FLASHFEED STUDY GUIDE

Summer Olympic Trivia: Ancient Roots, Modern Icons & Historic Feats

Study guide by FlashFeed

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Summer Olympic Trivia: Ancient Roots, Modern Icons & Historic Feats: study guide

The Summer Olympics from the ancient Games and Pierre de Coubertin's 1896 revival through sprint and decathlon record-breakers, Michael Phelps and Simone Biles, to Muhammad Ali's 1960 boxing gold and the sport's all-time medal pantheon.

Edition	November 2026 (2026-11-21)
Pack version	1.0.16
Contents	6 lessons · 287 cards in the app · 72 self-test questions · 69 pictures
In the app	flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/summer-olympic-trivia

How to use this guide

Take one lesson at a time: read the study guide, then go over any key facts. Where a lesson has a self-test, try it from memory before you check the answer key at the back. Follow the Go deeper links when you want more.

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LESSON 1 OF 6

Ancient Roots to Modern Revival (776 BC – 1896 – 1912)

The Ancient Olympiad & Sacred Truce · Pierre de Coubertin & Athens 1896 Revival

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Identify the traditions, combat rules, and historical timeline of the Ancient Olympic Games from 776 BC to 393 AD.
- Recall the founders, inaugural awards, and key milestones of the Athens 1896 modern Olympic revival.

Ancient Roots to Modern Revival (776 BC – 1896 – 1904)

The Ancient Olympiad & Sacred Truce

The ancient Olympic Games began at Olympia in **776 BC**, and the first champion recorded by name was **Coroebus of Elis**, a baker who won the footrace. That race was the *stadion* — a single straight sprint the length of the stadium track, roughly **192 meters**. For the first several decades it was the only event on the programme.

The Games gave Greece its calendar as well as its athletics. An **Olympiad** — the four-year interval between festivals — became the standard unit for reckoning historical time across the Greek world, so events were dated by which Olympiad they fell in.

Competition was protected by the *ekecheiria*, the **sacred truce**. Heralds carried word of it from Elis to every participating city-state, wars were suspended, and athletes and spectators travelling to Olympia were granted safe passage through hostile territory.

The events themselves were unforgiving. **Pankration**, a near-limitless combat sport blending wrestling and boxing, permitted almost everything: the only strictly forbidden actions were **biting and gouging an opponent's eyes**. Wrestling produced the era's most celebrated strongman in **Milo of Croton**, a six-time Olympic champion whose victories spanned **540 BC to 516 BC**.

Athletes competed nude and oiled. Afterwards they scraped the mixture of oil, sweat and dust from their skin with a **strigil**, a curved metal blade that is among the most common objects to survive from the ancient sporting world.

Women were barred from competing, but not from winning. The Spartan princess **Cynisca** became the first female Olympic champion in **396 BC** by **owning and training the victorious chariot team** — in equestrian events the owner, not the driver, took the olive crown.

The festival ran for nearly twelve centuries. Its last securely recorded celebration came in **393 AD**, traditionally linked to **Emperor Theodosius I**'s suppression of pagan practice, though archaeological evidence suggests some competitions continued for a few more years afterward before finally lapsing.

Pierre de Coubertin & Athens 1896 Revival

The modern revival was the work of the French educator **Pierre de Coubertin**, who convened a congress at **the Sorbonne in Paris** in **1894**. It established the International Olympic Committee and resolved to stage the first modern Games in Athens two years later.

Those **1896 Athens Games** drew **14 nations**. They were held in the **Panathenaic Stadium**, an ancient site restored entirely in white marble for the occasion — the only major stadium in the world built from marble. The first champion of the modern era was the American **James Connolly**, who won **the triple jump** on **April 6, 1896**.

The Games' defining moment was the marathon, won by **Spyridon Louis**, **a Greek water-carrier and farmer** whose victory on home soil made him a national figure overnight.

Coubertin also gave the movement its emblem: **five interlocking rings**, one for each inhabited continent taking part.

Athens was men-only. Women first competed at the **1900 Paris Games**, where **22 female athletes** took part, and Britain's **Charlotte Cooper** became the first female individual Olympic champion by winning the tennis singles.

One familiar convention arrived later still. Gold medals for first place were not awarded until the **1904 St. Louis Games**, the third modern Olympics; Athens had given silver to its winners.

Key facts



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The Stadion: The First Olympic Event

For the first several decades of the ancient Games at Olympia, the *stadion* — a single sprint the length of the stadium track, roughly **192 meters** — was the only event on the program. The first champion recorded by name, in **776 BC**, was **Coroebus of Elis**, a baker who won that footrace.



Library of Congress · Ruins of Temple Zeus, Olympia, Greece · No known restrictions (verify at source)

The Sacred Truce: Ekecheiria

Competition at Olympia was protected by the *ekecheiria*, the **sacred truce**. Heralds called *spondophoroi* travelled from Elis to every Greek city-state announcing the festival dates, participating states suspended any ongoing wars, and athletes, pilgrims and officials travelling to Olympia were guaranteed safe passage. Athletes sealed the occasion by swearing solemn oaths before the statue of Zeus before competing.

Pankration's Only Two Rules

Pankration was a near-limitless ancient combat sport blending wrestling and boxing, and it permitted almost everything a fighter could do to an opponent. The only two actions strictly forbidden were **biting** and **gouging an opponent's eyes** — everything else, including strikes on the ground, was fair game.



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An Olive Wreath, Not a Medal

Ancient Olympic champions never stood on a podium for gold. Victors received only a sacred wreath of wild olive branches, the *kotinos* — the same **olive crown** awarded to Cynisca's victorious chariot team — while medals and prize money on-site did not exist. Home city-states often rewarded their champions afterward with pensions and honors instead.

Theodosius I Ends the Ancient Games

The ancient Olympics ran for nearly twelve centuries. Their last securely recorded celebration came in **393 AD**, traditionally linked to Roman Emperor **Theodosius I**'s broader suppression of pagan practices and sanctuaries across the Christianized empire — though archaeological evidence suggests some competitions continued for a few more years before the festival finally lapsed under his successors.

Milo of Croton

Milo of Croton — Six-time ancient Olympic wrestling champion between 540 BC and 516 BC.



Wikimedia Commons · Peter J. Miller · CC BY-SA 4.0

Cynisca, the First Female Champion

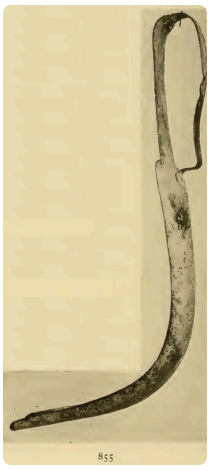
Women were barred from competing at the ancient Games, but not from winning them. The Spartan princess **Cynisca** became the first female Olympic champion in **396 BC** by **owning and training the victorious chariot team** — in equestrian events, ancient rules crowned the owner rather than the driver.



Annatsach · CC BY-SA 4.0

The Olympiad: A Four-Year Clock

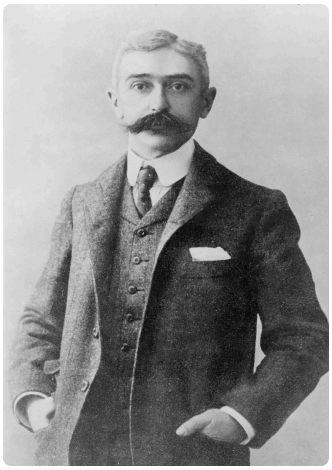
An **Olympiad** was the four-year interval between successive Olympic festivals. It became the standard unit for reckoning historical time across the Greek world, so ancient writers dated events by which Olympiad they fell in rather than by a fixed calendar year.



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Strigil

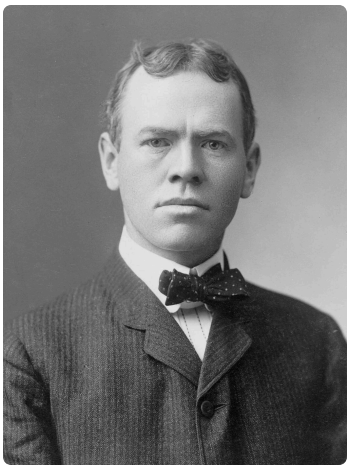
Strigil — Curved metal tool used by ancient athletes to scrape oil and dirt from their skin.



Photograph from Bain News Service. · Public domain

Coubertin's Sorbonne Congress

The modern Olympic revival began with French educator **Pierre de Coubertin**, who convened a congress at **the Sorbonne in Paris** in **1894**. The congress established the **International Olympic Committee** and resolved to stage the first modern Games in Athens two years later.



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Athens 1896: The Games Begin

The inaugural modern Olympics in **1896** drew **14 nations** to Athens. The first champion of the modern era was American **James Connolly**, who won **the triple jump** on **April 6, 1896** — the opening day of competition.



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Spyridon Louis Wins the First Marathon

The defining moment of Athens 1896 was the marathon, won by **Spyridon Louis**, **a Greek water-carrier and farmer**. His victory on home soil, timed at 2:58:50, made him a national hero overnight.

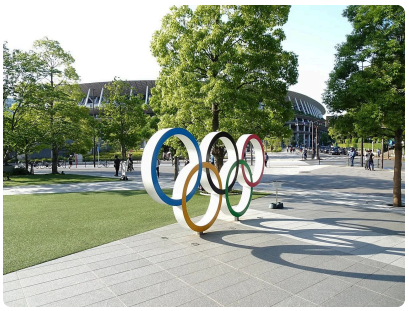


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Gold Medals Didn't Start Until 1904

At **Athens 1896**, first-place finishers received a silver medal and an olive branch, with bronze going to second place — there was no gold. The now-familiar gold-silver-bronze format for first, second and third place debuted only at the **1904 St. Louis Games**, the third modern Olympics.

> **Panathenaic Stadium**
>
> Panathenaic Stadium — Historic Athens stadium restored entirely in white marble for the 1896 Games.



RuinDig/Yuki Uchida · CC BY 4.0

The Five Olympic Rings

Pierre de Coubertin gave the Olympic movement its lasting emblem: **five interlocking rings**, designed to represent the **five inhabited continents** taking part in the Games. Coubertin designed the symbol in 1913, but its planned 1914 public debut was delayed by World War I — the rings did not fly at the Games until the 1920 Antwerp Olympics.

> **1900 Paris: Women Compete for the First Time**
>
> Athens 1896 was men-only. Women first competed at the **1900 Paris Games**, where **22 female athletes** took part in events including tennis, golf, sailing, croquet and equestrian.



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Charlotte Cooper

Charlotte Cooper — British tennis player who became the first female individual Olympic champion in 1900.

By the numbers

What was the length of the ancient Olympic stadion race track in meters?

192 meters

How many years are in an Olympiad, the ancient Greek chronological unit?

4 years

How many nations participated in the inaugural 1896 modern Olympic Games in Athens?

14 nations

How many interlocking rings make up the official Olympic symbol designed by Coubertin?

5 rings

How many female athletes competed at the 1900 Paris Games, the first with female participation?

22 athletes

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Milo of Croton → Six-time ancient Olympic wrestling champion between 540 BC and 516 BC

Strigil → Curved metal tool used by ancient athletes to scrape oil and dirt from their skin

Panathenaic Stadium → Historic Athens stadium restored entirely in white marble for the 1896 Games

Charlotte Cooper
→ British tennis player who became the first female individual Olympic champion in 1900

Step by step

The proclamation and enforcement of the Ancient Olympic Truce (Ekecheiria)

1. Heralds (spondophoroi) travel across Greek city-states announcing the festival dates
2. Participating city-states enact an immediate cessation of all ongoing armed warfare
3. Guaranteed safe passage is granted to athletes, pilgrims, and officials traveling to Elis
4. Athletes swear solemn oaths before the statue of Zeus at Olympia before competing

The Ekecheiria protected travelers to ensure the Panhellenic festival could proceed safely.

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Who was the first Olympic champion recorded by name, winning the stadion race in 776 BC?

- A Milo of Croton
- B Coroebus of Elis
- C Spyridon Louis
- D Cynisca

2. Approximately how long was the ancient stadion race track that gave the event its name?

- A 1500 meters
- B 400 meters
- C 42 meters
- D 192 meters

3. Which action was strictly forbidden in ancient pankration?

- A Joint locks
- B Strikes while an opponent was down
- C Eye-gouging
- D Chokeholds

4. Which of these ancient Olympic milestones happened earliest?

- A Coroebus wins the stadion, 776 BC
- B Cynisca's win, 396 BC
- C Theodosius bans the Games, 393 AD
- D Milo's first title, 540 BC

5. A historian writes that a battle occurred 'in the third year of the 50th four-year cycle since the first Olympic Games.' What is this dating unit called?

A The Roman consulship year
B The Olympiad (four-year cycle)
C The lunar calendar
D The Julian calendar

6. Which venue hosted the 1894 congress where Pierre de Coubertin founded the International Olympic Committee?

A The Louvre in Paris
B Panathenaic Stadium in Athens
C The Sorbonne in Paris
D Buckingham Palace in London

7. How many nations took part in the inaugural 1896 Athens Olympics?

A 22 nations
B 40 nations
C 5 nations
D 14 nations

8. Who won the marathon at the 1896 Athens Games, becoming a national hero?

A Spyridon Louis
B Pierre de Coubertin
C James Connolly
D Charlotte Cooper

9. At the 1896 Athens Games, what did first-place finishers receive instead of a gold medal?

A Cash prize
B Trophy cup
C Silver medal
D Bronze medal

10. In which Olympics were gold medals for first place introduced?

A 1908 London
B 1900 Paris
C 1896 Athens
D 1904 St. Louis

Go deeper

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LESSON 2 OF 6

Track & Field: Sprint Legends & Hurdle Breakthroughs

Sprint Dominance: 100m, 200m & World Records · Hurdles, Relays & Mid-Distance Milestones

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Recall standing world records, peak velocities, and historic medal milestones in Olympic sprint events.
- Recall win streak numbers, world record times, and tactical milestones in Olympic hurdles and distance races.

Sprint Dominance: 100m, 200m & World Records

The men's 100m world record has stood at **9.58 seconds** since Usain Bolt ran it in 2009. Over that race his **peak speed reached 27.78 mph** — a velocity no human has been measured exceeding on foot. Across his career Bolt won **eight Olympic gold medals**.

The women's Olympic 100m record is older and has proved just as durable: **Florence Griffith Joyner's 10.62 seconds**, set in **1988**.

The event's founding legend is **Jesse Owens**, who won **four gold medals** at the **1936 Berlin Olympics** — a result whose meaning was inseparable from the regime staging the Games. Nearly half a century later **Carl Lewis** matched him exactly, taking **four track and field golds at Los Angeles 1984**.

Sprinting rewards margins invisible to the eye. **Noah Lyles** won the Paris 2024 100m by **five thousandths of a second (0.005s)** in a photo finish. **Donovan Bailey** won the 1996 Atlanta 100m in world record time from lane 6.

Elaine Thompson-Herah became the first woman to manage it, completing **back-to-back 100m and 200m doubles** at **Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020** — a feat only Usain Bolt (three straight Games, 2008–2016) had achieved before.

Relay teams work inside a **30-meter exchange zone**, extended by the 2018 rule change that folded the old acceleration zone into a single measured area.

Hurdles, Relays & Mid-Distance Milestones

The most extraordinary streak in the sport belongs to **Edwin Moses**, who won **122 consecutive 400m hurdles races** across nine years, nine months and nine days without a single defeat.

The barrier events have fallen fast in the modern era. **Kevin Young** set a world record of **46.78 seconds** at Barcelona 1992 that stood for decades. **Karsten Warholm** then became the **first man under 46**

seconds, running **45.94s** at Tokyo 2020. On the women's side **Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone** ran **50.37 seconds** to win at Paris 2024 — her **sixth world record** in the event.

The flat 400m produced its own landmark when **Wayde van Niekerk** ran **43.03 seconds from lane 8** at Rio 2016, unable to see any rival for the entire race.

Style and adversity both leave their mark. **Michael Johnson** won the 200m/400m double at Atlanta 1996 in **custom golden spikes**. **Kip Keino** won the 1968 Mexico City 1500m while suffering **a severe gallbladder infection**, having run to the stadium on foot after his bus was caught in traffic.

Distance running has supplied the Games' most enduring images. **Abebe Bikila** ran **barefoot across Rome's cobblestones** to win the 1960 marathon in world record time. **Joan Benoit** broke away at **mile 3** — audaciously early — to win the inaugural women's Olympic marathon in 1984. And **Hicham El Guerrouj** completed the **1500m and 5000m double** at Athens 2004, a combination last achieved in 1924.

Key facts



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Usain Bolt: The Fastest Man Ever

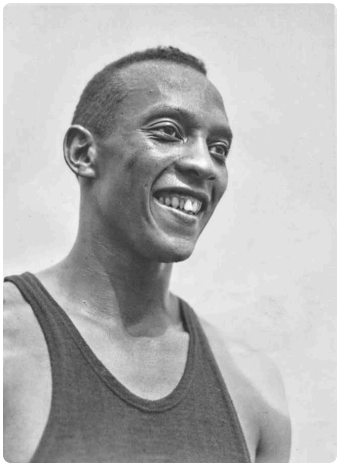
Usain Bolt has held the men's 100m world record of **9.58 seconds** since running it at the 2009 World Championships in Berlin. During that race he reached an instantaneous peak speed of **27.78 mph** — a velocity no human has been measured exceeding on foot. Across his Olympic career, spanning Beijing 2008 through Rio 2016, Bolt won **eight gold medals**.



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Flo-Jo's Enduring Olympic Record

Florence Griffith Joyner's women's 100m Olympic record of **10.62 seconds**, set at Seoul in **1988**, has never been broken. She had run even faster, 10.49 seconds, at the US Trials that year — a mark recognized as the world record — but her 10.62 remains the standing Olympic mark.



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Jesse Owens at Berlin 1936

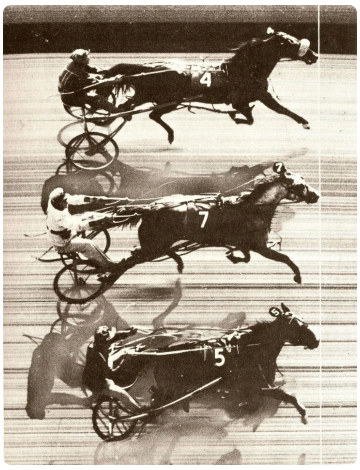
Jesse Owens won **four gold medals** at the **1936 Berlin Olympics** — in the 100m, 200m, long jump, and 4x100m relay. His success at Games staged by Nazi Germany made his achievement inseparable from the politics surrounding them.



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Carl Lewis

Carl Lewis — Matched Jesse Owens by winning four track and field golds at Los Angeles 1984.



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Noah Lyles' Photo-Finish Gold

Sprint margins can be invisible to the eye. **Noah Lyles** won the Paris 2024 Olympic 100m final by just **five thousandths of a second (0.005s)**, clocking 9.784 to Kishane Thompson's 9.789 in a razor-thin photo finish.

> ### Donovan Bailey's 1996 World-Record Gold
>
> Canada's **Donovan Bailey** won the **1996 Atlanta** Olympic 100m in a world-record 9.84 seconds running from **lane 6**.



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Elaine Thompson-Herah

Elaine Thompson-Herah — Completed back-to-back 100m and 200m Olympic sprint double golds at Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020.

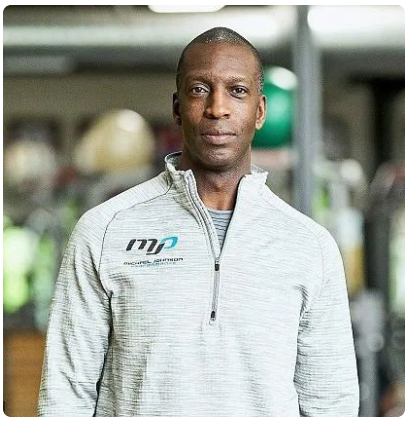
> ### The 30-Meter Relay Exchange Zone
>
> Relay teams hand off the baton inside a measured **exchange zone**. Since a **2018** rule change merged the old acceleration zone with the passing zone, that zone has measured **30 meters**, giving sprinters more room to build speed before the handoff.



Andy Miah from Liverpool, UK · CC BY-SA 2.0

Edwin Moses' Unbeaten Streak

Edwin Moses compiled the most extraordinary streak in track and field: **122 consecutive 400m hurdles races won** across nine years, nine months and nine days without a single defeat. The streak, run between 1977 and 1987, included his 1984 Olympic gold — the second of his two career titles, the first coming in 1976 before the streak began.



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Golden Spikes and Grit: Johnson and Keino

Style and adversity have both left their mark on Olympic middle-distance running. **Michael Johnson** won the 200m/400m double at **Atlanta 1996** wearing custom **golden spikes**. Decades earlier, **Kip Keino** won the **1968 Mexico City** 1500m gold while suffering from a **severe gallbladder infection**, after running to the stadium on foot when his bus was caught in traffic.



Erik van Leeuwen, attribution: Erik van Leeuwen (bron: Wikipedia). · GFDL

Van Niekerk's Lane-8 World Record

Wayde van Niekerk ran the 400m in a world-record **43.03 seconds** from **lane 8** at Rio 2016, breaking Michael Johnson's long-standing mark. Running from the outermost lane, he was unable to see any rival for the entire race.

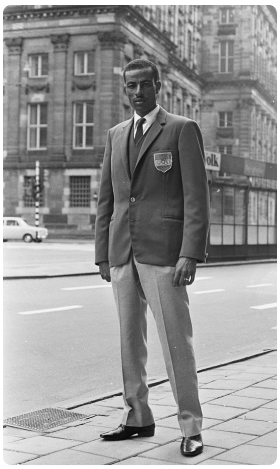
> **Hicham El Guerrouj**
>
> Hicham El Guerrouj — Moroccan legend who achieved the 1500m and 5000m double gold at Athens 2004.



Goyk (talk) · CC BY-SA 3.0

Joan Benoit's Audacious Breakaway

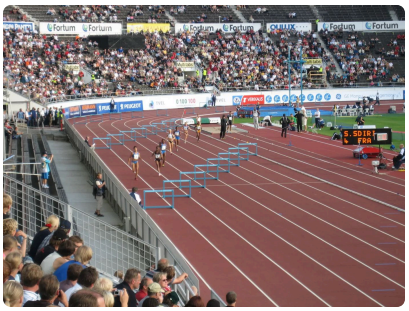
Joan Benoit won the inaugural women's Olympic marathon in **1984** with a bold tactical gamble. She broke away from the field at **mile 3** — astonishingly early for a marathon — and held on in 90-degree heat to finish in 2:24:52.



Wikimedia Commons · Jack de Nijs for Anefo · CC BY-SA 3.0 nl

Abebe Bikila

Abebe Bikila — Ran barefoot across Rome's cobblestones to win the 1960 marathon in world record time.



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The 400m Hurdles World Record Falls

The hurdles have fallen fast in the modern era. **Kevin Young** set a world record of **46.78 seconds** at Barcelona 1992 that stood for nearly 29 years, until **Karsten Warholm** became the **first man under 46 seconds**, running **45.94 seconds** at Tokyo 2020. On the women's side, **Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone** ran **50.37 seconds** to win at Paris 2024 — her **sixth** world record in the event.

By the numbers

What is Usain Bolt's standing men's 100m world record in seconds?

9.58 seconds

What was Usain Bolt's peak top speed in miles per hour during his 9.58s world record sprint?
27.78 mph

What is the official length of the 4x100m relay exchange zone in meters since the 2018 rule change?
30 meters

How many total Olympic gold medals did Usain Bolt win in his career?
8 gold medals

How many consecutive 400m hurdles races did Edwin Moses win during his 9-year undefeated streak?
122 consecutive wins

What 400m world record time in seconds did Wayde van Niekerk run from lane 8 at Rio 2016?
43.03 seconds

What 400m hurdles world record time in seconds did Kevin Young set at Barcelona 1992?
46.78 seconds

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Carl Lewis → Matched Jesse Owens by winning four track and field golds at Los Angeles 1984

Elaine Thompson-Herah
→ Completed back-to-back 100m and 200m Olympic sprint double golds at Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020

Hicham El Guerrouj
→ Moroccan legend who achieved the 1500m and 5000m double gold at Athens 2004

Abebe Bikila
→ Ran barefoot across Rome's cobblestones to win the 1960 marathon in world record time

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. What is Usain Bolt's standing men's 100m world record time, set in 2009?

(A) 9.72 seconds
(B) 9.58 seconds
(C) 9.63 seconds
(D) 9.69 seconds

2. During his 9.58s world record sprint, what peak speed did Usain Bolt reach?

(A) 23.35 mph
(B) 30.30 mph
(C) 27.78 mph
(D) 25.40 mph

3. Donovan Bailey won the 1996 Atlanta 100m in world-record time running from which lane?

A Lane 1
B Lane 4
C Lane 5
D Lane 6

4. Which pair of sprinters each won exactly four track and field golds at a single Olympics, 48 years apart?

A Owens and Lewis
B Bailey and M. Johnson
C Thompson-Herah and Flo-Jo
D Bolt and Lyles

5. Since the 2018 rule change, how long is the 4x100m relay exchange zone?

A 20 meters
B 40 meters
C 30 meters
D 10 meters

6. How many consecutive 400m hurdles races did Edwin Moses win during his famous unbeaten streak?

A 122
B 98
C 135
D 107

7. Who became the first man to run the 400m hurdles under 46 seconds, clocking 45.94s at Tokyo 2020?

A Kevin Young
B Wayde van Niekerk
C Edwin Moses
D Karsten Warholm

8. What 400m world record time did Wayde van Niekerk run from lane 8 at Rio 2016?

A 43.97 seconds
B 43.03 seconds
C 43.44 seconds
D 43.18 seconds

9. Which Olympic champion won 1500m gold while suffering a severe gallbladder infection after running to the stadium on foot?

A Kip Keino
B Michael Johnson
C Abebe Bikila
D Hicham El Guerrouj

10. What world record time did Kevin Young set in the 400m hurdles at Barcelona 1992?

A 46.33 seconds
B 45.94 seconds
C 47.02 seconds
D 46.78 seconds

Go deeper

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LESSON 3 OF 6

Track & Field: Field Leaps, Throws & The Decathlon

Defying Gravity: High Jump, Long Jump & Pole Vault · Decathlon Kings & Historic Throws

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Identify landmark leaps, technique revolutions, and record measurements across Olympic field jump events.
- Recall decathlon point records, equipment redesign specifications, and multi-gold throwing dynasties.

Defying Gravity: High Jump, Long Jump & Pole Vault

Mexico City 1968 reshaped two field events in a single Games. **Bob Beamon** long-jumped **8.9 meters**, beating the existing world record by so much that the optical measuring device on its rail could not reach his mark. The record stood for 23 years until **Mike Powell** jumped **8.95 meters** in 1991.

At the same Games **Dick Fosbury** won high jump gold using a technique nobody else was using: **a backward, head-first layout over the bar**. The Fosbury Flop is now universal, and the men's world record — **Javier Sotomayor's 2.45 meters** — has been set no other way. The women's record, **Stefka Kostadinova's 2.09 meters** from **1987**, is one of athletics' longest-standing marks.

Pole vault has two defining names. **Sergey Bubka** became the first person to clear **6.00 meters**, in 1985. **Mondo Duplantis** has pushed the ceiling far past it, winning Paris 2024 gold at a world record **6.25 meters**.

In the horizontal jumps, **Jonathan Edwards' 18.29-meter triple jump** has stood since 1995, while **Christian Taylor** took consecutive Olympic triple jump golds at **London 2012 and Rio 2016**.

Longevity is its own achievement here. **Al Oerter** was the first athlete to win **four consecutive Olympic golds in the same event**, taking the discus from **1956 through 1968**.

Decathlon Kings & Historic Throws

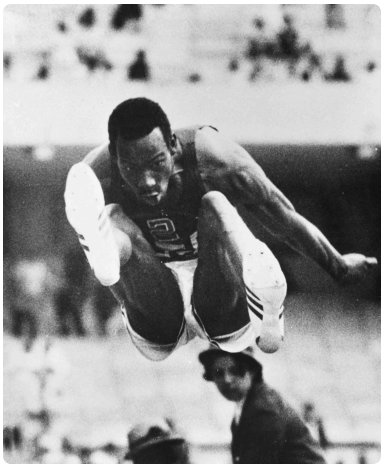
The decathlon comprises **10 events** across two days, and its champion carries an informal title as the world's best all-round athlete. That phrase traces to **1912**, when **King Gustav V of Sweden** is said to have presented **Jim Thorpe** his trophy with the words: *"Sir, you are the greatest athlete in the world"* — a widely repeated account that did not appear in print until decades later.

Britain's **Daley Thompson** won back-to-back decathlon golds at **Moscow 1980 and Los Angeles 1984**. **Ashton Eaton** repeated the feat at **2012 and 2016**, scoring **8,893 points** at Rio. In the women's heptathlon, **Jackie Joyner-Kersee** set a world record **7,291 points** at **Seoul 1988** that still stands.

The throws have been shaped as much by equipment rules as by athletes. In **1986** the men's javelin was redesigned with its **center of gravity moved 4 centimeters forward**, making it dive earlier — a deliberate change after throws began threatening to clear the infield entirely. Even so, **Jan Zelezny** threw **98.48m** for a world record and won three consecutive Olympic golds (**1992, 1996, 2000**).

Consecutive-gold dominance runs through the throwing events. **Anita Wlodarczyk** won three straight hammer titles (**2012, 2016, 2020**) with an **82.98m** world record. **Ryan Crouser** won **three consecutive shot put golds** between **2016 and 2024**, and New Zealand's **Valerie Adams** medalled in the shot put across **four consecutive Olympic Games**.

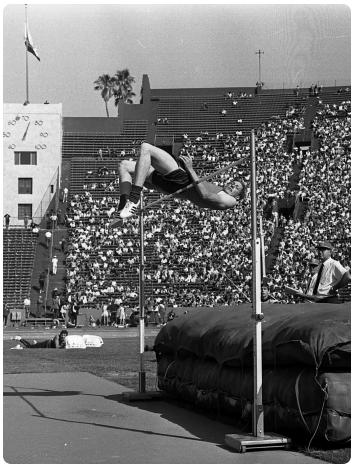
Key facts



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The Long Jump: Beamon to Powell

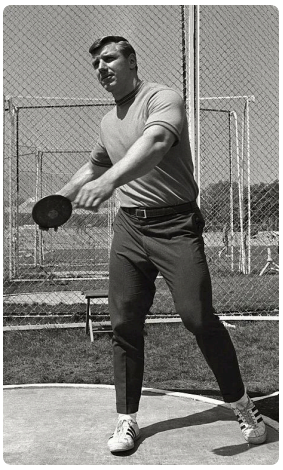
At Mexico City 1968, **Bob Beamon** long-jumped **8.9 meters**, obliterating the existing world record by so much that the stadium's optical measuring device couldn't even reach his mark. The record stood for 23 years until **Mike Powell** jumped **8.95 meters** in 1991 to finally break it.



Los Angeles Times · CC BY 4.0

The Fosbury Flop and the High Jump Record

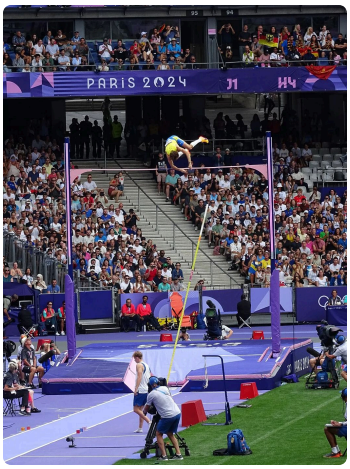
At Mexico City 1968, **Dick Fosbury** won high jump gold using a technique nobody else was using: a **backward, head-first layout over the bar**. The 'Fosbury Flop' is now universal, and the men's world record — **Javier Sotomayor**'s **2.45 meters**, set in 1993 — has been set no other way.



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Al Oerter

Al Oerter — First athlete to win four consecutive Olympic golds in the same event (Discus: 1956–1968).



Aeltegop · CC BY 4.0

Pole Vault: Bubka to Duplantis

Pole vault has two defining names. **Sergey Bubka** became the first person to clear **6.00 meters**, doing so in Paris in **1985**. Nearly four decades later, **Mondo Duplantis** pushed the ceiling far past it, winning Paris 2024 gold at a world-record **6.25 meters**.

> ### Jonathan Edwards' Triple Jump Record
>
> Jonathan Edwards' triple jump world record of 18.29 meters, set in 1995, has stood for three decades.



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Christian Taylor

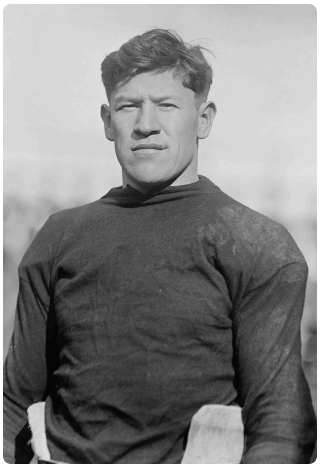
Christian Taylor — American triple jumper who won consecutive Olympic gold medals at London 2012 and Rio 2016.



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Kostadinova's Long-Standing High Jump Record

Stefka Kostadinova set the women's high jump world record of **2.09 meters** in Rome in **1987**. Nearly four decades later, it remains one of athletics' longest-standing marks in any event.



Harris & Ewing · Public domain

'The Greatest Athlete in the World'

The decathlon champion carries an informal title as the world's best all-round athlete, a phrase that traces to **1912**. That year, **King Gustav V of Sweden** is said to have presented **Jim Thorpe** his Olympic decathlon trophy with the words: *'Sir, you are the greatest athlete in the world'* — a widely repeated account that did not appear in print until decades later.



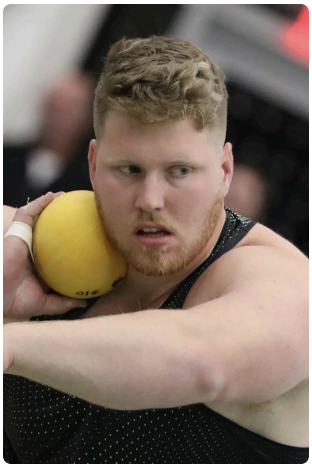
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Ashton Eaton

Ashton Eaton — American decathlete who won back-to-back Olympic golds in 2012 and 2016, scoring 8,893 points at Rio.

Why the Javelin Was Redesigned

In **1986**, the men's javelin was redesigned with its **center of gravity moved 4 centimeters forward**. The change made the javelin dive nose-first earlier in flight, shortening throws after distances had begun threatening to clear the infield entirely.



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Shot Put Dominance: Crouser and Adams

Ryan Crouser won **three consecutive** Olympic shot put gold medals, at Rio 2016, Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024. New Zealand's **Valerie Adams** built her own streak of longevity, medalling in the shot put across **four consecutive Olympic Games** — gold in 2008 and 2012, silver in 2016, and bronze in 2020.

Jan Zelezny

Jan Zelezny — Czech javelin thrower who won three consecutive Olympic golds (1992, 1996, 2000) and threw 98.48m WR.

Daley Thompson's Back-to-Back Golds

Britain's **Daley Thompson** won consecutive Olympic decathlon gold medals at **Moscow 1980** and **Los Angeles 1984**. Along the way, he built a fierce rivalry with West Germany's Jurgen Hingsen.



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The Decathlon's Ten Events

The **decathlon** comprises exactly **10** track and field events, contested across two consecutive days. Its champion carries an informal title as the world's best all-round athlete.



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Joyner-Kersee's Unbroken Heptathlon Record

Jackie Joyner-Kersee set the heptathlon world record of **7,291 points** at Seoul **1988**. Nearly four decades on, it remains unbroken.

> **Anita Wlodarczyk**
>
> Anita Wlodarczyk — Polish hammer thrower who won three consecutive Olympic golds (2012, 2016, 2020) and threw 82.98m WR.

By the numbers

What was Bob Beamon's historic long jump world record distance in meters at Mexico City 1968?

8.9 meters

What world record height in meters did Mondo Duplantis clear to win pole vault gold at Paris 2024?

6.25 meters

What is Javier Sotomayor's standing men's high jump world record in meters?

2.45 meters

What is Jonathan Edwards' standing men's triple jump world record in meters?

18.29 meters

What height in meters did Stefka Kostadinova jump in 1987 to set the long-standing women's record?

2.09 meters

How many centimeters forward was the men's javelin center of gravity moved during the 1986 redesign?

4 centimeters

How many consecutive Olympic shot put gold medals did Ryan Crouser win between 2016 and 2024?

3 gold medals

How many total track and field events make up the Olympic decathlon?

10 events

What world record point score did Jackie Joyner-Kersee set in the heptathlon at Seoul 1988?
7291 points

Across how many consecutive Olympic Games did New Zealand's Valerie Adams win shot put medals?
4 Olympic Games

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Al Oerter → First athlete to win four consecutive Olympic golds in the same event (Discus: 1956–1968)

Christian Taylor
→ American triple jumper who won consecutive Olympic gold medals at London 2012 and Rio 2016

Ashton Eaton
→ American decathlete who won back-to-back Olympic golds in 2012 and 2016, scoring 8,893 points at Rio

Jan Zelezny
→ Czech javelin thrower who won three consecutive Olympic golds (1992, 1996, 2000) and threw 98.48m WR

Anita Wlodarczyk
→ Polish hammer thrower who won three consecutive Olympic golds (2012, 2016, 2020) and threw 82.98m WR

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. What distance did Bob Beamon leap to set the world long jump record at Mexico City 1968?

A) 18.29 meters
B) 6.25 meters
C) 8.9 meters
D) 2.45 meters

2. Which athlete pioneered the backward, head-first layout over the bar that revolutionized high jump at the 1968 Olympics?

A) Sergey Bubka
B) Dick Fosbury
C) Mike Powell
D) Javier Sotomayor

3. Who became the first pole vaulter to clear 6.00 meters, in 1985?

A) Dick Fosbury
B) Javier Sotomayor
C) Mondo Duplantis
D) Sergey Bubka

4. What world-record height did Mondo Duplantis clear to win pole vault gold at Paris 2024?

A 6.25 meters
B 6.00 meters
C 2.45 meters
D 2.09 meters

5. Whose 8.95-meter long jump in 1991 finally broke Bob Beamon's 23-year-old record?

A Mike Powell
B Christian Taylor
C Dick Fosbury
D Jonathan Edwards

6. What revolutionary high-jump technique did Dick Fosbury introduce to win gold at Mexico City 1968?

A The western roll face-down clearance method
B The scissors kick clearance over the crossbar
C The backward head-first layout over the bar
D The classic straddle barrel roll technique

7. At which Olympics did Dick Fosbury debut the revolutionary high-jump technique that bears his name?

A Munich 1972
B Mexico City 1968
C Tokyo 1964
D Montreal 1976

8. How many total track and field events make up the Olympic decathlon?

A 7 events
B 12 events
C 9 events
D 10 events

9. In the 1986 javelin redesign, how far forward was the center of gravity moved?

A 10 centimeters
B 4 centimeters
C 6 centimeters
D 2 centimeters

10. In the widely told 1912 story, which monarch is said to have called Jim Thorpe 'the greatest athlete in the world'?

A King Gustav V of Sweden
B King Haakon VII of Norway
C King Edward VII of Britain
D Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany

11. Which shot putter won three consecutive Olympic gold medals between 2016 and 2024?

A Anita Wlodarczyk
B Jan Zelezny
C Ryan Crouser
D Valerie Adams

12. Which decathlete won back-to-back Olympic golds at Moscow 1980 and Los Angeles 1984?

A Ashton Eaton
B Rafer Johnson
C Jim Thorpe
D Daley Thompson

13. How many points did Ashton Eaton score to win decathlon gold at the Rio 2016 Olympics?

A 8,617 points
B 9,126 points
C 8,893 points
D 8,462 points

14. At which Games did Ashton Eaton post his 8,893-point decathlon score?

A London 2012
B Tokyo 2020
C Beijing 2008
D Rio 2016

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/summer-olympic-trivia/track-and-field-field-leaps-throws-and-the-decathlon

STUDY Summer Olympic Trivia: Ancient Roots, Modern Icons & Historic Feats in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/summer-olympic-trivia

LESSON 4 OF 6

Pool of Champions: Swimming & Aquatics Dominance

Michael Phelps & The Golden Era of Aquatics · Freestyle Queens, Stroke Innovators & Diving Feats

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Recall Michael Phelps' medal tallies, record swims, and razor-thin Olympic victory margins.
- Identify historic swimming win streaks, stroke evolution milestones, and diving feats.

Michael Phelps & The Golden Era of Aquatics

Michael Phelps finished his career with **28 Olympic medals**, more than any athlete in any sport. The centrepiece was **Beijing 2008**, where he won **eight gold medals** in a single Games, breaking Mark Spitz's record.

Two of those eight were decided by almost nothing. Phelps beat **Milorad Cavic** in the 100m butterfly by **0.01 seconds** — a single hundredth, confirmed only by the timing pads. And the quest survived the 4x100m freestyle relay because **Jason Lezak** swam a **46.06s anchor split**, the fastest relay leg recorded at the time, running down a French team that had promised to "smash" the Americans.

Phelps' 13th individual gold broke a record that had stood for **2,168 years**: the **12 individual titles of Leonidas of Rhodes**, a runner who won across four ancient Olympiads.

The era did not end with him. **Caeleb Dressel** won **five golds** at Tokyo 2020. France's **Leon Marchand** took **four individual golds** at Paris 2024, winning the 200m butterfly and 200m breaststroke **on the same night**. Before them, Australia's **Ian Thorpe** — "The Thorpedo" — won **five career Olympic golds**, and Russia's **Alexander Popov** took back-to-back **50m/100m freestyle doubles** in **1992 and 1996**.

All of it happens in a **50-meter** pool, the standard Olympic competition length.

Freestyle Queens, Stroke Innovators & Diving Feats

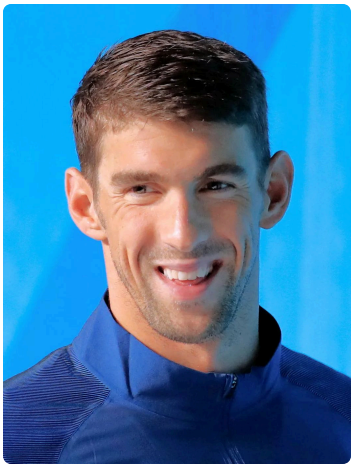
Katie Ledecky has won **nine Olympic gold medals** across four Games, dominating distance freestyle across more than a decade. **Mark Spitz** won **seven golds** at **Munich 1972**, setting a world record in every single event. **Matt Biondi** took **seven medals** at **Seoul 1988**.

Australia's **Dawn Fraser** was the first swimmer to win the same event — the **100m freestyle** — at **three straight Games**. At the other end of the age range, **Summer McIntosh** won **three individual golds** at Paris 2024 at **17 years old**.

The butterfly exists because of a rules loophole. In the **1930s** swimmers found that **breaststroke** regulations did not forbid recovering the arms *over* the water, and the resulting hybrid was fast enough that it was eventually split off into a stroke of its own.

Diving supplies the era's most-replayed moment of nerve: **Greg Louganis** struck his head on the springboard during preliminaries at **Seoul 1988**, took stitches, and returned to win **double diving gold**. The highest Olympic platform stands at **10 meters**, and **synchronized diving** joined the programme at the **2000 Sydney Games**.

Key facts



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Michael Phelps, the Most Decorated Olympian

Michael Phelps finished his career with **28 Olympic medals**, more than any athlete in any sport. The centerpiece was **Beijing 2008**, where he won **eight gold medals** in a single Games, breaking the record of **seven** set by **Mark Spitz** at Munich 1972 — a Games in which Spitz had set a world record in every one of his seven events.

> **Phelps' Hundredth-of-a-Second Margin**
>
> Two of Phelps' eight Beijing 2008 golds came down to almost nothing. He beat **Milorad Cavic** in the 100m butterfly by just **0.01 seconds** — Phelps touched in 50.58 to Cavic's 50.59 — a margin confirmed only by the timing pads.



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Jason Lezak

Jason Lezak — Swam an impossible 46.06s anchor split to save Phelps' 8-gold quest in the 4x100m freestyle relay.

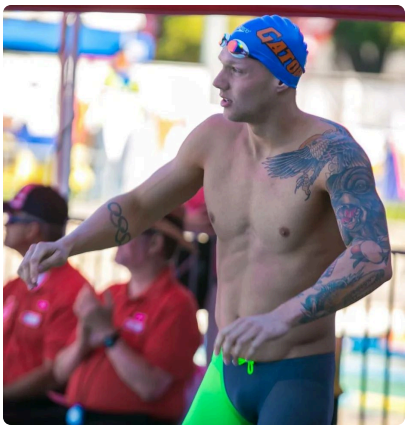


Fernando Frazão/Agência Brasil · CC BY 3.0 br

Phelps Breaks a 2,168-Year-Old Record

Michael Phelps' 13th individual Olympic gold medal broke a record that had stood for **2,168 years**. It belonged to **Leonidas of Rhodes**, an ancient runner who won **12 individual titles** across four Olympiads between 164 and 152 BC.

> **Leon Marchand**
>
> Leon Marchand — French swimmer who won four individual golds at Paris 2024, winning 200m fly and 200m breast on the same night.



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Caeleb Dressel's Five Golds at Tokyo

American swimmer **Caeleb Dressel** won **five gold medals** at the **Tokyo 2020** Olympics. His golds came in the 50m freestyle, 100m freestyle, 100m butterfly, and two relays.

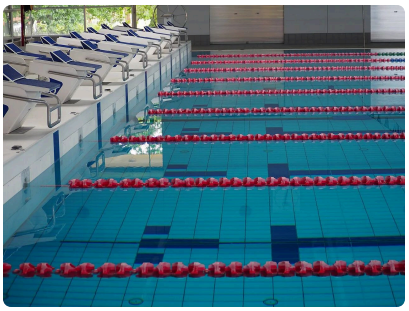


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Ian Thorpe

Ian Thorpe — Australian freestyle giant ('The Thorpedo') who won five career Olympic gold medals.

> **Alexander Popov**
>
> Alexander Popov — Russian sprinter who won back-to-back 50m/100m freestyle double golds in 1992 and 1996.



KeepActive Australia from Melbourne, VIC, Australia · CC BY-SA 4.0

The Olympic Pool's Standard Length

Every Olympic swimming record is set in a pool of the same standard size. It measures **50 meters** long and 25 meters wide, with 10 racing lanes.



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Katie Ledecky's Distance Dominance

Katie Ledecky has won **nine Olympic gold medals** across four Olympic Games. Her dominance in distance freestyle events has now spanned more than a decade.

> ### Greg Louganis' Concussion Comeback
>
> At **Seoul 1988**, diver **Greg Louganis** struck his head on the springboard during preliminaries, badly enough to need stitches. He returned to the competition and swept both the 3m springboard and 10m platform gold medals.



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The Butterfly Stroke's Rule-Loophole Origin

The butterfly stroke exists because of a rules loophole. In the **1930s**, breaststroke swimmers realized the rules didn't forbid recovering their arms *over* the water rather than under it, and the resulting hybrid technique proved fast enough that swimming's governing body eventually split it into a stroke of its own, in 1952.



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Dawn Fraser

Dawn Fraser — Australian pioneer who became the first swimmer to win the same event (100m free) at three straight Games.



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Summer McIntosh, Teenage Prodigy

Canadian swimmer **Summer McIntosh** won **three individual gold medals** and a silver at the **Paris 2024** Olympics. She achieved this at just **17 years old**.

> ### Matt Biondi's Seven Medals at Seoul
>
> American swimmer **Matt Biondi** won **seven medals** at the **1988 Seoul Olympics**. His haul included five gold, one silver, and one bronze.



Rosslieb (Openverse) · cc0 1.0

The Height of the Olympic Diving Platform

Platform diving is contested from Olympic diving's highest point. The platform stands exactly **10 meters** above the water, roughly 33 feet.



Javid Nikpour / Tasnimnews · CC BY 4.0

Synchronized Diving's Olympic Debut

Synchronized diving joined the Olympic program at the **2000 Sydney Games**. It was contested in both the 3m springboard and 10m platform events.

By the numbers

How many total Olympic medals did Michael Phelps win across his career, the most in history?
28 medals

How many gold medals did Michael Phelps win at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, breaking Mark Spitz's record?
8 gold medals

By what margin in seconds did Michael Phelps defeat Milorad Cavic in the 2008 Beijing 100m butterfly?
0.01 seconds

How many gold medals did American swimmer Caeleb Dressel win at Tokyo 2020?
5 gold medals

What is the standard length in meters of an Olympic competition swimming pool?
50 meters

How many career Olympic gold medals has Katie Ledecky won across her four Olympic appearances?
9 gold medals

How many gold medals did Mark Spitz win at Munich 1972, setting a world record in every event?
7 gold medals

How old was Canadian swimming prodigy Summer McIntosh when she won three individual golds at Paris 2024?
17 years old

How many total medals did American swimmer Matt Biondi win at the 1988 Seoul Olympics?
7 medals

What is the height in meters of the highest Olympic diving platform?
10 meters

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Jason Lezak
→ Swam an impossible 46.06s anchor split to save Phelps' 8-gold quest in the 4x100m freestyle relay

Leon Marchand
→ French swimmer who won four individual golds at Paris 2024, winning 200m fly and 200m breast on the same night

Ian Thorpe → Australian freestyle giant ('The Thorpedo') who won five career Olympic gold medals

Alexander Popov

→ Russian sprinter who won back-to-back 50m/100m freestyle double golds in 1992 and 1996

Dawn Fraser

→ Australian pioneer who became the first swimmer to win the same event (100m free) at three straight Games

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. How many total Olympic medals did Michael Phelps win across his career, the most of any athlete?

A) 23 medals
B) 19 medals
C) 28 medals
D) 25 medals

2. How many gold medals did Michael Phelps win at the 2008 Beijing Olympics?

A) 6 gold medals
B) 9 gold medals
C) 7 gold medals
D) 8 gold medals

3. Whose single-Games gold medal record did Phelps break at the 2008 Beijing Olympics?

A) Mark Spitz
B) Ian Thorpe
C) Matt Biondi
D) Caeleb Dressel

4. By what margin did Michael Phelps out-touch Milorad Cavic in the 2008 100m butterfly final?

A) 0.13 seconds
B) 0.01 seconds
C) 0.04 seconds
D) 0.08 seconds

5. Which of these does NOT describe Michael Phelps' Beijing 2008 achievement specifically?

A) 0.01s win over Cavic
B) Broke Spitz's 7-gold record
C) 8 golds in one Games
D) 28 career medals total

6. What split time did Jason Lezak swim on the anchor leg to save Michael Phelps' 2008 gold-medal quest?

A) 48.51 seconds
B) 47.82 seconds
C) 46.06 seconds
D) 45.13 seconds

7. Which team's relay swimmers had promised to 'smash' the Americans before Jason Lezak's 2008 comeback leg?

A) Germany
B) France
C) Australia
D) Great Britain

8. Which swimmer became the first to win the same individual event at three straight Olympic Games?

A Dawn Fraser
B Katie Ledecky
C Michael Phelps
D Summer McIntosh

9. Which stroke emerged in the 1930s from a rules loophole in breaststroke technique?

A Backstroke
B Butterfly
C Freestyle
D Sidestroke

10. Which diver hit his head on the springboard at Seoul 1988, then returned to sweep both diving golds?

A Greg Louganis
B Fu Mingxia
C David Boudia
D Klaus Dibiasi

11. What is the height of the highest Olympic diving platform?

A 3 meters
B 7 meters
C 5 meters
D 10 meters

12. At which Olympic Games did synchronized diving debut as an event?

A 2008 Beijing
B 2024 Paris
C 2000 Sydney
D 2020 Tokyo

13. In which decade did a breaststroke rules loophole give rise to the modern butterfly stroke?

A 1920s
B 1930s
C 1960s
D 1950s

14. Butterfly emerged when swimmers found a rules loophole in which other stroke?

A Freestyle
B Sidestroke
C Backstroke
D Breaststroke

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/summer-olympic-trivia/pool-of-champions-swimming-and-aquatics-dominance

STUDY Summer Olympic Trivia: Ancient Roots, Modern Icons & Historic Feats in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/summer-olympic-trivia

LESSON 5 OF 6

Gymnastics & Court Showdowns: The Quest for Perfection

Artistic Gymnastics: Perfect 10s & Simone Biles · Olympic Basketball: The 1992 Dream Team & Showdowns

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Recall historic gymnastics scores, scoring overhauls, and signature skills of iconic gymnasts.
- Recall scoring margins, timeout records, and iconic showdowns in Olympic basketball history.

Artistic Gymnastics: Perfect 10s & Simone Biles

At **Montreal 1976**, **Nadia Comaneci** scored the first perfect **10.0** in Olympic gymnastics history — and the scoreboard read **1.00**, because the display had been built with only three digits on the assumption that a perfect score was impossible. She went on to earn **seven perfect tens** at those Games.

Mary Lou Retton became the **first American woman to win the individual all-around** at **Los Angeles 1984**. At **Atlanta 1996**, **Kerri Strug** stuck her final vault on **a severely sprained ankle with torn ligaments** to secure the American team gold, then had to be carried from the floor. **Gabby Douglas** became the **first Black gymnast to win the individual all-around** at **London 2012**.

The modern era's defining gymnast is **Simone Biles**, holder of **11 Olympic medals** and **five eponymous skills** in the FIG Code of Points — elements so difficult that they carry her name because she was the first to land them in competition. The Code itself replaced the perfect-10 system with an open-ended difficulty score, precisely so that routines like hers could be ranked.

The men's side has its own dynasties. **Vitaly Scherbo** won **six gold medals** at **Barcelona 1992**, four of them **in a single day**. Japan's **Kohei Uchimura** — "King Kohei" — won back-to-back all-around titles in **2012 and 2016**.

Olympic Basketball: The 1992 Dream Team & Showdowns

The **1992 USA "Dream Team"** won its games at Barcelona by an average of **43.8 points**, and head coach **Chuck Daly** called **zero timeouts** across the entire tournament — he never needed one.

Twenty years earlier the sport produced its most disputed result. The **1972 Munich** men's final ended **51-50 to the Soviet Union** after the closing seconds were replayed three times. The American players refused their silver medals, which remain **in a bank vault in Lausanne, Switzerland** to this day.

Team USA has not been unbeatable. **Manu Ginobili** led Argentina's Golden Generation past the Americans to gold at **Athens 2004**. In the 2024 final against France, **Stephen Curry** sank **four three-pointers in the final three minutes** to close it out.

The women's programme has been the most dominant in Olympic sport: **eight consecutive gold medals** from **1996 to 2024**, with **Diana Taurasi** winning **six** of them — more than any basketball player in history.

Brazil's **Oscar Schmidt** scored **1,093 career Olympic points** across five Games, the most by any player, without ever winning a medal.

The sport's Olympic debut was less polished. The **1936 Berlin** final was played **on an outdoor clay court in heavy rain**, reducing the game to a 19-8 scoreline.

Key facts



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Nadia Comaneci's Perfect 10

At Montreal **1976**, **Nadia Comaneci** scored gymnastics' first-ever perfect **10.0** — but the scoreboard displayed **1.00**, because its designers had built it with only three digits, never imagining a perfect score was possible. She went on to earn **seven** perfect tens at those Games, winning three gold medals at age 14.

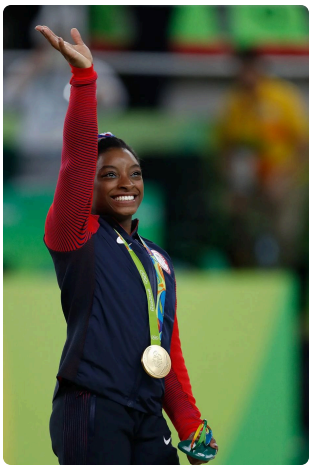


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Mary Lou Retton

Mary Lou Retton — First American woman to win Olympic individual all-around gymnastics gold at Los Angeles 1984.

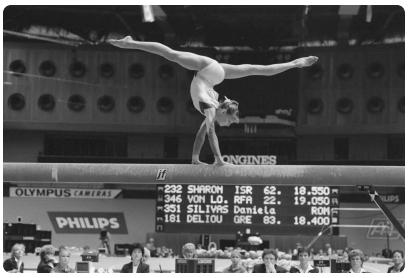
> ### Kerri Strug's Vault on an Injured Ankle
>
> At **Atlanta 1996**, **Kerri Strug** stuck her final vault landing on a **severely sprained ankle with torn ligaments** to secure the American team's gold medal. She then had to be carried off the competition floor.



Agência Brasil Fotografias · CC BY 2.0

Simone Biles: Modern Gymnastics' Defining Star

Simone Biles holds **11 Olympic medals**. She also has **five eponymous skills** officially named after her in the FIG Code of Points — elements so difficult that they carry her name because she was the first to land them in competition.



Wikimedia Commons · Rob Croes / Anefo · CC0

Gymnastics Scoring Since 2006

Olympic gymnastics scoring changed fundamentally in **2006**, when the sport's governing body abolished the old **10.0 ceiling**. In its place came an **open-ended score** combining a Difficulty (D-score) with a 10.0-based Execution (E-score) — a system designed precisely so that routines of ever-rising difficulty could still be ranked.

> **Gabby Douglas**
>
> Gabby Douglas — First Black gymnast in Olympic history to win the individual all-around gold medal at London 2012.

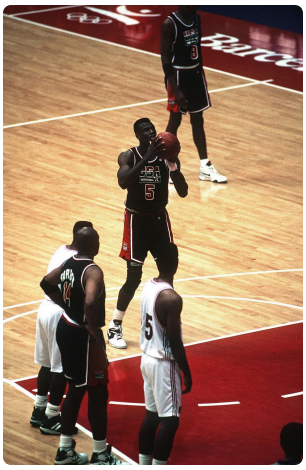
> **Vitaly Scherbo's Six Golds in One Games**
>
> Vitaly Scherbo won six gold medals at the Barcelona 1992 Olympics. Four of them came in a single day.



Wikimedia Commons · Rick McCharles from Calgary, Canada · CC BY 2.0

Kohei Uchimura

Kohei Uchimura — Japanese gymnastics virtuoso ('King Kohei') who won back-to-back Olympic all-around titles in 2012 and 2016.

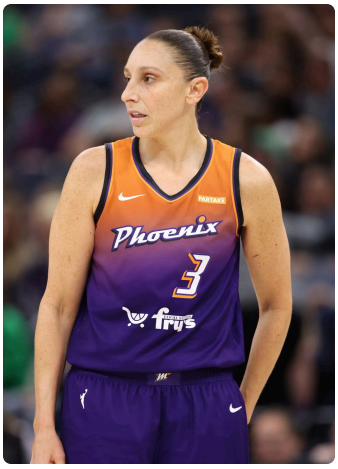


Ken Hackman, U.S. Air Force · Public domain

The 1992 Dream Team's Dominance

The **1992 USA 'Dream Team'** won its eight games at Barcelona by an average margin of **43.8 points**. Head coach **Chuck Daly** called **zero timeouts** across the entire tournament — dominance so total he never needed one.

> ### The 1972 Munich Final and the Refused Silvers
>
> The **1972 Munich** men's basketball final remains the sport's most disputed Olympic result: after the final three seconds were replayed three times, the Soviet Union beat the USA **51-50**. The American players voted unanimously to refuse their silver medals, which remain stored in **a bank vault in Lausanne, Switzerland**, to this day.



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USA Women's Basketball's Golden Dynasty

The USA Women's Basketball team has been the most dominant program in Olympic sport: **eight consecutive gold medals** from **1996 to 2024**, with no Olympic loss since **1992**. **Diana Taurasi** won **six** of those eight golds — more than any basketball player in history, male or female.



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Manu Ginobili

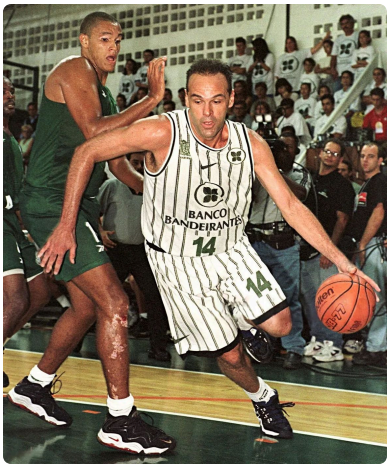
Manu Ginobili — Led Argentina's Golden Generation to men's basketball gold at Athens 2004, upsetting Team USA.



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Steph Curry's Closing Barrage

In the Paris 2024 gold-medal game against France, **Stephen Curry** sealed the win with a late shooting barrage. He sank **four three-pointers in the final three minutes** alone.



Marie Hippenmeyer · Public domain

Oscar Schmidt's Scoring Record, No Medal

Brazil's **Oscar Schmidt** is the all-time leading scorer in Olympic basketball history, with **1,093 career points** across five Games between 1980 and 1996. He set that record without ever winning an Olympic medal.

> **Basketball's Muddy Olympic Debut**
>
> Olympic basketball's debut was far from polished. The **1936 Berlin** final was played **outdoors on a clay court in heavy rain**, reducing the game to a low-scoring, mud-soaked 19-8 USA win over Canada.

By the numbers

How many total perfect 10.0 scores did Nadia Comaneci earn during the 1976 Montreal Olympics?

7 perfect tens

How many total Olympic medals has Simone Biles won in her legendary gymnastics career?

11 medals

How many eponymous skills are officially named after Simone Biles in the FIG Code of Points?

5 eponymous skills

How many gold medals did Vitaly Scherbo win at Barcelona 1992, winning four in a single day?

6 gold medals

What was the average margin of victory in points for the 1992 USA 'Dream Team' at Barcelona?

43.8 points

How many timeouts did head coach Chuck Daly call during the Dream Team's entire 1992 Olympic tournament?

0 timeouts

How many consecutive Olympic gold medals did the USA Women's Basketball team win from 1996 to 2024?

8 consecutive golds

How many total career Olympic points did Brazil's Oscar Schmidt score across five Olympic Games?

1093 points

How many Olympic gold medals has Diana Taurasi won, the most in basketball history?

6 gold medals

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Mary Lou Retton
→ First American woman to win Olympic individual all-around gymnastics gold at Los Angeles 1984

Gabby Douglas
→ First Black gymnast in Olympic history to win the individual all-around gold medal at London 2012

Kohei Uchimura
→ Japanese gymnastics virtuoso ('King Kohei') who won back-to-back Olympic all-around titles in 2012 and 2016

Manu Ginobili

→ Led Argentina's Golden Generation to men's basketball gold at Athens 2004, upsetting Team USA

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Which gymnast scored gymnastics' first-ever perfect 10.0, at Montreal 1976?

- A Mary Lou Retton
- B Simone Biles
- C Gabby Douglas
- D Nadia Comaneci

2. How many perfect 10.0 scores did Nadia Comaneci earn overall at the 1976 Montreal Games?

- A 10 perfect tens
- B 5 perfect tens
- C 7 perfect tens
- D 3 perfect tens

3. What replaced gymnastics' 10.0-ceiling scoring system when the rules changed in 2006?

- A Single execution-only score
- B Open-ended D-score plus E-score
- C Judges' ranked consensus, no score
- D Flat percentage out of 100

4. How many eponymous skills are named after Simone Biles in the FIG Code of Points?

- A 5 eponymous skills
- B 7 eponymous skills
- C 3 eponymous skills
- D 11 eponymous skills

5. Which of these gymnasts is NOT known for winning an Olympic individual all-around title?

- A Gabby Douglas
- B Kohei Uchimura
- C Mary Lou Retton
- D Kerri Strug

6. How many skills in gymnastics' FIG Code of Points are named after Simone Biles?

- A Two
- B Five
- C Seven
- D Three

7. Why do several gymnastics skills in the FIG Code of Points carry Simone Biles's name?

- A She has won the most Olympic medals
- B Judges voted to honor her career
- C She was first to land them in competition
- D She helped design the scoring system

8. In what year did the FIG abolish gymnastics' perfect-10.0 scoring ceiling?

- A 2006
- B 1996
- C 2000
- D 2012

9. What two components make up gymnastics' open-ended scoring system that replaced the perfect 10?

A Artistry and risk scores
B Style and originality scores
C Speed and power scores
D Difficulty and Execution scores

10. By how many points did the 1992 USA Dream Team win its games at Barcelona on average?

A 35.2 points
B 28.6 points
C 43.8 points
D 50.1 points

11. How many timeouts did Dream Team coach Chuck Daly call during the entire 1992 Olympic tournament?

A 3 timeouts
B 0 timeouts
C 1 timeout
D 2 timeouts

12. What was the final score of the disputed 1972 Munich men's basketball final?

A USSR 51, USA 50
B USA 51, USSR 50
C USA 50, USSR 49
D USSR 52, USA 51

13. Which country, led by Manu Ginobili, upset Team USA to win basketball gold at Athens 2004?

A Lithuania
B Argentina
C Brazil
D Spain

14. Which statement about the USA Women's Basketball dynasty is FALSE?

A Diana Taurasi won six of the golds
B No Olympic loss since 1992
C Eight consecutive golds through 2024
D The win streak began in 1984

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/summer-olympic-trivia/gymnastics-and-court-showdowns-the-quest-for-perfection

STUDY Summer Olympic Trivia: Ancient Roots, Modern Icons & Historic Feats in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/summer-olympic-trivia

LESSON 6 OF 6

Summer Lore, Combat & The All-Time Medal Pantheon

Combat, Racquets, Sand & Discontinued Sports · Marathon Chaos & The All-Time Summer Pantheon

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Identify Olympic feats: Ali's Rome 1960 boxing gold, Lopez's wrestling streak, the Walsh/May-Treanor volleyball run, and Korea's archery streak.
- Recall wild marathon lore, art competition medals, and all-time Summer Olympic medal records.

Combat, Racquets, Sand & Discontinued Sports

Cassius Clay — later Muhammad Ali — won Olympic boxing gold at **Rome 1960** at **18 years old**.

Wrestling has supplied both the greatest upset and the greatest streak. At **Sydney 2000**, **Rulon Gardner** beat **Aleksandr Karelin**, who had not lost a match in thirteen years and had not conceded a point in six. Cuba's **Mijain Lopez** then won **five consecutive individual Olympic golds** in Greco-Roman wrestling, more than any athlete in any individual event.

Karch Kiraly is the **only player to win Olympic gold in both indoor volleyball (1984, 1988) and beach volleyball (1996)**. On the sand, **Kerri Walsh and Misty May-Treanor** won **21 consecutive Olympic matches** across **2004–2012** without dropping a single one.

In tennis, **Steffi Graf** completed the only **Golden Grand Slam** in history in **1988**, winning all four majors and Olympic gold in the same calendar year.

Table tennis has been close to a single-nation event: China has won **37 of the 42** gold medals contested between **1988 and 2024**. South Korea's women's archery team has been similarly untouchable, taking **10 consecutive team golds** from **1988 to 2024**.

Some early events have not survived, for good reason. **Paris 1900** staged **live pigeon shooting**, the only occasion on which animals were intentionally killed as part of Olympic competition.

Marathon Chaos & All-Time Summer Pantheon

The **1904 St. Louis marathon** remains the most chaotic race in Olympic history. **Fred Lorz** crossed the line first having **ridden 11 miles in an automobile** after cramping. The actual winner, **Thomas Hicks**, was kept moving by his handlers with doses of **strychnine sulfate mixed with raw eggs and brandy** — a stimulant then legal and very nearly fatal.

For nearly four decades the Games awarded medals for art. **147 official Olympic medals** were given in fine arts competitions between **1912 and 1948**, for works inspired by sport. **Pierre de Coubertin**

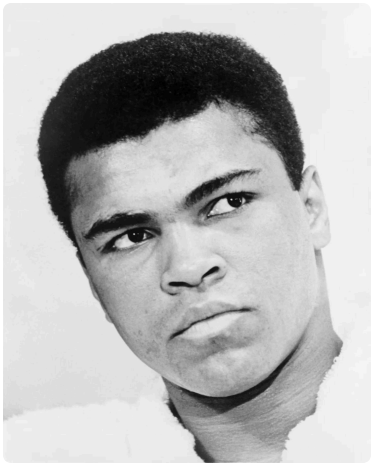
himself won a **gold medal in literature at Stockholm 1912** for the poem *Ode to Sport*, entered under a pseudonym.

Opening ceremonies have their own landmark: at **Barcelona 1992**, Paralympic archer **Antonio Rebollo** lit the cauldron by shooting a flaming arrow over its rim.

The all-time records sit at the extremes of both scale and age. The **United States** is the only nation to pass **1,000 all-time Summer Olympic gold medals**. Sweden's **Oscar Swahn** became the **oldest medalist in Olympic sporting competition** at **72**, in 1920 (the art competitions' 1948 medalist John Copley, at 73, was older); Greek gymnast **Dimitrios Loundras** won bronze at Athens 1896 at **10 years old**.

Politics has repeatedly reached the Games — **65 nations** joined the US-led boycott of the **1980 Moscow Olympics** over the invasion of Afghanistan. In **2021** the motto *Faster, Higher, Stronger* gained a fourth word: **Together** (*Communiter*).

Key facts



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Muhammad Ali's Olympic Gold at 18

Cassius Clay — later known as **Muhammad Ali** — won Olympic boxing gold in the light heavyweight division at **Rome 1960**. He was just **18 years old** at the time.



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Rulon Gardner

Rulon Gardner — American wrestler who pulled off the 2000 upset over undefeated legend Aleksandr Karelin.



Dilaver Najafov · CC BY-SA 4.0

Mijain Lopez's Five Consecutive Golds

Cuba's **Mijain Lopez** won **five consecutive individual Olympic gold medals** in Greco-Roman wrestling, spanning 2008 to 2024 — more than any athlete in any individual Olympic event. He retired by leaving his wrestling shoes on the mat.



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Karch Kiraly

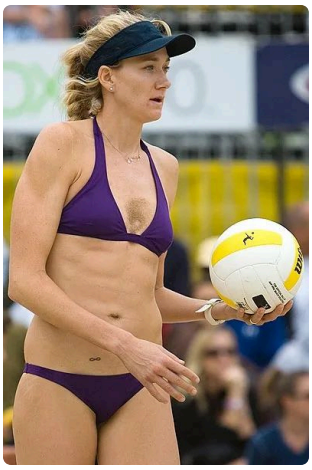
Karch Kiraly — Only player in Olympic history to win gold in both indoor volleyball (1984, 1988) and beach volleyball (1996).



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Steffi Graf

Steffi Graf — Achieved the only Golden Grand Slam in tennis history by winning all 4 majors and Olympic gold in 1988.



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Walsh and May-Treanor's Perfect Streak

Beach volleyball duo **Kerri Walsh Jennings** and **Misty May-Treanor** won **21 consecutive Olympic matches** across 2004 to 2012 without a single loss. The streak carried them to three straight gold medals.



Marcus Cyron (Openverse) · by-sa 3.0

Single-Nation Dominance: Table Tennis and Archery

Two Olympic sports have been close to one-nation affairs. **China** has won **37 of the 42** gold medals contested in table tennis since the sport's 1988 debut. South Korea's women's archery team has been similarly untouchable, winning **10 consecutive team golds** from 1988 to 2024.

> ### Paris 1900's Live Pigeon Shooting
>
> Some early Olympic events have not survived, for good reason. **Paris 1900** staged **live pigeon shooting**, in which competitors shot at real birds released as targets — roughly 300 were killed. It remains the only occasion animals were intentionally killed as part of Olympic competition; clay targets replaced live birds afterward.



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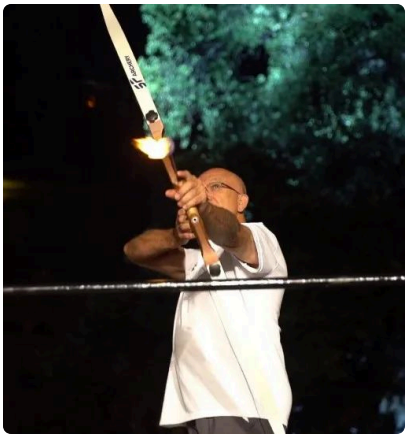
The Chaotic 1904 St. Louis Marathon

The **1904 St. Louis marathon** is the most chaotic race in Olympic history. **Fred Lorz** crossed the finish line first after **riding 11 miles in an automobile** when he cramped up, and was disqualified once discovered. The actual winner, **Thomas Hicks**, was kept moving by his handlers with doses of **strychnine sulfate mixed with raw eggs and brandy** — a stimulant then legal, and very nearly fatal.

> ### When the Olympics Awarded Medals for Art
>
> For nearly four decades, the Olympics awarded medals for art inspired by sport. A total of **147 official Olympic medals** were given in Architecture, Literature, Music, Painting and Sculpture between **1912 and 1948**.

Pierre de Coubertin

Pierre de Coubertin — Won an Olympic gold medal in literature at Stockholm 1912 for his poem 'Ode to Sport' under a pseudonym.



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Antonio Rebollo

Antonio Rebollo — Paralympic archer who lit the 1992 Barcelona Olympic cauldron by shooting a flaming arrow over the rim.



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Olympic Extremes: A Nation's Medals, an Athlete's Age

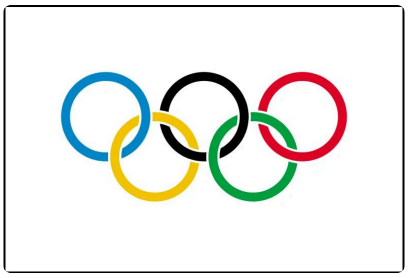
Olympic history's extremes sit at both scale and age. The **United States** is the only nation to pass **1,000 all-time Summer Olympic gold medals**. At the other extreme of age, Sweden's **Oscar Swahn** became the **oldest medalist in Olympic sporting competition** at **72** (Antwerp, 1920) — the art competitions' 1948 medalist John Copley, at 73, was older — while Greek gymnast **Dimitrios Loundras** won bronze at Athens 1896 at just **10 years old**, the youngest medalist in Olympic history.



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The 1980 Moscow Boycott

65 nations joined a US-led boycott of the **1980 Moscow Olympics**. The protest was against the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan.



Original author: Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937) · Public domain

The Olympic Motto Gains a Word

In **2021**, the IOC added a fourth word to the Olympic motto. *'Faster, Higher, Stronger'* became *'Faster, Higher, Stronger — Together'* (Latin: *Communiter*), emphasizing unity alongside individual achievement.

By the numbers

How old was Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) when he won Olympic boxing gold at Rome 1960?

18 years old

How many consecutive individual Olympic gold medals did Mijain Lopez win in Greco-Roman wrestling?

5 consecutive golds

How many consecutive Olympic matches did Kerri Walsh and Misty May-Treanor win across 2004–2012?

21 consecutive matches

How many of the 42 contested Olympic table tennis gold medals has China won between 1988 and 2024?

37 gold medals

How many consecutive Olympic team gold medals has the South Korean women's archery team won (1988–2024)?

10 consecutive golds

How many miles did Fred Lorz ride in an automobile during the chaotic 1904 St. Louis marathon?

11 miles

How many official Olympic medals were awarded in fine arts competitions between 1912 and 1948?

147 medals

The United States is the only nation to surpass how many all-time Summer Olympic gold medals?

1000 gold medals

How old in years was Sweden's Oscar Swahn when he became the oldest medalist in Olympic sporting competition, in 1920?

72 years old

How old in years was Greek gymnast Dimitrios Loundras when he won Olympic bronze at Athens 1896?

10 years old

How many nations joined the US-led boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics over the Afghan invasion?
65 nations

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Rulon Gardner
→ American wrestler who pulled off the 2000 upset over undefeated legend Aleksandr Karelin

Karch Kiraly
→ Only player in Olympic history to win gold in both indoor volleyball (1984, 1988) and beach volleyball (1996)

Steffi Graf
→ Achieved the only Golden Grand Slam in tennis history by winning all 4 majors and Olympic gold in 1988

Pierre de Coubertin
→ Won an Olympic gold medal in literature at Stockholm 1912 for his poem 'Ode to Sport' under a pseudonym

Antonio Rebollo
→ Paralympic archer who lit the 1992 Barcelona Olympic cauldron by shooting a flaming arrow over the rim

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. How old was Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) when he won Olympic boxing gold at Rome 1960?

A 16
B 20
C 22
D 18

2. Rulon Gardner's stunning 2000 Olympic wrestling upset ended the 13-year unbeaten streak of which wrestler?

A Bruce Baumgartner
B Alexander Medved
C Aleksandr Karelin
D Buvaisar Saitiev

3. How many consecutive individual Olympic gold medals did Cuba's Mijain Lopez win in Greco-Roman wrestling?

A 5
B 6
C 4
D 3

4. China has won how many of the 42 Olympic table tennis golds contested since 1988?

A 30
B 37
C 40
D 35

5. What did Steffi Graf achieve in 1988 beyond winning all four tennis majors, making her season unique in tennis history?

A Fed Cup title
B Olympic gold medal
C Olympic silver medal
D Wimbledon doubles title

6. In the chaotic 1904 St. Louis marathon, how many miles did Fred Lorz ride in an automobile before crossing the line first?

A 11
B 8
C 14
D 17

7. How many official Olympic medals were awarded in fine arts competitions between 1912 and 1948?

A 200
B 175
C 120
D 147

8. Which nation is the only one to pass 1,000 all-time Summer Olympic gold medals?

A Great Britain
B Soviet Union
C United States
D China

9. At what age did Sweden's Oscar Swahn become the oldest medalist in Olympic sporting competition, in 1920?

A 72
B 75
C 68
D 70

10. How old was Greek gymnast Dimitrios Loundras when he won bronze at Athens 1896, the youngest Olympic medalist ever?

A 8
B 12
C 9
D 10

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/summer-olympic-trivia/summer-lore-combat-and-the-all-time-medal-pantheon

STUDY Summer Olympic Trivia: Ancient Roots, Modern Icons & Historic Feats in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/summer-olympic-trivia

Answer key

Lesson 1: Ancient Roots to Modern Revival (776 BC – 1896 – 1912)

1. B Coroebus of Elis

Coroebus of Elis, a baker, won the 776 BC stadion, the first recorded champion. Milo, Cynisca, and Louis were champions of later, different eras.

2. D 192 meters

The stadion track measured about 192 meters, giving both the sprint and the stadium their name.

3. C Eye-gouging

Pankration allowed nearly everything, including ground strikes, chokeholds, and joint locks — only biting and eye-gouging were strictly forbidden.

4. A Coroebus wins the stadion, 776 BC

Coroebus's 776 BC stadion win predates Milo's title run (540 BC), Cynisca's victory (396 BC), and the 393 AD ban.

5. B The Olympiad (four-year cycle)

Greek writers dated events by the Olympiad, the four-year interval between festivals, not by a fixed calendar system.

6. C The Sorbonne in Paris

Coubertin's 1894 congress at the Sorbonne in Paris founded the IOC and set Athens as host of the first modern Games.

7. D 14 nations

The 1896 Athens Games drew 14 competing nations, the smallest field of any modern Olympics.

8. A Spyridon Louis

Spyridon Louis, a Greek water-carrier and farmer, won the marathon on home soil, becoming a national hero overnight.

9. C Silver medal

Athens 1896 gave first-place finishers a silver medal, with bronze for second place — gold wasn't introduced until 1904.

10. D 1904 St. Louis

Gold medals for first place debuted at the 1904 St. Louis Games, the third modern Olympics; Athens 1896 awarded silver instead.

Lesson 2: Track & Field: Sprint Legends & Hurdle Breakthroughs

1. B 9.58 seconds

Bolt ran 9.58s at the 2009 Berlin World Championships, a mark still unbeaten. The other times are close but not the actual record.

2. C 27.78 mph

Bolt's instantaneous peak speed of 27.78 mph in that race is the fastest ever measured for a human on foot.

3. D Lane 6

Bailey set the world record from lane 6 at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

4. A Owens and Lewis

Jesse Owens (Berlin 1936) and Carl Lewis (Los Angeles 1984) each won exactly four golds, matching feats 48 years apart.

5. C 30 meters

The 2018 change folded the old acceleration zone into the passing zone, creating a single 30-meter exchange zone.

6. A 122

Moses won 122 straight 400m hurdles races over nine years, nine months, and nine days without a defeat.

7. D Karsten Warholm

Karsten Warholm broke the sub-46 barrier with 45.94 seconds at Tokyo 2020, surpassing Kevin Young's older record.

8. B 43.03 seconds

Van Niekerk ran 43.03 seconds from the outermost lane, unable to see any rival for the entire race.

9. A Kip Keino

Kip Keino won the 1968 Mexico City 1500m despite the infection, having run to the stadium after his bus was stuck in traffic.

10. D 46.78 seconds

Young's 46.78 seconds stood for nearly 29 years until Karsten Warholm broke it at Tokyo 2020.

Lesson 3: Track & Field: Field Leaps, Throws & The Decathlon

1. C 8.9 meters

Beamon's 8.9m long jump obliterated the old record in 1968; 2.45m, 6.25m, and 18.29m are high jump, pole vault, and triple jump marks.

2. B Dick Fosbury

Dick Fosbury debuted this backward, head-first technique in 1968; Sotomayor and Powell set later high-jump/long-jump records, and Bubka is a pole vault great.

3. D Sergey Bubka

Bubka broke the 6-meter barrier in 1985; Duplantis later raised the world record to 6.25m, while Fosbury and Sotomayor are high jumpers.

4. A 6.25 meters

Duplantis vaulted 6.25m for gold and a world record; 6.00m was Bubka's 1985 milestone, 2.45m the men's high jump record (Sotomayor), and 2.09m the women's high jump record (Kostadinova, 1987).

5. A Mike Powell

Mike Powell jumped 8.95m in 1991, finally beating Beamon's 8.9m mark from 1968; Edwards and Taylor are triple jumpers, and Fosbury pioneered the high-jump flop.

6. C The backward head-first layout over the bar

Dick Fosbury introduced the 'Fosbury Flop', arching backward over the bar head-first, winning gold at 2.24m.

7. B Mexico City 1968

Fosbury introduced his backward head-first 'flop' technique to win high jump gold at Mexico City 1968.

8. D 10 events

The decathlon comprises 10 events across two days; the women's heptathlon (7 events) is the other multi-event discipline in Olympic track and field.

9. B 4 centimeters

The 1986 redesign moved the javelin's center of gravity 4cm forward, making it dive earlier after throws threatened to clear the infield.

10. A King Gustav V of Sweden

The story credits King Gustav V of Sweden, who presented Thorpe's trophy in 1912. It is widely repeated, though its exact wording is disputed, and it is the source of the decathlon's 'world's greatest athlete' label.

11. C Ryan Crouser

Ryan Crouser swept shot put gold at Rio, Tokyo, and Paris; Zelezny and Wlodarczyk won javelin/hammer streaks, and Adams medalled across four Games without three straight golds.

12. D Daley Thompson

Daley Thompson won consecutive decathlon golds in 1980 and 1984; Ashton Eaton later repeated the feat in 2012 and 2016, while Thorpe and Johnson each won a single decathlon gold.

13. C 8,893 points

Ashton Eaton scored 8,893 points to win his second straight decathlon gold at Rio 2016.

14. D Rio 2016

Eaton's 8,893-point decathlon score came at Rio 2016, his second consecutive Olympic decathlon title.

Lesson 4: Pool of Champions: Swimming & Aquatics Dominance

1. C 28 medals

Phelps retired with 28 Olympic medals in total, more than any athlete in any sport.

2. D 8 gold medals

Phelps won 8 golds in a single Games at Beijing 2008, breaking Mark Spitz's prior record of 7.

3. A Mark Spitz

Mark Spitz had won 7 golds at Munich 1972; Phelps broke that record with 8 golds in Beijing.

4. B 0.01 seconds

Phelps won by just 0.01 seconds, a margin confirmed only by the timing pads.

5. D 28 career medals total

28 is Phelps' full career medal count, not a Beijing-specific figure — his Beijing 2008 haul was 8 golds, breaking Spitz's 7-gold record by 0.01 seconds over Cavic.

6. C 46.06 seconds

Lezak's 46.06-second anchor split, the fastest relay leg recorded at the time, ran down France in the 4x100m freestyle relay.

7. B France

France's relay team predicted they would 'smash' the Americans, but Lezak's anchor leg ran them down for gold.

8. A Dawn Fraser

Dawn Fraser won the 100m freestyle at three consecutive Games, a historic Olympic swimming streak.

9. B Butterfly

Swimmers found breaststroke rules allowed recovering arms over the water, creating the butterfly.

10. A Greg Louganis

Greg Louganis needed stitches after the collision but came back to win springboard and platform gold.

11. D 10 meters

The Olympic platform diving event is contested from 10 meters above the water.

12. C 2000 Sydney

Synchronized diving joined the Olympic program at the 2000 Sydney Games.

13. B 1930s

In the 1930s, swimmers exploited a breaststroke loophole allowing arm recovery over the water, birthing the butterfly.

14. D Breaststroke

Breaststroke rules didn't forbid recovering the arms over water, and that hybrid became the butterfly stroke.

Lesson 5: Gymnastics & Court Showdowns: The Quest for Perfection

1. D Nadia Comaneci

Nadia Comaneci scored the first perfect 10.0 in Olympic gymnastics at Montreal 1976; the scoreboard could only show 1.00 since it had just three digits.

2. C 7 perfect tens

Comaneci earned seven perfect 10.0 scores across the 1976 Montreal Olympics.

3. B Open-ended D-score plus E-score

The 2006 reform dropped the 10.0 ceiling for an open-ended Difficulty (D) score combined with a 10.0-based Execution (E) score, so harder routines could score higher.

4. A 5 eponymous skills

Simone Biles has five skills named after her in the FIG Code of Points; 11 is instead her total Olympic medal count.

5. D Kerri Strug

Kerri Strug is famed for her injured-ankle vault that secured team gold, not an individual all-around title; the others all won all-around crowns.

6. B Five

Simone Biles has five eponymous skills in the FIG Code of Points, named for her because she was first to land them.

7. C She was first to land them in competition

Skills are named for a gymnast when she is first to land them in competition — Biles has done this five times.

8. A 2006

The FIG replaced the 10.0-ceiling system with an open-ended difficulty score in 2006.

9. D Difficulty and Execution scores

Since 2006, routines are scored by combining a Difficulty (D) score with a 10.0-based Execution (E) score.

10. C 43.8 points

The 1992 Dream Team won its Barcelona games by an average of 43.8 points, dominance so total the coach never called a timeout.

11. B 0 timeouts

Chuck Daly called zero timeouts across the whole tournament — the Dream Team's dominance meant he never needed one.

12. A USSR 51, USA 50

The Soviet Union beat the USA 51-50 after the final seconds were replayed three times; the Americans refused their silver medals.

13. B Argentina

Manu Ginobili led Argentina's Golden Generation past the Americans to gold at Athens 2004.

14. D The win streak began in 1984

The USA women's streak of eight consecutive golds ran from 1996 to 2024, not starting in 1984; Taurasi won six of those golds.

Lesson 6: Summer Lore, Combat & The All-Time Medal Pantheon

1. D 18

Clay won light heavyweight boxing gold at 18, years before turning pro as Muhammad Ali.

2. C Aleksandr Karelin

Gardner beat Aleksandr Karelin at Sydney 2000; Karelin hadn't lost a match in 13 years.

3. A 5

Lopez won 5 straight individual golds (2008-2024), more than any athlete in any individual Olympic event.

4. B 37

China has won 37 of the 42 table tennis golds awarded since the sport joined the Olympics in 1988, the most lopsided run in any racquet sport.

5. B Olympic gold medal

Graf also won Olympic gold in 1988, completing the only true Golden Grand Slam in tennis history.

6. A 11

Lorz rode 11 miles by car after cramping, and was disqualified once discovered.

7. D 147

147 medals were given across architecture, literature, music, painting, and sculpture for works inspired by sport.

8. C United States

The United States is the sole nation to surpass 1,000 all-time Summer Olympic golds.

9. A 72

Swahn won a shooting medal at Antwerp 1920 at age 72, the oldest medalist in Olympic sporting competition (the art competitions' 1948 medalist John Copley, at 73, was older).

10. D 10

Loundras won bronze in gymnastics at just 10 years old, the youngest Olympic medalist in history.

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