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### Promotions and Publications

Four years have passed and excitement is mounting for another instalment of the biggest sport spectacle of modern times when the opening ceremony on 13 August 2004 commences the XXVIII Olympiad in Athens, Greece, where it all began more than two millennia ago.

### Background

The ancient Olympic Games were held in Olympia, Greece, every four years from at least 776 B.C. until the Roman emperor Theodosius I issued a decree prohibiting all pagan worship, which included the Olympic Games. During the Middle Ages athletic activities had little significance, but new sport had developed by the late nineteenth century and sports clubs and associations were being founded where sports enthusiasts convened and competed.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937) of France was inspired by the ancient Olympic Games and was very interested in archaeological excavations in Greece. In 1875-81 the remains of Olympia were excavated. He conceived the idea of the modern Olympic Games and first mentioned the idea of reviving the Games during a lecture in 1892. At a sports congress in Paris in 1894 organised by De Coubertin a resolution was accepted to revive the Olympic Games in 1896. The first celebration would be in Athens and thereafter capital cities would take turns in hosting the Games every four years. The new Olympic Movement was to be coordinated and led by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Winter sports in general remained outside the scope of the Olympic Movement until 1924 when an International Winter Sports Week was staged at Chamonix in France. It proved to be so successful that the IOC agreed to stage the Winter Olympic Games in the same year as the Summer Games, but organised as a separate celebration. This was changed in 1986 when the Olympic Charter was amended by the IOC. The Winter and Summer Olympics would henceforth be held alternately every two years.

### Symbols and ceremonies

The Olympic flag with its five coloured rings has been in use at the Olympic Games since 1920 at Antwerp. The intertwined rings symbolise the five continents whose athletes meet to compete. When the symbol was designed, the flags of all the nations of the

world could be made up of the five colours and white background.

The lighting of the Olympic flame has also been tradition since 1928. Torchbearers have been carrying the flame from Greece to the host venue in commemoration of the ancient games since 1936. At the closing ceremony of each Games, the host country of the next Olympiad is ceremonially presented with the Olympic flag.

The Library Service boasts an interesting selection of videos featuring Olympic highlights and triumphs over the years.

### Berlin 1936

#### Hitler's Olympia: the Nazi Olympics 1936 / director, Leni Riefenstahl.

A record of the Olympic Games held in Berlin in 1936, made in two parts - **Fest der Völker** (Festival of the nations) and **Fest der Schönheit** (Festival of beauty). The first part opens in ancient Greece, glorifying both the architecture and the beauty of the human form. This is followed by the carrying of the Olympic flame to Berlin and the parade before Hitler (parts of which are cut in some prints).

The rest is devoted to track and field events. The second part starts with sequences in the Olympic village, then covers the rest of the games. On completion, after two years' editing, the film was accepted as

the official film of the Olympic Committee. Director Leni Riefenstahl captured both the beauty and the exhilaration of the occasion. The grace of the high divers and figures photographed against the sunlight is contrasted with quivering flags and torches which seem to be caught up in the excitement.

Her close-ups of athletes' faces, which make them look like statues, and above all her sense of form and balance, give the film grandeur and magnificence.

Riefenstahl claims that the film is apolitical, but a strong Nazi bias is apparent in its celebration of sport as a heroic, superhuman feat and in the sections portraying Hitler and his entourage. (Source: **Oxford companion to Film**.)

### Tokyo 1964

#### Tokyo Olympiad / producer, Suketaro Taguchi; director, Kon Ichikawa.

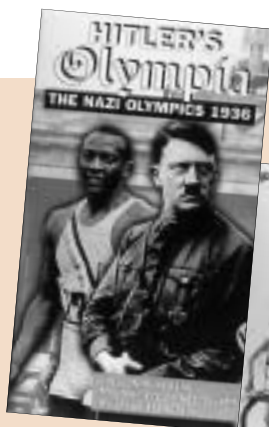
### Los Angeles 1984

#### 16 days of glory / producer and director, Bud Greenspan.

Today a condition for hosting the Olympic Games is that a filmed record of the occasion be produced and over the years some memorable documentaries have resulted. Amongst the most impressive have been **Olympia**, Leni Riefenstahl's monumental two-part impression of the 1936 Olympic



## THE GREEKS ARE AT IT AGAIN



Games in Berlin; Kon Ichikawa's humanistic **Tokyo Olympiad** of 1964; **Visions of eight**, the episodic account of the 1972 Olympics in Munich; and **Games of the XXI Olympiad**, the National Film Board of Canada's record of the 1976 event in Montreal. Because of the extensive television coverage during the games, the producers of these official records have generally tried to get away from the tradition of straight reportage.

For this film of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad, held in Los Angeles from 28 July to 12 August 1984, the filmmakers concentrated on aspects of the human drama, rather than on transient moments of competition.

Following the experiences of a number of individuals, it focuses on specific triumphs and disappointments, amongst them those of long distance runner Dave Moorcroft, judoka Yasuhiro Yamashita, hurdler Edwin Moses, swimmers John Moffet and Rowdy Gaines, gymnast Mary Lou Retton and marathon runner Joan Benoit. Also featured are the clash between Daley Thompson and Jurgen Hingsen in the decathlon and the controversial 3000 metres for women, featuring Mary Decker, Zola Budd and Maricica Puica, as well as the moving opening and closing ceremonies. The film's director, Bud Greenspan, is an experienced producer of sports documentaries, including the 1976 television series, **The Olympiad** of which we have two titles in stock, **Jesse Owens returns to Berlin** and **The African runners**.

### Seoul 1988

**Golden moments: an official highlights video of the Seoul Olympics** / producer, Drummond Challis, director Ray Millichope.

**Olympic gymnastics: an official highlights video of the Seoul Olympics** / producer, Drummond Challis.

### Barcelona 1992

#### 1992 Summer Olympics

This four-part series features highlights of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. The first two videos depict a selection of athletic events, both track and field, as well as the all round individual competition, for both men and women, in gymnastics.

Swimming and diving events from both men's and women's events are featured in the third volume in this series.

The fourth video devotes approximately half-an-hour each to basketball and boxing. For basketball it focuses on the final between the United States and Croatia which was won by the so-called dream team which fea-

tered players like Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson. In the case of boxing it concentrates on a number of final bouts for gold medals in the various categories.

**Olympic experience** / producer and director, Anthony Harrild.

This video highlights different facets of over 20 years of the Games from 1964-1984. The power of the world's fastest man of 1964, Bob Hayes at the Games in Tokyo contrasts with the technical finesse of Carl Lewis at Los Angeles in 1984. Other interesting incidents include Tommie Smith and John Carlos demonstrating the cause of Black Power at Mexico City (1968), the murder of Israeli competitors at Munich in 1972 and the gymnastic skills of Nadia Comaneci in Montreal (1976).

Sports enthusiasts will appreciate your efforts to alert them to the staging of the Olympic Games in Athens 13-29 August 2004. It is the ideal opportunity to promote the video stock, as well as reading matter, on this spectacle and sport in general.

Let the Games begin!

### References

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Note: Reviews by Freddy Ogterop, Film/Video/DVD selector of the Western Cape Provincial Library Service.

2004

## Summer Games

- 1896 Athens, Greece
- 1900 Paris, France
- 1904 St Louis, USA
- 1908 London, Great Britain
- 1912 Stockholm, Sweden
- 1916 Cancelled because of war
- 1920 Antwerp, Belgium
- 1924 Paris, France
- 1928 Amsterdam, Holland
- 1932 Los Angeles, USA
- 1936 Berlin, Germany
- 1940 Cancelled because of war
- 1944 Cancelled because of war
- 1948 London, Great Britain
- 1952 Helsinki, Finland
- 1956 Melbourne, Australia
- 1960 Rome, Italy
- 1964 Tokyo, Japan
- 1968 Mexico City, Mexico
- 1972 Munich, Germany
- 1976 Montreal, Canada
- 1980 Moscow, USSR
- 1984 Los Angeles, USA
- 1988 Seoul, South Korea
- 1992 Barcelona, Spain

- 1996 Atlanta, USA
- 2000 Sydney, Australia
- 2004 Athens, Greece
- 2008 Beijing, China

## Winter Games

- 1924 Chamonix, France
- 1928 St Moritz, Switzerland
- 1932 Lake Placid, USA
- 1936 Garmisch - Partenkirchen, Germany
- 1948 St Moritz, Switzerland
- 1952 Oslo, Norway
- 1956 Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy
- 1960 Squaw Valley, USA
- 1964 Innsbruck, Austria
- 1968 Grenoble, France
- 1972 Sapporo, Japan
- 1976 Innsbruck, Austria
- 1980 Lake Placid, USA
- 1984 Sarajevo, Bosnia
- 1988 Calgary, Canada
- 1992 Albertville, France
- 1994 Lillehammer, Norway
- 1998 Nagano, Japan
- 2002 Salt Lake City, USA
- 2006 Turin, Italy
- 2010 Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada