

HOCKEY HALL of FAME OLYMPIC GAMES FACTS

The "Olympic Medal Collection" at the Hockey Hall of Fame is home to 140 medals from 47 Olympic Games (1896-2010) and is located in the RBC Olympic exhibit within the Hall of Fame's World of Hockey Zone.

Did you know?

1896

- During the inaugural Olympics in 1896, winners were given a silver medal and an olive branch, while runners-up received a copper medal and a laurel branch. The tradition of awarding gold, silver and bronze medals began in 1900.
- The 1900 Olympic Games held in Paris, France marked the first time women were allowed to participate. Charlotte Cooper became the first woman to win an Olympic champion title (singles tennis) though medals were not awarded to women until 1904.
- The 1920 Summer Games marked the first time the Games had been held after eight years off; as the games of 1916 were canceled due to the breakout of World War One.
- Hockey made its debut at the 1920 Olympics in Antwerp, Belgium, at of all places, the Summer Games. The games were played with seven players per side with the rover position being employed. In the end it was the Winnipeg Falcons, representing Canada that would come away with the gold medal.
- The first Winter Olympics took place in Chamonix, France in 1924.
- Since 1928, the face of every Summer Olympic medal features the image of Nike, goddess of victory, holding a palm frond in her left hand and a winner's crown in her right.
- On the afternoon of August 4, during the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, an unexpected friendship was formed between African-American trailblazer, Jesse Owens and German athlete, Luz Long. During the preliminary rounds of the long jump competition, Owens had fouled on his first two attempts and faced elimination if he fouled on his third. It was Long that gave Owens needed advice to help him advance to the final round. Owens went on to win the gold medal and Long the silver, but the sportsmanship Long showed Owens was never lost on the American legend "It took a lot of courage for him to befriend me in front of Hitler... You can melt down all the medals and cups I have and they wouldn't be a plating on the twenty-four karat friendship that I felt for Luz Long at that moment."
- The 1948 Winter Games, hosted by St. Moritz, Switzerland, would be the first Olympic Games held in 12 years due to the breakout of World War Two.
- The medals of the 1960 Winter Games held in Squaw Valley, USA, marked the first time individual sporting disciplines were indicated on each medal.
- Wilma Rudolph overcame infantile paralysis that caused her to require a leg brace until the age of 12 to become the first woman to win three gold medals in track and field during a single Olympic Games at the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome.
- The 1976 Summer Games, held in Montreal would be the first time Canada would play host to the Olympic Games.
- During the 1980 Winter Games, in Lake Placid, the 'Miracle on Ice' took place as the USA's Ice Hockey team would capture the gold medal; marking the first time the USSR would not take home the gold in 20 years.
- Canadian sailor, Lawrence Lemieux committed an extreme act of sportsmanship during the 1988 Summer Games in Seoul, South Korea. During his race, two sailors from Singapore were thrown into the water, injured and unable to right their boat. Though in second place at the time, Lemieux broke away from the race and rescued the two men. He eventually finished the race in 22nd place. Soon after the race, Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the IOC remarked "By your sportsmanship, self-sacrifice and courage, you embody all that is right with the Olympic ideal.
- The medals are designed by the host city's organizing committee, though certain standards must be met. Each medal must be at least three millimeters thick and 60 millimeters in diameter. Additionally, the gold and silver Olympic medals must be made out of 92.5 percent silver, with the gold medal covered in six grams of gold.
- American swimmer Michael Phelps has won a total of 14 Olympic gold medals, but his 16 total medals (including two bronze) puts him in second place all-time behind Soviet gymnast Larissa Latynina who won an amazing 18 medals in her Olympic career.

2010

- At the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver, Canada became the first country to win Olympic gold in both men's and women's hockey on home soil.