

The Ancient Olympics



The Ancient Olympics were held at Olympia, one of the sacred places of the ancient god Zeus.

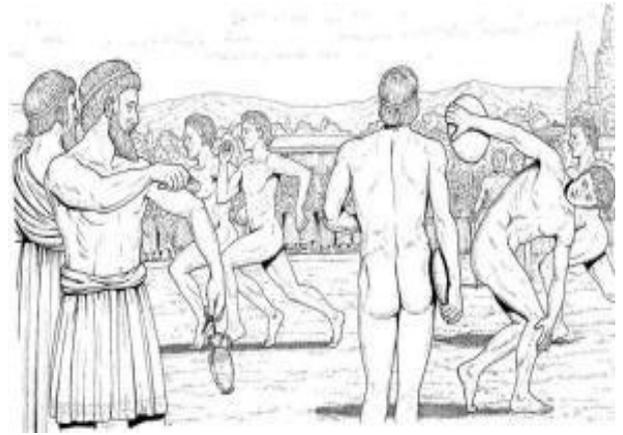
The earliest known record of an Olympic competition is 776BCE but it is thought that some kind of event may have been held for many years before that.

One legend states that the games were started by Heracles while another states that they were started by a king who wanted to bring peace to the region.

Women did not compete in the ancient Olympics and married women were not even allowed to attend as spectators.

The male athletes did not wear any clothes and competed naked. At the first Olympic Games in 776BCE there was just one event - the Stade - a 200 metre (222 yard) race.

Other events were added over time and by 100BCE the games lasted for five days.



Ancient Olympic Events

Sprinting/Running	Combat/Fighting	Other
Stade/Stadion - 200 metres	Boxing Wrestling Pankration - violent martial arts style	Chariot Racing - The winner was the owner of the chariot rather than the rider
Dialous - 400 metres		
Dolichos - 4800 metres		Pentathlon - Wrestling, Stadion, Long Jump, Javelin, Discus
Hoplitodromos - 400 or 800 metres in full armour		

Winning an Olympic event was considered to be the greatest sporting achievement. The winner of each event was presented with an olive branch as a token of this achievement.



The Ancient games began to decline around 424BCE when Greece was at war with the Spartans and many young men had to go to war rather than devote themselves to athletics.

The games continued when the Romans invaded and conquered Greece but when the Emperor Theodosius came to power he banned all non-Christian events including the Olympic Games.