

Your Name

Professor's Name

Course Title and Number

The History of the Olympic Games

The Olympic Games are an international sports festival that brings people of different countries together. The festival began in ancient Greece. The first Olympic Games were organized every four years, until the time they were banned at the beginning of the early Christian era. This sports event was regularly held at the time of the pre-Christian epoch, which is often called the Golden Age of Greece. The renewal of the Olympic Games didn't take place until 1896. Since then, they have been held every four years, except for the periods during World War I (1914-1917) and World War II (1939-1944) (Findling & Pelle, 2004).

The Ancient Greeks established the Games to honor the ancient gods, especially Zeus, who was considered the most important god in the Greek ancient pantheon. The competition areas included theater performance, oratory, and music. The modern Olympic Games serve to highlight the talents in different kinds of sports and sportsmen from all the parts of the world. They last for two and a half weeks. Following the Greeks' original purposes, the political meaning of the Olympics is to overcome possible international conflicts between countries, if there are any, by means of a friendly competition.

It's interesting to note that only men were allowed to take part in the games. Only one race per day could take place. A longer race was added during the 14th Olympics. The race was made longer again 4 years later. As time passed, a number of new sports activities were included in the Olympics, including jumping, running, spear and discus throwing, and wrestling. Boxing was added for the 23rd games. As the list of sports activities and games included into the international festival expanded, the actual time for the competition became longer, expanding to 5 days (Findling & Pelle, 2004).

The games were officially ended in AD 394 by the Roman emperor Theodosius. He justified his decision with the argument that they promoted pagan attitudes, and the emperor was strongly against paganism. The revival of the games did not begin until 1896, when a French nobleman, Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937), decided to institute an educational program in France to maintain a well-balanced development of body and mind. The story goes that the Greeks themselves took efforts to restart the Games, but their attempts were not successful (Zakus, 2010). Thirteen countries took part in the competition in 1896. The program included nine sports activities. These were

fencing, cycling, lawn tennis, gymnastics, swimming, shooting, track and field, wrestling and weightlifting. The games were a success. The next Olympiad was held in France.

Starting with the 1924 winter sports, events were included for biathlon, skiing, ice hockey, speed skating, and figure skating. However, the summer games still attract the spectators' attention the most. The Games are organized and funded by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Its headquarters is situated in Switzerland, Lausanne (Zakus, 2010).

Works cited

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- Zakus, Dwight H. *The International Olympic Committee: Cengage Learning*. 2010: 439-440. Print.