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SUMMER SPORTS

OLYMPIC | PARALYMPIC | NON-OLYMPIC SPORTS

Compendium

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SUMMER SPORTS

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SPORTS





ARCHERY

The beginning

Hunting is known to have been a tight activity to the beginnings of the human beings, and so we can easily say that archery is among of the oldest sports in the history.

Starting with the 16th Century, archery was officially a sport within various tournaments organised in England. As an Olympic sport it appeared in Paris, in 1900, while at St. Louis 1904 was already allowing women to compete, thus being among the first sports to allow so.

What it is about

The shooting distance between the archer and the 1.22m diameter target, is of 70m. The points go from 1 to 10 according to the closeness to the inner circle. The archer has 6 arrows and 40 seconds to shoot each. In the finale the archer has at its disposal half of the time available and arrows (20 seconds, 3 arrows). The arrow can reach an incredible speed up to 240 km/h while being in the air.

In the knockout system any mistake made can be fatal for the athlete which can be excluded from the competition for that. For the individual competitions, each archer has 5 turns with 3 arrows each. The points of the best 3 turns are counted and the final score indicate the top for the following phase. Same rule goes for teams with the difference of having 4 turns of 6 arrows.



ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS

The beginning

Gymnastic events were included in the Olympic programme even since the Ancient Greece, with men performing for individuals and teams events. The name of “artistic gymnastic” was first used in the 19th Century to separate the free style from the military preparation routines.

The competitions soon started to take place in athletic schools and clubs all around Europe and so it was included in the first Modern Olympic Games in Athens 1896 too. The women were allowed to compete in the Olympics from Amsterdam 1928.

What it is about

Having moves that require a great force, flexibility and equilibrium, the biggest challenge of the gymnasts is performing their routine seeming effortless, proving the judges their grace and easiness in movements.

The male competition has 6 apparatus (floor, vault, horizontal bar, parallel bars, pommel horse and rings) and 4 apparatus for the female ones (floor, vaults, uneven parallel bars and beam).

The score is awarded by 9 judges taking into consideration the difficulty level, quality of technical and performance movements, and of the routine itself, for each event.



ATHLETICS

The beginning

It is the oldest sport to have ever been included in the Olympic Games, being present as well in the Ancient Greeks' Games of 776 BC. Given the variety of events it has, the athletics are now the sport that offers the most medals, i.e. 141 in total, out of which 47 are gold.

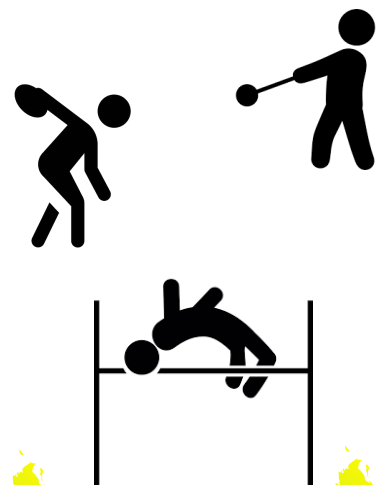
What it is about

The 24 track events vary as distance between 100 m and 10.000 m, having up to 3 rounds of qualifications (qualifications, semi-finals and finale). The number of the series for each depends on the number of the competing athletes. The only exceptions are the male and female competitions of 10.000 m where all the athletes compete directly in the finals, having no qualification rounds before.

The 16 field disciplines are divided into 3 categories (throwing, put and jumps) have only 2 rounds of qualifications (qualifications and finals).

The joint of heptathlon for women and decathlon for men have the events spread on 2 days.

- 100m-10.000m
- 100m hurdles - 400m hurdles
- 3.000 steeplechase
- 4x100 relay - 4x400 relay
- high jump
- pole vault
- long jump
- triple jump
- discus throw
- hammer throw
- javelin throw
- shot put
- decathlon
- heptathlon





MARATHON AND RACE WALK

Marathon

Included in the Olympic programme from Athens 1896, marathon has simple rules, yet not a simple challenge: the athlete that reaches first the finish situated at 42.195 m wins the gold medal. The path to success requires greatly the capacity of the athlete to restrain its own rhythm.

Race Walk

This type of event debuted in the St. Louis 1904 Games with the male competition, while the women only started to compete it in Barcelona 1992.

The events vary depending on the distance such as 20 km for both male and female, and 50 km available only for the male racers. The athlete – also called as “the walker” – must avoid at any cost running always maintaining the contact with the ground with at least one foot at any time. More than that, at each step taken the forward moving leg must remain straight; this hip movement is memorable for the spectators and easy to notice from the beginning.





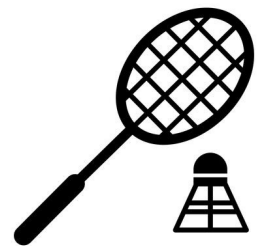
BADMINTON

The beginning

With the history proving similar practices in Asia and Europe dating 2.000 years ago, badminton debuted at the Games of Barcelona 1992 in single and double events, for both female and male competitors. The mixed double event was added later in Atlanta 1996. The game consists of 2 players hitting a shuttlecock back and forth without leaving it fall on the ground.

What it is about

Despite its obvious similarities with tennis, the sport played with a shuttlecock is not identical with the latest. The rules and the score are greatly different: badminton has 3 sets of 21 points each. Usually the Olympic programme consists of 2 events in which the athletes can win medals: individual (male and female), double (male, female and mixed). The qualifications have a group pool round, followed by the play-off up to the final.





BASKETBALL

The beginning

Basketball was introduced in the Olympic programme of Berlin 1936. Before becoming one of the most popular sports around the world, basketball - created in 1891 in the American city of Springfield, Massachusetts - went through lots of changes since its creator dr. James Naismith, simply threw a ball in a fruit basket.

What it is about

The basketball game has its particularity where a minute can last more than 60 seconds due to every penalty, fault, shots or lost ball, during which the time is stopped. The 40 minutes game, spread on 4 quarters, always last more than 40 minutes.

The shots worth up to 3 points each, depending on the player's position on the court. The size of a basketball court is of 28m long and 15m wide. There are 12 male and 12 female teams starting the competitions, each having 12 players and 5 simultaneously on the court.





BEACH VOLLEY

The beginning

The families of North-American city of Santa Monica started in the '20s to gather up on the beach to play volleyball. The now known sport as beach volleyball grew rapidly and became famous in those times.

The first World Championship approved by the International Volleyball Federation took place in 1987, in Ipanema, Brazil. The sport became part of the Olympic family at Atlanta 1996.

What it is about



Played in pairs, the matches have up to 3 sets and the winners are those that get 2 of them; the first 2 sets are being played until 21 points, while the 3rd if necessary, by 15. The team needs a difference of 2 points in order to win the set. The players serve alternatively from whichever position from the serving area, situated at the back of the court. Each pair can touch the ball up to 3 times in a row, and the block is considered as well a touch.



BOXING

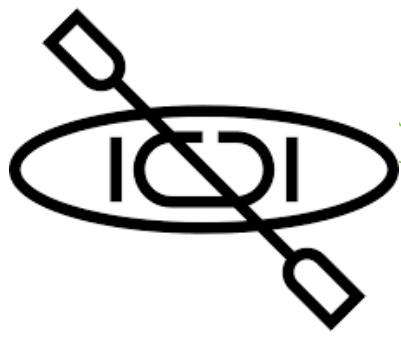
The beginning

Boxing is part of the Olympic Games even from the Ancient Greece when it was introduced to the programme roughly around the 7th Century BC. Back then the opponents were used to fight with leather straps covering their fists. After centuries of bloody fights resulted in the absence of gloves, the sport rules were drafted by Jon Chambers and published eventually in 1867. Starting with the London 2021 Games, The International Olympic Committee allowed women to compete as well.

What it is about

Cross, right, jab and uppercut are some of the main techniques allowed between the chords. The Olympics match duration is rather short: 3 rounds of 3 minutes each. There are 10 weight categories for male and 3 for female competitors.

Regardless the weight category, the boxing competition has a standard form of a single elimination. The winners of the semi-finals compete further for the gold medal, while those that lost receive directly the bronze medals.



CANOE

Canoe Slalom

Canoe Slalom takes place on a river with a steep 250m course. The purpose is to reach the finish line in the shortest time possible. Each of the Games has a different course and so requiring experience and essential strategy in finishing it. The athlete encounters with lots of power and strong waters, whirlpools and swirls.

The event continues to be a permanent one in the Olympics only from Barcelona 1992 however the first competition was included in the Munich 1972 one.

Canoe Sprint

Canoe Sprint is a maximum speed on a short distance type of event. In the near past the courses of 200 m, 500 m and 1.000 m on a still water became faster and faster.

Kayak (k) and canoe (c) names identify the types of the used boats. The number indicates the crew dimension, while the metreage indicates the distance of the course.

This sport known from North America to Polynesia was firstly presented as a demo sport in Paris 1924 and had its official debut in Berlin 1936. Women started competing at London 1948.





CYCLING BMX

The beginning

Cycling was already included in the first Games of the modern Era in 1896 and it is one of the 5 sports constantly present in all the Olympic editions ever since. At the moment it has 4 disciplines.

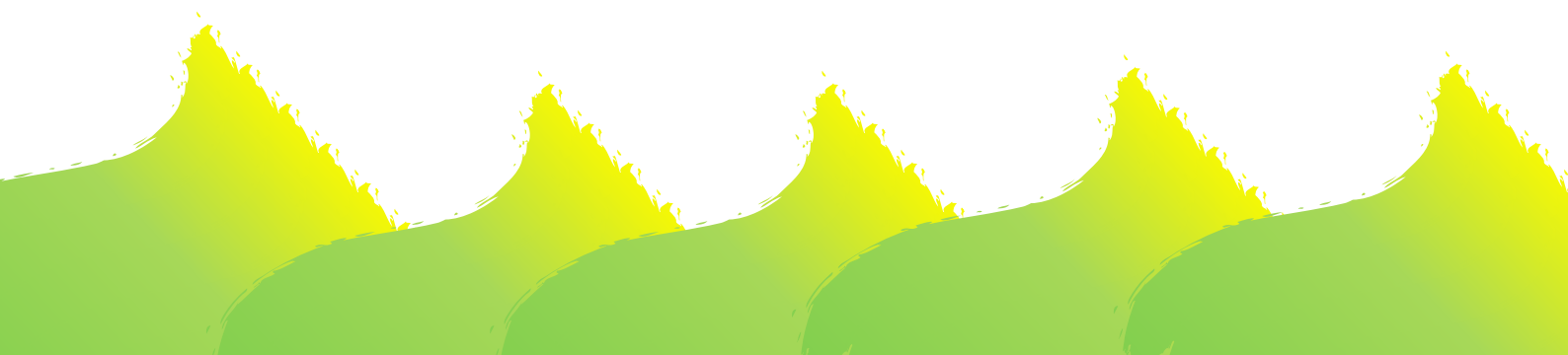
BMX started gaining popularity at the end of the '60s in California meanwhile the motocross became quite popular too in the US.

The event was integrated in the International Cycling Union in 1993, 15 years before the BMX race to actually be included in the Olympic programme of Beijing 2008.

What it is about

Groups of 8 riders start from an uphill of 8 m height which leads to a circuit of 300 m to 400m. Despite some parts that can be flat, the circuits include various ramps, turns, uphill and downhill portions. The first 4 athletes with the best times qualify to the next round.

With a reduced dimension compared to a mountain bike, the BMX one has tires of 20' and only one gear and break, all incorporated in a resisting frame that absorbs shocks from jumps and bumps along the circuit.





CYCLING MOUNTAIN

The beginning

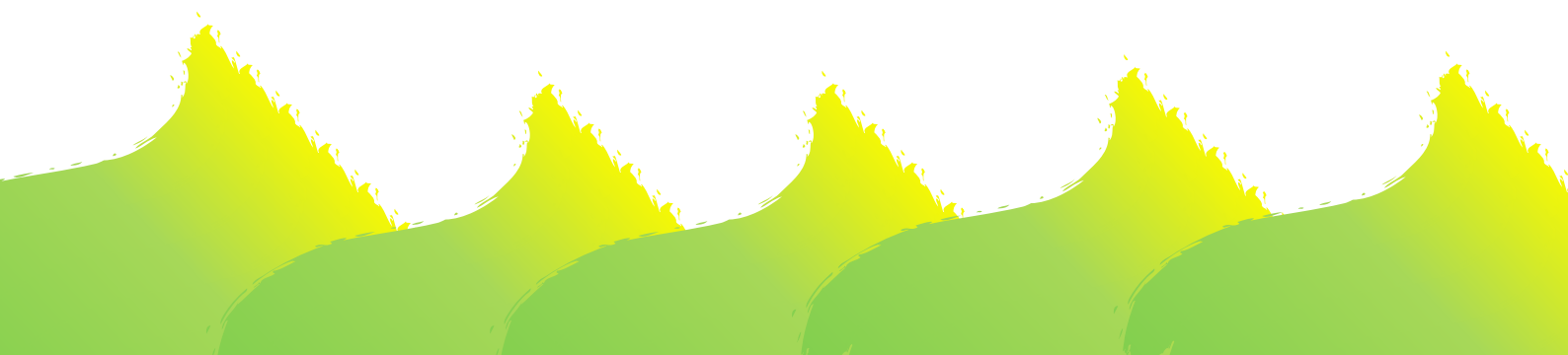
The mountain cycling emerged in the '70s in California from the desire of adventurous riders to explore paths and tracks at north of San Francisco with their old bikes. In 1976 they the first race demanding changes and adaptations of the already existing bicycles took place. And so the modern mountain cycling was born, a biking discipline that expanded immediately all around the world.

Cross-country mountain biking debuted in Atlanta 1996 and was included ever since in all the Olympic editions.

What it is about

The discipline happening on irregular and rough terrains has its riders showing a great adaptation capacity to the various situations along the course. The route has about 5 km length and men need to do more laps than women.

Created to minimize the impact and reach high velocity easily, the bicycles have tires of big dimensions, with shock absorbers both in front and back of the bike. Light and robust, they weight from 8 to 9 kg.





CYCLING ROAD

The beginning

Road cycling is one of the 4 cycling disciplines included in the Olympic programme and appeared at the end of the 19th Century. The historians say the first competition took place in fact in Paris, in 1868. Even if it was present in Athens 1896, it was re-included in the Olympic programme starting with Stockholm 1912 and ever since. The time trial event was included in Atlanta 1996.

What it is about

The time trial discipline is a event where the bikers start at regular time frames and must finish the route in the shortest time possible. The road cycling race however has all the riders starting together the long distance track. The bicycles must be light, robust and comfortable given that the bikers can spend lots of hours pedalling. For the individual time trial discipline the bicycle's aerodynamic shapes and the biker's position are all that matters.



CYCLING TRACK

The beginning

The track cycling competitions started at least in the 1870. The competitions were taking place on wood covered tracks, similar to the nowadays velodrome. Besides Stockholm 1912, the discipline was included in all the Olympic Games starting with Athens 1896.

What it is about

Races being competed in a special arena called the “velodrome”, track cycling requires speed and resilience during the individual and team events. The cyclist must combine the strength, speed and extraordinary tactics in order to obtain high performances. The bicycles are designed to reach incredible high velocity being light and robust. There is only one gear and the bike has no breaks as a sudden halt during a race could lead to serious problems on the track.



DIVING

The beginning

Besides having its Olympic debut in St. Louis 1904, diving was already practiced even from the 18th and 19th Centuries in Sweden and Germany, where gymnasts were incorporating acrobatics in their jumps.

The competition remained unchanged in the Olympics until Sydney 2000 when the 3 m springboards and 10 m platform synchronized events were introduced.

What it is about

The divers get a high score related to the complexity and accuracy of their acrobatics. Men have 6 jumps, while the women have 5. Seven judges award points from 0 to 10 for each jump. Two of the best and two of the lowest grades are disregarded. The remaining points are summed up and multiplied with the grade of the dive's difficulty points. During the synchronized event there are 11 judges and 6 grades are being dismissed.

Types of jumps:

- Forward: take off facing the water
- Backward: take off with the back at the water
- Reverse: take off facing the water, executing the move backwards
- Inward: backwards take off, forward execution
- Twist: regardless of the take off, the body must rotate in the air
- Armstand (only from the 10m platform): the take off is done by standing on the arms on the platform, with the feet up in the air



EQUESTRIAN

Equestrian Dressage

The equestrian history started with more than 2.000 years ago with the Greeks introducing the horse training as a way to prepare the animals for the wars. The purpose of equestrian dressage is to reach a perfect harmony while performing the race between the horse and the rider, alternating freestyle and obligatory techniques such as the walk, trap, gallop and stop. The free movements represent the special choreography acts for each horse, following the music.

Equestrian Eventing

The equestrian eventing incorporates all the horse disciplines. The competition takes various days and is divided in 3 phases: dressage, jumps and a race of 30-40 jumps with various types of obstacles, small ponds and stone obstacles, and with a maximum time of execution. The winner is the rider or team that gather the least mistakes until the end of the 3 phases of the competition.

Equestrian Jumping

The horse is challenged from the speed, strength and obedience while jumping points of view in a course of 10-13 obstacles, while the rider must show its riding abilities. If while jumping an obstacle is being knocked down or if the horse does not perform the jump it counts as a mistake. The techniques used while jumping are not being evaluated. The winner is the rider or team that gathered the least of mistakes, within the shortest time frame.



FENCING

The beginning

Although swords fights were present for thousands of years, the modern fencing was transformed into a sport only in the 19th Century when the first contest took place in the 1890s. In 1896 it was already included in the first Modern Olympics.

At first it had only the foil and epee events, the sabre becoming part of the programme only in the following Games of Paris 1900. The female fencing was present for the first time in Atlanta 1996, and 8 years later the sabre event was included too.

Fencing is among the 5 sports constantly included in the Olympic programme since Athens 1896.

What it is about

The sport has 3 weapons: epee, foil and sabre.

In epee any part of the body can be touched yet using only the tip of the weapon.

In foil only the upper part and front part of the neck can be touched.

In sabre any part of the blade can hit above the waist, including at the head.

If the athlete touches the opponent in any of the allowed body part a point is awarded. A sensor connected to the attacking athlete lights up and emits a sound each time a point is made. All athletes must have protection equipment such as face masks, long pants, a jacket and a glove on the hand handling the weapon. The fencing equipment is made of puncture resisting materials. Women must wear an additional rigid protection of metal or plastic for the chest.



FOOTBALL

The beginning

Its Olympic debut happened in Paris 1900 as a demo sport. It was included in the permanent programme in London 1908 with the great support of FIFA. The female football was added only since Atlanta 1996.

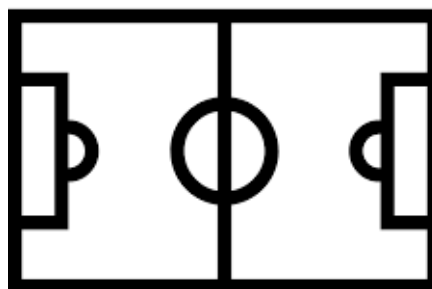
What it is about

Teams of 11 players confront each other in a match of 2 halves of 45 minutes each.

In the male event, 16 countries are competing in 4 group pools. The first 2 of each group advance to the quarter finals, where the losing team gets directly eliminated and continuing so until the end of the competitions.

In the female event there are 12 countries competing in 3 group pools. The best 2 countries of each group and the best 2 of the third place countries advance to the quarters. From this point forward the competition goes on as the male one.

Once reached the eliminatory phase for both genders, whenever the match ends the regular time in a draw, there are added 2 extra halves of 15 minutes each. If there is still draw after the supplementary time, penalty shots decide the winner.





GOLF

The beginning

It is believed that the modern golf comes from the 15th Century Scotland. The sport was part of the Olympic programme on 2 occasions: Paris 1900 and St. Louis 1904, where only men could participate and where only US and Canada participated. In 2016, after no less than 112 years, golf was reintroduced in the Olympic Games.

What it is about

As an Olympic sport, the competition takes place on a 72-holes course. The golfer finishing the circuit with a minimum number of hits at the end of the 4 quarters – having each 18 holes – is declared the winner. The spectators can walk through the field and follow the competition, assist at the strength of a hit and the precision of a chip shot (short hit, generally needed to reach the hole).





HANDBALL

The beginning

Evolved in 19th and 20th Century Europe, handball was first introduced in the Olympic Games in Berlin 1936 as an outdoor sport. It was then taken out of the programme until Munich 1972 when it was reintroduced yet as an indoor sport. Females started competing from Montreal 1976. Ever since handball continued to be part of the Games.

What it is about

A team consists of 7 players on the court at the same time with more on the bench that can replace at any time an athlete in play. The court dimensions are of 40m length and 20m width.

A match of 1 hour, divided into 2 halves of 30 minutes each, has frequent goals scored within seconds. The passes are done only with the hands and arms, yet it is not allowed the ball to touch under the knee level.

A player can hold onto the ball for no more than 3 seconds and can take maximum 3 steps before passing it to a team mate or shoot it at the opponent's goal.



HOCKEY

The beginning

Although it seems to date back with 4 millennia to the Ancient Egypt, the most similar game to what we nowadays know had started to develop in the mid-18th Century while being practiced in the British schools.

The sport was included in the Olympic programme of Amsterdam 1928 and was exclusively dedicated to male competitions for 13 editions in a row. The female events were introduced only at Moscow 1980. As historians mention it, the hockey reached Brazil at the end of the 19th Century and was initially played only by the immigrants. It then reached the next level when the first 2 official artificial fields were built for the Pan American Games of 2007.

What it is about

Teams of 11 players each aim to score at the opponent's goal. Seeming likely initially to football, its rules are rather different. To begin with, the players have a stick with which they control the ball, the stick generally being of carbon fibre, with a weight of 350 g – 700 g, and with a diameter of 5 cm.

The points are validated only if the shots were made from the semicircle. When a match ends in draw, the teams execute a free shot from the 23m line; the player has 8s to move the ball forward and try to score.



JUDO

The beginning

Judo is a type of Japanese martial arts that can be translated as the “soft path” as Jigoro Kano, the creator of the sport, described it. Judo develops the technique itself and helps also disciplines the mind.

Its debut in the Games was no other than in Tokyo 1964. Japan is the country with the highest number of victories, having obtained 72 Olympic medals so far. Women events were introduced in Barcelona 1992 and at the moment have 7 weight categories, similar to the male ones. Judo gathered so far more than 20 millions of followers from over 20 countries.

What it is about

The points vary depending on the used technique: Ippon, Waza-ari and Yuko. Ippon guarantees the victory and can be obtained from the following 3 situations: when the judoka takes down the opponent with strength and speed, and they fall on the back; when one is kept on the ground for 20 seconds; when a fighter renounces as having blocked the arm or is unable to breath for example. Waza-ari is close to be an ippon, yet not reached: the opponent is put down, but technically does not meet the ippon requirements or the opponent is kept on the ground between 15 and 20 seconds. Two waza-ari equal an ippon. The third technique, yuko, is scored when the opponent falls on its lateral or is kept to the ground for at least 10 seconds, but less than 15; no matter how many yuko one would get, they would never be bigger or equivalent to a waza-ari or ippon.

The medal competitions have a direct elimination system. The play-off fights allow the judokas that lost in the quarter finals though to fight for the bronze medals (2 for each weight class).



MODERN PENTATHLON

The beginning

Put together by Baron de Coubertin, the creator of the modern Olympics, the event of modern pentathlon follows the tradition of the Ancient Greece' Olympic Games as their once most important sport. The event was initially elaborated to test the “men’s moral qualities, as well as their physical capabilities and skills, consequently producing the ideal complete athlete”.

The modern pentathlon debuted in Stockholm 1912 and was part of all the Games ever since. Starting with Atlanta 1996 the competition is held in only 1 day. Women began participating at Sydney 2000. At London 2012 running and shooting became a combined event.

What it is about

The competition starts with a qualification round of fencing, followed by the competition in other 4 disciplines: swimming first, returning to fencing and horse riding. The combination of these 3 events offers the order of the qualification for the running-shooting combined event.



RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

The beginning

Rhythmic gymnastics arose in the 19th Century having had developed and incorporated elements of the classic ballet, German weightlifting techniques and Swedish exercising systems.

In 1963 the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) adopted the rhythmic gymnastics as a discipline, 21 years before becoming an Olympic sport in Los Angeles 1984. Likewise the synchronized swimming, since it was included in the Olympic programme in the rhythmic gymnastics only women compete.

What it is about

The performances take place on the floor and are accompanied by music, thus creating an amazing show. The discipline has 5 apparatus (rope, ball, hoop, ribbon and clubs), yet only 4 of them are present at each Olympics, as decided through a rotation provided by FIG.

Two judging committees evaluate the performance taking into account its difficulty and execution. The gymnast obtaining the highest score wins. There are events for both individuals and teams, where the group has a pre-established combination of apparatus.



ROWING

The beginning

The first depiction of a rowing boat was found in Finland and seems to date from 5800 B.C, while the oldest regatta competition seems to have been recorded in Venice, in 1274, when the gondoliers and boatmen were competing against each other.

The sport was added to the Olympic programme in Athens 1896, yet the regatta was cancelled due to the agitated sea. Four years later though, at Paris 1900 the competition finally took place. Rowing was then added to all the following editions. Women started competing in Montreal 1976.

What it is about

There are 14 events divided in 8 for men and 6 for women. There are up to 6 boats performing in each regatta. Making way towards the finale is done through a system defined by the International Rowing Federation. The 2.000 m race takes place on a straight line, with marks every 250m. There is a lane with a width of 13.5m for each boat.

An interesting person in rowing is that of the cox who acts as a coach from inside of the boat. Besides the tactical guidance of the team and establishing the rowing rhythm and directions of the boat, it also motivates the rowers to communicate the positions of the opponents.



RUGBY

The beginning

Rugby-7 debuted in Rio 2016 however the sport was already present before in the Olympic programme. The “classic” version with 15 players was previously competed in Paris 1900, London 1908, Antwerp 1920 and Paris 1924.

What it is about

On a grass field, the playing rhythm increases and the athletes combine speed and strength.

The male and female tournaments have 12 teams each, playing against each other in matches of 2 halves, of 7 minutes each.

As in all the other team sports, rugby's main feature is to pass through the opponent's defence, which requires good resilience, technique and tactics. The “try outs” are the main point of the match when the scoring appears while the ball is being kept on the opponent's field, after the goal line was overcame.



SAILING

The beginning

The unfavourable weather conditions delayed its debut at Athens 1896, and so the competitions took place only in the following Games of Paris 1900.

Female and male athletes raced with each other in all the classes until Seoul 1988, when the events were eventually split by genders.

What it is about

The Olympic regattas are competed with boats of same aspect and technical characteristics inside each class, thus the competitor's success depends on a great matter to their skills. The personal features may make the difference though: light sailors generally don't do well in events which require a higher strength, such as Finn does.

For regattas the route is outlined by buoys that need to be encircled on certain sides. After a series of qualifications, the best 10 sailors compete further for medals in each category.

The competitions have 10 events: 5 male, 4 female and 1 mixed. The sport where you can make the best out of the wind as your fuel, the winner is generally the one that adapts the best to the climate and navigation conditions. A deep knowledge of meteorology therefore is as price-worthy as the physical training of the athlete.



SHOOTING

The beginning

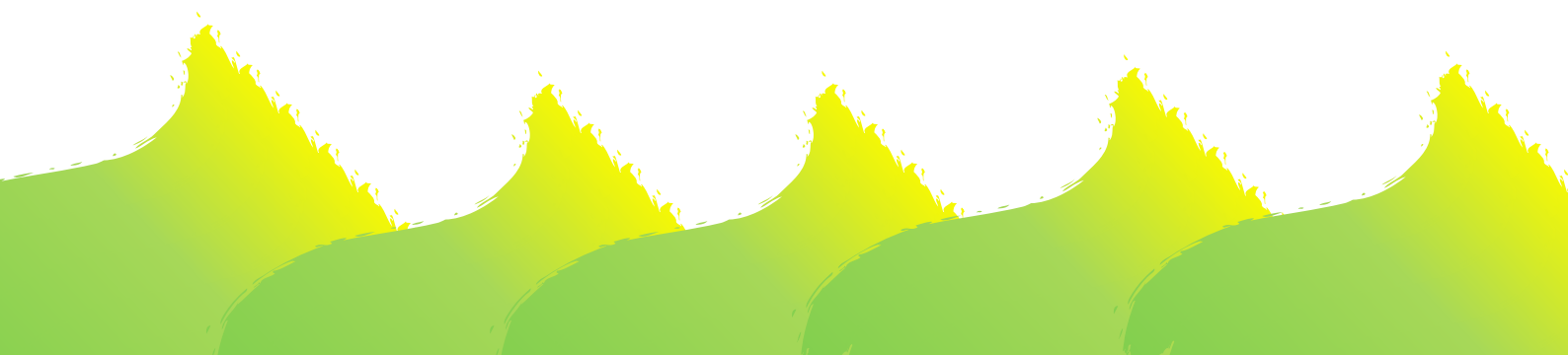
Shooting appeared in Germany, in Europe, and is known shooting clubs to have existed for more than 700 years. The French Baron Pierre de Coubertin, father of the nowadays Olympic Games, was a shooting champion.

The establishment of federations in England, in 1859 and later in the US in 1871 contributed to the popularization of this sport in the Anglophone countries. Female events were included at Los Angeles 1984.

What it is about

The 15 shooting events are divided according to the 3 types of guns (rifle, pistol and shotgun). Each of them has 3 events for men and 2 for women, both being individual.

The rules vary depending on factors such as: the distance to the target, shooting position, number of shots and time spent on shooting. For example the rifle and pistol competitors need to shoot a fixed target with 10 circles in a pre-established time, while in the shotgun events the targets are mobile and pulled at the shooter's command.





Marathon Swimming

Relatively new in the Olympic programme, the marathon swimming made its debut in Beijing 2008. Having only an event for men and another one for women (25 swimmers at each), the marathon swimming is competed in a non-interruptive race of 10 km. The athletes must swim around buoys that outline the track and, similar to a running marathon, they must wear their number of their body.

Swimming

The discipline is present in the Olympic Games even since Athens 1896. Now it's one of the competitions that offer the most medals, as in 32 events.

An Olympic pool has 50m width, 25m length and 3m depth. The competitions are divided in qualifications, semi-finals and finals. Besides the events which vary as distance or technique, there are relays and mixtures of techniques.

Synchronized Swimming

Synchronized swimming, known as well as the "water ballet", became popular in North America in the '40s. Ten years later the first rules were drafted allowing the sport to evolve until it finally debuted in the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games.

The swimmers are evaluated for 3 aspects: execution, difficulty and artistic impression which points at the choreography, musical interpretation and presentation way. The duets are between 2min20s to 3 min, while the team routines are of 2min50s to 4 min.

A decorative pattern at the bottom of the page consisting of several overlapping, rounded, brushstroke-like shapes in various shades of green, creating a wavy, organic effect.



TABLE TENNIS

The beginning

Table tennis evolved in the 1880s in England as an entertaining game for after dinner in the superior class parties. The equipment was improvised, yet with a touch of wealth, such as: the books could have served as the net, the ball could have been the rounded cork from a champagne bottle, while the cigar box lids could have served as the rackets.

Obviously both the equipment and the rules were revised until the foundation of the International Table Tennis Federation in 1926.

What it is about

The tournament is organised by seeds, all the matches being directly eliminatory.

At every 2 points the serve changes or at each point when the score is 10:10; in the double events the players take turn at serving.

Along the years, various changes contributed to the transformation of the sport into a more equilibrated one. The matches were reduced from 5 sets of 21 points each to 7 sets of 11 points each. For the team events each match is consisted of the best out of the 5 matches: 4 played by singles and 1 double.

To slow down the balls' motion and make it more appealing to the public, the ball was increased in dimensions from a diameter of 38 to 40 mm.



TAEKWONDO

The beginning

Following the word by word translation “tae” means foot, “kwon” means first and “do” means the way. The beginning of this martial art can be tracked back to 50 BC to the period known in the Korean history as the Three Kingdoms. In 1955, Republic of Korea pointed Taekwondo as the sport representing the country world-wide. The martial art was included in the Games starting with Sydney 2000.

What it is about

The matches are disputed in rounds of 2 minutes each where the fighters kick with the leg and arm towards the chest and head of the opponent and each kick are worth 1 up to 4 points. The athletes wear protection gear for: forearms, palms, foot, leg, chest, head and groin. If there is a tie at the end of the 3 rounds, there is a “golden point” round which is the forth one, in which the first fighter that scores – with whatever technique – wins.



TENNIS

The beginning

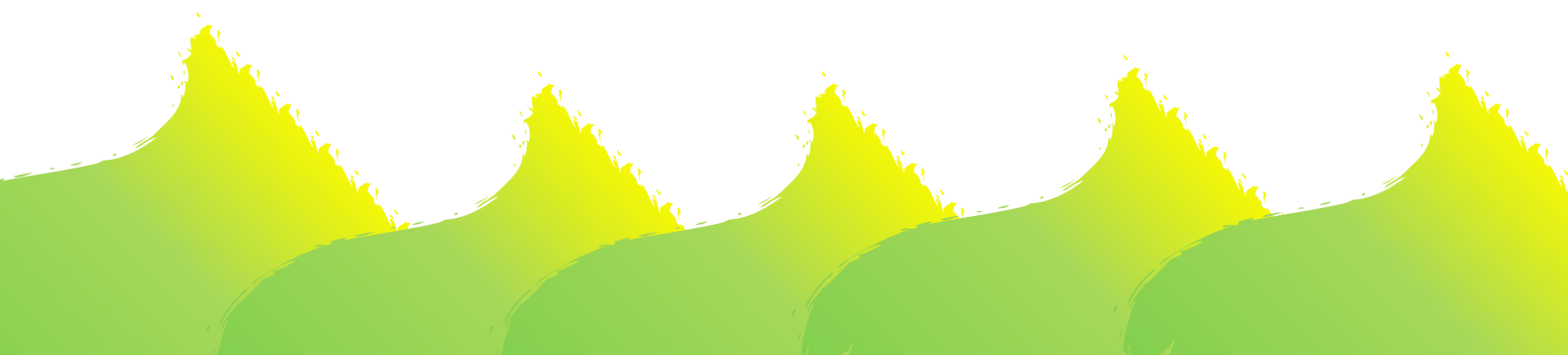
An early version of the game can be traced back to the 11th Century when the French seemed to have used their palms to hit a ball towards a wall in a game called “jeu de paume”.

What it is about

Tennis has events of single for men and women, of double for men and women, and of mixed double. The matches are played with the best out of 3 sets, and each game has at least 4 points. The points go as 15, 30 and 40, while the last point is the one that closes the game.

The one winning first 6 games takes the set, excepting the case where there is 5:5, case when there are 2 additional games played. If there is another tie at 6:6, the set is decided through a tie-break of 7 points.

In the Olympic single male finals the match ends on with the best out of 5 sets, and the final set is played as a tie-break, if the case, with the final set being decided at a difference of 2 games.





TRAMPOLINE GYMNASTICS

The beginning

Trampoline gymnastics started in the '30s when the modern trampoline was elaborated by George Nissen and Larry Griswold from University of Iowa. At first the trampoline was used as an instrument to practice for acrobats, astronauts and athletes, but eventually ended up elaborating a self-standing competitive sport.

The trampoline is the newest of the gymnastic Olympic disciplines, debuting at Sydney 2000. The events are interesting through the beauty and presentation's performed playful spirit.

What it is about

While launching themselves up from a trampoline the gymnasts must perform acrobatic movements while in the air. Each athlete has to cover a series of 10 elements with simple and double jumps, with or without spins.

Once the chief-judge gives the signal, the gymnasts have 1 minute to start their performance.

The movements are evaluated by a jury that scores them taking into consideration the difficulty level, the flying time and execution of the athlete. The athletes can compete with socks or special gymnastic shoes for trampoline, but never barefoot. Only the single events are part of the Olympic programme.



TRIATHLON

The beginning

The sport appeared in the US as an alternative practice for the athletics practitioners to maintain their shape.

The first official competition took place in 1974 in San Diego and included swimming on 500 m, cycling on 8 km and running on 10 km. The sport was introduced in the Olympics at Sydney 2000 and is part of it ever since, for both male and female events.

What it is about

The triathlon is a tri-disciplinary challenge that merges in one event swimming (1.5 km), cycling (40 km) and running (10 km).

All styles are allowed in swimming although the majority prefer the free style. Once finished the swimming event the athlete must put on the helmet before getting on the bike. For cycling, the draft is allowed – a tactic where the athletes “take a ride” in the rhythm of their opponents in front of them. Third and the last one is the running event. The transitions between the phases are added to the total time of the athlete, them being able to recover every lost second while changing the exercise, which can make all the difference eventually.



VOLLEYBALL

The beginning

Volleyball was put together in 1895 in the Massachusetts state, as a substitute to the harsh physical contact demanded by basketball, a sport created just few years before in the same state. It was introduced in the Olympic programme of Tokyo 1964 and its name developed from the movement of “volley”.

What it is about

Players are responsible for attacking or defending their side of the court depending on their position. The only exception is the libero who can replace any player whenever wanted, yet cannot attack. The matches are won by the best out of 5 sets. To win a set the team must take 25 points, having a minimum advantage of 2 points; if a team reaches 25 and there is no difference of at least 2 points, the set continues until the advantage is obtained.

A team is allowed to touch the ball up to 3 consecutive times before passing it to the opponent.

As soon as a team wins the point on the opponent's serve, the winning players rotate clockwise and change their position on the field.



WATER POLO

The beginning

Water polo was the first team sport included in the Olympic Games of Paris 1900. It was then ever since at all the editions despite having had various important changes such as the ball (smaller in the female events), increasing the number of players (from 11 to 13) and quite recently, the elaboration of penalty shots for the matches ending in tie.

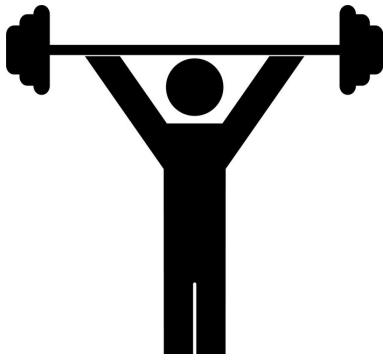
What it is about

If it is to compare it with other team sports, 32 minutes (4 quarters of 8 minutes) may appear as a short playing time. Yet without the possibility to touch the pool's bottom the swimmers move continuously swimming up to 5km in a match.

Besides the goalkeeper, the players cannot retain the ball with both hands. Additionally, they cannot lean on nor push from the gate or from the edge of the pool, kick the ball with the fist or splash the opponent intentionally.

Each team has 13 players, out of which 7 are the starting team, 6 field players and 1 goalkeeper.

WEIGHTLIFTING



The beginning

As a need to demonstrate who is the strongest, weightlifting events were present in the Athens 1896 Games, but included in the gymnastic discipline. It was then divided into a separate event and after Antwerp 1920 remained a constant component of the programme ever since. Women started competing in Sydney 2000. The Olympic weightlifting remained unchanged since 1976 when the snatch lift and clean and jerk lifts were introduced.

What it is about

It has two disciplines: snatch, and clean and jerk lifts. For snatching athletes need to lift a weighted bar above their head and keep it up for two seconds. In the clean and jerk lift first the athlete picks up the bar from the ground to the shoulders' height and then holds it above the head. Each athlete has 3 try outs. The athlete that picks up the highest weight in general is declared the winner. Three judges observe the body's athlete while performing to be completely extended and if the bar remains still at the end of the movement. The competition is divided in 15 weight categories: 8 for men and 7 for women.



The beginning

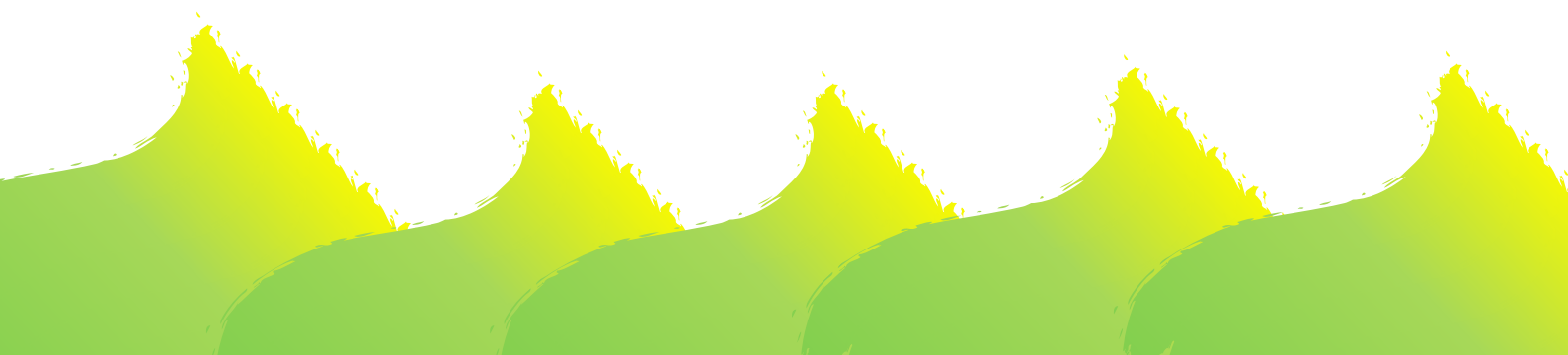
Perhaps one of the oldest competitive activities from all around the world, wrestling was already popular enough among the spectators of the Ancient Games. The competitions are divided in 2 disciplines: Greco-Roman and freestyle.

The Greco-Roman wrestling was practiced from old times and is seen as a close body fight. The fighters use just the arms and the upper part of the body to attack the opponent.

The freestyle wrestling debuted in the Olympic Games of St. Louis 1904 and is consisted of a mixture of styles from all around the world with rules allowing the usage of legs to keep at distance the opponent. Women events started in Athens 2004.

What it is about

The 2 rounds of 3 minutes each are disputed in a circular court of 9m in diameter. The purpose is to put and keep the opponent with the back on the ground. This technique is called "pin". If it cannot be finalised, the fighter gaining the most points (by putting the opponent down, for example) will be declared as winner.



OLYMPIC SPORTS

Facts

The Romanian gymnast Nadia Comăneci had the first perfect presentation of the Games' history, receiving a 10 from all the judges, at the Games of Montreal 1976.

The female handball team of Denmark had won already 3 consecutive gold medals: Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004. The third medal was a unique event in the Olympian history. On the other hand the record was reached again in 2016 by the French male team and the Norwegian female team which won at Beijing 2008, London 2012 and Rio 2016.

As the creators of Taekwondo martial art, Korea dominated the Olympic Games in this event having gathered 14 medals, 10 of which being gold. China goes second with 8 medals, 5 of which are gold.

2

PARALYMPIC

SPORTS



ARCHERY

The beginning

The bow and the arrows can be traced back with 10.000 for hunting and wars, yet the fire guns made them look outdated for the military purposes. As a sport though, the popularity of archery continued to increase. Today, archery is practiced in about 150 countries. This was also the only sport of the Stoke Mandeville Games of 1948, the predecessor of the Paralympic Games, and was also included in the Paralympic programme from its very first edition of Rome 1960.

What it is about

Practiced by athletes with cerebral palsy, paraplegics, quadriplegics, amputees, persons with dysfunctional and progressive diseases, and multiple deficiencies, the Paralympic archery has the same purpose as the Olympic discipline: shooting arrows to a target with 10 circles, from a distance of 70 m, using a recurved bow, or from 50m using a compounded bow. The competition area is identical and the equipment much similar. If they reach the required index, the Paralympic athletes are allowed to compete as well in the Olympic Games. This is how the New Zealander Neroli Fairhall participated in Los Angeles 1984 and the Italian Paola Fantato in Atlanta 1996.

There are 2 categories of events:

- Open: Athletes with leg impairments and wheelchairs users or with balance impairment, shooting standing or sitting on a small bench
- W1: Athletes with leg impairments and that can be wheelchair users



ATHLETICS

The beginning

The first Paralympic Games held in Rome 1960 included athletics as one of the 8 sports the edition had on its programme, where there were 25 medal disciplines for the athletes. Ever since it was always part of the Paralympics and currently is the most comprising medal awarding discipline from the programme. Persons with deficiencies from over 120 countries practice world-wide athletics at the moment.

What it is about

The events are very similar to the Olympic ones. For the track disciplines the athletes run races between 100 m and 5.000 m. The field disciplines include jumps and throws. The marathon event exists as well.

There are disciplines for competitors with visual, intellectual and physical impairments, each with its functional classification that ensures the equality between competitors. Based on the athletes' classifications, the name of the event is followed by a code (letter + number). The track disciplines use T. The field disciplines use F. The number tells the impairment level of the athlete:

- 11 to 13 – visual impairments
- 20 – intellectual impairment
- 31 to 34 – sitting cerebral palsy
- 35 to 38 – standing cerebral palsy
- 40 – dwarfism
- 41 to 47 – amputees and Les Autres
- 51 to 57 – wheelchair users (effects of polio, lesions to the spine and amputees)



MARATHON

The beginning

The first Paralympic Games held in Rome 1960 included athletics as one of the 8 sports the edition had on its programme, where there were 25 medal disciplines for the athletes. Ever since it was always part of the Paralympics and currently is the most comprising medal awarding discipline from the programme. Persons with deficiencies from over 120 countries practice world-wide athletics at the moment.

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There are disciplines for competitors with visual, intellectual and physical impairments, each with its functional classification that ensures the equality between competitors. More competitions propose the same distances in the Paralympic athletics. For example, there are only 2 Olympic marathon events, one for men and one for women, while the Paralympic one has 3 male classes (T12, T46 and T54) and 2 female (T12 and T54).

Based on the athletes' classifications, the name of the event is followed by a code (letter + number). The track disciplines use T. The field disciplines use F. The number tells the impairment level of the athlete, just as in the general athletics.





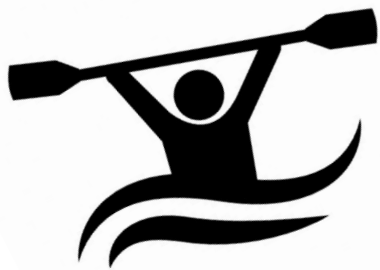
BOCCIA

The beginning

It is believed Boccia originated in Ancient Greece, with contestants throwing large stones at a target rock. The sport was transformed in 16th-Century Italy, and since then its popularity has spread worldwide. Playing boccia requires a skillful combination of control, precision, and concentration, as well as a keen tactical nous. Boccia is currently practiced in over 50 countries by athletes with cerebral palsy or related neurological conditions involving the use of a wheelchair. The sport does not have a similar event in the Olympic Games, and it was introduced at the New York/ Stoke Mandeville Paralympic Games in 1984.

What it is about

All boccia events are mixed gender, with individual, pair and team competitions. The goal is the same: to throw coloured balls as close as possible to the target, or white ball, which is known as the "jack". The winner is the player who lands the most balls as close to the jack as possible. Depending on the category, participants can be helped by an assistant, who may stabilize the chair or hand the ball to the athlete. Competitions are divided into rounds. A coin toss determines who will play with red or blue balls. Red balls start the first round, and competitors are entitled to six balls each. In the individual and pair events, there are four rounds per game, while in the team competition there are six rounds per match.



CANOE SPRINT

The beginning

From North America, all the way to Polynesia and even Greenland, kayaks have been used for different purposes throughout history. Originally intended for hunting and fishing, they were made with animal fur stretched over a wooden frame. Canoe races became more popular in the early 20th Century, and the 1930s were crucial to boosting their popularity. Speed canoeing made its official debut at the Berlin 1936 Games and since then has been a permanent event in the Games program.

What it is about

While there are two types of boats in the Olympic competitions, canoes and kayaks (identified by the letters C - canoe-, and K - kayak), the Paralympic Games will only host kayak events. The competition is held on a 200m straight route. The athlete that finishes the distance in the shortest time possible is the winner.

The events are disputed in five rounds initially, each with 2 boats. The one that wins the race advances directly to the finale, while the other goes to the semi-finals. The three top-ranked competitors in the semi-finals compete in the finals. There are three functional classes in Paralympic canoe events: KL1 (sum of three points), KL2 (four to seven points), and KL3 (eight or nine points). In the classification system, the athlete's points are assessed according to their leg and trunk movement, potential and an assessment on the water while rowing. The higher the score, the greater the athlete's functional potential.



CYCLING ROAD

The beginning

Cycling for athletes with an impairment originated in the early 1980s. Road competitions were introduced in the New York/ Stoke Mandeville 1984 Paralympic Games program, with events for competitors with cerebral palsy. Four years later, in Seoul, cyclists with other types of impairments cerebral palsy and amputees/Les Autres were also included. Visually impaired athletes made their debut at Barcelona 1992 Games.

What it is about

The Paralympic road for cycling competition has male, female, individual, and team events. As in conventional cycling, the road races are long and, fundamentally, require good tactics.

There are four types of bicycles, specific to each type of impairment. The functional classification is closely related to the model the athletes use. In addition to traditional bicycles, there are tricycles, fitted with two wheels at the back, for those with cerebral palsy. Handbikes, pedaled by hand, are used by paraplegic or tetraplegic athletes. Visually impaired cyclists pedal a two-seater bike called tandem - the athlete is accompanied by a guide, who sits in the front seat and indicates the direction.



CYCLING TRACK

The beginning

Cycling for impaired athletes was firstly added to the road discipline in the beginning of 1980. The technological evolution allowed the sport to be more inclusive and the races more and more competitive. The track cycling is the last added discipline to the Paralympic cycling, being introduced in Atlanta 1996, with events for both male and female.

What it is about

Amputees and athletes with impaired muscular strength or reduced motion range, cerebral palsy and impairments that affect the coordination make usage of specially adapted bikes. Those with visual deficiencies pedal bicycles called tandem. The adaptation of the bike varies as well – from the break activation and the gearbox to prosthetics and orthotics specially made for competing, such as those gripping the handlebars.

Same as in the Olympic cycling, the speed is the essential factor. Track cycling has both male and female individual and team events. The events are identifiable through a letter that points the deficiency or used bicycle type, and a number indicating the deficiency degree. The letter B is destined for the visual impaired athletes, while the letter C sums up those that use adapted traditional bicycles. The events are as the Olympic ones, time trial, pursuit and sprint, besides the team sprint events. The track bicycles have fixed gears, and the races are held on an oval track varying in length from 250m to 325 m.



EQUESTRIAN

The beginning

Equestrianism has existed for over 2000 years, ever since the Greeks started training their horses in preparation for war. In the Middle Ages, it continued being developed as a military exercise, with dressage, cross country and jumping tests, aiming to reflect the variety of challenges that horses face in the army. Equestrian sports were originally used for rehabilitation and recreation for people with an impairment. The training discipline for Paralympic athletes was first introduced in the 1970s, and early competitions took place in the UK and Scandinavia.

What it is about

Men and women compete together, with the athletes being able to use a "compensating aid". A few use adapted saddles if they don't have a limb, others have "callers"; - people who inform the proximity of the arena letters if the rider has a visual impairment. Athletes are divided into five categories. The lower the class number, the greater the impairment.

- Classes Ia and Ib: mainly wheelchair users, athletes with little trunk balance and impairments in all four limbs or no trunk balance and good upper limb functions
- Class II: Mainly wheelchair users or people with a high degree of motor impairment in the trunk, with good upper limb functions, athletes with a high degree of impairment in the arm and slight impairment in the leg, or severe unilateral impairment
- Class III: Typically, athletes who can get around without assistance. They have a moderate unilateral impairment or moderate impairment in all four limbs, and severe arm impairments. Full or severe visual impairment
- Class IV: Athletes with impairments in one or two limbs or some visual impairment



FOOTBALL 5-A-SIDE

The beginning

Traditional football was first adapted for the visually impaired in Brazil in the 1960s. In a game called "goal to goal" visually impaired students would kick a plastic bottle with little pebbles in it. The bottle was later substituted for a plastic ball wrapped in a plastic bag, until the current ball, which has rattles in it, was created in Brazil in the 1980s. The sport debuted at the Paralympic Games at Athens 2004. Six teams took part back then, but the tournament was expanded at London 2012, with the addition of two more teams.

What it is about

Verbal introductions are allowed, but only by three people: guides, goalkeepers (the only sighted players on the team) and coaches. The guides are positioned behind the opponent's goal, shouting indications of movement and directions towards the goal. If the game ends with a dead-ball situation, the guide signals with a metallic object to the goalpost the direction towards it. The goalkeeper guides the team's defence, while the coach stands in the central part of the court.

It is important to respect the corresponding thirds of the pitch for guidance, and officials supervise sound limits. Where the ball is during the game guides players: if it is on the offensive side, the guide will direct the game, and so on. The game is divided into two 25-minute halves.

Although players are considered blind (up to five percent vision in the better eye), some can perceive shapes. Therefore, all athletes must wear eye-shades, which opponents can not touch. If this happens, the referee will pause the game and the reposition the eye pad and shades. After committing five fouls, the athlete will be sent off and substituted. There are no sidelines, low side walls measuring 1.2 m in height instead.



FOOTBALL 7-A-SIDE

The beginning

Football 7-a side was created by adapting the Olympic version for the players with cerebral palsy and similar conditions (traumatic cerebral lesions or stroke sequelae). It was introduced in the New York/Stoke Mandeville 1984 Games and continued to be present in the Paralympic programme ever since.

What it is about

There are lots of differences from the Olympic version. As the name mentions there are 7 players on each side on the court, and 7 on the bench. The rule of offside no longer exists and the throw-ins may be done using a single hand, rolling the ball on the field of play.

The matches last 60 minutes and are of 2 halves of 30 minutes each, with a 15 minute break in between. The court is smaller than the Olympic one, having 75m x 55 m.

The players are classified regarding their physical impairment. The scale varies from 5 to 8 and as lower the class is, as higher the limitations are. Each team must have at least an athlete of class 5 or 6 and only 1 athlete of class 8 on the field. The goalkeepers are generally of class 5 or 6, as they are the most limited ones from the movement point of view.





GOALBALL

The beginning

First introduced in 1946, goalball was created to assist in the rehabilitation of veterans with a visual impairment. Its popularity has only grown since then: the sport is currently practised in 85 countries.

It debuted in the Paralympic Games at Toronto 1976, as a demonstration sport. Since then goalball has been ever present at all editions of the Games.

What it is about

As in the case of football 5-a-side, the goalball ball has bells in it. Teams consist of three starting line-up players and three on the bench, all blindfolded. The game is divided into two 12-minute halves, and the winner is the team that scores the most goals. Throws must be low or bouncing and must always touch certain areas of the pitch. Players are both attackers and defenders.

The width of the goal is the same as the width of the pitch (9 m x 1.30 m). Therefore, players position themselves in the three areas they must defend: left-wing, right-wing and central or pivot position. There is no contact between adversaries, which makes the game safer for the players –attacking requires strength since the ball weighs 1.25 kg.

The 11 referees are key to the dynamics of the game, but the two main referees are responsible for conducting the match, using different whistle blows and verbal commands. The four officials working near the goalposts are responsible for replacing balls, guiding replaced athletes, and for assisting in pitch maintenance. The remaining ones work on the table, taking care of score sheets and time.



JUDO

The beginning

Based on Jujitsu, it was developed by the educator Jigoro Kano and consolidated as a sport in the late 19th Century. Judo made its first appearance at the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games. It debuted in the Paralympic program in Seoul 1988, and women were allowed into the competition from Athens 2004. Judo is the only martial art present in the Paralympic program.

What it is about

Only visually impaired athletes compete in Paralympic judo. For this reason, classification is based on functional, rather than on medical criteria.

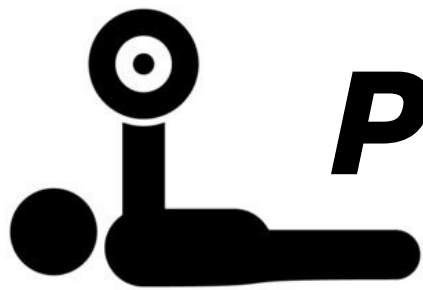
One of the biggest benefits afforded by Paralympic judo is teaching the athlete to fall properly-since the sport helps them move and position themselves correctly. They end up being able to avoid common, daily accidents.

Athletes are divided into three classes, all starting with the letter B (for blind) :

- B1 - Total blindness, and is unable to identify objects or people.
- B2 - Visual field less than 5 degrees. Athletes can perceive shapes and recognize shapes.
- B3 - Visual field between and 20 degrees, which means that the athlete is able to see images.

The official only starts the bout when the two athletes are holding each other's judogi (kimono). It is their responsibility to keep the fighters active. If the two are not in contact with each other, the bout is stopped.





POWERLIFTING

The beginning

Powerlifting started at the Tokyo 1964 Paralympic Games, when spinal injuries suffering athletes competed in 4 events, at the time still under the weightlifting category. In the following years, the sport underwent transitions to include other types of impairments and debuted in its new format at New York/Stoke Mandeville 1984. Women have been participating since Sydney 2000, and today, powerlifting is one of the fastest-growing Paralympic sports, being practiced in around 100 countries.

What it is about

There is only functional class, which means that athletes have to meet minimum eligibility criteria to compete. Impairments falling into this category include hypertonia, ataxia, athetosis, limb impairments (amputation), decreased passive range of movement, impaired muscle power, leg length differences, and low height combined with other types of impairment.

The lifters lie on a bench and can opt to be fixed with one or two belts. Subsequently, can opt to be helped by one or two assistants with supporting the bar lifting. As soon as the athlete is in the full capacity of controlling the bar on its own, the chief-judge gives the starting signal and the athlete finishes the actual lift.

Each athlete can try 3 lifts and during the competition can request an additional one if they would be trying to break the world record. A possible fourth attempt offered at the discretion of the jury and the technical delegate does not interfere in the final classification: the winner of the competition is the one who lifts the most weight in his body weight category. In the event of a tie, the winner is the athlete with lower body mass.



ROWING

The beginning

The first representation of a rowboat dates back to 5800 B.C. and was discovered in Finland. The oldest race record took place in Venice, in 1274, when gondoliers and boatmen competed in different boats. Rowing has only become a competitive sport in the last 200 years however. The sport was scheduled to debut at the Athens 1896 Olympic Games, but the race was cancelled due to rough seas. The competition was finally held four years later, in Paris 1900. Paralympic rowing, in turn only entered the program in Beijing 2008.

What it is about

In Paralympic rowing, the competition equipment is modified, so it is easier for the athlete to practice sport. Regardless of the category, the events always take place across distances of 1000 m, while in the Olympic Games, they are 2000 m. Boats may be manned by one, two, or four athletes, depending on the event.

There are three classes in Paralympic rowing:

- AS - For athletes with an impairment of the trunks and legs, whose mobility is restricted to shoulders and arms. The competition is individual
- TA - Conceived for athletes with functional use of their legs and trunks and arms. The event is carried out in pairs formed by a man and a woman
- LTA - Conceived for athletes with functional use of their legs, trunks, and arms for rowing. This category includes up to two visually impaired people. The boat is occupied by four members, two men and two women, and a cox, who may be a man or a woman and needs not to be impaired.



SAILING

The beginning

Sailboat racing first appeared in the 17th Century, in the Netherlands. The practice grew in England, when King Charles II, a great sailor, was restored to the throne. The sport was already well established when, in 1851, the schooner America crossed the Atlantic, departing from the United States and won the race at the Isle of Wight overcoming British ships and winning the trophy currently known as America's Cup. Sailing events debuted at the Atlanta 1996 Paralympic Games, but as a demonstration only. The sport became a medal event at Sydney 2000.

What it is about

Created for the athletes with visual or physical deficiencies, Paralympic sailing uses a functional classification system that takes into consideration body stability problems, based on the hand functionality, mobility conservation degree as well as aspects connected to the visual field and visual acuity. There are three types of boats used in competitions:

- 2.4 mR- manned by a single athlete, who may have a minimal impairment
- SKUD -18 - boat for two crew members, requiring the presence of a woman
- Sonar - class for three athletes. Each person gets a score ranging from 1 to 7 in accordance with their degree of impairment. The set can not add up to more than 12 points.

There is no gender separation in the Paralympic competition. Even in the 2.4 mR class where the boat is singly handed, women compete against men.



SHOOTING

The beginning

The first gun clubs emerged in Germany in the 13th century, and the activity grew with the technological advancements in weapons and ammunition. It was regulated as a sport in the 19th century, a fact that led to the founding of the International Union of National Shooting Federation and Association, in 1907, currently the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF).

Paralympic shooting was born in Scotland, in 1970, debuting at the Toronto 1976 Paralympic Game. Having featured in the Games, programme since then, it has 12 events-three men, three women and six mixed.

What it is about

Athletes with different types of impairment can compete together. The Paralympic programme comprises two classes.

- SH1-pistol and rifle shooters who do not require support for their guns.
- SH2-rifle shooters who need support for their guns.

There is a third class, which is not present in the Paralympic Games: SH3, for the visually impaired.

There is support equipment, such as shooting tables and chairs, in addition to supports for the weapons. As in the conventional shooting competition, rules vary according to the event, distance, type of target, firing position, number of shots, and the time to shoot. The target has ten circles, worth different scores, and the middle circle called the bullseye and the smallest of all is worth 10 points. The winner is the athlete with the highest score after the qualifying and final stages.



SITTING VOLLEYBALL

The beginning

Sitting volleyball was firstly elaborated in the Netherlands in the '50s as a result of a combination between the Olympic sport and the German "sitzball". Even so it began to spread only in the '60s.

Various international competitions were continuously held since 1967 and soon after sitting volleyball was adopted by the International Sport Organisation for the Disabled (ISOD) in 1978.

The sport was included in the Paralympic programme of Arnhem 1980 and it was present ever since. Until Sydney 2000 there were two events: sitting and standing. Since Athens 2004 only the sitting one remained as a Paralympic event.

What it is about

Same as in the Olympic version, the winner is the best out of 5 sets. The team that reaches first 25 points takes the set and the last one is played only by the 15th point. There are two significant differences from the Olympic version and these are: the gluteus of the playing athlete must be in permanent contact with the ground, while blocking the serve is allowed. Also common is the feet of the opponents to touch at the net area during the match, this being allowed as long as it does not stop the opponent from playing.

The field has a surface of 60 m² (10 m in length, 6 in width), and the net has a height of 1.15 m from the floor for the male competitions and 1.05 m for the female ones.



SWIMMING

The beginning

Swimming was firstly introduced in the Rome 1960 programme and is part of the Paralympic programme ever since. Having athletes competing in 152 events, swimming is the second biggest medal discipline, following only athletics.

What it is about

In the beginning of the race, athletes can start from the block (including sitting), from inside the water or with the help of a professional, depending on the impairment level of the athlete. The ones with visual deficiencies get the help of a tapper, an assistant using a pole with a cushioned end to signal when they reach the edge of the pool. Tappers are needed for the S11 class and optional for S12 or S13. S11 athletes swim using black goggles to stop the swimmers with a certain vision from having an advantage on those that are completely blind. For the athletes of other classes this equipment is optional.

Swimmers are divided in 14 functional classes. In order to determine their group, the athletes pass a series of clinical evaluations to test the muscle strength, joint and motor mobility (classes S1-S10) and the visual capacity (S11-S13).

As higher the deficiency is, as lower the class is:

- 1 to 10 – physical and motor limitations
- 11 to 13 – visual impairments
- 14 – intellectual impairments



TABLE TENNIS

The beginning

Table tennis was developed in the 19th Century in Great Britain being played with the wealthy families. In its beginning, when it was known as “wiff-waff”, the lids of the cigar boxes were used as rackets and the books as the net. Both the equipment and the rules were improved as soon as the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) was founded, in 1926.

The sport was included in the Paralympic Games from its ever first edition in Rome 1960. Athletes that did not require the usage of a wheelchair started competing in Toronto 1976. In Arnhem 1980 the cerebral palsy athletes were included, while those with intellectual deficiencies joined the Games in Sydney 2000.

What it is about

The rules and the dynamics specific for the Paralympic table tennis are similar to those of the Olympic version. The exception is connected to the serve as the rules allow the athlete to use a single hand to raise and hit the ball.

The serve conditions are modified when it comes to the wheelchair users which imply the serve to be directed towards the end line of the table as the movements are limited.

Athletes are divided in 11 classes. As higher the number is, as lower the deficiency is:

- TT1 to TT5 – sitting players
- TT6 to TT10 – standing players
- TT11 – standing players with intellectual deficiency



TRIATHLON

The beginning

The first documented triathlon event took place in San Diego, US, in September 1974. The event had 5.63 km of running, 8 km of cycling and 548m of swimming in the Mission Bay. Ever since, the sport grew fast and was officially added to the Olympic programme in 1994. Its debut happened 6 years later in Sydney 2000.

The first World Triathlon Championship for athletes with deficiencies promoted by the International Triathlon Union (ITU) took place in 1996 in Cleveland, US. The first Paralympic triathlon event was the one in Rio 2016, copying the Olympic version, with the distance adjustments of 750m swimming, 20 km of cycling and 5 km of running, for athletes with various types of deficiencies. Given the short distances, the event is also known as the sprint triathlon.

What it is about

Same as in the Olympic version, the time spent transiting from a discipline to the other sums up to the total of the athlete. It is therefore fundamental and can severely affect the competitions result, of which winner is the first athlete that ends the circuit. Some helpers must be identified accordingly for each transition. The competitors choose themselves the helpers.



WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

The beginning

The sport was created in the US in 1946 when the veterans from WWII started developing an adapted version of basketball while using the wheelchair. Meanwhile in England, veterans in wheelchairs were playing netball – a previous version of the event – at the Spine Rehabilitation Hospital of Stoke Mandeville, where the Paralympic Movement was born.

Wheelchair basketball was taken across the Atlantic around mid '50s after the Americans participated in the Stoke Mandeville Games, the predecessors of the Paralympic Games. The sport was then played at the first Paralympic edition in Rome, 1960 and was kept in the programme ever since.

What it is about

Wheelchair basketball has various identical aspects as the Olympic version such as: the court dimension (28 m long and 15 m wide), height of the basket (3.05 m) and the playing time (4 quarters of 10 minutes each). In addition, the player must bounce, shoot or pass the ball to a team mate every 2 pushes of the wheelchair.

In order to ensure the equality among players, the wheelchairs must have specific measurements. Before the ball to be thrown into play, the referees check the conformation of the diameters of the wheels, chair or footrest height. There are allowed cushions up to 10 cm thick as well as objects and belts that fixate the athlete to the chair.



WHEELCHAIR FENCING

The beginning

Wheelchair fencing was first introduced at the Stoke Mandeville Games in 1954, by Sir Ludwig Guttmann, and has been part of all editions of the Paralympic Games.

What it is about

Wheelchair fencing rules are based on those set forth by the International Fencing Federation (FIE, in the French acronym), which governs Olympic fencing, as adapted to the needs of wheelchair users. Wheelchairs are fastened to the ground, and the athlete must only make upper limb movements. As in Olympic fencing, there are three weapons: foil, epee and saber.

Athletes undergo functional testing to determine the category they will compete in. Dorsal, lumbar and lateral movements are evaluated, as is bending and body balance with the weapon. There are two Paralympic classes: A and B.



WHEELCHAIR RUGBY

The beginning

It was first introduced in 1977, in Winnipeg, Canada, wheelchair rugby was the initiative of a group of quadriplegic athletes seeking alternatives to wheelchair basketball. It was initially named murderball because of the sudden impact between players. The first international championship was held in 1982, with teams from Canada and the United States.

Four years later, wheelchair rugby debuted at the Atlanta 1996 Paralympic Games as a demo sport. At Sydney 2000, it became part of the official program. Since then, it has been featured at all editions of the Paralympic Games and is already guaranteed at Tokyo 2020.

What it is about

Wheelchair rugby is a dynamic, heavy-contact sport. Crashing is allowed and even encouraged. The game combines elements of rugby, basketball and volleyball, and is played by mixed teams. The teams are formed by four, and there are eight players on the bench, all with quadriplegia or with impairments in all four limbs.

The objective is to accumulate as many goals as possible. Points are scored when a player carries the ball across the goal line. There are no ties. When necessary, there is a three-minute period of extra time. The team has 40 seconds to score a goal, with only 12 seconds to get to the offensive half of the pitch. The game is played in four eight-minute quarters with five-minute intervals between the second and third halves, and two-minute intervals between the other two.



WHEELCHAIR TENNIS

The beginning

Many historians believe tennis was probably invented in the 13th Century. However, in its modern format, the sport only appeared in the late 19th century, when it was designed, patented and marketed by a major in the British army in 1873.

About a century later, the wheelchair tennis appeared in the United States. After suffering a spinal cord injury in an acrobatic ski competition, athlete Brad Parks met Jeff Minnenbraker, who was learning how to play tennis in a wheelchair. Parks was enthused with the idea and went on to successfully promote the game of wheelchair tennis. The first regulating organization was created in 1979, in partnership with the United States Tennis Association (USTA).

Wheelchair tennis was played as a demo sport at Seoul 1988 Paralympic Games and became a medal event at Barcelona 1992. Since then, it has been part of all editions of the Paralympic Games.

What it is about

To participate, one must be diagnosed with locomotor impairment. If limitations are verified in one or more parts of the body, and the person is deemed unable to participate in traditional tennis competitions, they will be able to play in the Paralympic program.

The main difference between Paralympic and Olympic tennis is the two-bounce rule. Although chairs have adapted wheels, which help players move around, they do not have the same movement capacity. Therefore, players must strike the ball to the other side of the court before it bounces on the ground for the third time.

PARALYMPIC SPORTS

Facts

Swimmer Daniel Dias is the highest Brazilian medalist in Paralympic Games. The athlete has won 10 gold medals (four Beijing 2008 and six at London 2012), four silver medals and one bronze medal (Beijing 2008)

Italy's Alessandro Zanardi, a former Formula 1 driver, was involved in an accident in 2001, in a Grand Prix held in Germany, and lost both legs.

A speed lover, Zanardi turned to Paralympic road cycling and won three medals at London 2012: two gold (road and time trial) and a silver (mixed relay).

The Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar's movie „Live Flesh”, the personage interpreted by Javier Bardem, one of the lead actors, gets shot in the back and becomes a wheelchair basketball player who plays at the Paralympic Games of Barcelona 1992, for the Spanish team.

3

NON OLYMPIC *SPORTS*





AIR SPORTS

Parachuting

Involves a series of tasks and designed to test a parachutist's ability to control his canopy and fly accurately. Pilots compete on water surfaces for safety reasons as the speeds get quite high, at the same time creating a spectacular action such as the whiz on the water surface and the tail of the spray behind them.

The Aerobatics competition



This event is testing the pilot's capacity to run a pre-planned routine with amazing acrobatic manoeuvres while handling the glider's energy. The silent and gracious moves are mixed in a sequence that aims to awe the judges with the precise management abilities of the pilot.

Paramotoring

Paramotoring (known as well as the powered paragliding) allows the pilot to launch from a flat field, unassisted and rise to high altitudes; there is no need the take off to be made from a hill or from the ground.



AMERICAN FOOTBALL

The beginning

On November 6, 1869, Rutgers and Princeton played what was billed as the first college football game. However, it wasn't until the 1880s that a great rugby player from Yale, Walter Camp, pioneered rules changes that slowly transformed rugby into the new game of American Football.

What it is about

As a sport team, it is one of the most popular sports of US and involves 2 teams of 11 players each. The American football ball is an ellipsoid leather ball sewn sideways. The players can pass the ball by kicking, carrying, throwing or passing it from hand to hand among them.





BEACH HANDBALL

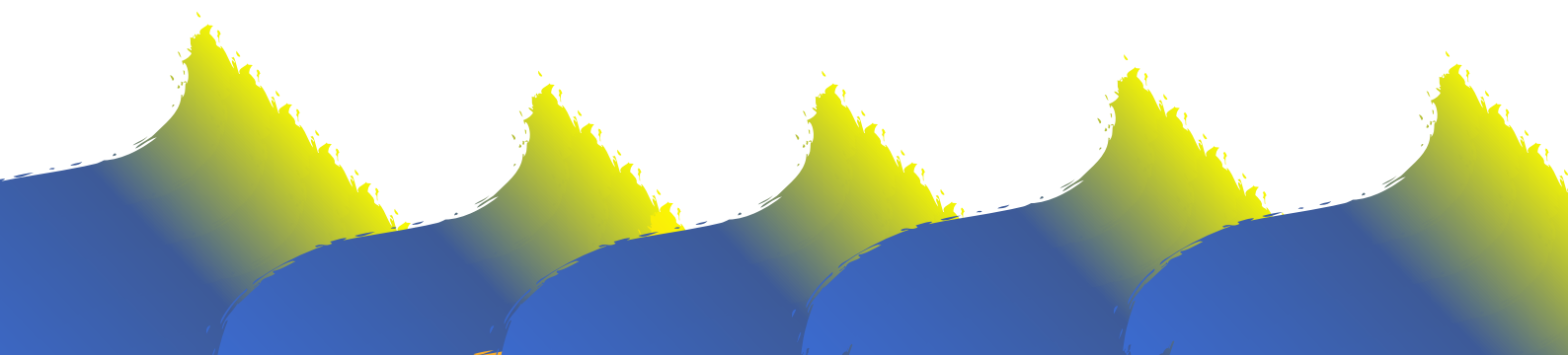
The beginning

A trendy variation of the traditional Olympic sport, beach handball suits perfectly with the beach lifestyle and cultures.

What it is about

Played on sandy beaches the action between the 2 teams of 4 players with 4 reserves, happens fast, sometimes even furious on the small terrain.

The playing field is a rectangle 27 m long and 12 m wide. The playing area is 15 m long and 12 m wide delimited by lines with a maximum width of 8 cm. The goals are like those of handball, they are 2 m high and 3 m wide.





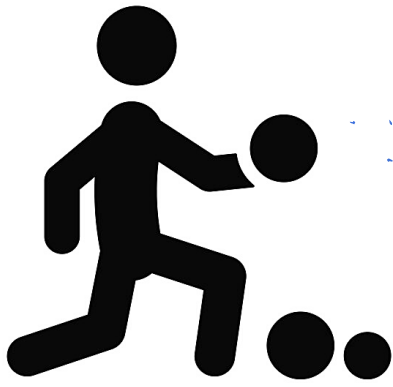
BILLIARDS

The beginning

Billiards began as a lawn game similar to the croquet played sometime during the 15th Century in Northern Europe. It has evolved from that point into the present-day style of billiard/pool table and rules. The game moved indoors to a wooden table with green cloth to simulate grass, and a simple border around the edges. The term "billiard" is derived from the French language, either from the word "billart," one of the wooden sticks, or "bille," a ball.

What it is about

Newton's principle of action and reaction certainly applies to billiard sports. But before it does, the players need to calculate an intricate network of possibilities in the silent analysis of the cool green baize. Disciplines for The World Games: Pool (9-ball), Carom (3-cushion), snooker.



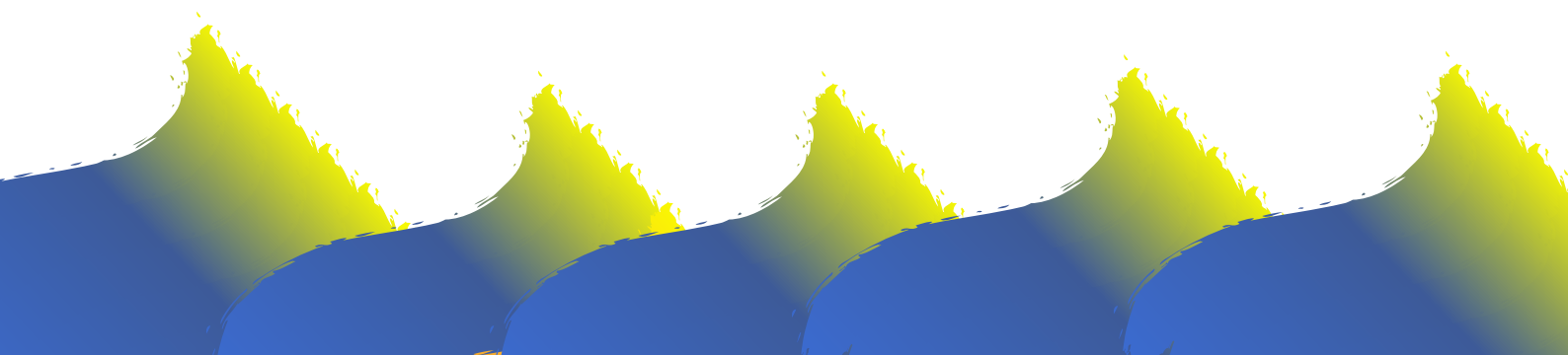
BOULES

The beginning

The boules alike games are traditional and quite popular in many European countries and so were taken with and became famous in some of the previous French colonies of Africa and Asia. Boules is often played in outdoor open spaces, such as plazas or parks, in villages or cities. The playing area dedicated for the boules are generally large fields, flat, rectangular, made out of flattened soil, gravel or crushed stones, enclosed by wood rails or planks.

What it is about

The boules sports fight to surpass the tight connections of those of Gaulish cultures. The smoking and beret-totting players from all the city plazas of France describe the nowadays game that recently evolved.





BOWLING

The beginning

About 2,000 years ago, in the Roman Empire, a similar game evolved between Roman legionaries entailing the tossing of stone objects as close as possible to other stone objects, which eventually evolved into Italian Bocce, or outdoor bowling.

Around 400 A.D., bowling began in Germany as a religious ritual to cleanse oneself from sin by rolling a rock into a club (kegel) representing the heathen, resulting in bowlers being called keglers.

What it is about

Bowling must be one of the most beloved sports if we take into account its participation. Hundred of millions of people world-wide play it regularly. It is estimated that 10 million actively participate in leagues, competing roughly 40 times per year. Yet only the best ones get to meet one against the other in the international competitions.



CANOE POLO

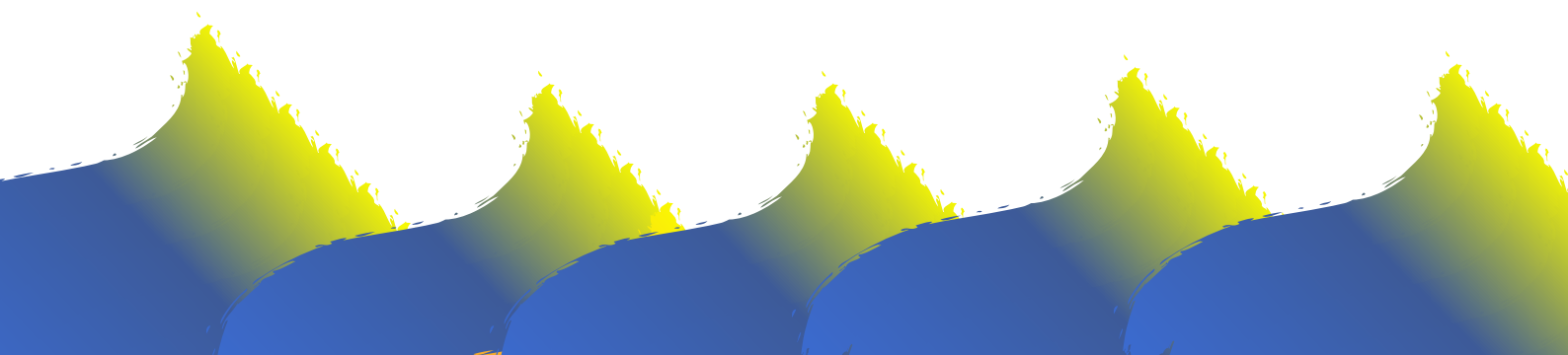
The beginning

Canoe polo was played in the United States of America. The first game was at Rocky Glen, Pennsylvania in 1905. John Conkling designed a boat specifically for playing canoe polo on a field marked out by a timber frame. At Williamsport, 1913, players, one to a canoe, stood to work the ball with a paddle.

What it is about

Canoe polo, also known as kayak polo, is one of the competitive disciplines of canoeing, known simply as "polo" by its followers. Polo combines canoeing and ball-handling skills with an exciting contact team game, where tactics and positional play are as important as the speed and fitness of the individual athletes.

The game requires excellent teamwork and promotes both general canoeing skills and a range of other techniques unique to the sport.





DANCE SPORT

The beginning

The first unofficial Dance Sport World Championship was held in 1909, while the first Formation Team was introduced in 1932 at the Astoria Ballroom in London by Olive Ripman.

What it is about

The dance sport balances the artistic touch of the dance with the athletics of a regular physical demanding sport. What must be seen as a smooth succession of steps or movements on the music, are in fact rough aerobic physical exercises. The athletic skills must blend with the artistry to provide a truly captivating performance on the floor.



FINSWIMMING

The beginning

The sport was created in Europe following the rapid availability of rubber fins in the '30s. The Italian diving pioneer, Luigi Ferraro, seems to be mentioned as the organizer of the very first sea finswimming competition in 1951, followed by a 100 km oceanic race in 1955. The first competitions of the Soviet Union took place in 1958.

The events specific for the finswimming are the races of 40 m and 1.000 m that mention using be it surface swimming techniques or those of apnoea and immersion techniques. In 1969 the first Finswimming European Championship was held in Locarno, Switzerland, where the underwater orienteering separated from the rest.

What it is about

Finswimming is an underwater sport consisting of four techniques involving swimming with the use of fins either on the water's surface using a snorkel with either monofins or bfin's (i.e. one fin for each foot) or underwater with monofin either by holding one's breath or using open-circuit scuba diving equipment.



FISTBALL

The beginning

Fistball was first presented in 1885 at the German Gymnastics Festival in Dresden. In 1894, Georg Weber, along with Dr. Heinrich Schnell, drafted the first German rules that outlined a sport with competitive elements.

What it is about

Fistball is incredibly similar to volleyball. The aim of the both sports is to put down the ball on the opponent's half without them being able to return it. The crucial difference here though is: the ball is hit with the fist or arm, yet never with the open hand, and it is allowed to bounce once after each contact with the ground.



FLOORBALL

The beginning

The sport was invented in Sweden in the late 1960s. The basic rules were established in 1979 when the first floorball club in the world, Sala IBK, from Sala, was founded in Sweden. Official rules for matches were first written down in 1981.

What it is about

Floorball is a sport team with 5 field players and 1 goalkeeper, who needs to guard and stop the opponent to score in. The field is a 40m x 20m rectangular, surrounded by a 50 cm high metal side with rounded corners.





JU - JITSU

The beginning

The written history of Jujitsu first began during the Nara period (c. 710 – c. 794) combining early forms of Sumo and various Japanese martial arts which were used on the battlefield for close combat.

What it is about

Ju-jitsu (or yawara) is an old Japanese martial art with the origins dating back to the 16th Century. The legend mentions Shirobei Akiyama as a witness to the branches of the majority of the trees being broken during a blizzard. On the contrary, the more elastic branches of the willow bent and freed themselves efficiently of snow.



KICKBOXING

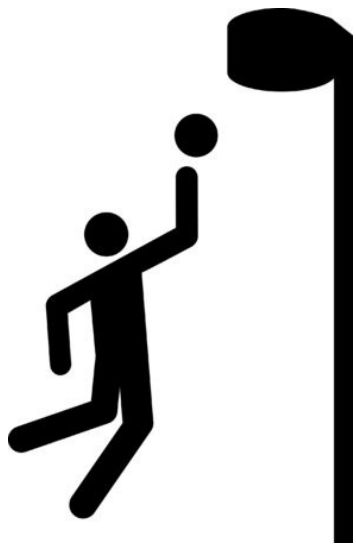
The beginning

Kickboxing is a stand-up combat sport based on kicking and punching, historically developed from karate mixed with boxing. Kickboxing is practiced for self-defence, general fitness, or as a contact sport. Japanese kickboxing originated in the late 1950s, with competitions held since then.

Historically, kickboxing can be considered a hybrid martial art formed from the combination of elements of various traditional styles. This approach became increasingly popular since the 1970s, and since the 1990s, kickboxing has contributed to the emergence of mixed martial arts via further hybridization with ground fighting techniques from Brazilian ju-jitsu and folk wrestling.

What it is about

Kickboxing is a martial art with its origin back in the '70s defined by WAKO as an umbrella name for various fighting styles: point fighting, light-contact, foot kick-light and musical shapes on the tatami and a full-contact, K10low-kick rule in the boxing ring.



KORFBALL

The beginning

Korfball, game similar to netball and basketball, invented in 1901 by an Amsterdam schoolmaster, Nico Broekhuysen. It was first demonstrated in the Netherlands in 1902 and was played on an international level, primarily in Europe, by the 1970s. It was devised as a game for both sexes. A national association was formed in 1903, and the game spread to Belgium, Indonesia, Suriname, Germany, Spain, New Guinea, and England.

What it is about

Korfball is the sport with the most positive gender equality statements in the sport world. The game is very similar to the basketball game, from which in fact it evolved, yet it is based on a complete collaboration between the two genders. Although four men and four women team up on each side, only same gender players can directly confront on the field.



LACROSSE

The beginning

Lacrosse was developed by the Native American Indians and was firstly known as stickball. The sport was played originally in St. Lawrence Valley among the Algonquian tribe and was then followed by other tribes in the Eastern side of the North America and around the Western Great Lakes area.

What it is about

The lacrosse teams have 12 players. The two teams try to score by getting the ball in the opponent's goal, while of course stopping the opponent in scoring in their goal.



MUA Y THAI

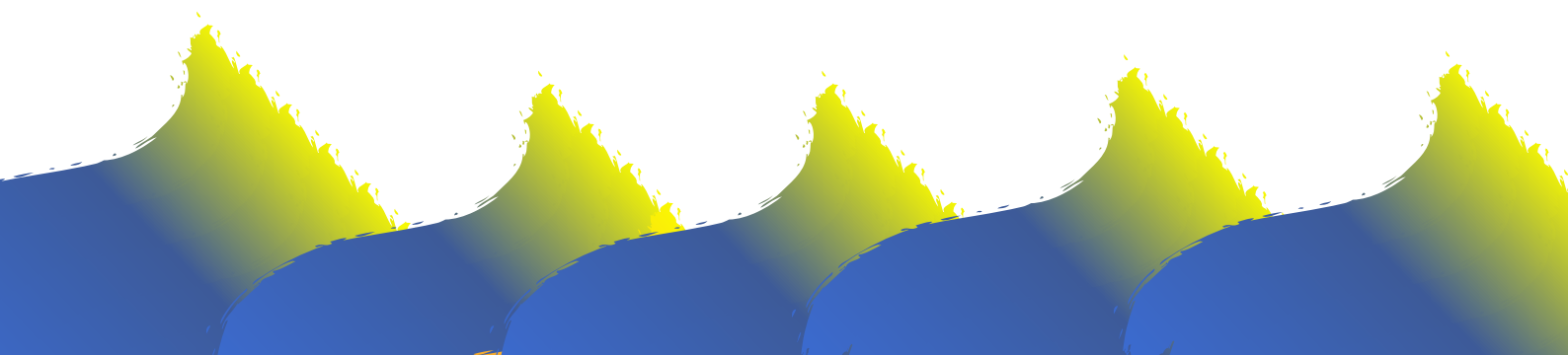
The beginning

Muay Thai is the national sport and cultural martial art of Thailand. It was developed several hundreds of years ago as a form of close-combat that utilizes the entire body as a weapon.

Today its definitive origins are debated by modern scholars, as much of the Muay Thai history was lost when the Burmese ransacked Ayudhaya, Siam's capital city in Thailand, during the 14th century.

What it is about

The accurate origins of Muay Thai are contested although the martial art is believed to have been created 1.000-2.000 years ago in South-Eastern Asia. It became a rather efficient technique vastly practiced by the armies of the Siam Kingdoms, in order to protect their lands and frontiers.





ROLLER SPORTS

Artistic roller skating

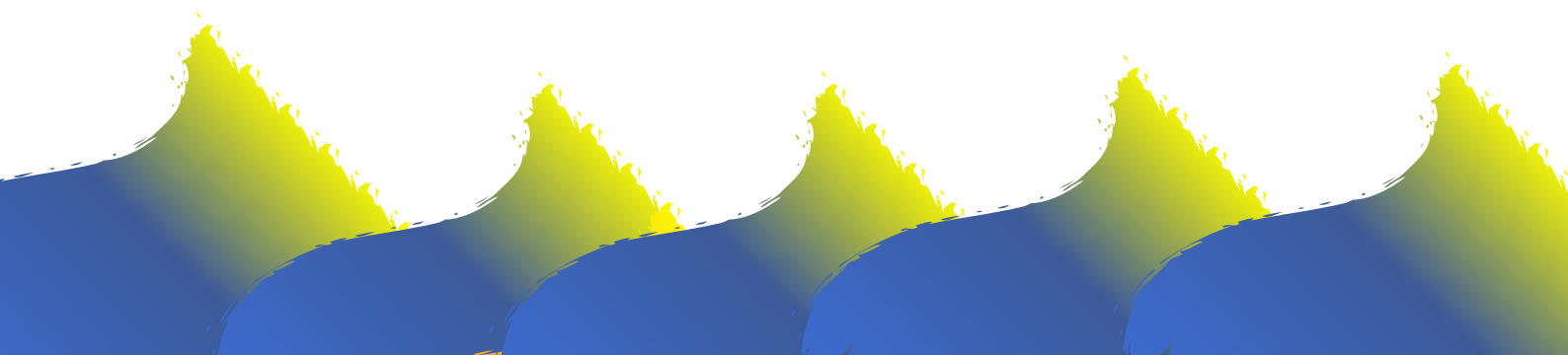
It is a sport similar to figure skating but where competitors wear roller skates instead of ice skates.

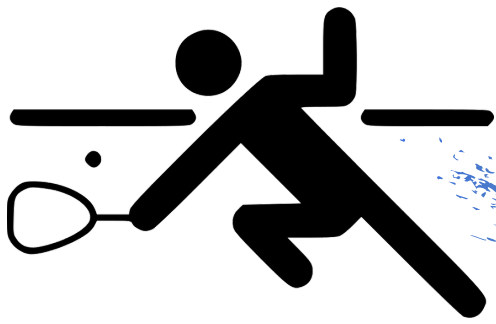
Inline hockey

Inline hockey is a team sport played on a neat surface, on which the skaters use sticks to pull a plastic hockey puck in the opponent's goal in order to score points.

Speed skating

The gold medal is won by the fastest skaters. Few sports can equal the enthusiasm of the head-to-head fights for the leading positions of the skaters hurtling in curves. In order to win, the skaters need not only sprinting and resilience skills, but also skills of rapidly understanding the race situation and use all their advantages to beat their opponents.





SQUASH

The beginning

Squash found its origins in an older racket game played in the London prisons of the 18th Century. Later, around 1830s, the boys of the Harrow School observed a punctured ball “squashing” at the impact with the wall was giving them a larger variety of movements to the game. The sport reached other schools. The first courts were built at Harrow School were rather dangerous as they were next to water pipes, counterforts, chimneys or window ledges. The natural rubber was the opted material for the ball.

The pupils modified the rackets to have a smaller field of shot and to improve their capacity to play in the tightened playing conditions. In 1864 eventually the school built 4 outdoor fields.

What it is about

Squash is a racket sport played by two (singles) or four players (doubles) in a four-walled court with a small, hollow rubber ball. The players must alternate in striking the ball with their racket and hit the ball onto the playable surfaces of the four walls of the court.



SUMO

The beginning

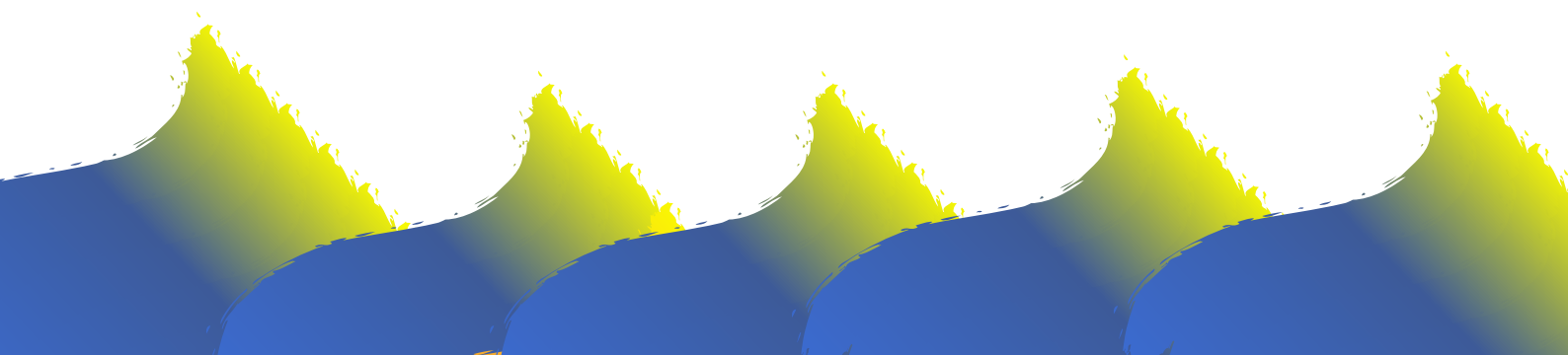
According to the Japanese legend as a result of a sumo match between Takemikazuchi and Takeminakata Gods determined in the forming of the Japanese islands.

In the Ancient Japan the sumo was seen as a ritual act, a dedication towards the gods that were praying for a better harvest. The earliest mentioning places sumo around the year of 712 BC.

In the 8th Century sumo was already included in the imperial courts ceremonies. The annual sumo festivals had music and dances, with matches combining themselves wrestling and boxing elements. Later the court drafted rules and techniques and so the sport started to look alike the sport we know today.

What it is about

Sumo wrestling is a competitive full-contact wrestling sport where a rikishi (wrestler) attempts to force another wrestler out of a circular ring (dohyo) or into touching the ground with anything other than soles of his feet.





TUG OF WAR

The beginning

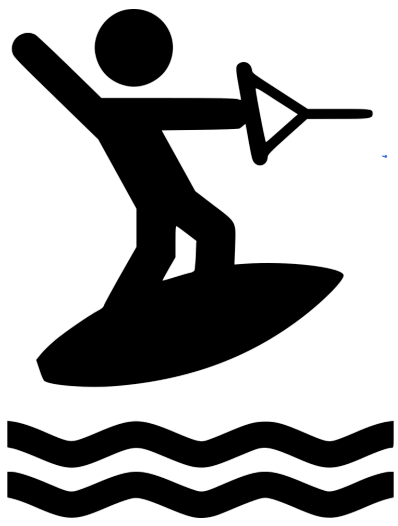
The origins of tug of war remain unclear, yet it is well known that this sport was practiced in Cambodia, Ancient Egypt, Greece, India and China. According to a book dating from the Tang dynasty, The Notes of Feng, mentions the tug of war under the name of “hook pulling” as being used by a military commander of the Chu State during springs and autumns for training the warriors (8th-5th Century BC).

During the Tang dynasty, the Emperor Xuazong widely promoted the tug of war matches using ropes of even 167 m with shorter ropes attaches, having more than 500 people at each end pulling the rope. Each side was mentioned to have had their own team of drummers that were encouraging the participants.

What it is about

The sport represents a classic concept of competing against each other and so in many languages the name appears to be used as a daily language. The long history of the tug of war as the purest human strength competition offers glorious movements.

Tug of war is a sport that pits two teams against each other in a test of strength: teams pull on opposite ends of a rope, with the goal being to bring the rope a certain distance in one direction against the force of the opposing team's pull.



WATER SKI

The beginning

The water ski was created in 1922 when Ralph Samuelson used a pair of wooden skis and a laundry rope on the Pepin Lake in Lake City, Minnesota.

Samuleson experimented with various positions on the skis for several days until 2nd July 1922. He then discovered that by leaning backwards on water and holding upright the skis' tips was the optimal method. His brother, Ben, towed him and thus reached a speed of 32 km/h.

What it is about

The water ski is a surface water sport where a person is towed from behind a motor boat over the water, scratching the surface with 2 or 1 ski.

The game requires a vast enough area on a flat water surface, one or two skis, a motor towing boat with a rope, three persons (depending on the boating laws) and a personal floating device.

NON OLYMPIC SPORTS

Facts

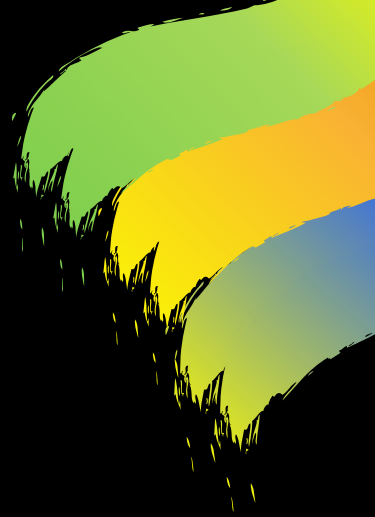
The World Record for the Most Water Skiers Towed By a Single Boat is 145. It's pretty impressive when two or more water skiers are towed by the same boat, but Tasmania's Horsehead Water Ski Resort took this to a whole new level by towing a record-setting 145 skiers in 2010. The previous world record was just 100 skiers, set 24 years .

Lacrosse, first played by the Cherokee, Iroquois, and Onondaga nations, has been around since the 1500's. One of the earliest reasons Native American lacrosse was played was to settle disputes and prevent war between nations.

The world's largest billiard hall was built during billiards' "Golden Age". "The Recreation", a mammoth seven-story health spa, was a bustling Detroit business in the 1920's. It featured 103 tables, 88 bowling lanes, 20 barber chairs, three manicuring stands, 14 cigar stands, a lunch counter on each floor, a restaurant that could seat 300, and an exhibition room with theater seating, that could accommodate 250 spectators.

SUMMER SPORTS

sources



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