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7 Things You Did not Know About Olympic Games

The games of Zeus in our days

1. The five Olympic circles represent the five continents: Africa, North and South America, Asia and Australia. They are connected to symbolize the sports friendship amongst all the people in the world. 2. The Olympic motto "citius, altius, fortius" means "faster, higher, stronger" in Latin. 3. The Olympic flame burned on the shrine of Zeus during the ancient Olympic games. Today a torch is fired in the sunlight and brought to the place where the games are taking place. 4. The first official Olympic Games took place in 776 BC, but many believe they started 5 centuries earlier. Ancient Greeks believed that the spirits of the dead enjoyed these competitions and they organized national feasts where religion intermingled with sport. They organized the Isthmic Games, the Nemeic Games, the Olympic Games and the Pitic Games, but the Olympic Games were the most appreciated, being held in the honor of Zeus, the supreme god of the Greeks. At the beginning, there was only a running race but in time other events were introduced, like war chariot races and rigorous resistance competitions. For the safety of the many spectators coming to watch the competitions, during the games a general armistice forbidding fights for a while was applied both before the beginning and shortly after the end of the games. When Rome turned into a global war, the Olympic games entered a decline. Many Romans looked at these events in contempt. An exception was emperor Nero who, in 67 AD, participated at the Olympic Games winning all the trials in which he competed (the participants knew what was best for them...). After 394 AD, the games were no longer organized. Now the mostly Christian Greeks do not worship Zeus anymore. 5. The interest on the ancient games was revived by the archaeological diggings made by Germans at the end of the 19th century near the city of Olympia. The French baron Pierre de Coubertin suggested the relaunch of the games, and in 1896, in Athens the first modern Olympic Games took place. Since then, they are organized every four years. They were interrupted only during the two World Wars. There are also the Winter Olympic Games for winter sports. 6. The games were meant to promote respect amongst all the competitors, no matter their race, religion or sex. How did Hitler feel when in 1936, during the Olympic Games held in Germany, 15 medals out of 56 were won by Black American athletes? 7. To get an idea of the number of competitors participating at the Olympic Games, at Sydney 2000 came 10,300 athletes involved in 28 sports, 292 events and 635 matches.