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JUST FOR FUN: A QUICK QUIZ

Before we jump into the upcoming events, here's a quick one-question quiz about past Summer Olympic events.

Question: Which sport was never an Olympic event?

- (1) Tug of War
- (2) Squash
- (3) Rope Climbing

Did you say "squash"? If so, you're right. This racket-and-ball sport has never been contested at the Olympics.

But the other two have been featured in several modern Olympics.

Tug of War took place at five Olympic Games in 1900, 1904, 1908, 1912, and 1920. Great Britain holds the most gold medals (2) in this sport.

Rope climbing was contested at only four Olympic Games: 1896, 1904, 1924, and 1932. At the first rope climbing event in 1896, the rope was 14 meters high (about 46 feet). Only the two Greek competitors made it to the top.

Neither of these two sports will be contested at the upcoming XXXIII Olympiad in Paris, France. But there will be one *new* sport at the 2024 Summer Games. Do you know what it is? Keep reading to find out.



By the way, here's some good news for squash lovers. The sport will be contested for the first time ever at the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, California. We can't wait.



Athletics

The ancient Olympic Games

took place in Athens, Greece, every four years for almost twelve centuries — from 776BC to at least 393AD. One of the main sports back then— in addition to chariot racing—was athletics. It included a variety of running, jumping, throwing, and walking events.

At the 2024 Olympics, the athletics competition will also include a variety of running, jumping, throwing, and walking events. But there's one big difference.

At the ancient athletics competition, women weren't allowed to compete. In fact, they weren't even allowed to watch the games.



2024 Olympic Athletics

At a Glance

Olympic Debut: 1896, Athens, Greece.

Number of Disciplines: 3 (track and field, road running, race walking).

Number of Events: 48.

Competitors: 1,810.

Dates: August 1-11.

Country with Most Olympic Gold Medals: USA (344).

But at the 2024 Olympics, women will compete in all the same events as men—from the 5000m track event to the javelin throw to the 20km Race Walk—a total of 48 events in all.

One athletic event that is slightly different for men and women is the heptathlon (women) and decathlon (men). The women's heptathlon consists of seven events over two days. The men's decathlon consists of ten events over two days.

Did You Know?

Who are the fastest two people on Earth?

Short answer: Whoever wins the 100-meter sprint races at the Olympics.

The winners of the 100-meter race are often considered the fastest people in the world.

Basketball

Basketball was invented in 1891 by a physical education teacher in Springfield, Massachusetts. The popularity of the game grew instantly in both high school and college. By 1898, the first professional league was formed.

But as popular as it was, basketball didn't become an official Olympic sport until 1936 at the Summer Games in Berlin, Germany.

And it took even longer—much longer—for women's basketball to be included on an Olympics program. It made its debut at the 1976 Montreal games, forty years after men's basketball was contested at an Olympics. Yet, most of the rules invented back in 1891 still apply to today's basketball games.



2024 Olympic Basketball At a Glance

Olympic Debut: 1936, Berlin, Germany (men's); 1976, Montreal, Canada (women's); 2020, Tokyo, Japan (3x3).

Number of Events: 4 (basketball, men and women; 3x3 basketball, men and women).

Dates: July 27-August 11.

Country with Most Olympic Gold Medals: USA (26).

In the late 1980s, a variation of basketball was created. It was played with three players on each team on a half-court setup with one hoop and backboard. It became known as 3x3 basketball and made its Olympic debut at Tokyo 2020.

At Paris 2024, there will be four tournaments: 5-on-5 basketball for men and women, and the 3x3 competition for men and women.

There is one thing constant about these tournaments. Most of the rules invented back in 1891 still apply to today's basketball games.

Did You Know?

Basketball was originally played with peach baskets. After a player scored, someone had to get the ball out of the peach basket by hand.

Breaking

It all started on the streets of the Bronx in New York City in the 1970s. Young people created dance contests that combined dance creativity with amazing athleticism. They called it breaking.

It has taken decades for breaking (often incorrectly called break-dancing) to make it to the Olympics.

But at Paris 2024, breaking will make its official debut. It's the only new sport added to the program for 2024. (Two other sports that were added to the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo—karate and baseball/softball—have both been dropped from the 2024 Olympic program.)



2024 Olympic Breaking

At a Glance

Olympic Debut: 2024, Paris, France.

Number of Events: 2 (one for men and one for women).

Number of Competitors: 32 (16 B-Boys and 16 B-Girls).

Dates: August 9-10.

Country with Most Olympic Gold

Medals: To come.

What will it take to bring home the gold? Amazing power moves, for sure. Jaw-dropping windmills and freezes, of course. And both a creative and athletic performance often set to funk, rap, and soul music.

This amazing art form is sure to be one of the most popular events at Paris 2024.

Breaking Vocabulary

Breaker: A breaking athlete.

Power Move: A dynamic move or trick that involves breathtaking twists and turns, ending in a freeze.

The Freeze: When a breaker holds his or her body in place for a few seconds in an upside-down position.

Windmill: A power move where a dancer rolls his or her body in a constant circular motion on the floor.

Gymnastics

Gymnastics was introduced at the very first Olympic Games of the modern era in 1896 and has been included in every edition since.

At first, only men participated in gymnastic events. No surprise there, right?

But in the 1928 Games in Amsterdam, women joined the program for the first time.

Since then, gymnastics events have changed a lot. For example, rope climbing was part of the gymnastics events in 1896, 1904, 1924, and 1932. But it has not been on an Olympics program since.



2024 Olympic Gymnastics

At a Glance

Olympic Debut: 1896, Athens.

Number of Disciplines: 3 (artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, trampoline).

Number of Events: 18.
(Artistic:14, Rhythmic: 2, Trampoline: 2).

Competitors: 318 (110 men, 206 women).

Dates: Artistic: July 27-August 5;
Rhythmic: August 8-10; Trampoline:
August 2.

Country with Most Olympic Gold Medals: Soviet Union (73).

Today, there are three sports that make up the Olympic gymnastics program— artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, and trampoline.

Artistic Gymnastics (since 1896): In this discipline, athletes compete on different apparatus and floor routines.

Rhythmic Gymnastics (since 1984): Athletes perform on a floor with either a ball hoop, clubs, ribbon, or rope.

Trampoline (since 2000): Athletes perform acrobatic movements such as twists and somersaults, while bouncing on a trampoline. It became a gymnastic discipline in 2000.

Skateboarding

What do you do when you want to “ride the waves,” but there are no waves around?

Answer: Try “sidewalk surfing,” as it was once known or skateboarding as it will be contested for the second time in Olympic history at Paris 2024.

The exciting competition will take place in two locations:

Park competition takes place in a “bowl” with steep sides and obstacles. Skateboarders perform a variety of mid-air tricks.

Street events take place on a city “street-like” course. The course includes everything from stairs and handrails to benches and curbs. Skateboarders use these obstacles to perform their tricks.



2024 Olympic Skateboarding At a Glance

Olympic Debut: 2020, Tokyo, Japan □.

Number of Disciplines: 2 (street and park).

Number of Events: 4 (street, men and women, and park, men and women).

Competitors: 88.

Dates: July 27-August 7.

Country with Most Olympic Gold Medals: Japan (3).

At Paris 2024, a total of 88 skateboarders will compete in four medal events—street and park, each for men and women.

At Tokyo 2020, the USA women’s team missed out on a medal. But the men’s team brought home a bronze medal in Park and Street.

Can they add to their medal count at Paris 2024?

A Bit of Olympic History

Between 1896 and 2020, the Summer Olympic Games have been *scheduled* thirty-two times. But the Games have only been contested twenty-nine times. Why?

The games were cancelled on three different occasions—in 1916 because of World War I and in 1940 and 1944 because of World War II.

Sport Climbing

Power, endurance, speed, and even a little problem solving: Those are just some of the skills you need to be a gold medal winner in sport climbing at the Olympics.

The sport made its Olympic debut in Tokyo four years ago. At those Games, athletes competed in a single event that combined three disciplines: boulder, lead, and speed. The athlete with the lowest combined score for all three events took home the gold.

In Paris 2024 there will be two disciplines contested: speed (for men and for women), and boulder and lead combined (also for men and for women).

A total 68 athletes will compete for gold in the two disciplines: 28 for speed and 40 for boulder-and-lead.



2024 Olympic Sport Climbing At a Glance

Olympic Debut: 2020, Tokyo, Japan.

Number of Disciplines: 2 (boulder and lead combined, and speed).

Number of Events: 4 (boulder and lead combined, women's and men's; speed, women's and men's).

Competitors: 68 (28 for speed and 40 for boulder and lead).

Dates: August 5-10.

Country with Most Olympic Gold Medals: (tie) Slovenia and Spain (each 1).

So, what's the difference between the two disciplines?

In Speed, two athletes compete for the fastest time in a climb up a 15-meter-high wall.

In boulder and lead combined, boulder athletes climb 4.5m high walls without ropes, in a four-minute time period.

In the lead event, athletes climb with a rope as high as they can on a wall over 15m high in six minutes.

A Bit of Olympic History

In the history of the Summer Olympics, the USA has hosted the Games more than any other country—four times in 1904 in St. Louis, 1932 in Los Angeles, 1984 in Los Angeles, and 1996 in Atlanta. The 2028 Games are also scheduled for Los Angeles.

Surfing

In the 1920s, a Hawaiian athlete named Duke Kahanamoku—a five-time Olympic medalist in swimming—began a campaign to make surfing an Olympic sport.

It took nearly one hundred years for Duke (and others) to achieve that goal. But in 2020 at the XXXII Olympiad in Tokyo, Japan, surfing finally made it onto the Olympic program.

The sport will be contested for the second time at Paris 2024. But the surfing competition won't be taking place *in* Paris. (No water, no surf.)

Instead, the surfing events at Paris 2024 will take place in Tahiti, an island in French Polynesia. Waves



2024 Olympic Surfing At a Glance

Olympic Debut: 2020, Tokyo, Japan. □

Number of Events: 2 (shortboard for men and women).

Competitors: 48 (24 for each gender).

Dates: July 27-August 5.

Country with Most Olympic Gold Medals: (tie) Brazil, USA (each 1).

there often reach up to 3m (9.8 ft.) high.

Tahiti is 15,771 kilometers (9,800 miles) away from the host city. That may seem strange. But this is not the first time that has happened.

At the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, Australia, the equestrian events were held in Stockholm, Sweden—some 15,610 kilometers (9,700 miles) away from Melbourne.

At Paris 2024, twenty-four men and twenty-four women will compete in the surfing competition at Teahupo'o Beach—undoubtedly the perfect location for speed, power, and amazing surfing tricks.

Mother, May I

Surfing competition has its own set of rules for how to surf “politely.” For example, only one surfer can ride a wave at a time. The surfer closest to the peak of a big wave has the right of way.

Table Tennis

What does it take to become a medal contender in table tennis at the Olympic games?

Many professionals say it can take up to 10,000 hours of serious practice. 10,000 hours! That's twenty hours a week, every week, for ten years.

Table tennis made its Olympic debut in Seoul 1988 with men's and women's singles and doubles.

Since then, one country has dominated the sport. The People's Republic of China! In fact, China has won 32 of 37 gold medals from 1988 to 2021.

Table Tennis is a fast sport. How fast? A really good table tennis player will slap the ball across the table at 100 mph (160 km/h). By comparison, the average speed of a

2024 Olympic Table Tennis

At a Glance

Olympic Debut: □ 1988 Seoul.

Number of Events: 5 (two per gender and a mixed).

Competitors: 172 (half men, half women).

Dates: July 27-August 10.

Country with Most Olympic Gold Medals: China (32).

major league fastball is 93 mph (149.6 km/h).

At Paris 2024, a total of 172 table tennis players (half men, half women) will compete across five events (two per gender and a mixed).

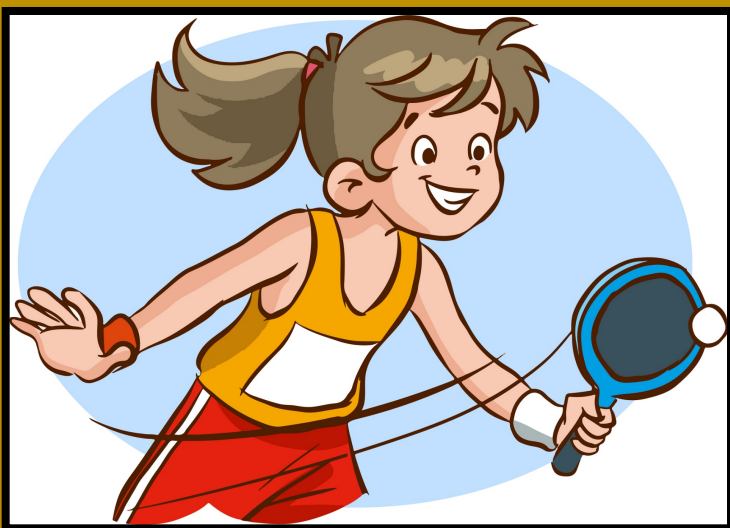
The U.S. has not yet won a medal in table tennis at any Summer Olympic Games. Will that change at Paris 2024?

Table Tennis “Back Then”

Table tennis was invented in England in the 1880s. But back then, it was a little different than it is today. How? There are at least three ways:

- (1) The “net” was a line of books on a table.
- (2) The ball was the rounded top of a champagne cork
- (3) And the paddle? Often it was simply a cigar box lid.

All sounds pretty creative, right?



Volleyball

How about a game of “mintonette”?

“A game of what?” you ask.
Volleyball, of course.”

“Mintonette” is what it used to be called. The word comes from the game badminton.

The game of mintonette was created in 1895 and got popular real fast. Soon it was known as volleyball.

The sport was played as a “demonstration event” at the 1924 Olympics in Paris, France. But it didn’t become an official Olympic medal sport until 1964 at the Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan. It has been contested at every Summer Games since then.



2024 Olympic Volleyball At a Glance

Olympic Debut: 1964, Volleyball, Tokyo, Japan; 1996, Beach Volleyball, Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

Number of Disciplines: 2 (indoor volleyball and beach volleyball).

Number of Events: 4.

Competitors: 24 volleyball teams (12 per gender) and 48 beach volleyball teams (24 per gender).

Dates: July 27-August 11.

Country with the Most Olympic Gold Medals: USA (11).

Beach volleyball became an Olympic sport in 1996. Like indoor volleyball, there were editions for both men and women from the beginning.

At Paris 2024, a total of 24 teams (twelve teams per gender) will participate in indoor volleyball.

A total of 48 teams (twenty-four teams per gender) will participate in the beach volleyball tournament.

So, are you ready for a fast game of mintonette. . .er, volleyball?

Did You Know?

In a game of volleyball, the ball can reach speeds of up to 130km/h (80.7 mph).

Wrestling

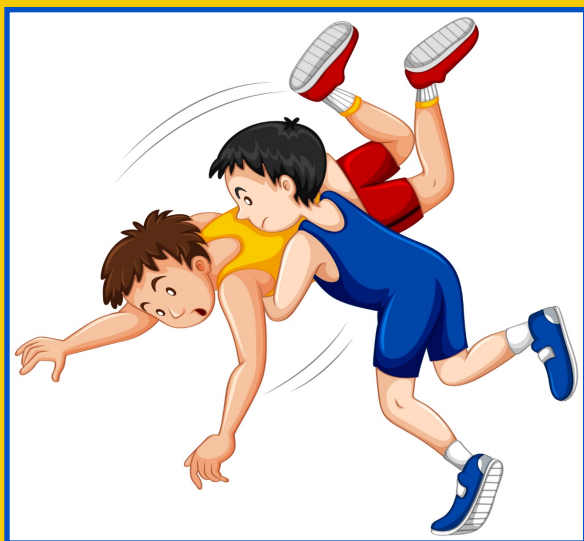
Wrestling may very well be the oldest sport in history. In fact, there is evidence that wrestling matches were held as long ago as 3000 BC.

Today, wrestling contests at the Olympics consist of two disciplines: Greco-Roman and Freestyle.

Greco-Roman wrestling was the style of wrestling contested at the first modern Olympics in 1896. It has been contested at every Summer Olympics since 1896 (except Paris 1900).

Freestyle wrestling was added to the Olympic program in 1904. It has been contested at the Summer Olympics ever since.

What's the difference between the two styles of wrestling? Greco-Roman wrestlers can only hold their opponents above the waist. Freestyle



2024 Olympic Wrestling At a Glance

Olympic Debut: 1896, Athens (Greco-Roman style); 1904, St. Louis, MO (freestyle wrestling).

Number of Disciplines: 2 (Freestyle and Greco-Roman).

Number of Events: 18 (6 events for men, freestyle; 6 events for men, Greco-Roman; 6 events for women, freestyle).

Competitors: 288.

Dates: August 5-12.

Country with Most Olympic Gold Medals: Soviet Union (62).

wrestlers can attack any part of their opponent's body.

At the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece, women's freestyle wrestling was added to the program.

At Paris 2024, 288 wrestlers (men and women) will compete across eighteen different weight categories. Men will wrestle each other in both freestyle and Greco-Roman. Women will wrestle each other only in freestyle wrestling.

Did You Know?

There are two main ways to win an Olympic wrestling match: pinning an opponent's shoulders to the mat, or winning the most points through different moves, like holds.