - 251-445 yards
- Par 5 - over 550 yards

Given in relation to the number of shots above or below par, the winner takes the fewest shots to get his or her ball in each hole over the full competition.

Rio 2016 Venue:

Olympic Golf Course

Olympic Debut:

Paris 1900

Interesting Fact

On 6 February 1971, golf was played on the moon when US astronaut Alan Shepherd exited Apollo 14 and hit a 6-iron shot.



Artistic Gymnastics

Fact Sheet

Gymnasts push themselves to their physical limits by combining strength, balance, flexibility and grace. They use apparatus such as vaults, bars and beams, as well as in the apparatus-free 'floor' routines.

How it Started

Records of acrobatic moves similar to those seen today exist from ancient Egypt, although it is believed that gymnastics originated in ancient Greece.

In ancient times, gymnastics competitions included wrestling and dueling with bulls!

Significant People

Romanian Nadia Comaneci made history at Montreal 1976 as the first gymnast ever to receive full marks from all judges, known as the 'perfect 10'. She was aged just 14 at the time.

Rio 2016 Venue:
Rio Olympic Arena

Olympic Debut:
Athens 1896

Daiane dos Santos of Brazil performed the first Arabian double pike in the floor exercises at the 2003 World Championships. This move is now known as 'Dos Santos'!



Handball

Fact Sheet

Two teams of seven players pass the ball hand-to-hand and attempt to score by throwing it into the other team's goal - the team with the highest score at the end of the game wins.

How it Started

Handball was first played in Scandinavia and Germany at the end of the 19th century, with the modern rules drawn up in Denmark in 1898.

Significant People

Norway's women's team won the last two Olympic gold medals - at London 2012 and Beijing 2008.

During the Moscow 1980 Games, Yugoslavia defeated Kuwait 44-10 in the men's tournament, still the biggest winning margin in an Olympic handball game.

Did You Know?

Handball is the second most-played sport in Europe and of the 22 countries to have won Olympic medals, the only non-Europeans are the Republic of Korea and China.

Rio 2016 Venue

Future Arena

Olympic Debut

Berlin 1936

Fun Fact

On its Olympic debut at the Berlin 1936 Games, handball was an 11-a-side game played on large, outdoor pitches - it moved to indoor gyms to avoid Europe's harsh winters.



Hockey

Fact Sheet

This is played on a pitch where two teams of 11 players use sticks to control, dribble, pass and shoot a ball. The team with the most goals wins. A hockey match is divided into four 15 minute quarters.

How it started:

The sport dates back to Ancient Egypt 4000 years ago.

The very first British hockey club was called the Blackheath Hockey Club, formed in 1861.

Interesting Facts:

Hockey is one of the oldest Olympic sports that boasts great skill and bravery along with clever tactics and thrilling penalty shoot-outs.

At the London Games, the Dutch women became Olympic champions for the third time, beating Argentina in the final.

Rio 2016 venue:

Olympic Hockey Centre

Olympic debut:

London 1908

Olympic Medalists:

Argentina is the only South American country to have an Olympic medal in hockey.

India's men's hockey team won six consecutive Olympic titles between 1928-1956.

The team scored 197 goals altogether.



Judo

Fact Sheet

Two competitors enter the combat area and try to throw their opponent to the ground. They must remain on the ground for 20 seconds with their backs on the floor for the round to end. Each round is called a bout and fights last five minutes for men and four minutes for women.

How it started

Jigoro Kano, a young Japanese lecturer, studied jiu-jitsu in the 1880s. He took the style of fighting and removed the most dangerous parts of the sport to create a new style of fighting. He named it judo and it is known as the 'gentle way' of fighting.

The martial art made its Olympic debut in the country of its birth, Tokyo, in 1964. At the Barcelona 1992 Games, women first competed in the sport.

Rules of the sport

Kicking and punching are not allowed in judo. The referee may penalise or disqualify a competitor for dangerous actions.

Traditionally, both competitors wore white kimonos (a jacket and trousers made of thick cloth), but the rules were changed so that one competitor wears blue to help distinguish them.

Olympic debut

Carioca Arena 2

Rio 2016 venue

Tokyo 1964

Interesting Facts

The match referee shouts "hajime!" at the start of each bout. This means 'start' in Japanese.

Fights take place on special synthetic mats which absorb impact and reduce the danger of injury to the fighters.



Mountain Biking

Fact Sheet

Competing over an off-road course, mountain bike riders must adjust quickly to the tough, uneven land in order to cross the finish line ahead of their opponents.

How it Started

Mountain biking originated in California in the 1970s, when cyclists took old bikes out exploring the trails and tracks north of San Francisco.

About the Competition

A mountain bike circuit should not include more than 15% of flat land, so the competitors must use a great deal of effort on uphill parts of the track as well as speed and ability on the downhill parts.

There are lots of different obstacles on a mountain bike course; including singletrack, which is made up of narrow sections of mountain bike trail needing skill and precision to ride at high speed. There is also the rock garden which is a mixture of rocks placed in part of the course to make the riders use more skill and knowledge to pass through.

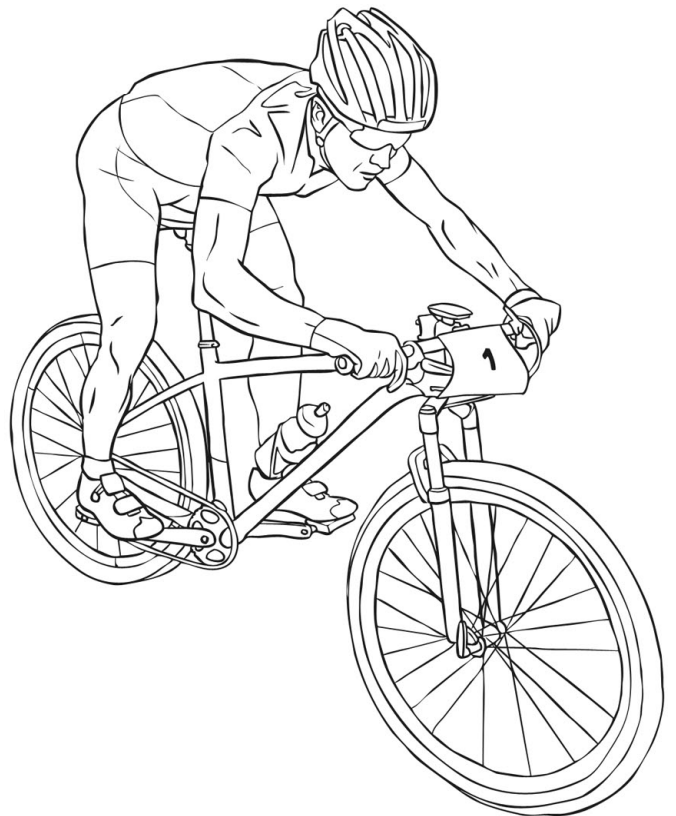
A race lasts on average between 90 minutes and two hours, from the start until the last competitor finishes.

Rio 2016 Venue:
Mountain Bike Centre

Olympic Debut:
Atlanta 1996

Interesting Fact:

If something breaks on their bike, cyclists must fix it themselves or get to the 'Technical Assistance Zone' where their team mechanics can help.



Pentathlon

Fact Sheet

Athletes compete in fencing, swimming and horse riding, followed by a combined running and shooting event, with the first to cross the line winning the gold medal. And all of this happens on one day!

How it all started:

Just as the ancient pentathlon was based on the skills needed to be a soldier, the modern pentathlon was devised to test the abilities required by a cavalry soldier.

Pentathlon was first held in the ancient Olympic Games in 708 BC and consisted of running, long jump, spear throwing, discus and wrestling.

Interesting Facts:

Women first competed in modern pentathlon at the Olympic Games at Sydney 2000, where Great Britain's Stephanie Cook won gold.

Modern pentathlon used to be staged over four or five days, until Atlanta 1996, when it was compacted into one day of action.

Unlike equestrian events in which riders use their own horses, in modern pentathlon the athletes are allocated their rides through a draw on competition day.

Rio 2016 venues:

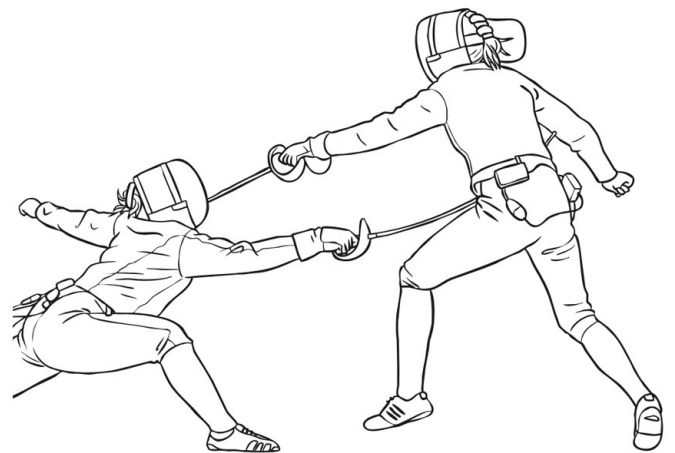
Youth Arena
Deodoro Aquatics Centre
Deodoro Stadium

Olympic debut:

Stockholm 1912

Events:

Men's individual and women's individual.



Rowing

Fact Sheet

Rowing boats of varying lengths and crew sizes race over a straight 2000m course – the boat that crosses the finish line first wins.

How it started:

Rowing for sport began in 1828 with the 1st 'boat race' between the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, an annual tradition that continues to this day.

Interesting Facts:

Rowing has featured at every modern Olympic Games with the exception of the first, in Athens 1896, when poor weather forced the cancellation of the event.

To avoid excessive weight, the cox tends to be small and light, but a minimum weight has been established: 50kg for women and 55kg for men.

The cox once used a megaphone to shout orders, but now there are small speakers distributed along the boat so that all the rowers can hear their instructions.

At Paris 1900, a French boy was plucked from the crowd to act as cox for Dutch rowers François Antoine Brandt and Roelof Klein – and he won an Olympic gold medal.

Rio 2016 venue

Lagoa Stadium

Olympic debut

Paris 1900

Events

In total, there are 8 mens races and 6 womens races. Each race varies in the number of rowers and the size of the boat and oars.



Rugby Fact Sheet

In a seven-a-side version of rugby union, two teams attempt to score tries or win penalties, moving an oval-shaped ball from player to player by hand, always passing it backwards.

How it started

Rugby was born in the 1830s when a young pupil at Rugby School in England picked up the ball during a game of football and ran with it.

The 15-a-side game featured in the 1900, 1908, 1920 and 1924 Olympic Games, but Rio 2016 will see the Olympic debut of rugby sevens.

Interesting Facts

The games only last 14 minutes, split into two seven-minute halves (except for the final, which comprises two halves of 10 minutes).

Rugby sevens was born in 1888 in Melrose, Scotland, created by two butchers – the men's Rugby World Cup Sevens trophy is called the Melrose Cup.

For the spectators, fancy dress is practically de rigueur at rugby sevens tournaments, and the carnival atmosphere during games should go down well in Rio.

Rugby sevens is played on a full-size pitch, the same as is used for the 15-a-side game, requiring incredible stamina from the players.

Olympic debut

Paris 1900

Rio 2016 venue

Deodoro Stadium

Events

Men's and women's



Sailing

Fact Sheet

Powered only by the wind, athletes must sail their identical boats around a course marked out by buoys.

About the Competition

The outcome of the race is dependant on the sailors' talent and how they adapt to the conditions.

Points are awarded based on the athletes finishing positions. The first boat gets one point, the second boat points gets two and so on. The top ten compete in a final with the winner finishing with the lowest points tally overall.

Events

Men's:

- Laser - One-person dinghy
- Finn - Heavyweight one-person dinghy
- 470 - Two-person dinghy
- 49er - Skiff
- RS: X - Windsurf

Women's:

- Laser Radial - One-person dinghy
- 49er FX - Skiff
- RS: X - Windsurf
- 470 - Two-person dinghy

Mixed:

- Nacra 17 - Multihull

Rio 2016 Venue:

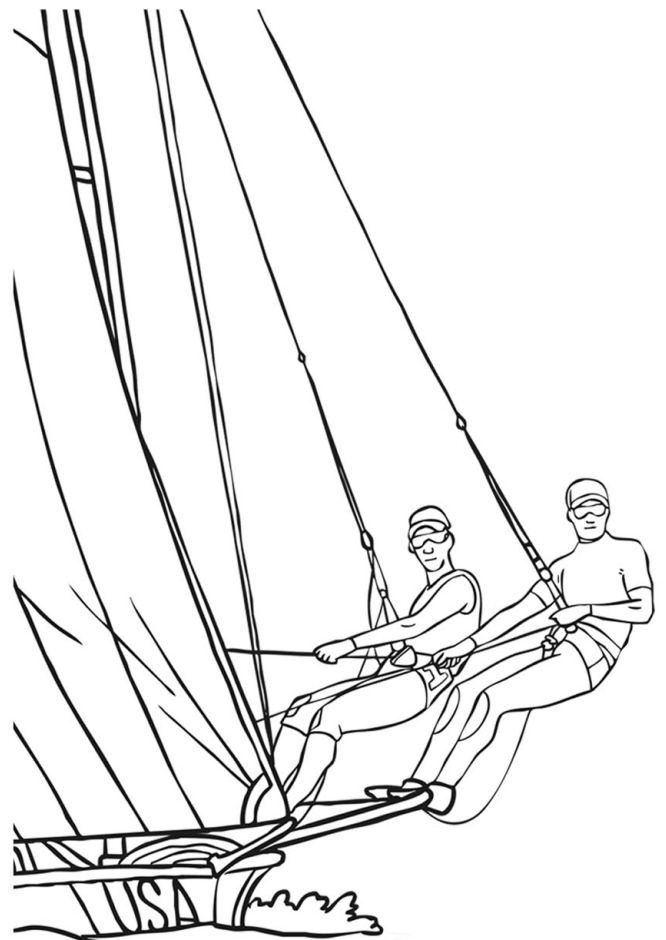
Marina da Glória

Olympic Debut:

Athens 1896

Interesting Fact

There are specific rules for overtaking which all depend on the direction of the wind relative to the boats.



Shooting Fact Sheet

Across a variety of firearm classes and positions, competitors must shoot at stationary or moving targets, scoring points for accuracy.

Shooting is a true test of accuracy and demands intellectual and psychological skill rather than physical strength, with competitions won and lost by a matter of millimetres.

How it started

Men's shooting was part of the first modern Olympic Games, in Athens in 1896, but women's events were not added until the Los Angeles 1984 Games.

Interesting Facts

Competitors wear glasses that enhance the contrast of the target against the background, and control their breathing rate in order to shoot from a more steady position.

Canada's Gerald Ouellete achieved the perfect score of 600 in the prone rifle event at the Melbourne 1956 Games, hitting 60 bullseyes in a row.

Shooting Dictionary

Bullseye - Centre of the target, worth the maximum number of points.

Firing line - The line behind which competitors take up their positions.

Series - A sequence of shots, usually five or ten.

Olympic debut

Athens 1896

Rio 2016 venue

Olympic Shooting centre

Events

Altogether there are 9 men's and 6 women's events. The events are separated into 3 firearm classes - pistol, rifle and shotgun.



Swimming

Fact Sheet

Swimmers must complete a set distance inside the pool, in some cases using a specific swimming style, in the shortest possible time.

How it all started:

Swimming has existed since the Stone Age, when people swam in rivers and lakes in search of food.

The first Olympic pool competitions were held at the London 1908 Games.

Rules:

Swimmers must not dive in before the starting pistol is fired - if this happens, a false start is declared and the swimmer at fault is disqualified.

Interesting Facts:

In order to reduce their times in the 50m freestyle, most Olympic swimmers complete the event without taking a breath.

Swimmers often remove body hair to be more aerodynamic.

Equatorial Guinea's Eric Moussambani learnt to swim just 6 months before Sydney 2000: he finished the 100m freestyle in 1min 52.72sec - the winning time was 48.30sec.

Olympic debut

Athens 1896

Rio 2016 venue

Olympic Aquatics Stadium

Events

There are 32 events in total, including freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, medley and relay races.

Michael Phelps is the most successful Olympian of all time: he won 22 medals at Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 and London 2012, including a record number of golds: 18.



Table Tennis

Fact Sheet

An indoor game based on tennis, which can be played by two or four players. It is played with paddles to hit a small ball across a table divided by a net. The object of the game is to score 11 points before your opponent in a match of usually 3, 5 or 7 games.

How it started

In late 1880s England, some Victorians decided to turn their dining room tables into miniature versions of traditional tennis. Everyday objects were used to make the game, such as a line of books as the net, empty cigar box lids as rackets and the ball would be either string or a cork.

It was given many different names when the games first started such as 'whiff whaff', 'gossamer' and 'flim flam', all created from the sound the ball makes when it is hit. An English manufacturer later sold the name 'Ping-Pong' to the Parker Brothers in the United States. It returned to Europe as 'table tennis'.

Rules of the sport

There are rules on the size and colour of table and size and weight of the ball. The material of the racket should be wooden, although it can be of any size, weight and shape.

Olympic debut

Seoul 1988

Rio 2016 venue

Riocentro – Pavilion 3

Interesting Facts

Table tennis was banned in the Soviet Union from 1930 to 1950. The sport was believed to be harmful to the eyes.

World class table tennis players can hit a ball at over 100 miles per hour.



Taekwondo Fact Sheet

Fighters score points by performing punches and kicks on the head and torso of their opponent. The fighter with the most points wins.

How it started

Taekwondo began in Korea around 2,000 years ago but the modern day rules of taekwondo were defined in 1955. It originally was a demonstration sport at the 1988 and 1992 Games but did not become a medal event until the Sydney 2000 Games.

Interesting facts

A new scoring system was introduced for the London 2012 Olympic Games including a smaller mat size to make the event more exciting.

At the London 2012 Games, Jade Jones from Great Britain took home the gold medal by beating Hou Yuzhuo of China.

Knockouts are rare in taekwondo, Dae Sung Moon won gold at Athens 2004 with a spinning kick that ended Alexandros Nikolaidis' participation there and then.

Cuba's Angel Matos was so upset at being disqualified in Beijing 2008 for his bronze medal match that he kicked one of the referees in the face. He was banned from the Olympics for life.

Rio 2016 venue:

Carioca Arena 3

Olympic debut:

Sydney 2000

Olympic medalists:

Korea has dominated Olympics taekwondo over the years taking one third of the sport's gold medals to date. China is the second highest medal-winners with eight, including five golds.



Tennis

Fact Sheet

Athletes must hit the ball with a racket over a net into the opponent's area, winning a point when their rival does not manage to return it.

How it started:

Players used their hands to hit a ball against a wall in a 12th-century French game called 'lawn tennis'. It was developed using rackets and garden courts.

Men's tennis started at the Athens 1896 Games and women joined at Paris 1900, when Britain's Charlotte Cooper became the first female Olympic champion.

Interesting Facts:

When a player does not have any points their score is called 'love' – it's nothing to do with romance, but in reference to the egg-like shape of the number 0 – 'l'oeuf' in French.

The USA's John Isner beat France's Nicolas Pietrangeli at Wimbledon 2010 – played over three days, it is the longest ever tennis match.

Australian Samuel Groth officially hit the fastest service of all time, clocked at 263kmph.

Olympic debut

Athens 1896

Rio 2016 venue

Olympic Tennis Centre

Events

Men's - Singles, Doubles

Women's - Singles, Doubles

Mixed - Doubles



Triathlon

Fact Sheet

Athletes must complete a course consisting of a 1.5km swim, 40km cycle and 10km run in the shortest possible time.

How it Started

The first official triathlon took place in San Diego, USA, on the 25th of September 1974 and consisted of a 500m swim, 8km cycle and 10km run.

About the Competition

Triathlon is one of the few sports with no heats.

Swimming

Starting at the same time, the athletes must swim a 1.5km course in open water, marked out by buoys. The athletes can use any swimming style they like.

Cycling

Leaving the water, the competitors must take off their goggles and helmet to embark on the 40km bike race.

Running

The final stage is a 10km run along city streets. The first athlete to reach the finish line wins the gold medal.

Rio 2016 Venue:

Fort Copacabana

Olympic Debut:

Sydney 2000

Interesting Fact

Triathlon originated in the United States as an alternative training programme to keep track and field athletes fit.



Volleyball

Fact Sheet

Two teams of six players separated by a net have to score points by hitting the ball on to the court of the opposing side.

How it started:

Volleyball was invented in the United States as an alternative sport for older people who could not withstand the constant physical contact of basketball.

Initially, it was called "mintonette" but was renamed volleyball because of the volleying nature of the play.

Important rules:

A team can touch the ball no more than 3 times before sending it over the net.

Every time a team scores a point from the opposition's serve, the players rotate their on-court positions clockwise.

A game is contested in the best of five sets - the first team to win three sets wins.

Volleyball dictionary:

Ace - Serve where the ball hits the ground in the opposition court without the rival team touching it.

Dig - Receiving or defensive shot where a player puts their hands together and 'digs' the ball upwards.

Spike - A forceful shot in which a player jumps as high as possible and smashes the ball from above their head down into the opposition court.

Olympic debut

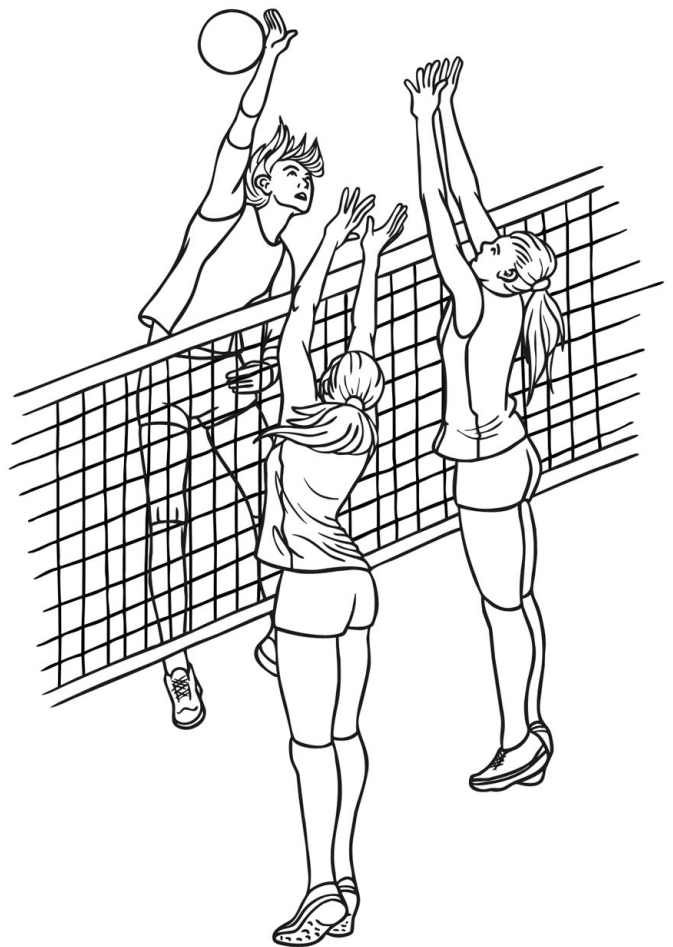
Tokyo 1964

Rio 2016 venue

Maracanãzinho

Events

Men's and women's



Water Polo Fact Sheet

Two teams of seven players face each other in the pool with the objective of throwing the ball into the opposition's goal – the team that scores the most goals wins.

Matches consist of four periods of eight minutes, with intervals between each. The clock is also stopped every time the ball goes out of play or there is a foul, meaning matches generally last 55-65 minutes in total.

How it started

A form of the sport was played in the 19th century in England, Scotland and the USA – it bore a resemblance to regular polo, but with canoes instead of horses.

At Paris 1900, water polo became the first team sport in the Olympic Games. Due to the tough nature of the sport, it went on to earn the nickname 'pool rugby'.

Interesting Fact

The first women's Olympic water polo competition was exactly 100 years after the men's debut, at Sydney 2000.

30-second expert

Egg-beater - A form of treading water that allows a player to maintain a steady position in the pool.

Skip shot - A shot that is aimed at the water and bounces off the surface.

Olympic debut

Paris 1900

Rio 2016 venues

Maria Lenk Aquatics Centre

Olympic Aquatics Stadium

Events

Men's and women's



Weightlifting Fact Sheet

Athletes compete by lifting a steel bar loaded with weights up and over their heads. The winner is the one who can lift the largest weight. Weightlifting identifies the world's strongest athletes. Vast amounts of power and determination are required, as this is a sport that pushes the human body to its limits.

How it started

Weightlifting competitions have been held since ancient times where they were seen as the ultimate tests of male strength. The first world championship took place in England in 1891 and were disputed by seven athletes from six countries.

Interesting facts

Athletes wear a special belt to improve performance and prevent injury. During the competition athletes can lift up to three times their own body weight. The weights are colour coded to indicate their weight. Metal components are used for fixing the weights on the bar, they weigh 2.5kg. The 'weigh-in' procedure is conducted two hours before the competition to ensure competitors are within the required body weight for their event.

The 'snatch' and the 'clean and jerk' are two different types of techniques used in the event. The 'snatch' entails lifting the bar directly from the floor above their head in a single movement. The 'clean and jerk' is a two-stage movement, lifting the bar from the ground to shoulder height and then lifting it above the head. Each athlete is allowed three attempts to perform each technique and the final score is the combined total of the two highest attempts.

Rio 2016 venue

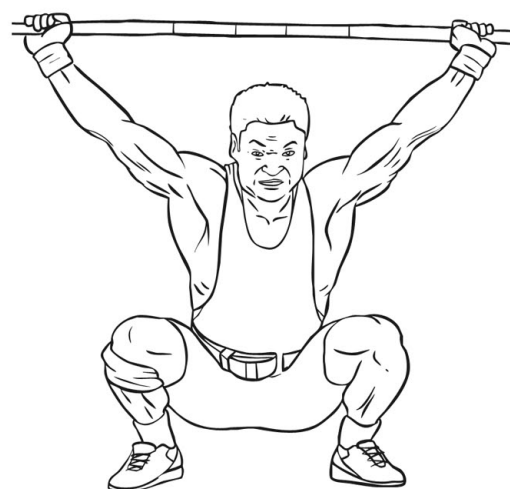
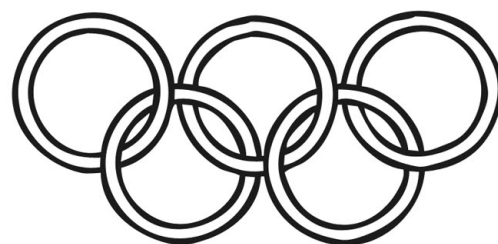
Riocentro – Pavilion 2

Olympic debut

Athens 1896

Events

Men's weightlifting events range from 56kg to 105kg+. Women's range from 48kg to 75kg+.



Wrestling

A combat sport or activity which involves a competitor grappling to keep the opponent down on the ground.

How it started

Wrestling is one of the oldest sports known, stretching back 7000 years. It is also mentioned in the oldest book in the world, the Bible. It was originally used as a method to increase toughness and strength in young men so they would become great soldiers.

Wrestling as a sport came in the 19th century and was an event in the ancient Olympic Games in 708 BC. When the Olympics resumed in 1896, Greco-Roman wrestling was a main event. In 1904, freestyle wrestling and weight classes were introduced.

Freestyle wrestling was first played in the United Kingdom and was taken to the United States by Irish immigrants.

Australia, Japan, Mexico, United Kingdom and United States were the countries to see modern wrestling as a popular sport and activity.

Olympic debut

1904 St. Louis

Rio 2016 venue

Carioca Arena 2

Interesting Facts

Women's wrestling was introduced to the Olympics in 2004.

Wrestling was the final element of a pentathlon in the Ancient Olympic Games, following the discus, javelin, long jump and foot race.

