

# “History” and other stories from the shadow of Sugar Loaf Mountain

By Volker Kluge

A memorable logo and torch on a Brazilian stamp block, franked on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016, the day of the opening of the Olympic Games.

Rarely have I heard or read the phrase “wrote Olympic history” so frequently as in the media coverage of the two and a half weeks in which Olympic Games took place in Rio de Janeiro. On closer inspection it was mostly not about history, but about positive stories with the standardised introduction: “For the first time ...”

There were cases of doping, bad behaviour from athletes, wrestling coaches undressing to protest against a verdict, or ungracious judokas refusing to shake hands with their opponent, only extremely rarely let the media write “history”.

If one understands history however as an occupation or even science which finding out about the past – and thus human history – by means of certain sources, then the flood of material from Rio is considerably reduced. Yet there were some moments which fully deserved to burn their way into the collective memory. Here is a selection:

## The Symbol

At first sight, the logo of the Olympic Games reminded me of a baby’s dummy. Only on further examination did I recognise three human beings who hands and feet, stylised into ribbons, touch, so that oval shapes arise.

Did these figures stand symbolically for the descendants of the indigenous peoples, for the white conquerors and immigrants as well the enslaved peoples of Africa, who are now in 2016 are included in the festival? If one of them breaks out, then the others fall as well, as the German discus thrower Christoph Harting discovered when he dropped the souvenir he had just received on the top step of the podium.



The three dimensional logo is somehow very Brazilian, and not just because it made up of the national colours of green, blue and yellow. It was chosen after a competition between amongst 137 creative agencies.

The idea apparently came to Frederico Gelli the creative director of Tátil Design, whilst he was swimming at Ipanema. When he emerged, he is said to have caught sight of the Dois Irmãos (Two Brothers Hill) and said to himself: “We are in the middle of sculpture city, we need to make a harmonizing logo.” It was the unique panorama of undulating mountains which inspired him to create a logo which emits a great deal of energy.

## Olympic Rings

The Parade of Athletes is the heart of the Opening Ceremonies. It was introduced in 1906 and as every year since 1928, it was led by Greece to honour the birthplace of the Games. The producer had set aside one hour,

## Games of the XXXI Olympiad Rio de Janeiro 2016

5<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> August

Opening: *Brazil's interim President Michel Temer*

Olympic Oath: Athletes: *Robert Scheidt (Sailing)*

Referees and Officials: *Martinho Nobre dos Santos (Athletics)*

Coaches: *Adriana Aparecida dos Santos (Volleyball)*

Last runner in the Torch Relay: *Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima (Athletics)*; budget: *10.6 billion USD*

Participating teams: *207, made up of 205 NOCs, Refugee Olympic Team (ROT), Independent Olympic Athletes (IOA)*

First appearance: *Kosovo (KOS), South Sudan (SSD)*

Entered athletes: *11,458*, of which: *men 6276, women 5182 (43.06%)*, Officials *3481*, Total *14,939*, by continents: *Africa 1004, America 2542, Asia 1900, Europe 5080, Oceania 733*  
28 Sports, 306 disciplines where medals were awarded, of which: *men 161, women 136, Mix: 9 (London 162–132–8)*  
Women were represented in all sports.

Men are not admitted to Synchronised Swimming and to Rhythmic Gymnastics.

50 minutes and 17 second. When it was complete, I was too tired to check whether or not the plan had been adhered to.

In truth, the world is large. No fewer than 207 teams took part in the march into the Maracanã Stadium, among them the much reduced team from Russia. Its authorities stood accused of state sponsored doping regime. Their total exclusion had been demanded by some.

For the first time in Olympic history the athletes were included in a campaign. On entering the arena they received seed and a cartridge with a plant, borne by a child who followed each team on a tricycle decorated with flowers. The seedlings were temporarily placed in mirrored boxes, which burst open after the parade and from whose upper ends the tops of the trees formed the Olympic rings – for the first time completely green.

Green was to be the dominant colour of the evening. It stands for the paradisiacal nature of Brazil, whose name comes from “terra do Brasil”, the brazil wood. For a long time it represented the only product of the host country, which led to the exploitation of gigantic forest areas.

The destruction of the national tree has stopped, but a greater problem is global warming of the earth. “Greenland is disappearing!” warned a voice in the stadium, in which reflection was included.

The contribution of the athletes to prevent climate change could be no more than symbolic. The Olympic Games will not save the world. But if the 11,000 seedlings come up, they could one day, together with the 207 seedlings in the form a beautiful “Athletes’ Forest”. We should monitor its progress.



Every team – one tree. The 207 seedlings will one day form the Athletes’ Forest of Deodoro.

### The Olympic Laurel

Thomas Bach’s Olympic Agenda 2020 recommended the creation of a new award. The Olympic Laurel, which was presented for the first time in Rio during the Opening Ceremony. The original trophy of fair-mined gold, which stands on a stone from the Ancient Olympia, will in future be kept in the Olympic Museum in Lausanne.

The first recipient was Kenya’s double Olympic champion Kipchoge Keino, who in 1968 won the 1500 m and in 1972 the 3000 m steeplechase. Keino served as an IOC Member from 2000 to 2010. He was nominated by a jury chaired by IOC President. It included prominent representatives from five continents – among them IOC Honorary President Jacques Rogge.

Keino received this prize for his charitable work with orphans, which started in 1973 following his retirement from competition. He opened a children’s school and a training centre, which is today home to almost 100



Green was the colour of the day. The Olympic rings were formed by trees at the opening of the Games.

Photos: picture-alliance

Kenya's double Olympic champion Kipchoge Keino was the first winner of the Olympic Laurel, which recognised for his social engagement.



Kenyan orphans. In 1999 there followed the opening of the Kip Keino School in an isolated region, offering education to more than 300 girls and boys aged from 6 to 13.

"We come into this world with nothing ... and depart this world with nothing", said Keino in a speech of thanks. "My request to you, all sports men and women, is to join me in the continuous continuation to support all the youths in the world to get basic humanity: food, shelter, and education."

### The Doves of Peace

Kites are part of the city landscape of Rio. A few months ago, 200 were dispatched to children in Kenya, who sent them back to Brazil together having added messages of peace. During the award for the Olympic Laurel kites flew in to represent the doves of peace in the Maracanã Stadium.

Doves had always been an important symbolic presence. IOC founder Pierre de Coubertin wrote about the opening ceremony in 1896 in Athens: "The Cannon salvoes immediately resounded, followed by the release of pigeons which wheeled joyously over the stadium ..."<sup>2</sup> What task was intended for them is not revealed. It is however known that the dove in Christianity stands as a symbol for the Holy Ghost<sup>3</sup> and as the bringer of the "joyful message".<sup>4</sup>

Doves have formed an important part of the ritual since Antwerp in 1920. Although these took place two years after the end of the war few thought of them as "doves of peace". Belgian soldiers from the Signals corps released the birds – one for each of the 27 participating nations.<sup>5</sup>

It is probable that the IOC had decided on this gesture in 1914 at the Olympic Congress in Paris, where other elements a flag and an oath were also added to the protocol by Coubertin. A year earlier he had witnessed the release of 10,000 doves at the inauguration of the German Stadium in Berlin, perhaps this provided inspiration.

Doves are not mentioned until the 1930 version of Olympic Charter, which states: "Immediately a fanfare of trumpets is heard and a salute is fired whilst the Olympic flag is hoisted on the central mast, this being a signal for the freeing of pigeons (each pigeon having round its neck a ribbon with the colours of the nation participating)..."<sup>6</sup>

If in 1932 in Los Angeles it was still "hundreds of doves", the number multiplied in 1936 in Berlin, where everything assumed a more gigantic scale. On the morning of the opening day 100,000 birds of German breeders were released in four groups, while the "Olympia Flight" in the afternoon was reserved for 18,000 homing pigeons, which had been sent in by their owners from eleven countries.

The symbolism we associate with the doves today arose only after the Second World War. Pablo Picasso designed a symbol of hope for the First World Peace Congress in 1949 in Paris. It incorporated a dove of peace. It was fitting that his daughter, born on the evening before the Congress, received the name "Paloma" – dove.

The Gun salute disappeared from the Olympic protocol, its passing was mourned by few. On 17<sup>th</sup> September 1988 the doves were released before the flame was lit in Seoul. Many came to rest on the rim of the cauldron and were incinerated when the flame was lit.

Yet the IOC previously concerned itself with the welfare of the animals. As the birds could be frightened by the usual cannon fire, Rule 57 was changed. At the Munich Games for the first time firecrackers were used and only then were the doves released. So that they would not get lost under the roof construction, their starting point was moved to a wall outside the stadium.<sup>7</sup>

Animal rights groups made such angry protests that the problem was discussed at the 1990 IOC Session in Tokyo. General Director François Carrard pleaded for a change to the bye-law of Rule D69 of the Olympic Charter, whereupon the Brazilian João Havelange proposed that instead of a whole flight of doves a single example or as an alternative "coloured balloons could be used instead"<sup>8</sup>. It was agreed finally on the formulation "a symbolic release of pigeons", which, as Rio showed, sets no limit on imagination.

Paper kites with messages of peace from Kenyan children sailed through the Maracanã Stadium. Adjacent: 94 years ago, in 1920 in Antwerp, it was Belgian-soldiers from the Signals corps who released the pigeons for each team.

Photos: picture-alliance, Volker Kluge Archive





Brazil's double gold medal winning sailor Robert Scheidt, spoke the Olympic Oath on behalf of his fellow athletes. The tradition began in 1920 when Belgian fencer Victor Boin, who took the oath whilst grasping his national flag.

## The Oaths

The Olympic Oath is one of the most solemn moments in the programme, at the same time one of the most controversial. Many consider that most athletes commit perjury.

It is almost a century since it was introduced. In 1920 in Antwerp it started with an athletes' spokesman – a role that requires much personality and was brilliantly fulfilled in Rio by 43 year old sailing champion Robert Scheidt. He had won a medal at each of five Olympic Games – two gold, two silver and a bronze. He should be free of any suspicion of deceit, apart from if he possessed the ability to dope the wind.

The controversial disqualification of the East German female tobogganists at the 1968 Winter Games probably contributed in the IOC Executive Committee to the realisation that judges and officials should also swear an oath in future. A text composed by Lord Killanin, similar in wording to the athletes' oath, was to be introduced at the Games in Mexico City.<sup>9</sup> Many sports federations objected to this so a resolution was postponed for a year. The oath for judges was only introduced at the Games of 1972.

It is to be expected that few of the referees and judges entrusted with this honour have become household names. Even the name of Martinho Nobre dos Santos, who took the oath in Rio, is not widely known outside his sport. He had been Technical Director of the Brazilian Athletics Federation (CBAt) for many years. Without him and many like him, the Games could not take place.

The same is true of the trainers. The IOC recognised the importance of the athlete 'entourage' at the 2009 Congress and since the 2010 Olympic Youth Games, they too have sworn an oath and are also obliged to promote Fair Play. Their oath was spoken in Rio by Adriana Aparecida dos Santos, who had won silver in 1996 and bronze in 2000 with the Brazilian basketball team.

The notion of an oath was already on the wish list of the founding Olympic Congress of 1894. It was supposed to give the IOC the right to exclude from the Games any person who had ever broken the rules. At that time they were primarily thinking of the amateur regulations. Yet Coubertin had something higher in his mind: he had the notion of a type of thinking which he called "religio athletae" – a moral direction.

In the wake of the "Thorpe Affair"<sup>10</sup> thoughts had become concentrated in the need for a participants' oath, a concept which Coubertin had first expressed in 1906.<sup>11</sup> It was to have been introduced at the 1916 Games but in the event it was made its debut only after the First World War in Antwerp. Fencer Victor Boin stood with a raised right hand and with the Belgian flag grasped in his left. He solemnly swore:

*Nous jurons de prendre part aux Jeux olympiques en compétiteurs loyaux, d'observer scrupuleusement les règlements et de faire preuve d'un esprit chevaleresque pour l'honneur de nos pays et pour la gloire du Sport.*<sup>12</sup>

Since 1984, the oath taker has grasped the Olympic flag rather than his or her national flag. The oath itself has been modified several times in its history. The word "swear" was replaced in 1961 by "promise" and, to reduce nationalism, "our country" by "our teams". The clause relating to doping and drugs was only adopted into the Olympic Charter in 1999.<sup>13</sup>

## The Hybrid Cauldron

As usual there was considerable speculation on who would be the last runner in the torch relay. It was considered a virtual certainty that it would be Pelé – the Brazilian football legend. It was said that IOC President Thomas Bach had invited him, and he was only waiting for the agreement of a sponsor. On the eve of the



**Vanderlei de Lima lit the Olympic Flame as last runner.**

**Right: twelve years before he had been denied victory in the Olympic marathon when impeded by an eccentric priest from Ireland. Only the swift intervention of a Greek spectator enabled de Lima to continue the race and take bronze.**

Photos: picture-alliance

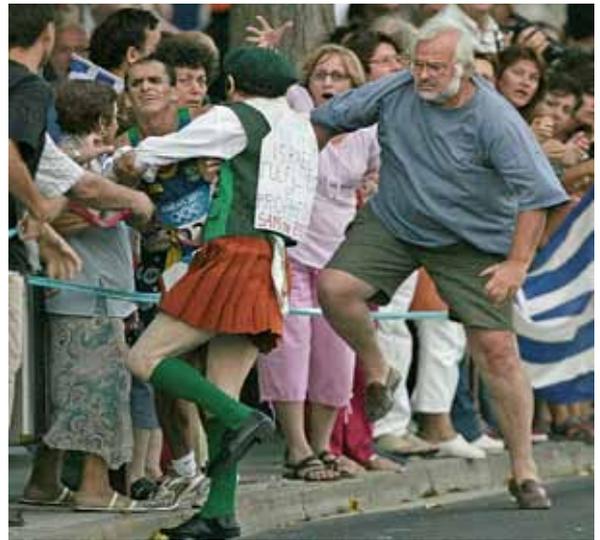
ceremony however a statement from Pele announced: "I'm not in physical condition to take part in the opening ceremony."

Now there was feverish speculation in the media about a replacement. These were called Jackie Cruz Silva and Sandra Pires – both had won Brazil's first Olympic gold in beach volleyball. Tennis player Gustavo Kuerten, who had been world number one in 2000 was discussed, and indeed he took the flame from former basketball world champion Hortência Marcarí. But a few metres further on, a slight man was waiting to take over. His name: Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima.



**The Olympic Hybrid Cauldron in the Maracanã Stadium**

Photo: Philip Barker



I thought it was a good choice. Who does not remember the dramatic images from the 2004 marathon race in Athens? On that evening an eccentric Irish priest called Neil Horan tried to grab hold of the Brazilian with five kilometres to go. Within a few seconds 53 year old Athenian Polyvios Kossivas managed to overpower the intruder, who had previously run onto the track during the British Formula One Grand Prix at Silverstone. He had also found his way onto the course for the Derby at Epsom. After the interruption de Lima lost his rhythm and it was only a question of time he was caught by Stefano Baldini (Italy), who had been only 30 seconds behind. Mebrahtom Keflezighi (USA) also overtook de Lima.

A protest by the Brazilian Athletic Federation, who demanded a second gold medal for de Lima, was rejected by the IAAF and also by the Court of Arbitration. De Lima had to be content with bronze, yet at the concluding event, in whose framework the victory ceremony for the marathon took place, received an extra prize. President Jacques Rogge presented him with the Pierre de Coubertin Medal. Since 1964, this has been awarded very rarely. It was given for his "exceptional sportsmanship".<sup>14</sup>

In Rio, de Lima was additionally honoured. He lit a cauldron which broke with the tradition of keeping the Olympic Flame alight for 17 days with a fire of huge volume. Instead a small flame was presented as a symbolic warning to reduce global warming caused by fossil fuel and greenhouse gases and to use the sun as an energy source.

### The Girl from Ipanema

Supermodel Gisele Bündchen now 36 years of age, stole the show in a golden shimmering dress by Alexandre Herchovitch on a 128 metre long catwalk which was decorated with sketches of the most famous work of architect Oscar Niemeyer. *The Girl from Ipanema* rang



Original and copy:  
Without her  
knowledge Helô  
Pinheiro became  
famous as the  
inspiration of the song  
*Girl from Ipanema*.  
At the Olympic Opening  
Ceremony, now 71  
and a grandmother,  
she was represented  
by Supermodel  
Gisele Bündchen.

out across the stadium. It has become an unofficial Brazilian national anthem.

According to legend, composer Tom Jobim and the lyricist Vinícius de Moraes sat in a bar in Rio's artists' quarter, where an unknown 17 year old girl would often run past. That was the inspiration for a song with a melancholy melody. It was about a beautiful girl with a graceful step on the way to the beach. At first, Moraes named his work *Menina que passa (Girl walking past)*.

After that he produced a second version, translated by Norman Gimbel into English and changed to conform to North American taste. The song catapulted a new genre, the Bossa Nova, onto the world stage. No fewer than four Grammys went to *The Girl from Ipanema* in 1964.

Not until three years later did the girl become aware that she had inspired the song. Her name was Heloísa Eneikda Menezes Paes Pinto and she got to know Jobim and Moraes, who made advances to her. But she married an engineer who was her childhood sweetheart and became a good housewife in São Paulo.

She did not profit from the success of the hit, played by Jobim's grandson on the piano at the opening. Only later did Helô Pinheiro, as she is now called, become a model. In 1987 she posed for *Playboy*; in 2003 again with her actress daughter Ticiane. In "her" bay, near the legendary bar "Veloso", which she once had to pass when she was sent by her mother to fetch cigarettes, she opened the boutique *Garota de Ipanema*, the title of the song in Portuguese.

Gisele Bündchen certainly represents a beautiful image of Brazil. However there was considerable discontent on social media. Many were upset because she had been chosen in preference to Helô Pinheiro who it was said had not even received an invitation to the Maracanã Stadium. Pinheiro, now 71 years old and a grandmother, was philosophical about the decision. Instead she happily carried the Olympic torch through Rio and announced: "I am proud to be a Carioca."

### Michael, Usain and Leonidas

Michael Phelps was already *The Greatest*, even before he set off for Brazil for his fifth Olympic Games. An 18 times Olympic champion, who already had returned from retirement – in 2009 and 2014 – he was entrusted with carrying the American flag – as only the second US swimmer after Gary Hall in 1976 in Montreal.

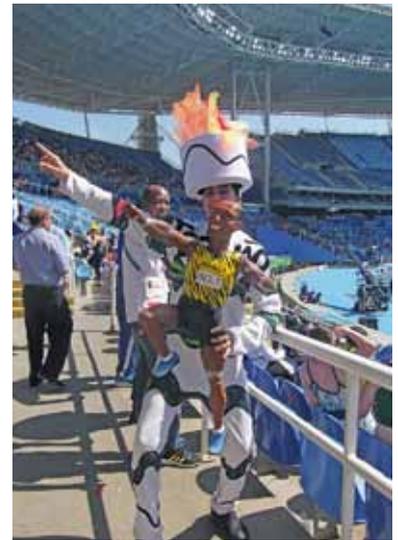
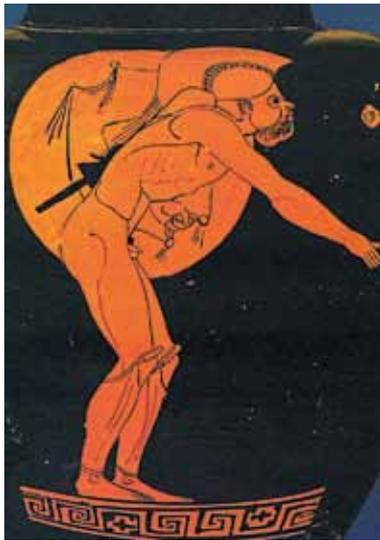
One record however was missing for a 31 year old who had achieved eleven individual Olympic victories from 2004 to 2012. There was one Olympic competitor who was even more successful, albeit 2168 years before. A Greek called Leonidas, whose name would forever be linked with his home island – Leonidas of Rhodos. He should not be confused with the Spartan commander Leonidas, who lived 300 years earlier and led a valiant action against the Persians at the Pass of Thermopylae.

Leonidas of Rhodes became famous as a runner, because he was the first athlete at the 154<sup>th</sup> Games in Olympia (164 BC) to win three times. He won in the stade over 192.70 m, over the double stade (Diaulos) and was also victorious in the race in armour (Hoplitodromos). The triple winner, described by the Greeks as "Triastes", repeated his success at the next three consecutive Games (from 160 to 152 BC), so that he went into history as a twelve time Olympic champion.

It took until the modern era before the feats of Leonidas were equalled. This was done by Phelps on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2016 with victory in the 200 m butterfly and two days later surpassed it in the 200 m medley. His complete record is 13 individual gold medals as well as three silver and two bronze. In addition come ten successes in the relays. In all he contributed to 23 Olympic victories. This is a record which should ensure that the "Flying Fish" will stand at the top of the ranking list perhaps for all time.

As far as the Rhodian is concerned, it should be noted that in antiquity there were neither team competitions

After 2168 years American swimmer Michael Phelps broke a further Olympic record: with 13 individual victories, he eclipsed the record of Leonidas of Rhodos, who in Ancient Olympia had won the stade, diaulos and the race in armour (right). Far right: there was no lack of support for Usain Bolt in his "Triple-triple".



Photos: picture-alliance, Philip Barker, Volker Kluge Archive

nor silver and bronze medals. All that counted was the victory of the individual, who was rewarded in Olympia with a "Kotinos", a olive bough. At the Isthmian Games in Corinth there was a pine branch, at the Pythian Games in Delphi laurel and at the Nemean celery.

Usain Bolt can also be celebrated as a "Triastes", although he owes his third gold medal to the relay. Bolt who turned 30 on the final day of the Rio Games could actually be described as a triple "Triastes" His gold medals came in three successive Games over 100 m, 200 m and as a member of Jamaica's 4x100 m. In the media however his success was celebrated as a "Triple-triple".

By winning the 200 m medley, Phelps catapulted himself into an exclusive circle. Until Rio only four Olympians who had won the same competition four times in a row: Danish sailor Poul Elvstrøm in the Finn class (1948-1960) Americans Ray Ewry in standing high jump and long jump (1900-1908 including 1906), Al Oerter in the discus (1956-1968) and Carl Lewis in the long jump (1984-1996). Even so Leonidas of Rhodos remains unmatched. He was victorious four times in a row in three individual disciplines.

### Go Fiji Go!

Until now I have only once seen rugby in the flesh, and had thought the 15 a side version a very physical game. Since Rio I have also become a fan of Rugby sevens, which, as I discovered, only needs a sixth of the playing field and is carried out in two halves of seven minutes. In the final it is ten minutes each way.

In particular it was those seven Fijians who contributed to my change of view. After they had put out 2013 World Cup winners New Zealand 12-7 in the quarter final, they unleashed a real tropical cyclone in the gold medal match. Great Britain was the victims. The margin of victory 43-7, was decisive. Britain were smashed! It was a hard lesson for the nation which had invented rugby.

An "historic day" then for the Fijians, but it begs the question which day is "golden". In Rio, it was the 11<sup>th</sup> August when Princess Anne presented their gold medals, but the clocks in the Fijian capital Suva, however showed 10 o'clock the next day. Will the 11<sup>th</sup> or the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month go into history? Few who celebrated across the 330 islands which make up the archipelago were really bothered.

Whatever, the day will remain memorable for the Fijians, who won their first gold, sixty years after their first appearance at the Games. Before this their best performance had come from weightlifter Maria Liku, who had been eighth in London.

News agencies reported that Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama had declared the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2016 as a national holiday. He received the team in Suva, but he made no reference to this in his speech in Prince Charles Park.<sup>15</sup>

Already on his return from Rio, where he watched the final, he had called on the 881,000 inhabitants to display their national flag. This is a light blue ensign which features the British Union flag in the top left quarter and the lion, another British symbol in the coat of arms.<sup>16</sup>

He made a call for the flag to be changed but the government did not agree. They reasoned the money needed would be better spent helping victims of cyclone "Winston" – a which had raced over the West Pacific Atoll on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

The Fijians had certainly put rugby back on the Olympic map after an interval of 92 years. For good measure, their women's team reached the quarter finals. The International Rugby Board, founded in 1886 and now known as World Rugby now boasts 92 member nations. It had been lobbying for Olympic inclusion since the nineties but not until the 2009 IOC Session in Copenhagen did they succeed. The majority 81 votes for, only eight against was overwhelming.



The introduction of Rugby sevens and the victorious Fijians enriched the Olympic programme in Rio. Adjacent: The result of the 1900 Rugby was a 27-17 win for France's against Germany. The scoreboard in the Velodrome de Vincennes in Paris was considered innovative.

In case traditions are still worth something, then rugby had good arguments on its side, for as early as the Olympic Games of 1900 in Paris this sport was held. Only two matches took place, but the first of these, played on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1900 had an additional dimension. At the invitation of the Union of French Sports Federations (USFSA), whose General Secretary had been Coubertin, the Frankfurt Football Club 1880 team travelled to Paris to meet the representatives of the host country in the Velodrome of Vincennes. This caused a violent chauvinistic reaction in the French press. They claimed it a disgrace to "measure themselves in peaceful contest with the sons of the nation which had slaughtered their fathers in 1870".<sup>17</sup> Fortunately, there was no sign of this hostile attitude amongst the 3500 spectators who saw the game. At the ensuing banquet in honour of the German guests there were alternating toasts to Kaiser Wilhelm and President Loubet. In any event a well-intended, in the end vain attempt to release a "Dove of Peace".

### Green Jacket instead of Olympic Gold

After an interval of 105 years golf was also welcomed back into the Olympic family at the 121<sup>st</sup> IOC Session in 2009 but with much less enthusiasm than had

accompanied the success of rugby sevens. They were voted back by 63 votes to 22. Some who opposed the decision may well have anticipated that there might be problems.

The Olympics called, but the best golfers did not come. More than half of the top-15 world-ranked players were missing. Astonishingly it was mostly the men who withdrew. Many of them used the threat of Zika virus as a pretext. Were they planning to become pregnant? The roll call of absentees was extensive: No. 1 Jason Day (Australia) who cited Zika as a reason, No. 2: Dustin Johnson (USA) Zika, No. 3: Jordan Spieth (USA) Zika, No. 4: Rory McIlroy (Northern Ireland) Zika and called the Olympic tournament "insignificant", No. 8: Adam Scott (Australia) pleaded another engagement, No. 10: Branden Grace (South Africa) withdrew because of Zika, No. 14: Louis Oosthuizen (South Africa) had other commitments. Perhaps the allure of victory in a 'Major' was considered more important than an Olympic victory?

Those who believed that through the absence of some to golfers it would be easier to win a medal in Rio were also mistaken. The signal was given by Justin Rose (No. 11). On very first day he sank a putt from 175 metres on the par three fourth. Three days later the 36 year old became the first Briton to be an Olympic golf champion.



For the first time for 112 years, golf was again played with Olympic gold at stake in Barra. Adjacent: at the first tournament in 1900 in Compiègne the ladies still played in hats and long dresses.

Photos: picture-alliance, La Vie au Grand Air

The American Charles E. Sands was the first Olympic golf champion in 1900.



The elite women were almost completely represented. Gold went to seven times major winner, Park Inbee from South Korea (No. 3), who scored three successive birdies in her opening nine. In the final round she carded a round of 66, 16 strokes ahead of New Zealand's 19 year old Lydia Ko. Although ranked number one in the world, Ko returned home with silver.

This was fourth time that golf was on the Olympic programme. In October 1900 competition was held at a course some 80 km from Paris in Compiègne (Oise). The course had been laid out only four years previously. The American Charles Sands won a thirty six hole tournament. He had also taken part in the tennis earlier in the summer 1900 and also played in the 1908 London Games in Jeu de Paume.

The ladies' winner in Compiègne was 22 year old American Margaret Abbott, went round the nine holes in 47. Players wore the standard hat and long skirt – and to pass the time, for in fact Miss Abbott had come to Paris to study art with Degas and Rodin.

She had been accompanied by her mother, the widowed Mary Abbott, who had written some novels and essays for Chicago newspapers. Like her daughter she was a member of the Chicago Golf Club. At the end Abbott senior ranked seventh out of ten participants.<sup>18</sup>

The second time golf was played for an Olympic title in St. Louis in 1904. But only the gentlemen were permitted and the tournament was matchplay. Canadian George Lyons won the final 3 and 2.

Golf was also planned as part of the Berlin Games in 1916. This came after the IOC had decided at their congress in Paris to classify golf as among the optional sports. It was for the host city to decide whether or not to stage it.<sup>19</sup>

The Organising Committee led by Carl Diem accepted golf into the programme. It was to have included both singles and team competitions. The intention was to extend a new course on the Berlin Wannsee, as the course of the Golf Club Berlin in the West End not far from the German Stadium had already become too crowded because of the growing popularity of the game.<sup>20</sup> The First World War prevented the Games themselves as well as the development of Olympic golf.

### The Thousandth – a Game with Figures

On the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016 *Team USA* celebrated their 1000<sup>th</sup> gold medal at Olympic Summer Games. It came in the swimming pool and was won by the women's medley relay. The golds were broken down as follows: 323 in athletics, followed by swimming (246) and shooting (54). There has yet to be a gold in badminton, handball, modern pentathlon, table tennis and triathlon.

By states (calculated by birthplace) California lay in front (at that time with 447 Olympic champions). From New York came 261, Illinois had 163. The fewest – two – came from Wyoming. Only North Dakota has failed to produce a champion to date.

However the examination of other databases brought more confusion than enlightenment. In *sports-reference*, which uses the data compiled by *Olympedia*<sup>21</sup>, computed after the Games in London more than 990 golds but this figure took into account the twelve American victories at the II<sup>nd</sup> International Olympic Games in Athens in 1906.

*Olympedia* founder and ISOH stalwart Bill Mallon, who advised *Team USA* in Rio, suggested that the 1906 gold medals were not taken into account, nor were the four which Americans won in the Art Competitions at the 1932 Games. If that is the case, then the total should have been not 977 but 974. It is possible that the USOC figures included these artistic golds.

Disregarding the 1906 medals, the total in *sports-reference* should have produced 978. Using this figure, the women's medley relay would not have won the 1000<sup>th</sup> gold, but the milestone would have arrived two days earlier in men's 4x200 m freestyle.



The exhibition *ESPORTE Movimento* organised by ISOH member Roberto Gesta de Melo one featured a wide range of Olympic memorabilia including a gold medal won by German-American gymnast George Eyser at the 1904 Games in St. Louis.

*Infostrada Sports (Gracenote)* also worked with the figure 978. Here, the gold medal of the Austrian Julius Lenhart, won a multi-event competition with athletic and gymnastic exercises at the 1904 St. Louis Games was included. Mallon on the other hand credits this victory to Austria, because Lenhart, who lived in the USA for professional reasons from December 1903 until 1905, never had American citizenship.<sup>22</sup>

In a *Journal* article<sup>23</sup>, which I compiled together with Tony Bijkerk and the late Karl Lennartz, we however pleaded for more flexibility. Lenhart was a member of the Philadelphia Turngemeinde, which won the team competition in St. Louis – of course for the USA. In addition, it should be remembered that no nationality was recognised in Austria as in some other countries. Instead there was so-called "Heimatrecht", given by the communes.

But it is a hundred per cent certain that the first Olympic champion of the modern era – and thus also of the USA – was called James B. Connolly. At the 1896 Games in Athens he won the triple jump. However the American did not receive gold. It is well known that the winners' awards at that time were made of silver.

Nor is it not totally clear who should be considered number 100. On 28<sup>th</sup> October 1904 the AAU Gymnastic Championships took place in St. Louis. These are also included in the Olympic gymnastic competitions, although it is probable that only Americans took part, but most were likely to have been native-born Germans. Among the four gymnasts who can be considered for this milestone, George Eysler towers over the rest. He had supposedly lost his left leg in a train accident and is said to have worn a wooden prosthesis. How was it possible that he could win the gym horse competition with that?

Statisticians always want clear answers. There is rarely room for footnotes.

### Limp Comparisons and unforgettable Pictures

A German athletes' spokeswoman, perhaps disappointed at her own performance, declared Rio 2016 to be the "worst Olympic Games of all time". Her own terms of reference were somewhat limited. The only Games she had taken experienced were London 2012.

The 2012 pole vault Olympic champion, Renaud Lavillenie, lost out to the Brazilian Thiago da Silva. The French claimed that as the competition came to a climax, he had been disturbed by jeering from spectators, which he compared to Berlin 1936. He was quoted as saying: "In 1936 the crowd was against Jesse Owens. We've not seen this since."<sup>24</sup>

Later he apologised and opined that of course one could not make such comparisons. In fact: the comparison itself was a limp one, for Owens was

celebrated with great applause from the Berlin spectators.

Athletes get headlines nowadays not just for sporting performances. An example: swimmer Ryan Lochte travelled to Rio with freshly blond-dyed hair which faded in the chlorinated water. The newsheets were not unanimous: was the colour green/blue or ice blue?

One Sunday it was reported that the social media star had been the victim of a crime in Rio. On the way home from a party in Leblon, men in police uniforms had allegedly waited for him at a petrol station, held a pistol to his head and robbed him.



Inconsolable: France's pole vaulter Renaud Lavillenie wept on the shoulder of Sergey Bubka. He was the recipient of abuse by Brazilian spectators. IOC President Thomas Bach remained neutral.

But a few days later the truth emerged on a video recording. In fact Lochte and three of his companions had lied. They had vandalised a petrol station. When the security men had arrived, the quartet had paid for the damage but then made their "complaint". They probably thought that an armed gang which robbed athletes would be a plausible story. It would certainly have been consistent with the image of a violent Rio which was widely reported.

It did not fit my picture that it occasionally rained on the sunny beach and that many seats in the venues remained unoccupied. Well, it was winter in Brazil. However the 17 Olympic Games which I previously experienced were always connected with hard work, also always different from how I had pictured them at home. But distance lends enchantment. As they recede into memory, the lovelier they became.

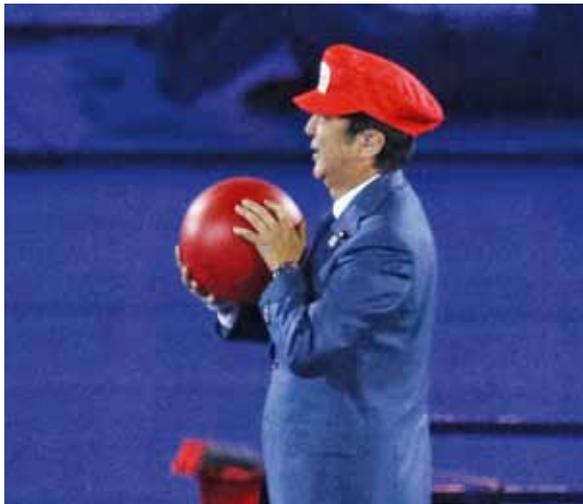


A well-earned honour: every workman who had contributed to the construction of the new Metro line 4, which leads to the Olympia Park in Barra da Tijuca, was recorded on a plaque at the Jardim Oceânico station.

Photos: picture-alliance

**“Super Mario”**: at the closing ceremony Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, dressed as the popular Italian plumber from the computer games appeared after having “tunnelled” all the way from Tokyo to Rio.

Photos: picture-alliance



There are many images of Rio which remain fresh and will perhaps never fade. One of the last comes from the closing ceremony, as the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, disguised a “Super Mario” bores through the globe from Tokyo to the Maracanã–Stadium. Everything wonderful, but in 2020 everything will be better. Perhaps – or perhaps not! ■

- 1 [www.simpliowebstudio.com/2016-olympic-logo-font-created](http://www.simpliowebstudio.com/2016-olympic-logo-font-created)
- 2 Pierre de Coubertin, *Olympic Memoirs*, IOC, Lausanne 1992, p. 43
- 3 Mark 1–10
- 4 Genesis 8–11. In the Bible it is said of Noah that after the Flood he let a dove arise from the Ark to check the water level of the earth: “When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf!”
- 5 The teams of Portugal and Brazil were still on the high seas on the opening day.

- 6 Regulation and Protocol for the Celebration of the Modern Olympiads and of the Quadrennial Olympic Games, IOC 1930, p. 22
- 7 Minutes IOC Session 1971 in Luxemburg, p. 52.
- 8 Minutes, IOC Session 1990 Tokyo, p. 50
- 9 Minutes, IOC EC Meeting, 30<sup>th</sup> September–6<sup>th</sup> October 1968, p. 10
- 10 The Indian Olympic champion of 1912 in pentathlon and decathlon, James Thorpe, had to return his medals and prizes, after it had become known that some years before he had played baseball and received money for it.
- 11 *Revue Olympique*, July 1906, pp. 107–109, letter to Charles Simon, General Secretary of the Fédération Gymnastique et Sportive des Patronages de France
- 12 Comité Olympique Belge, *Rapport Officiel des Jeux de la VII<sup>ème</sup> Olympiade Anvers 1920*, manuscript, p. 50
- 13 *Olympic Charter*, IOC 1999, bye-law to rule 69, 1.12, p. 94. The oath which has been valid since runs: “In the name of all the competitors I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, committing ourselves to a sport without doping and without drugs, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams.”
- 14 *Official Report of the XXVIII Olympiad*, Athens 2004, Vol. 2, p. 460
- 15 The Fijian Government, Hon PM Bainimarama’s Speech at Nadi Welcome Home Celebration for Fiji’s Olympic Team, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2016
- 16 *Ibid*, Statement by the Prime Minister on the National Flag, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2016
- 17 *Sport im Bild*, No. 47, 1900, pp. 644–645
- 18 Paula Welch, “Search for Margaret Abbott”, in: *Olympic Review*, No. 1982, December 1982, pp. 752–754.
- 19 Norbert Müller, *Von Paris bis Baden-Baden. Die Olympischen Kongresse 1894–1981*, Schors-Verlag, Niedernhausen 1981, p. 80. Because of the First World War the nine page protocol did not appear until November 1919.
- 20 Heiner Gillmeister, “Ein kosmopolitischer Golf Club in Berlin”, in: *100 Jahre Golf in Deutschland, Bd. 1: Gründerzeiten bis 1924*, Albrecht Golf Verlag, Oberhaching 2007, pp. 86–87
- 21 *JOH*, Vol. 17, 2009, No. 3, pp. 53–55
- 22 Bill Mallon, *The 1904 Olympic Games*, MacFarland & Company, Jefferson and London, pp. 150–151
- 23 Karl Lennartz, Volker Kluge and Tony Bijkerk, “Battle of Medals”, in: *JOH*, Vol. 18, 2010, No. 1, pp. 40–48
- 24 *Reuters*, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016

