**ANCIENT OLYMPIC GAMES**

***1. Historical Background:***

* The Sports is a Greek Invention. In Greek the citizens were used to find out time for sports. This value means of developing hunting skills, preparing of war, which they thought as a practice of pleasing the angry gods.
* The evidence of sports in Greek date back to Bronze Age which represents the “Ancient Minoan Civilization of Crete (3000 B.C-1200 B.C)”. In this age public display or entertainment were given main importance and the events were Tumbling, Bull Vaulting, Boxing, Wrestling, Archery and Distance Running.
* At that time many cities of Greek started organizing major athletic festivals at Olympia, in the honour of God Zeus. The First Olympic Games was held in 776 B.C.
* Some historians trace the games back much further on the names of the legends by linking the festivals to Phaeacian Games organized by Odysseus and an elaborate funeral celebration used to organized for the mythical hero Pelops.
* In ancient Olympic game Athletes used to participate and performed naked. This nudity was a reorganization of their heart and humidity of the Greek mountain valleys.
* The Olympic Games was a male dominated game but, the festival name “BERA” provide a separate chance to Greek women for participation.
* The winner of first Olympic s in 776 B.C was Coroebus. Milo the army commander in chief has won at least 6 Olympiads and 26 other lesser crowns.
* The Ancient Olympic Games used to be organized once in four years. The 293 Olympiads Games were terminated by Theodosius the great in 394 A.D. The Roman Emperors strong banned the Greek festivals and the Olympiads Games.

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**Pictorial Illustration of Ancient Olympic Games**

***2. Significance of Ancient Olympic Games:***

* The games were held on the honour of God Zeus, the games were the greatest religious festival in the life of the Greeks.
* Messengers were sent sufficiently in advance to every part of the world to announce the forth coming Olympic Festival. The festival was organized in the month of Olympic Games and this month was considered as a sacred month.
* In festival month any war or dispute taking place among the Greek city states should be stopped at once and a truce was declared.
* All competitors or visitors travelling to and from Olympic, they are allowed to move freely without fear. If someone harmed then it was considered to be the act of sacrilege to religious festival.
* The Ancient Greek Olympic Festival held on the principle of peace and good will among the ancient Greeks.

***3. Rules of Eligibility for Competition:***

* The participants should be free born Greeks.
* The amateurs were allowed to participate.
* The competition must have at least 10 month of training prior to their participation in the Olympics, the last and final month being spent at Olympic under the control of the official judges of the games (The Hellanodikai).

***4. Conduct of the games:***

* **Assembly:** Before commencement of the games the competitors, their trainees, coaches, their fathers, their brothers and the judges assembled in the council house in front of the statue of Zeus Horkios (God of Oaths).
* **Sacrifice:** A pig was sacrificed to god.
* **Oath:** The competitors took an oath that they would not resort to any unfair means to secure victory. Also they took oath they had 10 months of prior training as per Olympic rules and regulations. It was followed by the Olympic judges who swore that they would be honest and fair in their decisions.
* **March Past:** The march past took place in which the trumpeter, officials and competitors participated. At the time of March past, as the competitors passed by the herald announced to the spectators the name of each competitor, his father’s name and his city and asked whether anyone had any charge to make against him. The silence on the part of the spectators was considered as “No Objection” for the concerned competitors.
* **Opening Ceremony:** The herald announced the opening of the games. The chief judge or some distinguished person addressed the participants. Afterwards the events were conducted. The sacred fire was kept burning without stopping in front of the Alter of Zeus.
* **Events:** Originally foot race was the only items in Ancient Olympics and it was conducted in a single day. Later on other events such as foot races, chariot race, horse race, pentathlon (Running, Long Jump, Discuss Throw, Javelin Throw and Wrestling), boxing, Wrestling, etc were added later.
* First day was devoted to religious scarifies and oath taking ceremonies. No event of the competition was held.
* On the second day there was March past, introduction of competitors to spectators and the opening of the games. This was followed by some events such as chariot race, horse race and pentathlon.
* Third day morning time was devoted to official scarifies of 100 oxen at the altar of Zeus. In the after moon foot race, wrestling and boxing were conducted.
* On the fourth day was reserved mainly for the competition for main athletic events for men, such as three foot race and dual combats (wrestling and boxing). The race in armour was conducted at the end of the day’s programme.
* The fifth and last day was devoted for celebration through feasting and enjoyment.

***5. Awards:***

* The winner of the Olympic was highly honoured. It is believed that till the 7th Olympiad, the Olympic winner was given tripods and other valuable objects as prizes.
* Later on wreath made out of leaves plucked by scared olive tree in the temple Zeus was the only rewards given to him by the judge at the Olympic Stadium. The poets immortalized his name in the poems and sculptors craved figures in stones.
* The concern name of the Olympiads was name after the name of the winner of the 200 yards race which was known as stade race.
* Then the winner were escorted home by their fellow mates with triumph and loaded with honour, with varieties of gifts and with special rights.
* They were even considered demi gods. To be crowned a victory in the Olympics was the highest honour according to every Greek citizen.

***6. Decline and Termination of Olympic Games:***

* The Olympic Games continued for seven centuries. When Greek came under Romans dominance it was found that the game lost their original sacrifice, professionalism, corruption and foul play sets.
* The Roman Emperor Theodosius- I passed a rule and terminated the games in the year 394 A.D. In the past history of Ancient Olympic which lasted for 12 centuries, in which 293 Olympic Games were conducted

**DECLINE AND REVIVAL OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES:**

* After the Roman Empire conquered Greece in the mid-2nd century B.C., the Games continued, but their standards and quality declined. In one notorious example from A.D. 67, the decadent Emperor Nero entered an Olympic chariot race, only to disgrace himself by declaring himself the winner even after he fell off his chariot during the event. In A.D. 393, Emperor Theodosius I, a Christian, called for a ban on all “pagan” festivals, ending the ancient Olympic tradition after nearly 12 centuries.
* It would be another 1,500 years before the Games would rise again, largely thanks to the efforts of Baron Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937) of France. Dedicated to the promotion of physical education, the young baron became inspired by the idea of creating a modern Olympic Games after visiting the ancient Olympic site. In November 1892, at a meeting of the Union of Athletics Sports of Paris, Coubertin proposed the idea of reviving the Olympics as an international athletic competition held every four years. Two years later, he got the approval he needed to found the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which would become the governing body of the modern Olympic Games.

**MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES**

***1. The Revival and Revived Modern Olympic Games:***

* After the decline of Olympic Games in ancient period, some of the Greek villages had continued to hold the essence of Olympic Game. In historical records it is evidenced that two Olympic Games were organized by Greeks and Evangelos Zappas (a Greek living in Romania) in 1859 and 1870, but they were unsuccessful in their mission.
* Before the death of Zappas, Zappas donated lot of money to re-establish the Olympic Games in Greece. Equally Parisian Directoire also attempted to establish an Olympic celebration at the end of 18th century.
* In between 1863-1937 Baron Piere de Coubertin plans to excavating the Olympic site for reviving the game.
* The ancient site at Olympic was not suitable to conduct the games therefore, the first of the revived games was held, naturally enough, in Athens in 1986. The sponsors of the modern Olympics were hard pressed for money.
* The Greek government gave about 21/2 lacs drachmae in addition to the money donated by Zappas. Even this money was not enough. In 1986 a merchant name George Averoff gave a princely gift of a million drachmae for renovating the Pan Athletic Stadium and conducting the games.
* In the first Modern Olympic Games only few countries participate, after few years several countries began to participate in the games. At present almost all the nations of the world compete in these games.
* Modern Olympic is also held in once in four year. But during the two world wars games were not held (VI th, XII th and XIII th Olympiads respectively in the year 1916, 1940. and 1944).
* In Ancient period during Olympic Games the wars were stopped for the conduct of the games, but in the modern period, Modern Olympic Games had to be stopped for the conduct of two world wars.

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**Picture of Olympic Game of 1895**

***2. Governing body:***

* International Olympic Committee (I.O.C) is the supreme controlling body for the Modern Olympic Games which was formed during the International Athletic Congress held in Paris on 25th June, 1894.
* The first committee was nominated by Baron de Coubertin on his personal selection of 15 members. The head quarter of I.O.C is located at Campagne Mon Repos, Lausanne (Switzerland).
* From India Sir, Darabji Jamshediji Tata in 1920, Mr. G. D. Sondhi in 1932, Raja Bhalindera Singh in 1947 had the honor of being members of I.O.C.

***3. Organizations and Conduct of the Modern Olympic Games:***

* The first modern Olympics were held in Athens, Greece, in 1896. In the opening ceremony, King Georgios I and a crowd of 60,000 spectators welcomed 280 participants from 13 nations (all male), who would compete in 43 events, including track and field, gymnastics, swimming, wrestling, cycling, tennis, weightlifting, shooting and fencing. All subsequent Olympiads have been numbered even when no Games take place (as in 1916, during World War I, and in 1940 and 1944, during World War II). The official symbol of the modern Games is five interlocking colored rings, representing the continents of North and South America, Asia, Africa, Europe and Australia. The Olympic flag, featuring this symbol on a white background, flew for the first time at the Antwerp Games in 1920.

***4. Rules of Eligibility for Competition:***

The first Olympic Games at Athens in 1896 were merely experimental. The main objective was to give the movement a start. There was no hard and fast rule. Games at Paris in 1900 and those at St. Louis 1904 were no different. In 1908 in London Olympic the rules were given a definite direction.

* One who is by birth belonging to a participating country.
* One who has competed already in the Olympic Games for a nation cannot compete in future Olympic Games for another except in the case of captured country or the creation of the new state confirmed by the treaty.
* Every competitor must be an Amateur (A player who plays a game for the love of it not for money).
* There is no age limit for competitor.
* There was no bar on either sex to compare in the Olympics. However, in some of the sports events women are not allowed, due to some other technical reasons.

***5. Venue for the Olympic Games:***

* The venue of Olympic Games always fixed by majority of votes among the members of International Olympic Committee. The decision of the IOC about the venue conveyed to the concerned NOC (National Olympic Committee) through the mayor of the city to which games are allotted.
* Then the NOC (National Olympic Committee) of the concern country will take the responsibility for organizing and conducting the games. A high power organization committee is constituted which will look after all kinds of activities related to Olympic Games.

***6. Events:***

* The events are fixed by the Organizing Committee in consultation with International Olympic Committee. The approval of the events must be obtained at least 2 years prior to the commencement of the games. Once approved the programme can’t be changed.
* The events are- Athletics, Gymnastics, Boxing, Fencing Shooting Wrestling, Canoeing, Cycling, Rowing, Swimming, Diving, Horse riding events, Weight lifting, Yachting. Due to wide popularity of games Football, Hockey, Basketball, Handball, Volleyball, Water polo have the permanent place in the Olympic Games Programme.
* In the Fifth Olympic Fine Arts was conducted but from 1949 Fine Arts was excluded.

***7. Entries:***

* All entries must be forwarded to the organizing Committee for the Olympic Games through the National Olympic Committee.

***8. Opening Ceremony:***

* On the arrival of the president of the games the members of IOC and the members of NOC will be introduced to him.
* The president will then mount up the tribune of honour.
* The National Anthem of the host country will be played.
* The march past of the Athletes in their national contingents, smartly uniformed will be produced with their national flag and a banner bearing the country names.
* The contingents are placed in alphabetic order. Greek contingents always take the lead and the hosting country contingents always come at last.
* The president takes the salute at the march past. When the contingents come across the president then they dip its flag in token of respect and after passing the president the flag will be lift up.
* The competitions then march round the stadium and line up in the centre of the field, behind their flag and banners, facing the tribune of honour.
* The president of the organizing committee will request the president of the games to declare it open. The president will declare the game open in the conventional words “I declare the Olympic Games of (name of the hosting country) celebrating the ………… (number of Olympic Games) Olympiad of the Modern Era”.
* Immediately there will be a fanfare of trumpets and to the tune of the Olympic Hymm the Olympic flag is hosted.
* Will be released as symbolic gesture of peace and followed by a salute of three gun fires.
* The runners with the Olympic flame will enter the stadium, run around the track once and then the Olympic flame will be lit in the bowl constructed for this purpose. The flame will be burning throughout the period of Olympic Games.
* As soon as the Olympic flag is lit, all the flag bearers will move forward and stand in semi-circle around the rostrum facing the tribute of honour.
* Then the Olympic oath will be taken by the athlete of the host country team, usually the captain. The captain of the host country will hold a corner of the flag and then on behalf of all the competitors will take the following oath.
* The National Anthem of the host country will be played. Thereafter the athletes and the officials march out of the stadium and properly games started.

***9. Awards:***

* First, Second and Third are awarded and the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth are awarded with certificates.

***10. Closing Ceremony:***

* The closing ceremony of the games is simple but quite impressive, though it is on a smaller scale than the opening ceremony.
* In closing ceremony, the flag and banner intermingle with each other, forgetting their colour, caste, creed and nationality.
* They march into the stadium and gathered in the center of the field.
* Then 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 next country’s flag with that country's National Anthem.
* Then the president of IOC will declare the games closed and call the youth of various countries to assemble again after four years.
* After the declaration the ceremonial flag will be handed over to the mayor of the city to keep it safe for the next Olympic Games. Then the trumpets will be sounded, the Olympic Flames will be put off. The Olympic Flag will be lowered to the tune of Olympic Hymm.

***THE OLYMPIC HYMM***

***‘Now sing the virile games by which the body’s beauty***

***Is made to live once more;***

***Let every thoughtful mind fulfill the thinker’ duty***

***And strength of arm restore.***

***Come athletes. To our fields, like those of storied Hellas’***

***Where gods who looked that way***

***Saw graceful form at play, as songs and statues tell us***

***All agile, blithe and gay***

***That so within bared breasts your heart shall leap***

***In strength renewed to fear the tyrant’s head no longer***

***And freedom’s troth to keep,***

***And you ho are March beneath the palms victorious***

***As Conquerors we hail,***

***Whose eyes stay calm and true, below your brows glorious***

***Whose heart shall never fail.***

The lowering of the flag is followed by a salute of five guns. The flag and shield bearer March out of the Stadium while the band present there plays soft music.