



OLYMPIC FENCING

Since 1896, the history of fencing and the Olympic Games have been intertwined. The first Olympic Games of the modern era took place in Athens. Nobility, Honour, Respect and Tradition are the key words governing fencing and these were reflected in the Olympic ideal. Thirteen fencers representing four countries participated in the foil and sabre events; epee was not yet an Olympic event. The discipline was entirely male.

1900: The Olympic Games were held in Paris within the context of the International World Fair. 156 fencers representing seven countries participated. Epee became an Olympic discipline.

1904: The Olympic Games were held in St Louis, USA, at the time of the World Fair, but the only fencers from outside the USA to take part were two Cubans and one German.

1906: The Intermediary Games in Athens were intended to be the first of another series of Olympics to be held permanently in Athens halfway through the normal Olympic cycle, but the cost was prohibitive and only one was held. Although 12 countries took part - more than at any previous Games - in 1949 the IOC ruled that they were not official.

1908: London Olympic Games. Foil was removed from the Olympic programme that year because the organisers considered foil fencing to be a graceful and athletic exercise rather than a sport.

1912: The organisers of the Stockholm Games wanted to modify the rules relating to the foil target area. The dissatisfaction this caused highlighted the need to unify the rules in fencing.

1924: Paris Olympic Games. Women's Individual Foil was included in the Olympic programme.

1936: Berlin Olympic Games. The epee electrical apparatus, which had been around since 1931, made its Olympic appearance. Metallic pistes replaced the old cork pistes.

1956: Melbourne Olympic Games. The electric foil, which had been used at the world championships for the first time in 1955, became an Olympic weapon.

1960: Rome Olympic Games. A women's foil team event was introduced.

1988: Seoul Olympic Games. The electric sabre was included; there had been electric sabres since 1986.

1996: Atlanta Olympic Games. First women's epee events, individual and team. Women epee fencers had already competed during the 1989 World Championships.

2004: Athens Olympic Games and first Women's Individual Sabre events.

Fencing became completely mixed, with all three weapons available to men and women, but the team events at women's foil and sabre were dropped to comply with the IOC's restriction of ten fencing events.

2008: Beijing Olympic Games. 212 fencers participated, twelve more than in Athens. There were five men's events (three individual and two team) and five women's events (three individual and two team). Thus, full gender parity was reached in Beijing.