International Olympic Committee

FACTSHEET

The Olympic Movement

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Origin

The brainchild of Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Olympic Movement were officially established on 23 June 1894 at the Paris International Congress that was organised by Coubertin, at the Sorbonne.

Coubertin's vision for the Olympic Games may be summarised as follows: *"Why did I restore the Olympic Games? To ennoble and strengthen sports, to ensure their independence and duration, and thus to enable them better to fulfil the educational role incumbent upon them in the modern world*." Coubertin is also the author of the famous phrase which characterises the Olympic Games: "*The important thing in life is not the triumph, but the fight; the essential thing is not to have won, but to have fought well."* (Pierre de Coubertin, London, 1908).

The hosts for both the first and second editions of the modern Olympic Games were quickly agreed upon during this Congress: Athens for 1896 and Paris for 1900.

The Olympic Movement

The goal of the Olympic Movement is clearly defined in the Olympic Charter: "The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practised in accordance with Olympism and its values." (Olympic Charter, Chapter 1, Rule 1.1).

The Olympic Movement is the concerted, organised, universal and permanent action, carried out under the supreme authority of the IOC, of all individuals and entities who are inspired by the values of Olympism. It covers the five continents. It reaches its peak with the bringing together of the world's athletes at the great sports festival, the Olympic Games. "*Belonging to the Olympic Movement requires compliance with the Olympic Charter and recognition by the IOC."* (Olympic Charter, Fundamental Principles of Olympism, § 7).

In addition to the IOC, the Olympic Movement therefore includes the International Sports Federations (IFs), the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), the Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs), all other recognised federations, institutions and organisations, as well athletes, judges/referees, coaches and other sports technicians.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC)

The IOC is the supreme authority of the Olympic Movement. It acts as a catalyst for collaboration between all parties of the Olympic family, including the NOCs, the IFs, the athletes, the OCOGs, The Olympic Partner (TOP) programme sponsors and broadcast partners. It also fosters cooperation with public and private authorities, in particular the United Nations (UN), national governments and supranational organisations.

From a legal standpoint, the IOC is an international non-governmental non-profit organisation, of unlimited duration, in the form of an association with the status of a legal person, recognised by the Swiss Federal Council (decision of 17 September 1981). Its official languages are French and English. The administrative headquarters of the IOC were originally based in Paris, but, since 10 April 1915, they have been based in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Although it has no legal obligation to do so and following a recommendation of the Olympic Agenda 2020, the IOC has voluntarily decided to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The IOC Members

IOC Members are volunteers and represent the IOC and the Olympic Movement in their country (they are not delegates of their country within the IOC). They include active and former Olympic athletes, as well as presidents or senior leaders of IFs, NOCs or other international organisations recognised by the IOC.

The first membership list of the IOC in 1894 included a total of 15 individuals. Today, there are 106 IOC Members, including the President, four Vice-Presidents and ten members of the IOC Executive Board (EB). At present, the IOC also has 38 IOC Honorary Members, and 2 IOC Honour Member. The composition of the IOC's general membership today reflects the important part that is also played by the other segments of the Olympic family. This is demonstrated via the current Olympic Charter stipulation that representatives of the different Olympic family constituents (individuals holding leadership positions within an IF, NOC or athlete members of the Athletes' Commission) can become IOC Members (Olympic Charter, Chapter 2, Rule 16). Fourty-two of the IOC's current members have taken part in the Olympic Games as athletes, of whom 30 are medallists. In more recent years, the IOC membership has become more gender balanced. In 1981, Pirjo Häggman and Flor Isava Fonseca were the first women to be elected as IOC Members. Today the membership numbers 46 women, while there are three honorary members.

The IOC Presidents

It is a common misconception that, as the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin was also the first IOC President. Instead, following the original stipulation that the President should be from the country hosting the upcoming Games, it was the Greek Demetrius Vikelas who was the first IOC President. The original rule was quickly replaced, however, and modifications can be found in successive editions of the Olympic Charter. As a result, the number of individuals who have held the position of IOC President has been few, and the period of their presidency has varied considerably.

Today, in accordance with Rule 20 of the Olympic Charter, the President is elected by secret ballot for aterm of eight years, with the possibility of a single extension of four years.

During the 144th IOC Session held from 18 to 21 March 2025 in Greece the IOC Members elected the new IOC President. Seven candidates competed in the election for the presidency. They presented their programmes, in camera, to the full IOC membership during a meeting held in Lausanne (Switzerland) on 30 January 2025.

The 23rd of June 2025, Kirsty Coventry of Zimbabwe was elected as the 10th President of the IOC and the first female President in IOC history.

Table A: The IOC Presidents

Demetrius VIKELAS (GRE)	1894-1896
Pierre de COUBERTIN (FRA)	1896-1925
Henri de BAILLET-LATOUR (BEL)	1925-1942
J. Sigfrid EDSTRÖM (SWE) Vice-President and Acting President.	1946-1952
Avery BRUNDAGE (USA)	1952-1972
Lord KILLANIN (IRL)	1972-1980
Juan Antonio SAMARANCH (ESP)	1980-2001
Jacques ROGGE (BEL)	2001-2013
Thomas BACH (GER)	2013-2025
Kirsty COVENTRY (ZIM)	2025-

The IOC Executive Board

The IOC EB has the general responsibility for the administration and management of the IOC's affairs. Along with the President, it is the IOC EB members who are responsible for overseeing the IOC's administrative affairs. Created in 1921, the IOC EB is currently composed of the IOC President, four IOC Vice-Presidents and ten other IOC Members, all elected by the IOC Session by secret ballot, by a majority of votes cast, for a four-year term. Board members may serve no more than two consecutive years and must then wait two years before being re-eligible for election to the Board.

The IOC Session

The general assembly of the members of the IOC is called a Session. The IOC Session meets at least once a year and is the supreme organ of the IOC. It adopts, modifies and interprets the Olympic Charter. Upon the proposal of the EB, it elects the members of the IOC. The IOC Session also elects hosts of the Olympic Games.

The quorum required for an IOC Session is half the total membership of the IOC plus one. Decisions of the Session are taken by a majority of the votes cast; however, a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast is required for any modification of the Fundamental Principles of Olympism, of the Rules of the Olympic Charter or if elsewhere provided in the Olympic Charter.

The IOC commissions

The IOC President nominates special commissions or working groups to study certain specific subjects and make recommendations to the IOC EB. The composition of some of the commissions is mixed, and includes IOC Members, representatives of the IFs and NOCs, athletes, technical experts, advisers and sports specialists. Currently the IOC has 33 commissions.

One of the commissions, established in 1999 by President Juan Antonio Samaranch, is the Ethics Commission. Integrity within the Olympic Movement extends beyond the Fundamental Principles and the athletes' oath taken at the Games. Through the existence of commissions such as the Ethics or Medical Commissions, as well as via efforts to address problems such as the commercial abuse of athletes, the IOC is working to uphold its ethical and fundamental principles in a changing world

The Olympic Solidarity

The origins of Olympic Solidarity date back to the 1960s when the IOC decided to support NOCs in countries that had recently gained their independence. Olympic Solidarity offers financial assistance through relevant, targeted programmes specifically designed for NOCs, especially those with the greatest needs. Its activities are multi-faceted, prioritising athlete development; training for coaches and sports administrators; and promoting the Olympic values. Olympic Solidarity provides guidance to help NOCs implement programmes and properly manage the funds they have been allocated in a fully transparent manner. It relies on a global network of partners, including IFs, well-developed NOCs, and continental associations, to help establish, implement and monitor its programmes.

The IOC administration

The IOC administration is placed under the responsibility of the Director General, Christophe De Kepper. He runs the administration under the authority and guidance of the President. He is assisted in this task by the directors.
The main assignments of the administration include: preparation, implementation and follow-up of the decisions taken by the IOC Session, the IOC EB and the IOC President; preparation and follow-up of the work of all the commissions; and permanent liaison with the IFs, NOCs and OCOGs, including coordination of the preparations for all Olympic Games.

The International Sports Federations (IFs)

The IFs are international non-governmental organisations recognised by the IOC as administrating one or more sports at world level. When the IOC was established in 1894, only a very small number of IFs existed. Today, however, there are more than 70 IFs recognised by the IOC with more than half of them having their sport on the programme of the Games of the Olympiad or Olympic Winter Games.

The IFs are responsible for overseeing the technical aspects and management of their sport at the Olympic Games. They also establish the eligibility criteria for the competitions of the Games, in accordance with the Olympic Charter. They likewise play an active role in the applicant and candidate city evaluation process. They join the IOC in the fight against doping in sport. In order to discuss common problems and decide on their events calendars, the Olympic Summer Sports IFs, the Olympic Winter Sports IFs and the Recognised IFs have formed associations: the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF), the Winter Olympic Federations (WOF), and the Association of Recognised International Sports Federations (ARISF).

The National Olympic Committees (NOCs)

206 NOCs belonging to the Olympic family are essential "ambassadors" of the Olympic Movement in their respective countries, and the tasks assigned to them are clearly stipulated under Rule 27 of the Olympic Charter. The NOCs are responsible for sending participants to the Games and endorsing potential future Olympic hosts within their countries. Furthermore, they are assigned the task of promoting the Olympic Movement, its work, and its fundamental principles in their day-to-day activities. The NOCs form five continental associations, which are represented within the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC).

The Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs)

The organisation of the Olympic Games is entrusted by the IOC to the NOC of the country of the host as well as to the host itself. The NOC forms, for that purpose, an Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, which, from the time it is constituted, communicates directly with the IOC, from which it receives instructions. The OCOG executive body includes: the IOC Member or Members in the country; the President and Secretary General of the NOC; and at least one member representing and designated by the host.

The OCOG must undertake its work in accordance with the Olympic Charter and the Host City Contract concluded between the IOC, the NOC and the city. Some of the aspects of an OCOG's work include:

- to give equal treatment to every sport on the programme and ensure that competitions are held according to the rules of the IFs;
- to choose and, if necessary, create the required facilities, competition sites, stadiums and training halls, and to arrange for the equipment required;
- to accommodate the athletes, their entourage and the officials;
- to organise cultural events that are an essential element of the celebration of the Olympic Games.

The Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs)

The IOC redistributes 90 per cent of its revenue to the wider sporting movement, which means that every day the equivalent of USD 2 million goes to help athletes and sports organisations at all levels around the world. Commercial support for the Olympic Games can be traced back to the first modern Games in Athens, Greece, in 1896. Today, the success of the Olympic Movement is built on the strong and stable financial foundation provided by the IOC's commercial relationships. The IOC operates as a privately funded, independent organisation, with essential support from the global business community. The IOC's multi-faceted Olympic marketing programme plays a key role in staging and promoting the Games and Olympic values, while also generating revenue that is redistributed throughout the Olympic Movement. This revenue is essential for staging the Games and supporting NOCs, IFs, the Olympic Solidarity scholarship programme and other sports organisations. The success and global popularity of the Games is in large part due to the financial, technical and promotional support of our broadcast partners and our Worldwide Olympic Partners.

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