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GLEAMING AIRSHIP



**Pierre de Coubertin
on Sport and Olympism**

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On the occasion of
the 2nd Summer Youth Olympic Games 2014
Nanjing, China

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Pierre de Coubertin on Sport and Olympism

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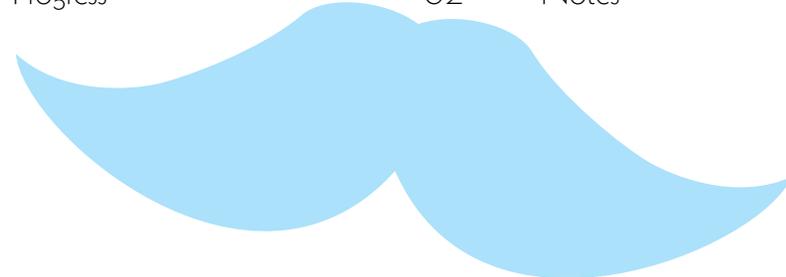
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See afar, speak frankly, act firmly

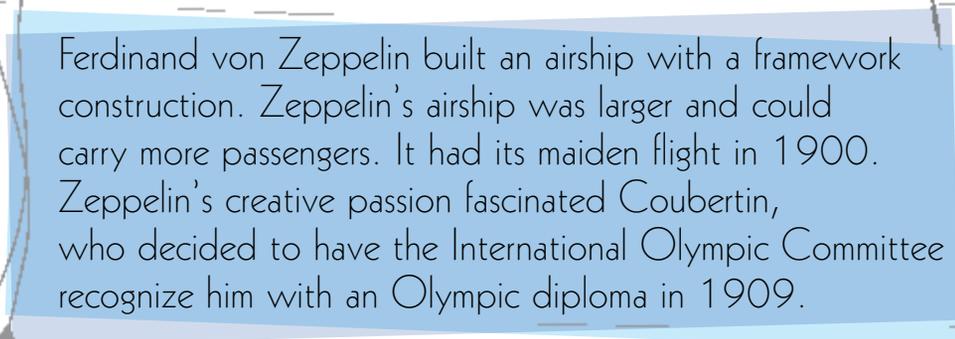
Pierre de Coubertin

WHAT IS THIS BOOK ABOUT?

A long, long time ago in ancient Olympia, on the Peloponnese in Greece, a competition known as the Olympic Games was held every four years. The Games had a long and fascinating history that lasted from 776 B.C. to 393 A.D. The modern Olympic Games hark back to this tradition. So what does the title, *Gleaming Airship*, have to do with all this?

The Olympic idea found the person it had been waiting for at the end of the 19th century – Pierre de Coubertin. Coubertin decided to revive the Olympic Games for the modern world. And so he did. After fifteen hundred years, the Olympic Games were brought back to life in Athens in 1896. This event coincided with a period of rapid technological development. Apart from the steam train, the telegraph and the telephone, the airship made quite an impression on Coubertin. Airships were huge balloons that were powered by steam engines and equipped with

Henri Jules Giffard, a French scientist and aviation pioneer, designed and built the world's first airship. In 1851, Giffard patented the use of a steam engine to drive such vessels. The historic first flight, which traversed almost 30 km, took place on September 24, 1852.



Ferdinand von Zeppelin built an airship with a framework construction. Zeppelin's airship was larger and could carry more passengers. It had its maiden flight in 1900. Zeppelin's creative passion fascinated Coubertin, who decided to have the International Olympic Committee recognize him with an Olympic diploma in 1909.

propellers. They aroused the interest of anyone watching as they floated through the air.

The title of this book refers to the words Coubertin used to sum up his work at the end of his life: "Olympism has sailed serenely over the world like a gleaming airship, the reform of education has borrowed the method of moles." The authors decided to approach the topic in this way to show that Olympism is a joyful way of life that opens people up to themselves and to the future. Coubertin always took a keen interest in the changes and progress taking place in the world. He believed that sport and Olympism ensured progress and could bring a lot of good into the world. The Olympic ideals – good, truth, fairness, beauty, friendship, respect, tolerance, striving for perfection, and world peace – are ever near to each and every one of us. The sports stadium is the ideal place to test our mettle and convince ourselves of what we really are. The Games bring young people together from all over the world, and are a celebration of joy. This has been the message of Olympism from the very beginning. The moral that the ultimate winner in life



Who was Pierre de Coubertin?

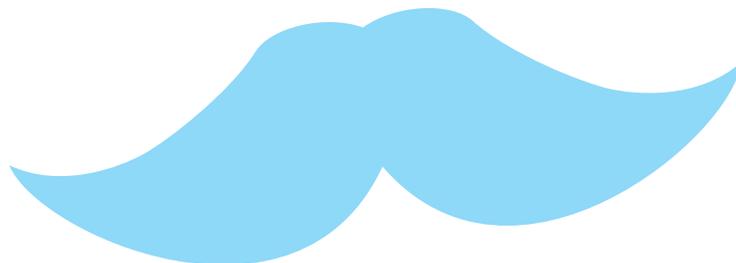
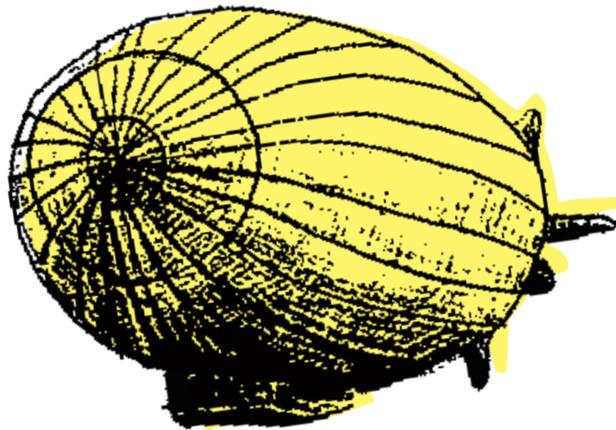
Coubertin was the person who revived the ancient idea of the Olympic Games. It is thanks to him that this, the world's greatest sporting celebration, has been held since 1896.

is the one who is fair and fights to the very end comes from the Olympics.

What we become depends on any number of factors – our family, our schooling, our friends, but also, and perhaps above all, on ourselves. After all, we choose the ideals we wish to live by. Let us not forget, then, those that have survived for centuries and which have laid the foundations of the world's great civilizations. Olympism is one such ideal.

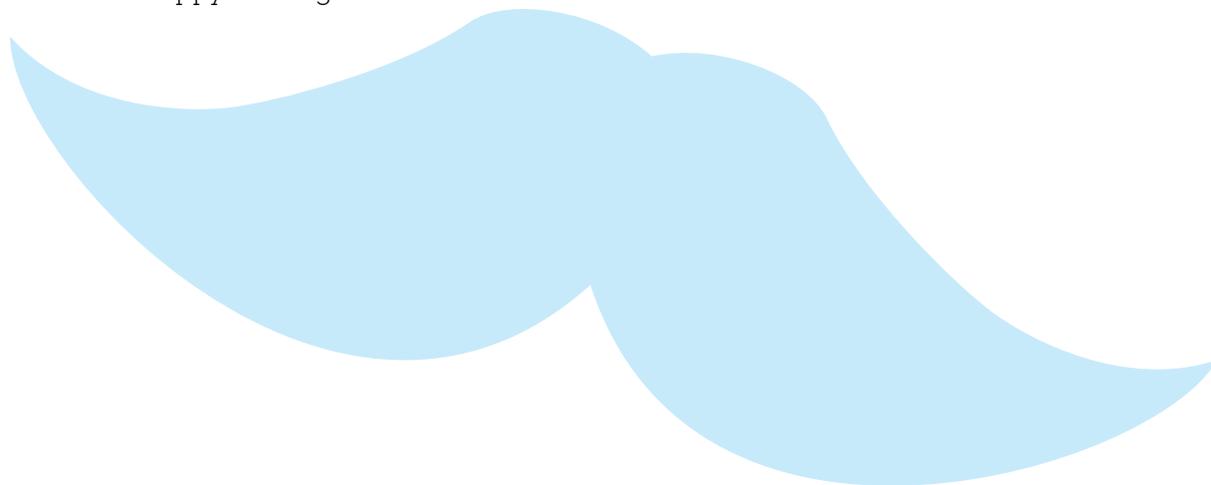
Coubertin's gleaming airship continues to soar around the world. Of that, there can be no doubt. Let's repeat after Coubertin – The future depends on you!

This book was inspired by a need to talk about Olympism in a way that is easy to approach and suitable for young people, and that portrays Pierre de Coubertin



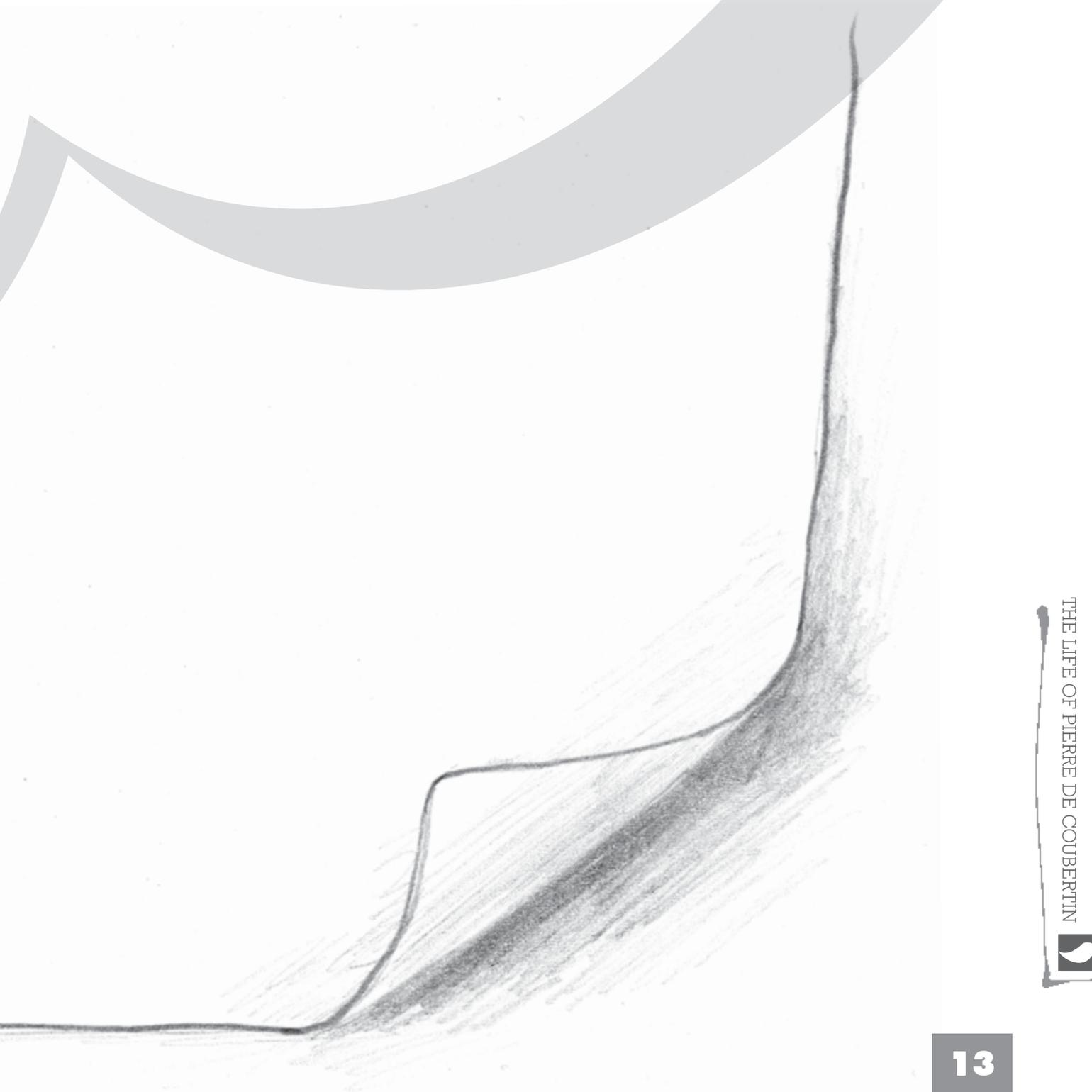
as a modern visionary whose thoughts enter into every discussion on sport today. The authors have made every effort to bring you closer to this fascinating figure from the time when the Olympic idea was being revived. The book has a conversation feel to it, as if Coubertin's story was being told off the cuff. The history of modern Olympism and Coubertin's biography are presented against a backdrop of important and interesting world events. The "Gleaming Airship" section includes a selection of Coubertin's thoughts on sport and Olympism. These thoughts are corroborated by events in the history of the modern Olympic Games, recounted as short stories. Every reader will be able to find similar attitudes in the Olympic competitors and heroes in his or her own country. This book shows the relationship between sport and art, and presents the history of Olympic art competitions. Finally, the pupils from three Polish junior schools helped make this book possible by taking on the challenge of interpreting Coubertin's poem "Ode to Sport" artistically.

Happy reading!



Pierre de Coubertin

(1863 - 1937)





Paris
1863

I was born
in Paris on
January 1, 1863.



This is heavy.
We're not going to
make it. Pity we're
in such bad shape.



1871

As a child, I witnessed
the Franco-Prussian
War in which my
country was defeated.

Olympia



When I was 12, I was sent to a Jesuit
school where one of my subjects was Greek.
Archaeological work was being carried out
in Olympia, in Greece, at the time.



1883

Rugby
School



When I was 20, I made my
first trip to England and
visited the grave of the
outstanding educator, Thomas
Arnold, who introduced sport
into school education.



I practiced a lot of
sports, including
fencing, rowing,
boxing and cycling.



We don't have the energy.
We're out of condition. We
don't have any PE classes. We
just sit in class all day.



Necessary
school
reform



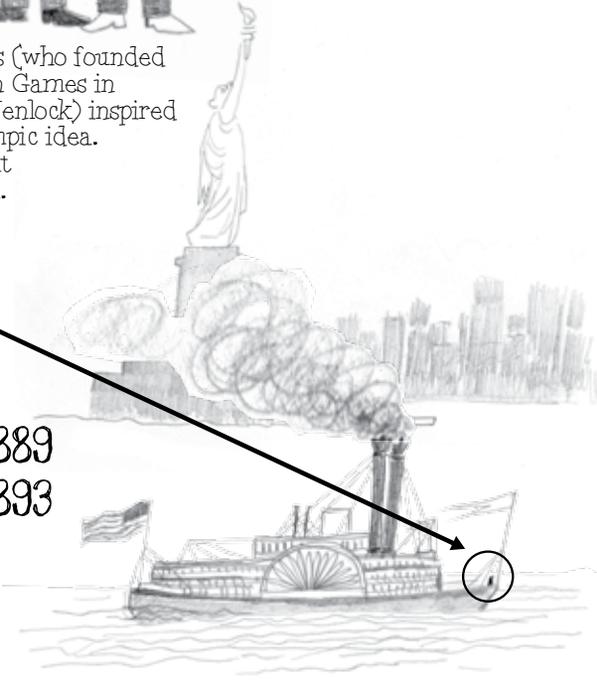
To my mind, the ancient Greek concept of "Ekecheiria" **1892** (the Olympic, or "sacred" truce) worked as follows: "Let us export rowers, runners and fencers; there is the free trade of the future, and on the day when it is introduced within the walls of old Europe the cause of peace will have received a new and mighty stay."



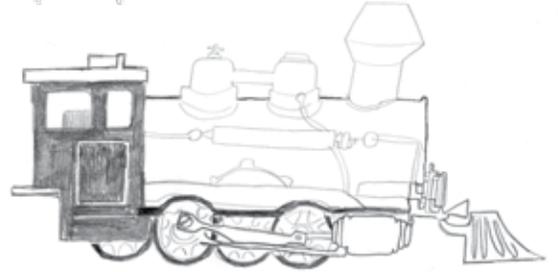
William Penny Brookes (who founded the Wenlock Olympian Games in the village of Much Wenlock) inspired me to revive the Olympic idea. I thought of doing it at the international level.

I made several trips to the USA to look at its school system and its universities.

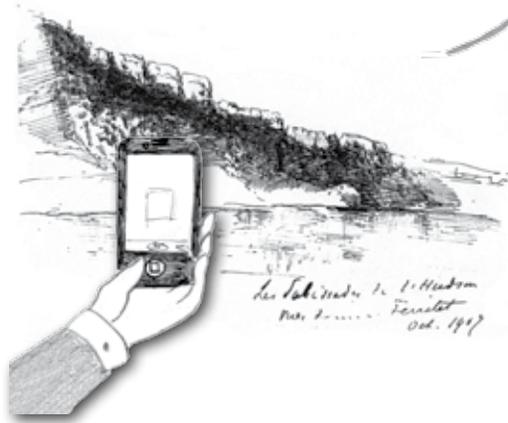
1889
1893



"It is clear that the telegraph, railways, the telephone did more for peace than all the treaties and all the diplomatic conventions. Well, I do hope that athletics will do even more."



Sport played a major role in the USA.



*See Table made by W. P. Brookes
Paris, 20.10.1893
Oct. 1893*

I always made a lot of sketches during my trips. These days, I would probably take pictures with my smartphone.

Paris 1894

I organized a Congress at the Sorbonne to revive the Olympic Games.



Athens 1896

After a lot of difficulties, I achieved my goal - the first modern Olympic Games were held!!!

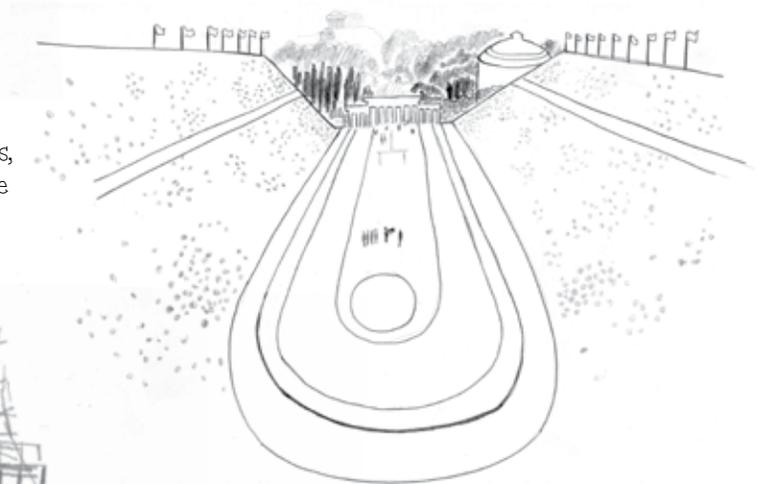


1895

This year is the beginning of world cinematography. Sport has always been a common topic in film thanks to the recording of the movement of the human body.



"A Trip to the Moon" (1902), directed by the famous illusionist Georges Méliès, was the first sci-fi film. Méliès pioneered special effects.



Paris 1900

The second Olympic Games were held in conjunction with the World's Fair and lasted longer.

These Games were not a success. But I still had faith in my country...

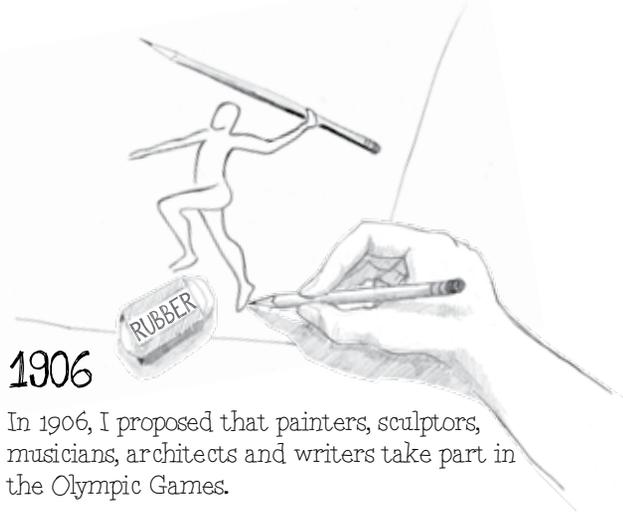
St Louis 1904

The St. Louis Games lost sight of the Olympic Idea. Instead of being an athletics competition, they were an entertainment spectacle with the World Fair in the background. This really got me down :(



1906

In 1906, I proposed that painters, sculptors, musicians, architects and writers take part in the Olympic Games.



London 1908

It was only in London that the Games became a genuine celebration of sport. Dorando Pietri appeared to be the first to have crossed the finish line after completing the marathon (42,195 m). The officials helped him cross the line.

Although this had him disqualified, Queen Alexandra presented him with a cup for his courageous effort.



I presented Ferdinand von Zeppelin (inventor of the airship) with an Olympic Diploma at an International Olympics Committee Session.

Berlin 1909

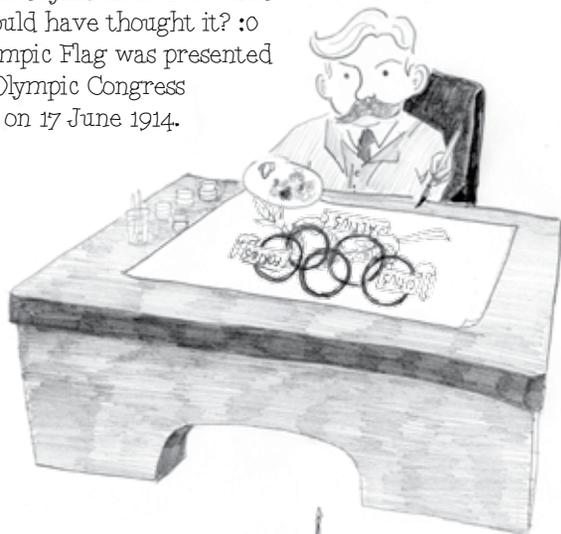
Teams from all five continents competed for the first time at the Stockholm Olympic Games. The first artistic competition was also held here. I won a gold medal for my "Ode to Sport" :)

Stockholm 1912



After giving it a lot of thought, in 1913 I created an Olympic symbol. This was destined to become one of the most recognized symbols in the world. Who would have thought it? :o The Olympic Flag was presented at the Olympic Congress in Paris on 17 June 1914.

1913 → 1914



Antwerp 1920

The Games held in the reconstructed post-war world were modest but with effective organization and special entertainment. During the Opening Ceremony the Olympic Oath was sworn for the first time.



1916



Due to World War I, the next Olympic Games were not held. This was the first such case in the history of the Olympic Movement. In ancient Greece, wars and conflicts had to stop for the Games (ekecheiria): ☹

Paris 1924

There is an interesting film "Chariots of Fire" (1981) directed by Hugh Hudson. It tells the fact based story of two runners who competed in the Olympic Games in Paris. Everybody should watch it!!!



Chamonix 1924

The first Winter Olympics were held in Chamonix in 1924. The Olympic torch has been lit from the fireplace in the home of Sondre Norheim three times (1952, 1960, 1994), in the valley of Morgedal, and in Telemark, Norway. Sondre was a great skier, craftsman and skiing pioneer.



Amsterdam 1928

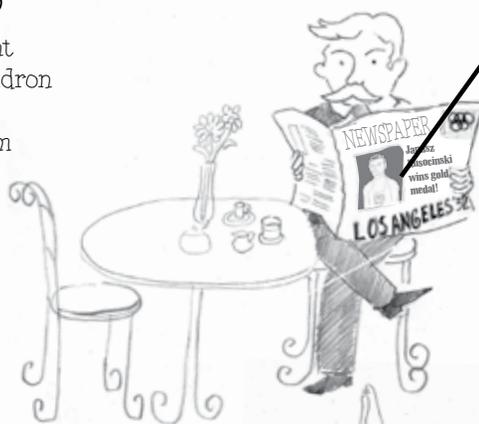
The next important moment was when the Olympic cauldron was lit. For the first time the flame was brought from Greece in Olympic torch relay in 1936.

1935

"Olympism is part of history. To celebrate the Olympic Games is to lay claim to history. History is also the best guarantee of peace. To ask people to love one another is merely a form of childishness. To ask them to respect each other is not utopian, but in order to respect each other they must first know each other."



Los Angeles 1932



I did not go the all the Games, but I always tried to keep up with what was going on. The newspapers were often my main source of information. Today, I would definitely read online about Janusz Kusociński winning gold medal in 10,000 metres run. I believe that sports journalists fulfill a very important role.

Berlin 1936

The Berlin Olympics were held in an atmosphere of propaganda. They announced the inevitability of World War II to the world :((

1937

I was tired. I stopped working for the Olympic Movement. The beautiful Polish gold medalist, Halina Konopacka, took part in the ceremony to place my heart at Olympia - my spiritual home (1938).

I had always dreamt that my life's work would continue after my death. I am extremely happy that this has happened. Although I have been dead for a long time, I keep watch over my work. I believe in the Olympic idea and I hope that you do too! :D



2014



CHRONOLOGY

1 Jan 1863 - Pierre de Coubertin is born

1880 - passes his baccalauréat in humanism after High School at St Ignace in Paris

1881 - obtains his baccalauréat in science

1885 - completes his studies at the School of Political Sciences; becomes interested in the educational system; devotes himself towards reforming the French educational system

1883-1887 - travels to England; visits the legendary Rugby School, where Thomas Arnold had once been headmaster

1885 - secretary general of the Union of French School Sport Associations (USFSA)

1890 - editor-in-chief of "Revue Athletique", the USFSA monthly magazine

1890 - travels to Much Wenlock, England, at the invitation of William Penny Brookes, as a special guest at the Wenlock Olympian Games where some sport events were demonstrated to him

1889 and 1893 - travels to the United States and Canada, and visits a number of universities there; makes a very positive appraisal of the educational role of sport in student life; presents his ideas about physical education in school life

1892 - at the Sorbonne in Paris for the first time proposes reviving the Olympic Games

1894 - organizes the congress at the Sorbonne in Paris at which the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is established and was decided that first modern Olympic Games will be held in Greece

1894 - presents his vision for the modern Olympic Games at the Parnassus Literary Society in Athens

1896 - assistance with the organization of the first modern Olympic Games in Athens

1894-1896 - Secretary General of the IOC

1896-1925 - President of the IOC

1897 - organizes Le Havre Congress on Sports Education and Hygiene

1906 - founds the Association for Educational Reform and publishes its program "Youth Education in the Twentieth Century"

1906 - initiates the Olympic Art Competitions at a conference held at the Comédie Française theater in Paris

1912 - writes the Olympic Oath

1912 - wins the gold medal in literature in the Olympic Art Competition for the "Ode to Sport"

1914 - presents the Olympic Flag at the 1914 Paris Congress of the Olympic Movement to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the IOC

1916 - moves the IOC Headquarters to Lausanne, Switzerland

1925 - resigns as IOC President

1926 - creates the Bureau International de Pédagogie Sportive (International Sports Education Bureau)

1927 - visits Olympia for the last time

1937 - dies suddenly of a heart attack

1938 - Coubertin's heart is placed in a commemorative stele in Olympia, not far from the ancient Olympic stadium



FIRST AIRSHIP CRUISE

“The course of the times in which we lived was completely altered time and again by the appearance of brilliant inventions.”

Pierre de Coubertin, 1924

Pierre de Coubertin valued those capabilities of the human mind that allowed inventors, scientists, architects and writers to lead the world into the future. However, he mostly valued people who achieved what at first blush appeared to be crazy ideas, but which later turned out to be milestones in world history. Airships sailing through the skies were one such idea, as they symbolized the invincibility of human will and action.

A lot of time had to elapse before Coubertin’s Olympism took to the skies. The world took quite a while to come round to the young Frenchman’s ideas. Coubertin was 20 when he first thought of reviving the Olympic Games and it took him 13 years to make it happen. He was not afraid to set himself and the world a great challenge. He wanted the Olympic Games to be an opportunity for athletes from all over the world to come together in a spirit of friendship, respect and peace.

Where did the idea that sport makes people better come from? Coubertin was influenced by the British educational system, especially the work of Thomas Arnold, the headmaster of Rugby School. This was based on physical education in schools, student councils, and sporting clubs and societies. Coubertin was convinced that changing the French idea of what a school should be and encouraging French people to play sport would improve their physical condition and restore their dignity after e.g. their defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), while the Olympic Games would help fire the collective imagination.

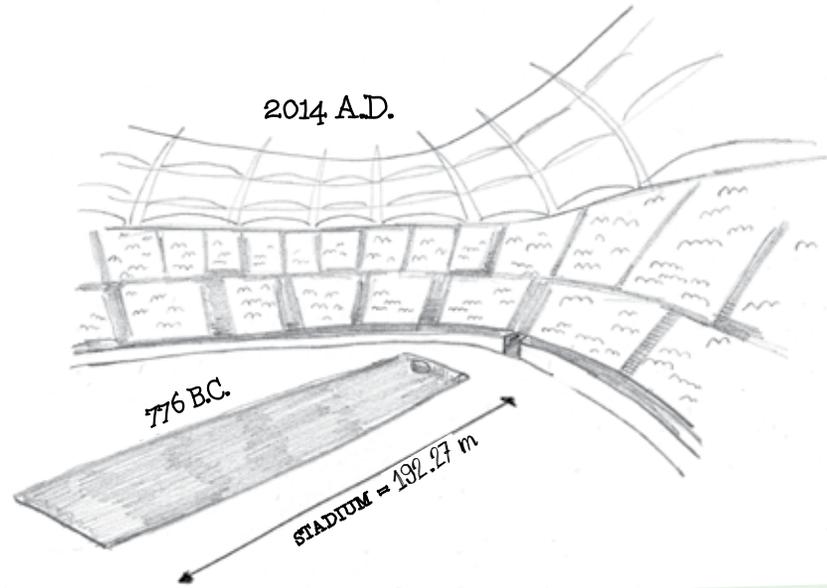
Coubertin stuck to his guns despite many obstacles and setbacks. His romantic visions of a better world and the support of his closest friends were what kept him going. He knew that bringing people around to his ideas and dreams was not going to be easy. He devoted a great deal of time and effort into helping to organize special sporting competitions that were of international significance and which observed set ceremonies. The idea of organizing the Games did not come to Coubertin out of the blue, but was the outcome of his education, interests and travels, as well as the people he met.

The story of the circumstances involved in holding the first Olympic Games in Athens in 1896 is the story of the trials and tribulations and the life of an individual who was not afraid to dream and who was determined enough to achieve those dreams, no matter what stood in the way. The separate fates of Coubertin and the roots of the modern Olympic Games are so deep and intertwined as to be inextricable. It would be hard to find anyone nowadays who has not heard of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the body that organizes the Summer and Winter Olympic Games. The Olympic flag, which features five interlocking rings in different colors on a white background, is one of the most recognizable symbols in the world. This creation can therefore be said to be a prized possession that belongs to all of us and which is part of the common heritage of humanity.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) was founded on the initiative of Pierre de Coubertin in 1894 for the purpose of nominating and leading the Olympic Games every four years.

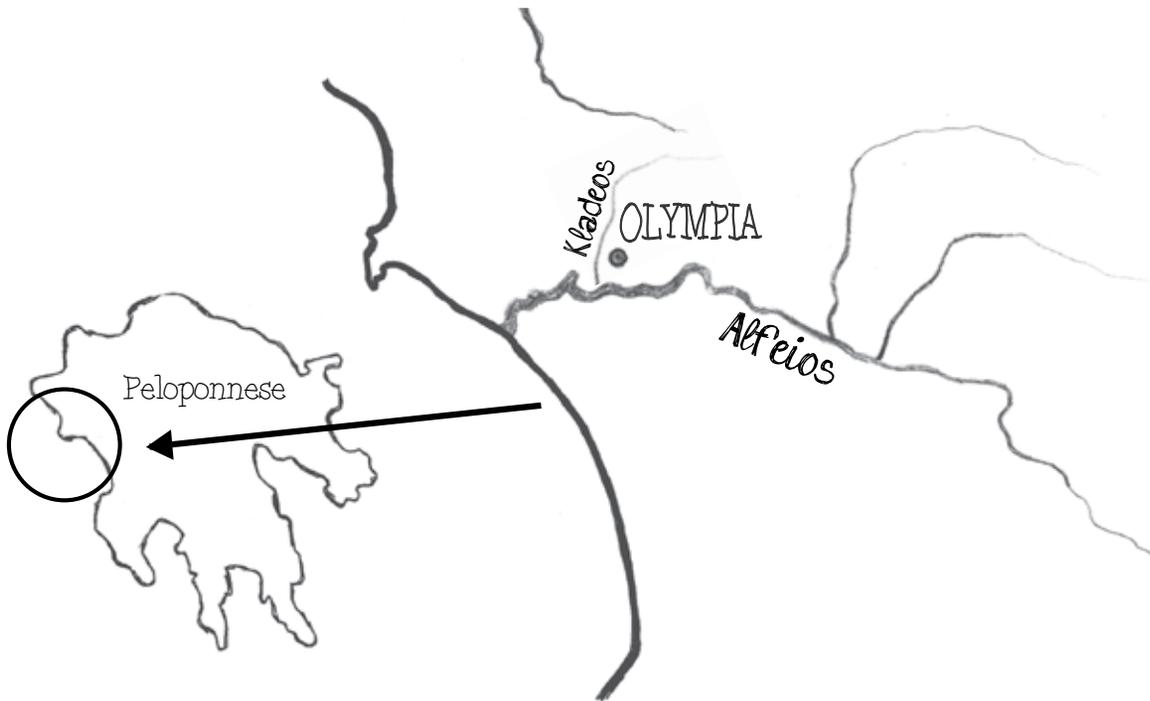


Over 200 years ago, an English antiquarian named Richard Chandler discovered the buried rubble of Olympia, the place where sporting competitions had once been held periodically for over 1,000 years. This recalled the descriptions by ancient writers of the games formerly held there. The discovery was such an inspiration that the site was excavated by German archeologists in the hope of restoring the ancient Olympic stadium.



The word “stadium” comes from ancient Greek and originally referred to a place where agony, i.e. contests, were held. The word could also mean “distance”. The stadium at Olympia was 600 Olympic feet (192.27m) long. According to Greek myth, only Hercules could run down it in a single breath. The word “arena” (Latin: harena, arena – sand) referred to a wheel-shaped place for wrestling. In ancient Rome, however, it took on an “anti-Olympic” connotation through its association with lurid battles featuring gladiators and animals.

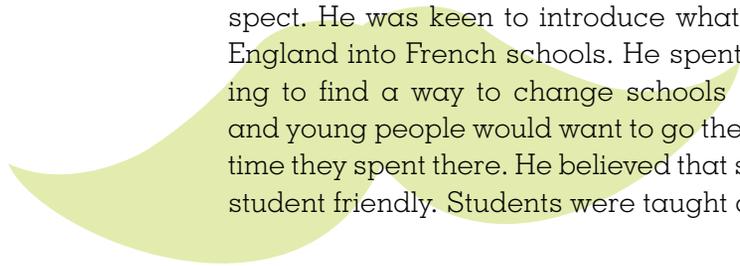
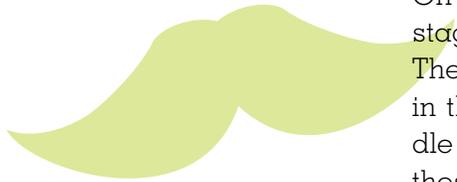
After a lot of hard work, in 1881 the first excavation programme ended and the sacred site of Olympia (Altis) was well discovered. Sporting contests, combined with religious ceremonies, were held here and offerings were made to the god Zeus. Competitors and supporters came from all Greek cities (poleis) every four years to take part in a very special experience – the Olympic Games. This was the most important of the four sporting competitions that were held in ancient Greece at the time. Apart from the Olympics, there were the Pythian Games in Delphi, the Isthmian Games in Corinth, and the Nemean Games in Nemea. Unfortunately, nature did not smile on Olympia. The sanctuary was destroyed by an tsunami, and the ruins of the stadium, temples and altars were covered with a thick layer of earth.





Coubertin mainly learnt about the ancient Olympic Games held in the sacred grove at Olympia through his classical school lessons and the work of German archaeologists (e.g. Ernst Curtius) and the lectures they gave. From the beginning of 19th Century, Europe had become enthralled with the civilization of ancient Greece. Artists and writers travelled around what used to be known as Hellas, and dedicated works to these places and the events that had occurred there.

Olympia was so popular that Coubertin saw it as an opportunity to realize his dreams, especially as he was not the first to have thought of reviving the Games. On several occasions, the Greeks themselves had staged competitions similar to those once held there. The "Wenlock Olympian Games" had also been held in the English village of Much Wenlock since the middle of the 19th century. Coubertin was able to watch these sporting contests in England on one of his visits there. He personally met with William Penny Brookes, the man who had set them up and continued to organize them. Brookes was one of Coubertin's chief inspirations. Coubertin often looked back on this trip and recalled his fascination with English sport after returning to France. The annual Much Wenlock Games had captured his imagination and confirmed him in the conviction that sport was ideally suited for educating children and youth in a spirit of mutual honor and respect. He was keen to introduce what he had seen in England into French schools. He spent a long time trying to find a way to change schools so that children and young people would want to go there and enjoy the time they spent there. He believed that schools were not student friendly. Students were taught a lot of unneces-



sary things and were bored. Coubertin claimed to have found a way to improve learning conditions in school as a result of his experiences and trips to England. What he prescribed was more PE classes and sports lessons outside class time. Having seen the effect that playing games and participating in sports and recreation had on the young, he asked himself why the whole world could not enjoy the benefits of sport.

“The Olympic Games are not parades of physical exercises, but aim to raise, or at least maintain, records.”

Pierre de Coubertin, 1912

Coubertin decided to organize a sporting festival the like of which the world had never seen. Unlike the games in ancient Olympia, the modern games were to be international. This was a highly original idea.

Every country in the world could be represented by its own team. Coubertin firmly believed that having athletes come together this way in the same place and at the same time would put their abilities to the test and be a joyful celebration during which all social divisions and racial prejudices would disappear, and an atmosphere of international friendship would prevail. Channeling aggression into sporting contests in stadiums was better than fighting wars on battlefields.

Coubertin dreamed of a world without wars. He wanted the Games to help bring about peace in the world. Coubertin said: “... in order to respect each other, they must first know each other.” Knowledge of and respect

„Sport is the best peacemaker.”

Pierre de Coubertin, 1924



for other cultures, beliefs and religions can be a source of peace between people. Coubertin and his friends were ahead of their time in this respect.



Lutz Long
(GERMANY)

Jesse Owens
(USA)

Convinced that his ideals were right, Coubertin immediately began to attempt to bring the ancient Olympic Games back to life. To this end, he gathered like-minded people, who believed in the success of the venture they had undertaken, around him. He presented his idea of reviving the ancient games at every opportunity and observed the reactions of his listeners with interest. As the road from the idea to its realization was going to be a long and winding one, he slowly

and systematically prepared people to embrace his plan. He was actively involved in publishing a number of periodicals and wrote articles about the Olympic idea and reforming school education in many of them. November 25, 1892 stands out among the most important dates and events in the revival of the Games. This was when the conference of the Union of French School Sport Associations (a sporting organization that Coubertin chaired) first announced its intention to revive the Olympic Games.

Coubertin called for support for the idea in his final address, saying: "There are people whom you call utopians when they talk to you about the disappearance of war, and you are not altogether wrong; but there are others who believe in the progressive reduction in the chances of war, and I see no utopia in this. It is clear that the telegraph, railways, the telephone, the passionate research in science, congresses and exhibitions have done more for peace than any treaty or diplomatic convention. Well, I hope that athletics will do even more."

Coubertin defended his idea, insisting that even if it was difficult to achieve, the effort would be worth it. He evoked images of crowds of tens of thousands of spectators coming to stadiums to watch a variety of sporting competitions. Once these huge crowds could unite under the same stadium roof, he did not see any reason why the phenomenon could not embrace entire nations and then whole continents.

Coubertin's persistence led to a historic congress being held at the Sorbonne, Paris, in June 1894. Delegates from many sporting organizations in twelve countries attended. Almost 1,000 people, including

Utopia (Greek: ou – not, topos – place, i.e. place that does not exist, and Greek: eu – good, topos – place, i.e. good place). This ambiguity is intentional as it refers to our longing for a better world.



Parisians, attended the opening ceremony at the main amphitheater. The chief director, Coubertin, took care of the arrangements and invited those present to listen to an ancient "Hymn to Apollo", which had been reconstructed by scholars on the basis of a text discovered at Delphi. The following day, the delegates discussed the main themes of the congress, viz. how to define amateurism in sport, regulations to ensure that this provision was observed, and the legitimacy of awarding monetary prizes. The last point on the program came up in this discussion. This was surprising as its merely being there could only mean that the Olympic Games were going to be revived. The International Olympic Committee was constituted on June 23 and given the task of arranging the Games. Demetrius Vikelas was elected as its first president. It was also decided that the Olympics would be held every four years and a tentative selection of Olympic disciplines was made. "Citius – Altius – Fortius" [Latin: Faster, Higher, Stronger] was adopted as the Olympic motto. The author was Henri Didon, a Dominican priest and Coubertin's spiritual guide. Didon regarded these three Latin words as the bedrock of sport. They express our spiritual and physical aspirations to expand our capabilities. Coubertin finished by delivering a closing speech and summing up his longstanding efforts, saying: "In the temple of science these delegates heard echo in their ears a melody also 2,000 years old, reconstituted by an eminent archeologist through the successive labours of several generations. And in the evening electricity transmitted everywhere the news that Hellenic Olympism had re-entered the world after an eclipse of several centuries. (...) if I were to go on, this joyful champagne

would go flat with boredom, so let me hasten to give it center stage. I raise my glass to the Olympic idea, which has crossed the mists of time like a ray from the all-powerful sun and is returning to shine on the gateway to the twentieth century with the gleam of joyful hope." Coubertin also said that the Games should preserve the humanistic values of sport and warned against the tendency "to transform the Olympian athlete into a circus gladiator" as well as possible distortions brought about by greed and money. He considered these threats to be the greatest enemy to sport, as they could have a negative and irreversible impact on the essence of the Olympic Games. At the same time, he stressed that the Games had their basis in Greek ideals, especially the unity of body, mind and soul, which he believed allowed for a full and vigorous life.

Coubertin's passionate speech gave his listeners the impression that they were part of a great event. The Games machinery was put in motion. It was decided that the first (1896) Games had to be held in Greece by virtue of their origin. The Greeks initially rejected the offer to hold the Games, as the country had a lot of financial problems. The government was not able to meet the costs of organizing such a large-scale project. For one thing, they had to build a huge stadium. Once again, Coubertin rose to the challenge. He singlehandedly worked out a plan, estimated the costs of organizing the event and offered to contribute financially.

On April 6, 1896, the world witnessed an event that had disappeared fifteen centuries previously. The revived Games were no longer the preserve of the Greeks, as they once had been, but were open





to all nations. Competitors from 13 countries took part. The first modern Games were a great success, even though reviving and holding them had long been put off as a Utopian dream. Tens of thousands of people came to watch at the stadium and their applause reverberated around the world through the international press.

So why do we say that Pierre de Coubertin is the chief architect of the modern Olympic Games? He had a prodigious talent for convincing other people of the merits of his own projects and did not shy away from taking on such a huge assignment. At first, he was only looking for ways to make schools work better, but as time has shown, he is most respected for this, his other work, which has been embraced by the world. We all enjoy watching the Summer and Winter Olympic Games. This alone makes Coubertin worthy of remembrance. We can watch athletes thank their opponents for competing with them, even after losing. All this happens in a stadium, over which the Olympic peace torch burns and the white flag, with its colored rings symbolizing friendship between everyone in the world, flies.





GLEAMING AIRSHIP

Olympism is a set of ideals and values. At least this is what a certain professor decided in the story “**Wandering thoughts**”. The **smiling** Halina Konopacka (1928 Olympic discus throw gold medalist) proved that training is not just about exhaustion, but **exertion and elation as well**. An Olympic gold medal does not necessarily mean that a **record** has been broken, but proves that the Olympian has managed to achieve **victory over him or herself**. People of strong **character** can achieve an **Olympic triumph**. The ceremonial atmosphere and exceptional rivalry of the Games liven up the **spirit of sport**. This is also the time when the gladiator becomes the athlete from Olympia (“**The rhythm of the times**”). Everyone is inspired by the idea of competing fairly in line with the principles of **fair play**. All this leads the competitors and spectators to jointly create a sort of **work of sport**. It does not matter whether we are talking about **combat sports** or the marathon. The **Olympic flag** flies over both. This serves to remind us that sport is not war, but a **peaceful** coming together of athletes from all over the world in a spirit of joy to celebrate **progress** and human achievement. This cycle of stories closes with **Pierre de Coubertin’s appeal to the youth of the world**. These are the principal addressees and trustees of the Olympic idea. How the world will look tomorrow is in their hands.



WANDERING THOUGHTS

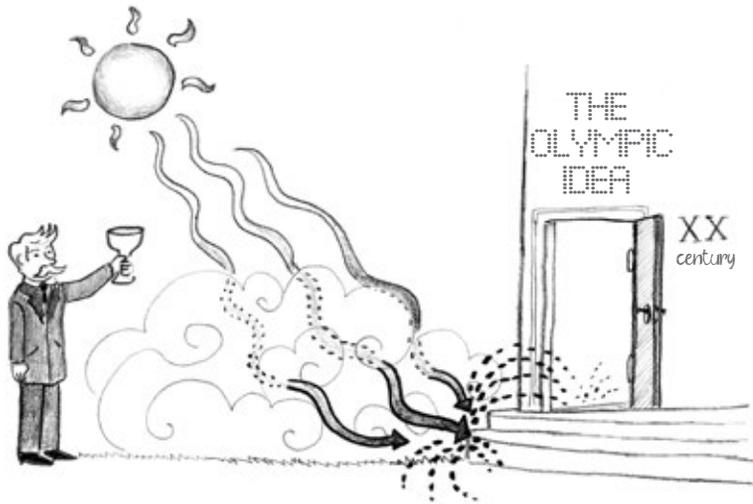
“Olympism is not a system, it is a state of mind.” (1918)

“It is the religion of energy, the cultivation of intense will developed through the practice of manly sports, based on proper hygiene and public-spiritedness, surrounded with art and thought.” (1918)

One day, a certain professor from the university was having a walk in the park. He looked up in the sky and fell into thought. After a while, he began to wonder just what Olympism was. The question continued to gnaw at him. The professor was an expert on philosophy as well as sport. He could not sleep at night or eat during the day. He wanted to understand exactly what this Olympism was that Pierre de Coubertin had created.

“Olympism is associated with the Olympic Games,” he thought. “So sport is definitely necessary for understanding it. A lot of situations in sport also occur in everyday life. Olympism is therefore a philosophy of life based on a few simple truths.”

Olympism says that everyone is equal in sport, regardless of origin, religion, culture or material circumstances, and that everyone is bound by the same principles and rules. Winning is not the only thing that matters in a sporting competition. Participating is important in its own right, as is the coming together of people from all over the world in a single stadium to compete. The scoreboard and who is fastest and strongest are not what matter most. After all, people are good and fair by nature. Competing



“I raise my glass to the Olympic idea, which has crossed the mists of time like a ray from the all-powerful sun and is returning to the shine on the gateway to the twentieth century with the gleam of joyful hope.”

Pierre de Coubertin, 1894

in sport gives them an opportunity to show that they have a sporting spirit based on the principle of fair play.

Olympism stresses that no one is alone in a sporting competition. Everyone has other people – competitors, coaches, family members, supporters etc. – behind them, wishing them all the best, sharing in their joy when they win, and grieving and sympathizing with them when they lose.

Olympism holds that fairness is fundamental to competitive sport. The undertaking given before the commencement of the Olympic Games is proof of this. Everyone is entitled to be treated equally and fairly, to have the same sporting equipment, and to enjoy the same living conditions in the Olympic Village.

The world we live in, according to the philosophy of Olympism, is founded on our basic desires for equality, justice, freedom, tolerance, mutual respect and fairness. The emotions expressed during sporting competitions



show that people are basically the same. Olympism stresses that anyone who enters a sporting competition for self-improvement and harmonious development is helping to build a better and more peaceful world.

"Whew," sighs the professor. I have finally managed to come to some definite conclusions. Is that all there is to say on the topic? Is there anything more to Olympism? Suddenly, a ball flies over his head. The professor catches it. A small boy runs up to him. "Boy, why are you so happy and smiling?" he asks. The child makes a funny face and answers "because I'm playing a ball game with my dad." The professor suddenly understands that sport and Olympism can have added significance for any one of us as well. This brings a smile to his face.



THE SMILE OF SPORT

“If someone were to ask for a recipe for ‘becoming Olympic’, I would say that the first prerequisite is to be joyful.” (1918)

A smile is common to everyone. Its meaning is easily understood. Everyone smiles in the same language. A smile is open and spontaneous, and can wander far and wide and be remembered for a long time. That is exactly what the smile of Halina Konopacka was like. It paved the way to people’s hearts and stayed there forever.

Halina Konopacka was much more than an outstanding and highly successful athlete. Above all, she was a wonderful woman, who exuded energy all her life. Konopacka was stylish, graceful and elegant. She made men’s hearts beat faster, and women looked up to her as everything a lady should be. She loved going to the cinema and the theatre, sitting in cafés and dancing. She played the guitar and the piano, and was fluent in several languages. Konopacka was famous for her red beret and sweater, which she usually wore on her trips to the Tatras. This earned her the moniker “Czerbieta” (lady in red). She went skiing, swimming and rowing, played tennis, and enjoyed team sports, especially basketball. She took an interest in cars and loved driving her cabriolet so much that she even tried her hand at motor racing. Konopacka was also a sensitive and intelligent woman who wrote poetry and painted.





Halina Konopacka

Halina Konopacka once spoke about her first sporting experiences at a function as follows: "It all began with my love of sport and sense of adventure. Curiosity made me throw things, run and test myself. This simply came from loving life, being young and having a sense of adventure – from all that sport should consist of. I picked up a discus and broke the national record after a couple of tries. That's when they told me to do some training. And that's how it all started."

The "lady in red" achieved results that she never dreamed of. She was ambitious and per-

sistent. She set very high goals and demanded a lot from herself. Konopacka was Polish champion in several athletics competitions 27 times in 7 years. Sport was her passion. Konopacka tried to smile whenever she competed. This is evidenced in an article she wrote for Stadion magazine, describing what it was like to win a gold medal at the Amsterdam Olympics on July 31, 1928: "The day is not particularly promising. It has been raining since morning. The forecast is not good – cold and windy, slippery discus, soggy circle. All I have going for me are a good frame of mind, energy and a frantic desire to win – a desire so great as to verge on certainty. I come out of the dressing room and onto the field via a long tunnel. Only now do I feel the overwhelming

power of the stadium. I can just make out the red and white banners among the swaying mass of spectators in the stands. They look like a thick cloud of wasps buzzing around the green flower of the sports field. I can only just hear them shouting 'Poland!', 'Halina!' and I can sense that they are calling for the flag and the national anthem."

The exuberance that Konopacka experienced when practicing athletics became a burning enthusiasm that gave her courage and confidence in herself. "I cannot understand athletics without enthusiasm. Calisthenics can be done calmly out of necessity, but athletics requires enthusiasm. Athletics can't be done dispassionately. A bored face at training shows that you don't know how to train. Nor will you reap the benefits of your work..."

Konopacka felt very strongly about things and always tried to get to the truth. She was also fully committed to what she did. She was reliable and trustworthy, and liked to meet people, and get together and chat with friends. Her disposition and positive attitude motivated others. People were happy just being around her. Konopacka was a favorite with sporting crowds, literary people, and connoisseurs of feminine beauty. She was declared Miss Olympic Games in Amsterdam, as well as winning the gold medal in the discus throw. The press described her as a woman of "statuesque beauty". Konopacka was the most popular person of her day in Poland: a symbol of personal triumph and national success. She was congratulated by many, including President Ignacy Mościcki and Marshal Józef Piłsudski.

Konopacka frequently stressed that "to be successful in athletics, you have to do it con amore [Italian: with love]." She believed that athletics should bring joy and help people, especially young people, find their way.



She wrote to the students of the Polish Olympians' High School in Szczecin in 1980 to tell them: "I don't deserve any medals or memorials. Nor can I take the credit for the discus going that little bit further. The credit goes to a love of life, the sun, the blue sky and the green grass of the sports field." At the end of the letter, she added a wish that she would no doubt have liked to extend to a wider group of young readers: "I wish you all the physical and moral prizes which athletics can give – the spontaneous joy of having a young, supple body and the moral satisfaction of having conquered yourself."



COOKING
WITH ALBERT



In today's episode:
WHAT MAKES A GREAT OLYMPIAN

VICTORY OVER YOURSELF

“Gentlemen, let us remember this strong statement. It applies to every endeavor, and can even be taken as the basis of a serene and healthy philosophy. What counts in life is not the victory, but the struggle; the essential thing is not to conquer, but to fight well. To spread these precepts is to help create a more valiant, stronger humanity, one that is also more scrupulous and more generous.” (1908)

“No doubt, my answer seems surprising. The term „Olympic“ incorrectly evokes an idea of tranquil balance, of forces in perfect counterbalance, a scale in perfect equilibrium. Mens sana... the old saying that pops up in speeches when prizes are awarded. But come now! This is hardly human, or at the very least, hardly youthful! It is an ideal for old fossils! In life, balance is a result, not a goal, a reward rather than something to be sought out. It is not achieved by taking every possible precaution, but by alternating one’s efforts.” (1918)

Everyone knows the Olympic creed: “... the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well”. These words were first spoken by the Rt. Rev. Ethelbert Talbot during a service at St. Paul Cathedral before the 1908 London Olympics. The Bishop said: “... though only one may wear the laurel wreath, all may share the equal joy of the contest. The most important thing is taking part, not winning.”

A week later, Coubertin repeated these words after a dispute as to who had won the 400-meter race. American runner John Carpenter had obstructed British runner Wyn-



The quotation “Mens sana in corpore sano” (Latin: a sound mind in a sound body) suggests that physical exertion strengthens the mind and the spirit. This is cited ad nauseam – and out of context – nowadays. The quote comes from Satire X by the Roman poet Juvenal (55-130 A.D.). Juvenal wrote that people should pray for a sound mind in a sound body, so that they could cope with everyday hardships.

Coubertin believed that this maxim was too obvious for an athlete. He wanted something “Olympic”. He concluded that an athlete should be enthusiastic and have a well-trained body in order to “scale the heights of pure Olympism”. This statement goes beyond what is meant by “a sound mind in a sound body”. It emphasizes that achieving a feeling of harmony between body and soul, and a state of perfect balance emboldens people to look further and make greater exertions. In 1911, Coubertin wrote: “Mens fervida in corpore lacertoso” [Latin: an impassioned mind in a vigorous body].

dham Halswelle, forcing Halswelle to slow down and lose. The umpires cried foul and one even cut the finish-line tape to prevent Carpenter running through it. Confusion reigned on the track for quite a while. The British umpires refused to let the U.S. team take part in the “green table” conference. Carpenter was disqualified. An argument ensued with both sides violating the principle of fair play. When the race was repeated two days later, Halswelle was the only starter. None of the Americans, including Carpenter, took part. This is the only walkover in Olympic history.

The most prestigious race of the competition, the mara-

thon, was held the next day. As the runners entered the stadium for the finish, the Italian Dorando Pietri was in first place. Pietri, on the point of exhaustion, ran around the stadium the wrong way. The spectators pointed him in the right direction. Pietri collapsed on the track. The umpires and (British) organizers helped him up and he crossed the finish line leaning on their shoulders. The American Johnny Hayes, who came second, lodged a protest. Hayes believed the assistance the organizers gave Pietri was directed against the Americans. The two situations were given wide coverage in the world press. Coubertin quoted the words of the Bishop during an evening banquet and finished with the universal formula: "The important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle, the essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well." By so doing, he gave the Bishop's words a vital and broader meaning.

The Olympic message was often repeated by Coubertin and has been displayed on screens in stadiums, e.g. during the opening ceremony in Los Angeles (1932), Berlin (1936) and London (1948). It may not be repeated all that often today, but it still expresses Coubertin's conviction that the Olympics are a step on the road to personal excellence – for competitors, coaches, spectators and journalists.

Something out of the ordinary occurred during the marathon at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City too, although it happened long after the last runner was thought to have crossed the finish line and while the spectators were leaving the stands. The stadium had almost emptied when Tanzanian runner John Stephen Akhwari appeared at the entrance with his right leg





bandaged, and started limping towards the finish line. The agony was written all over his face. The crowd watched in silence. At first, nobody knew what was happening, but it soon dawned on them that this was a marathon runner making for the finish line. Journalists quickly began to unpack the equipment they had just put away. People began to shout and cheer this extraordinary runner on. The cheering afterwards was so loud that anyone would have thought Akhwari had won. When a reporter asked him why he had kept running even though he was injured, Akhwari replied: "My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race; they sent me 5,000 miles to finish the race."

SPORTS RECORDS

“The English word ‘record’ seems to have no equivalent in any other language, since that is the term used throughout the world. The best evidence that this word is now a naturalized citizen of the world is that I do not need to resort to any sort of paraphrase to explain it. Everyone knows what it means. Not everyone, however, appreciates the educational value of the expression, and bringing these two ideas – education and records – together will certainly seem a daring move. A record, you see, is considered the quintessence of effort. Therefore it is viewed as extraordinarily harmful in a time when our quest for the average tends to gain the upper hand over our thirst for perfection. This is a mistake. Records can be put to excessive use, but taken by themselves, they are less prone to exaggeration than is competition. The reason is simple. Competition places you into a struggle, making you another living being’s competitor. A record faces you up against an inanimate fact, a figure, a measure of space or of time. Strictly speaking, you are fighting only with yourself.” (1903)

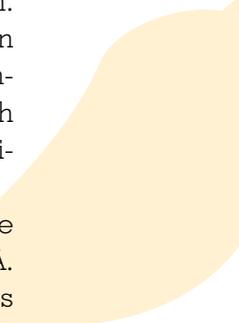
The year is 1972 and the Olympic Games are underway in Munich. The spectators in the pool viewing area are waiting for U.S. swimmer Mark Spitz to take the starting blocks. Spitz had boasted that he would achieve Olympic glory in Tokyo eight years earlier. However, he had not adequately prepared and did not realize his full potential, only coming away with two gold, a silver, and a bronze. Spitz returned home humble, contrite, and determined to do much better in Munich. He trained almost beyond endurance in the intervening four years. Spitz won seven gold medals at the Munich





Olympics and set a new world record with every win. He later recalled that the Tokyo Olympics were a lesson in humility and the Munich Olympics a lesson in winning. Spitz only managed this incredible record through good work management and a grueling training regimen.

A new world swimming sensation appeared at the 2008 Beijing Olympics – Michael Phelps from the U.S.A. Phelps had won 6 gold and 2 bronze medals four years earlier in Athens. But that was just a warm-up. Phelps was determined to break Spitz’s Olympic gold medal record in Beijing. Spitz did not hide his optimism when he saw the young American in action, describing him as the greatest Olympian of all time. “The Flying Fish”, as his teammates called him, owed his success to his talent, his love of hard work, his coach, and his physical characteristics. His shoulders are wider than his body is tall, his large hands are like oar blades, and his huge feet (48.5 cm) are like flippers. Phelps has a strong personality, a lot of mental endurance, and a determination to overcome his limitations. He hated swimming as a boy. He was terrified of putting his face in the water, and would become hysterical whenever he could not feel the ground beneath his feet. He got to love swimming by trying to overcome his weaknesses and by working tremendously hard at it. He recalls how his coach, Bob Bowman, decided to show him what training pain was all about. The more torturous the training, the great the success. Phelps always said that he was most stressed when training. He started to relax whenever a competition drew near, as he knew the hardest part was behind him and there was only pleasure (“the thrill of competition”) to look forward to.



Once Phelps had broken Spitz's record, he set about equaling the record for winning the most Olympic medals. This was held by Ukrainian gymnast Larisa Latynina, who had won 18 medals in the 1950s and 60s. Phelps achieved his goal when he won 7 medals at the 2012 London Olympics, bringing his tally up to 22. Latynina commented: "he is the greatest Olympian in the world. I hope this record stands for a long time."

People like Phelps constantly need new challenges. He lost motivation after Beijing, as he seemed to have

"The limits of his success are determined solely by his own physical and moral strength."

Pierre de Coubertin, 1912





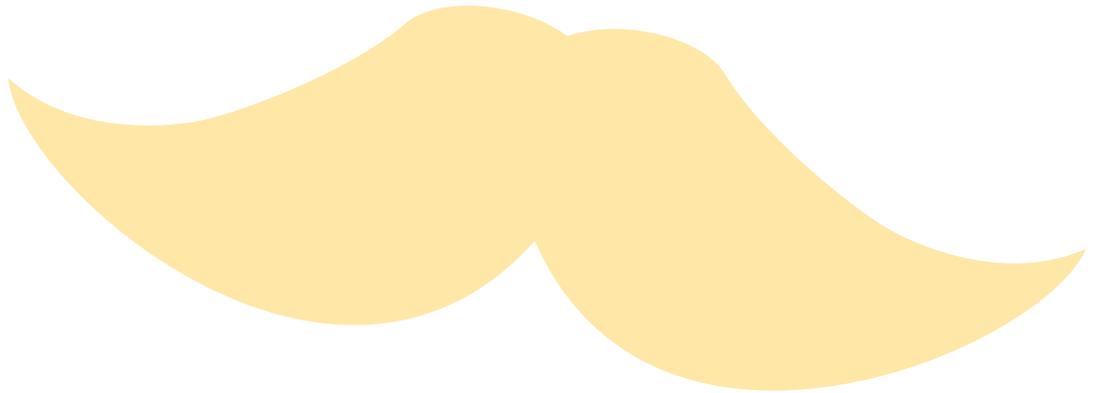
achieved it all, and started to skip training the following year. He had reached the pinnacle of success and wondered where he was going to go from there. His coach still maintained that there was nothing wrong in breaking more records. People as talented as Michael Phelps obviously have to set themselves exceptional challenges. After all, an Olympian strives for the best possible result. Pierre de Coubertin put it this way: "For every hundred who engage in physical culture, fifty must engage in sports. For every fifty who engage in sports, twenty must specialize. For every twenty who specialize, five must be capable to astonishing feats. To try to make athletics conform to a system of mandatory moderation is to chase after an illusion. Athletes need the freedom of excess. That is why their motto 'Citius – Altius – Fortius': Faster, Higher, Stronger, the motto of anyone who dares to try to beat a record!"

A record, for Coubertin, was the very essence of endeavor. An athlete mostly competes against him or herself for the best possible result. An Olympian should not be satisfied with merely beating a competitor. The contest should lead to self-perfection. At the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, Carl Lewis, from the U.S.A., equaled the record 4 gold medals that Jesse Owens had won in Berlin in 1936, and in the same four events, viz. the 100m sprint, the 200m sprint, the long jump, and the 4 x 100m relay. Lewis won the 100m sprint easily, even slowing down in the last 30m – which did not impress the crowd. His time of 9.99 seconds was not a record. He could have made three more jumps to try for the world record in the long jump two days later, as the other competitors had dropped off, but decided against it in order to save his strength for the 200m sprint. His time

of 19.80 was sufficient to win, but nowhere near what the world was hoping for. It was only in the relay that he gave his all, but the public would not forgive him for not breaking four world records as well. The moral to the story is that an Olympian should always give everything he or she has.

“Exercises are learnt quickly, but the muscles remember them for a long time.”

Pierre de Coubertin, 1910





WORK

“By chiseling his body through exercise as a sculptor does a statue, the ancient athlete ‘honored the gods’.” (1935)

“Sport must be seen as producing beauty and as an opportunity for beauty. It produces beauty because it creates the athlete, who is a living sculpture. It is an opportunity for beauty through the architecture, the spectacles and celebrations which it brings about.” (1934)

We would all like to be better than we are – more intelligent, stronger, healthier, better looking, and respected by others. Striving for perfection, however, means overcoming obstacles and limitations, and not giving up after failure. You create yourself by selecting values and setting goals in life. This is what it means to be master of your own destiny – to create the oeuvre of your own life.

The word “oeuvre” (the lifework of an artist) is normally associated with e.g. painting, sculpture, literature and music. An oeuvre has a specific meaning, conveys a particular message, and has a defining beauty all of its own. It can affect the feelings and experiences of the observer, listener or reader, and even alter the reality around him or her.

The work of an athlete, who produces a certain kind of creative output through physical exertion, is similar to that of an artist. An athlete is formed after completing certain activities and passing through clearly defined creative stages, in the same way as, say, a composer, writer or architect. The style with which an athlete



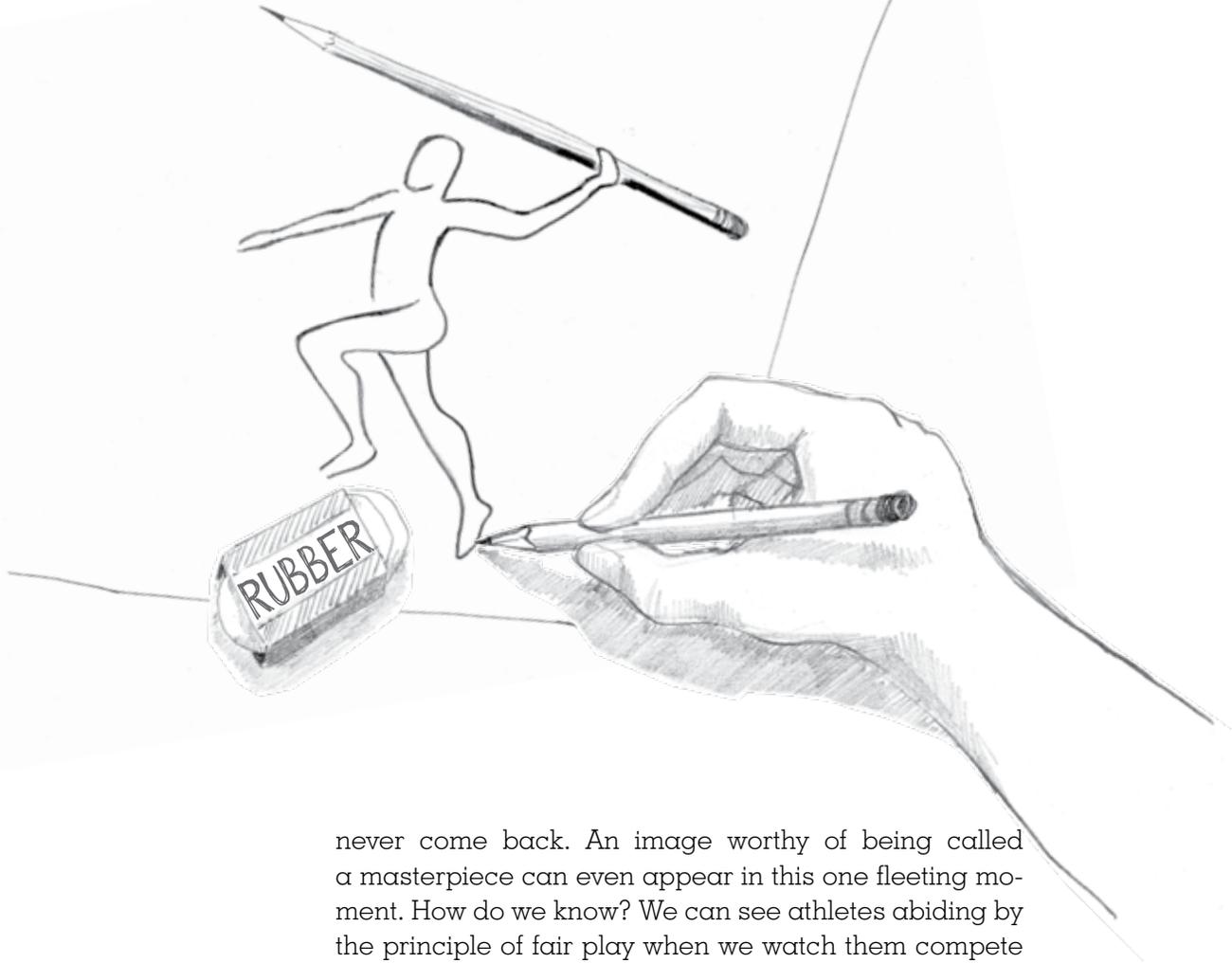
achieves victory or leaves the arena defeated matters as well. There is more to style than an athlete's technique and the beauty of his or her movements. It includes his or her behavior towards competitors, judges, coaches and spectators.

British runner Christopher Brasher bumped Norwegian competitor Ernst Larsen with his elbow just before the finish line during the 3000m steeplechase at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Brasher won gold and Larsen finished third. The judges, however, ruled interference and disqualified Brasher. Larsen had told them that Brasher did, in fact, push him, although not on purpose and that this had not interfered with his running. He lodged a written protest with the judges committee, explaining that Brasher had definitely run better, as had the Hungarian who finished second. The accidental elbowing was of no consequence in the circumstances. Brasher, and not Larsen, was awarded the gold medal as a result.

If Larsen had agreed with the decision of the judges committee to disqualify Brasher, he would have won silver and the Hungarian gold. Larsen, however, preferred a fairly won bronze medal. This was the result of hard work, training and preparation. Larsen felt that he did not deserve second place on the podium. This is why he did not want to take the credit for the creative output of someone else.

An athlete is an artist who creates things of beauty – not just tangible things, e.g. a muscular body, which has always been a favorite theme of painters and sculptors, but also beautiful moments, which are often difficult to observe and grasp. They stand out against a background of other creative works, as they cannot be copied or repeated. They touch a specific moment that will





never come back. An image worthy of being called a masterpiece can even appear in this one fleeting moment. How do we know? We can see athletes abiding by the principle of fair play when we watch them compete and see them e.g. holding out a hand to a prostrate opponent or admitting to having made a mistake. Or some other unexpected moment where they have the power to make us better people.

FAIR PLAY



“The Olympic idea is the concept of strong physical culture based in part on the spirit of chivalry – what you here so pleasantly call ‘fair play’ – and in part on the esthetic idea of the cult of what is beautiful and graceful (...) Yet it is also true that in our time, when the progress of material civilization – I would even say of mechanical civilization – has magnified everything, some problems threatening the Olympic idea are cause for concern. Yes, I do not wish to hide the fact, ‘fair play’ is in danger. It is in danger particularly because of the chance that we have unwisely allowed to grow: the madness of gaming, the madness of the bet, of gambling.” (1908)

In Coubertin’s day, gambling and betting was the greatest threat to sport. The incentive to pick winning teams, horses, and first place getters in sprints led to corruption, bribery and competition rigging. The main problem today, in addition to betting, is doping.

The principle of fair play is usually taken to mean abiding by the rules and regulations laid down, both during a competition and in everyday life. Fair play is a certain way of thinking that is opposed to any unfairness or dishonesty. It is about behaving nobly, so that everyone can compete in peace, justice and friendship. It is worth getting to know and understand fair play better, as it is regarded as the foundation of Olympism.





The term fair play has come down to us from a lot of traditions and periods. Fair play has its source in e.g. the Celtic “fir fer”, which means behaving in a dignified and fair manner in times of war.

The term, as understood today, comes from England. “Fair” was first used with “play” by William Shakespeare in King John (1598). This is how the term “fair play” began to be used informally in England, before finding its way into sporting language. The expression only appeared in Poland before the outbreak of World War I.

This principle also comes from the medieval ethos of chivalry. The Polish knight Zawisza Czarny (Zawisza the Black) may serve as an example. Zawisza was famous for his noble-mindedness and honorable behavior. He possessed character traits such as selflessness, respect, fighting for honor and not for personal gain, fairness, and ensuring the odds were even. These were not just the principles of a virtuous knight, but the rules athletes live by today.

Fair play is also based on a British code of honor known as the gentleman’s agreement. A gentleman was a brave and gallant man with faultless manners and an unblemished name who held honor to be the highest virtue.

In the modern Olympic Games, fair play is the spirit of the competing – the internal voice that tells us what is right and wrong and how we should behave. It is not easy to define, but it is not hard to appreciate someone being friendly and respectful towards a fellow competitor, competing with dignity, and displaying courage and humility.

Adam Małysz, the “Eagle from Wisła”, is a famous athlete and a Polish sporting hero. His results and his attitude have repeatedly confirmed that this is absolutely well deserved. Małysz received a Fair Play distinction from

the Polish Olympic Committee in 2001 for rebuking Polish supporters during a ski jumping competition in Harrachov. The supporters were booing Sven Hannawald and throwing snowballs at him. "The supporters not only behaved themselves for the rest of the competition, but things were better in every competition after that. It was Hannawald's attitude that made them behave the way they did. He was aggressive and arrogant when he won. He put on airs, which was extremely unfriendly. However, two wrongs don't make a right. It's better to defeat a rival in sport than to exchange words or be aggressive," Małysz said. In 2010, Małysz was awarded the Fair Play Trophy at the World Cup in Engelberg for giving his closest rival, Thomas Morgenstern from Austria, a chance. Morgenstern was supposed to jump before Małysz in the second round, but the zipper on his jumpsuit broke. Małysz could see that Morgenstern was going to be disqualified, as he was struggling with his zipper instead of concentrating on his jump. He might not





have even made it to the starting line. Małysz asked the judges to change the order, so that he could jump first and give “Morgi” time to fix his zipper. This spur-of-the-moment request took the judges by surprise. They were reluctant to agree but Małysz insisted. The supporters were no less surprised to see someone else in the air. “For me, fair play is about competitors being given the same chances as yourself, and having respect for the other person. Apart from that, I’d rather win or lose in sport, not outside it.” Although he did not win, and even came behind Morgenstern, the joy of competing and the attitude of both were more important. This made everyone happy. A lot of the spectators hotly debated Małysz’s behavior, and asked themselves how they would have behaved in a similar situation. “Sport is controlled by money and the media. There wouldn’t be any sporting events without them. But whether or not something is fair is entirely up to the competitor. Once you’ve made up your mind to stand by a principle, nobody can talk you into acting against it.” The attitudes of the competitors have a significant impact on how a sporting event is remembered years later.

THE SPIRIT OF SPORT



“Through my friends and former colleagues, I am aware that the technical organization was remarkable, which came as no surprise to me, and that the athletic spirit of the competitors was excellent, as well. The second of these things is what really matters most to me. I always admire the fact that these young men, gathered from all the countries in the world for a competition enhanced in their eyes by its infrequency, historic example, and solemn setting, manage to find enough moral strength in themselves to handle a deeply-felt defeat, without any apparent bitterness, and to shake the winner’s hand with heartfelt warmth. I have seen this happen a hundred times, and I have never grown tired of it. It fills me with delight. But one has to be in the company of athletes to have a sense of their manly beauty. If one goes over to the spectators’ benches, one notes the ever-increasing lack of that same sporting spirit. More and more, modern crowds lack the chivalrous spirit that thrived in the Middle Ages among those attending tournaments and popular jousts. Education on this point, as on so many others, must be totally revised. I would like it if we were to treat today’s spectators like great children, walking among them with enormous cards to teach them how to appreciate a splendid athletic feat, and how out of place on such occasions are those outbursts of crude nationalism that give our era a semi-barbaric stench.” (1928)

Football is more than just a sport in Africa. It is a celebration of life. Whenever a team from Africa wins a match in an international competition, all work and classes are cancelled the following day. Young people play football wherever they can – sports fields, beaches, streets, courtyards... even on balconies. Any round object can be used as a ball. Scoring





is often omitted. What counts most is the fun of playing – passing the ball to a friend, feinting, getting round an opponent and letting someone else shoot for goal. This is all pure fun.

Roger Milla from Cameroon, one of Africa's all-time great footballers, always played for fun and pleasure. Milla was voted best African player by the African Football Association in 2006. The joy he got from playing sport made everyone around him happy. Cameroon went a long way with Milla as captain. At the 1990 World Cup, Cameroon beat the odds to become the first team from Africa to make it to the quarter finals, and won the hearts of football fans everywhere along the way. Who could forget that beautiful moment when Milla celebrated scoring a goal by running to the corner of the field and dancing for joy around the corner flag? And so began the custom where a player would express his joy at scoring a goal in his own special way. This is still done and not just by African players. Milla's passion, enthusiasm and dedication will never be forgotten. He was 38 during the 1990 World Championship, but this did not stop him from scoring two goals in the match against Romania and another two against Colombia. He also set up two goals in the quarter final against England. The European players, however, were too strong. Despite everything, Cameroon could be proud of how they had played. The "Indomitable Lions", as the Cameroonian team is known, took the whole world by surprise, and the universally idolized Milla was their driving force. Milla also played in the 1994 World Championship. He became the oldest goal scorer in the history of the competition when he scored a goal against Russia.

Roger Milla played football because he loved sport. He says that he did not care how many goals he scored, how many matches he played, or even what he achieved. The main thing for him was football and the joy of playing. Milla represented the spirit of sport.

Coubertin often stressed that the true spirit of sport belongs to those who enjoy participating for its own sake and are just as pleased when their opponents win as when they do, who compete fairly and to the best of their ability, and who respect themselves and their opponents. The spirit of sport is locked away inside the person, and not in machines or technologies. That is why it is up to us to look after it and pass it on to others.



PROGRESS

“What about improvements in equipment? Are there any limits to it? In theory, no. Yet we must note that there are limits beyond which the equipment might, in a sense, replace man by making his efforts so easy. This would cross a line that might well be the very frontiers of sport. Let us consider a specific example. Ancient runners ran in the sand in order to increase the level of difficulty, and thus increase their own merit, as well. Modern runners are driven by the opposite concern. They want to make the race easier, in order to increase their speed. This has produced cinder tracks and shoes with spikes. But suppose we could imagine shoes, or even tracks, with spring that would somehow throw the runner forward with each step. In this case, it is not just the movement that is being made easier, but some of the athletic effort would then be done by the equipment the athlete is using. The speed achieved in this way will not be entirely his own.”
(1936)

Sport was revolutionized by science a long time ago. This is why so many sports and athletics disciplines keep recording better – and extremely impressive – results. Apart from grueling training regimens, sports people and their coaches look for ways to improve equipment, so that they can run and swim faster and throw further. From being fairly unsophisticated, technology has progressed to the point where people in sporting circles are now asking themselves whether victory is won by the person or the equipment.

Coubertin stated that better sporting equipment improved the quality of training in 1936. “In this regard, muscular development seems directly related to improvements in equipment, and to changes in men’s

movements and attitudes that have been the result” he said. Coubertin recommended training with rowing and cycling machines. He recommended examining athletes’ bodies using X-rays, and encouraged filming exercises, saying: “I have recommended to a major movie studio that they should develop small cameras that are easy to use and inexpensive. These cameras could provide a clear view of the athlete in motion.”

Television has also brought about huge changes to athletics training. The first Olympics transmission was in Berlin in 1936. The first use of replays, slow-motion, and close-ups was in Rome in 1960. These have since become standard coaching tools.

Photo finishes, electronic scoreboards, sneaker sensors for marathon runners, mini-sensors at boundaries, new types of skies, carbon bicycles, shoes with better grip, tartan tracks, and sports clothes made of top quality materials are the natural outcome of technical development. At the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Australian swimmer Ian Thorpe mounted the starting blocks in a tight-fitting “shark skin” bodysuit. This started a revolution that ushered in a completely new product. Speedo, together with NASA, produced a polyurethane swimsuit in 2008. Two hundred and fifteen world records were broken before these swimsuits were banned in January 2010. Swimsuits cannot now extend past the shoulders or below the knees. The reason these new swimsuits were banned was that not everyone had access to them. Some countries had to purchase swimsuits from other companies, and Speedo could not make enough for everyone. Moderation was necessary and the hard work that swimmers put in to





achieving their goals had to be respected. But it was not as if they did not have to train!



The Games Technical Committee had to rule on what kind of pole could be used in the pole vaulting competition before the 1972 Munich Olympics. The choice was between the generally available black pole and the latest blue or green “banana pole” made using the latest technology. The banana pole had recently helped American Robert Seagren set a new world record of 5.63m, much to the amazement of the crowd. The spectators, however, were not aware that the other jumpers were not given the opportunity to try out the new banana pole and master the new jumping technique. For this reason, the Technical Committee decided that everyone had to use conventional poles at the Munich Olympics. The Americans were favorites to win, as they had consistently won this event for the entire 76 years of the modern Olympics. Seagren was first to jump, followed by Jan Johnson. To everyone’s amazement, though, the winner was Wolfgang Nordwig from East Germany. The crowd went wild and gave the new champion a thunderous ovation. Meanwhile, the Americans went to the IAAF Technical Committee and violently threw their poles at the feet of the judge, Adriaan Paulen. Paulen congratulated Nordwig as he gave him the gold medal, saying: “I’m glad that in this competition, it was the person, and not the equipment, that won.”



RHYTHM OF THE TIMES

“Human imperfection tends always to transform the Olympian athlete into a circus gladiator. One must choose between two athletic methods which are not compatible. To defend oneself against the spirit of lucre and professionalism which threatens to invade them, the Amateurs, in the majority of countries, have created complicated legislation full of compromises and contradictions; what is more, too often the letter than the spirit of this legislation is respected.” (1894)

Nothing is ever done once and for all. It is not enough to clean our room once, as it will be a mess after a while, and our parents will ask us to tidy it up again. If we learn something in school and do not revise it, we quickly lose some of that knowledge, and mix up the part we remember. An athlete who has stopped training will not run as fast as before, as good results demand constant effort and hard training. There are many examples to show how easy it is to lose something we have worked really hard for once we stop caring about it.

It is the same with sport. It was not made up on the spot. It took quite a bit of time to work out the formula that we are familiar with and can watch at the stadium. The Olympic Games were one of the greatest achievements of the ancient Greeks. They were so valuable that we decided to continue them and build on them. But something terrible happened to sport in the past. People stopped caring about it, so it turned into something that was similar in name only.



Pierre de Coubertin warned us about this in the quote above. Coubertin distinguished two kinds of sport, but only one of them can be called true sport. The other is nothing but a perversion that has nothing in common with it.

Pierre de Coubertin explained what he had in mind by taking an athlete from Olympia, who competed in the ancient Olympic Games, as an example, and contrasting him with a gladiator who fought in the Roman arena. Only one of them is worthy of imitation. Which one and why?

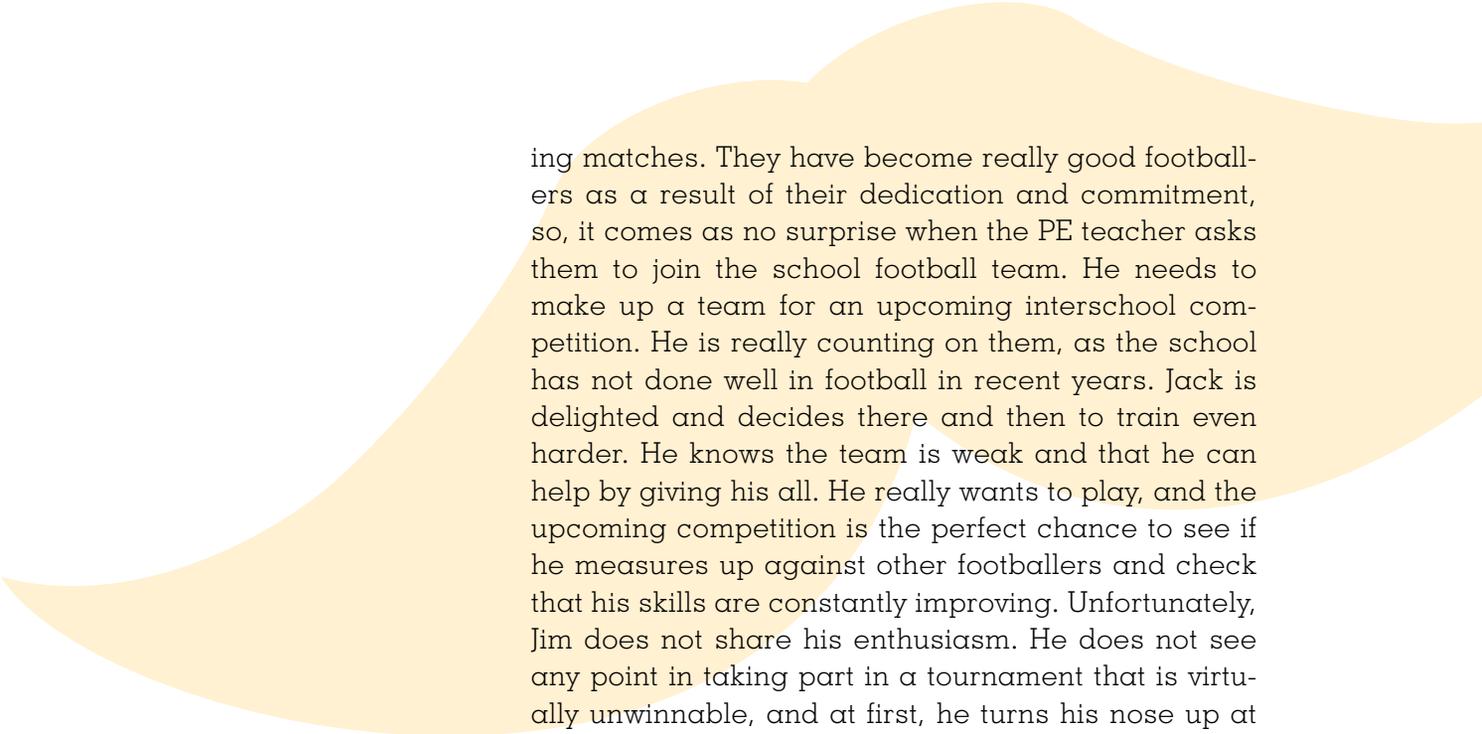
The ancient Greeks tried to prove to each other that they were better than their competitors in every area of life. Even when everyone was considered equal, there was always someone who could be shown to be a first among equals. An opportunity to do just that was organized in different parts of ancient Greece – the Games. The athletes exercised together and prepared for the competition as a group. There were prizes for winning and these were obviously an incentive, but the greatest dream of all was the olive wreath, which was made from a tree that grew in the sacred grove at Olympia. This symbolic prize was more highly valued than any material reward. The winner could proudly call himself an Olympic champion for the next four years. He brought honor to himself and the city he represented. Only one person was made to feel as if he had really won, as there were no prizes for coming second or third. The others were given nothing and had to decide whether to go to even greater lengths to do better – and perhaps win – next time. Coubertin presents us with an idealized model of the Greek athlete – one

who is primarily motivated by a desire for self-perfection. This perfection is worth striving for, even though it can never be fully realized. That is because our purpose in life goes beyond mere survival. We have to be able to set our own goals and exceed our own limitations, so that we can proudly say that we have made ourself another person. Coubertin gave the example of an athlete from Olympia, because he wanted to tell us that sport is not about defeating an opponent, but about overcoming our own weaknesses.

Coubertin calls up the image of the gladiator of the ancient Roman arena by way of contrast. Gladiators were usually slaves forced into the arena to please their masters or the shouting crowd. Coubertin held that this sort of athlete was deprived of something fundamental – freedom. Sport and athletics should be practiced voluntarily. Only then can it bring any enjoyment. Apart from that, victory for one was death for the other. This destroyed the whole purpose that normally makes it worthwhile competing with someone. The Romans forgot that sport was not supposed to be a life and death struggle, but a means to individual improvement. The gladiator only asks what the prize is. Nothing else matters.

These two contrasting recipes for competition were irreconcilable for Coubertin. The athlete from Olympia and the circus gladiator can symbolize the different ways competitors approach sport. It is not hard to find examples of both attitudes. Take Jack and Jim, who are in the same class at school and even sit together. Football is their passion. They spend all their spare time practicing their technique and shooting for goal, so that they can score as many goals as possible dur-





ing matches. They have become really good footballers as a result of their dedication and commitment, so, it comes as no surprise when the PE teacher asks them to join the school football team. He needs to make up a team for an upcoming interschool competition. He is really counting on them, as the school has not done well in football in recent years. Jack is delighted and decides there and then to train even harder. He knows the team is weak and that he can help by giving his all. He really wants to play, and the upcoming competition is the perfect chance to see if he measures up against other footballers and check that his skills are constantly improving. Unfortunately, Jim does not share his enthusiasm. He does not see any point in taking part in a tournament that is virtually unwinnable, and at first, he turns his nose up at the idea. The prizes for the winning team do not do much to persuade him either. However, he eventually agrees to join the team after the teacher tries to talk him round a few times.



The tournament ends as expected. The school team, with Jack and Jim playing, pulls out all stops but does not come first, despite their high skill levels. But no matter how bad things get, Jack gives it everything he's got and urges his teammates on as well. Jim, though, is clearly not happy. He kicks some really beautiful goals, but there is no point when everything, including the match, is lost.

Every school has stories like this. Jack can easily be credited with having an attitude similar to that of the "athlete from Olympia", while Jim's approach is closer to that of the "gladiator". So, which of the two do you think the teacher will want when the next competition comes round?



CHARACTER

“Yet in developing the human body for purposes of athletic success, mental properties play a major role, at times even a preponderant one. Remember that the modern Olympic cycle began with the triumph of a Greek peasant in the marathon. He was naturally robust, but he had not undergone any scientific preparation. Far from it. He prepared by fasting and praying before the Holy Icons in keeping with his religion. Let me add that at every Olympiad since then, I have always seen how strength of will and poise has ‘forced’ a success, in some way. Sometimes the most physically gifted athletes are eliminated by others who, though less well off in that regard, used greater energy and force of will to achieve their victories.”
(1936)

Irena Kirszenstein-Szewińska, Poland’s most outstanding athlete and a world-famous track and field star, was 14 when her PE teacher, after watching her run, noticed that she had “exceptional” talent. This gift, supported by constant hard work, was to see Szewińska win seven Olympic gold medals. Szewińska is also known all over the world for her commitment to, and activities on behalf of, the Polish Olympic Committee and the International Olympic Committee.

Irena Szewińska competed in five Olympics. She began her Olympic career at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, aged 18, where she won one gold and two silver medals. Over the next 16 years, up until the 1980 Moscow Olympics, she broke 13 world records and 38 Polish records, and won 10 European Championship medals. She competed in the 100m and 200m sprints, the 4 x 100m relay, and the long jump. When she ran the 400m at the 1976

Montreal Olympics, she became the first woman ever to do so in less than 50 seconds.

Irena Szewińska began studying at the Faculty of Political Economy at the University of Warsaw, after the Tokyo Olympics. She successfully combined learning and sport, and was awarded a Master of Economics degree. Not even motherhood could stop her from achieving her goals and maintaining her championship form afterwards. Szewińska had character in addition to her exceptional physical attributes – a slim figure and long legs. Frequent victories are no mean feat either, when you feel the pressure of the crowd. You have to know how to win and how to lose. And Szewińska did. She dropped the baton during the relay semi-final at the 1968 Mexico Olympics. This became a national issue. Szewińska bore the brunt of public blame and continued to train as she always had - rain hail or shine. Szewińska had the character of a champion. That was what helped keep her running throughout her sporting career.

“Sport has a unique capacity to embolden that comes from an abstract place. Dreams that exist only in the athlete’s brain and that add all the meaning of life to something as plain as skiing in circles. They can even alchemize a puck-sized hunk of bronze into “gold with diamonds”. So said Petra Majdič on winning the bronze medal in the individual sprint at the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010. A lot of people have won medals, but Majdič did so with five broken ribs and a punctured lung.

Majdič had come to Vancouver intending to win three medals, including at least one gold. She had previously competed in Salt Lake City in 2002 and Turin in 2006, but without success. A World Championship medalist and

“The muscles are made to do the work of moral educationer.”

Pierre de Coubertin, 1896



three-time winner of the Small Crystal Globe, Majdič was hungry for the Olympic medal that had eluded her for so long. However, she soon saw her dream slip away on a bend during the warm-ups. She fell over coming out of a bend during the downhill run and tumbled down a three-meter icy embankment straight into a rock. When a volunteer ran up to help her, she kept repeating “take me to the starting line” in a voice full of pain. The preliminary medical examination indicated bruised ribs, but the pain got worse. Majdič was only in 19th place after the first heat. Her progress in the course was inversely proportional to her ease of movement and breathing. Her bronze medal win in the final sprint was heroic. “I come from a small country where nobody has ever won a medal before. I knew that I was in top form and that there might never be another chance like this.” She crossed the finish line exhausted and in pain, but elated. “Pain is nothing to an athlete,” she said. A genuine Olympian is equal to the contest.

COMBAT SPORTS

“I was describing the other day how Theodore Roosevelt had used boxing as the first stage in the deliberate build-up of his manhood. Now boxing is not in favor with Lausanne opinion. Parents do not like their children to take part in it; in this they are very wrong. Boxing, in their eyes, is only the art of biffing – an art which comes quite naturally in case of need to the ends of a strong and well-muscled man’s arms. This is completely mistaken. Boxing is not at all instinctive. Try, if you have never had a lesson, to deliver a straight punch or kick. You will discover not only your clumsiness but the complete ineffectiveness of your effort, which will glance off or become deadened of its own accord. The gesture which nature teaches a man threatened by an attack is to grab any handy weapon – or else to seize the opponent and try to throw him down, which is a way of risking everything. The boxer’s attitude is much more calculated. He begins by covering up by means of a skillful stance, behind which he prepares to fight, sees blows come, decides to slip or parry them, chooses the place for his attack or counter, and hurls his full strength forward at the crucial moment; a complete tactics and strategy in miniature which call for a large number of psycho-physiological qualities. The boxer needs sangfroid and calm, quickness of eye and decision, remarkable speed and above all a continuous fount of courage playing steadily throughout the combat with no weakening of any kind. Add to this other merits. Boxing is a sport for men in a hurry, giving the maximum of exercise in the minimum of time. It requires little equipment. What is needed? A pair of padded gloves, bathing trunks, and soft-soled heel-less shoes – that is all. Nothing is healthier, incidentally, than such a costume, or more correctly such a lack of costume. Lastly boxing brings into play the various groups of muscles almost as harmoniously as rowing, and like

rowing has the advantage of ruling out one source of nervous fatigue – holding back. The boxer exerts the whole of his strength each moment without hesitation or reserve. It is perhaps the physical satisfaction due to this massive expenditure of energy which results in such a combative sport having such a pacifying influence.” (1919)

Boxing is a sport where two protagonists fight each other using only their fists. It is like fencing with fists, a dialog governed by certain rules. Although boxing is associated with brutality and aggression, nothing could be further from the truth, according to Pierre de Coubertin. This combative sport actually has a moderating effect. It requires specific strategies and tactics. To be successful in this discipline, you have to control your emotions, make lightning fast decisions, and not lose faith in yourself even for a moment. Jerzy Kulej (light welterweight gold medalist, Tokyo 1964 and Mexico 1968) once said that “boxing is a combination of strength and gentleness”, i.e. body and soul in harmony.

The history of boxing is full of heroes in the ring and in life. Felix Stamm was a legendary coach, the father of Polish boxing.

Feliks Stamm worked as an instructor at the Grudziądz Center of Cavalry Training. Fist fights similar to boxing matches were held in the military canteen. The prizes were nothing great – a glass of milk, a block of chocolate, and magnesium for strength. All Feliks needed to escape reality was a pair of boxing gloves and the prospect of a small prize.

The young Stamm learned how to box properly in Poznań. Competing in the ring, however, convinced him that boxing was not his calling. He preferred to

observe others. Stamm noticed that people varied considerably in temperament and ability. He understood then what he wanted to do. He had to escape the rigid confines of training, teach boxers, and coach them to victory. It did not take long for the 24-year-old Stamm's coaching talent to attract attention. He was made boxing coach at the Warta Poznań Club, which had the best boxers in the country, but it was almost 10 years before he was coaching the Polish national team. Stamm's moment arrived when the Polish team, coached by a foreign trainer, came home empty-handed from the 1936 Berlin Olympics. As it happened, he was the best possible choice. Stamm repeatedly demonstrated brilliant coaching skills. Those he coached achieved results that no other sporting discipline in Poland could boast at the time. At the 1948 London Olympics, Antkiewicz became the Polish boxer ever to win a bronze medal. This was to be the first of many successes. People began saying: "Haven't we had too many of these victories Mr Stamm?"

"Papa Stamm" was like a father to Polish boxers – he supported them and demanded things from them. He was a modest man, who never big-noted himself, never boasted about his achievements, and never put himself first. Stamm rarely gave interviews, although Tadeusz Olszański managed to talk to him in 1964. His statements revealed a lot of the wisdom he brought into and out of the ring, e.g. "Success is determined by teaching ability. Being able to get to know people and communicate what you know to them. The coach needs to demand full commitment from the boxer, but at the same time, he should set an example and demand the same from himself. You can't teach





using words and statements, but only by practice and personal example. The coach earns the respect and confidence of the boxer not just by managing him at the gym, but outside the gym as well, and not just by giving him advice in the ring. This is the only system of relationships that gives him the right – on the basis of an agreement between men – to demand that the boxer persevere and behave properly. It is only on this basis that the next important component of training a boxer can be built – knowing what he is striving towards” and “The secret is that while any coach can teach the basics of a given sport and get a sportsman to a certain level, an unskilled or inexperienced coach is not capable of bringing about any further improvement in the skills of a sportsman who has a really great career ahead of him. That’s just how it is. He can’t draw out the natural advantages of the person

“Boxing gloves are the surest keepers of the peace.”

Pierre de Coubertin, 1919



he's training or develop his physical capacities, because he doesn't have the 'nose'. It takes a 'nose' to sniff out a sportsman's temperament and character strengths, and to adjust his training to those individual traits. In a word: to give his strengths free rein while reining in his weaknesses."

These statements might seem simple, but they are difficult to put into practice. Many coaches try to follow them, but few succeed. Stamm could spot talent in sportsmen that everyone else had written off. Apart from that, his coaching methods and exacting requirements, combined with straightforward conversation and good contact, built strong relationships with the boxers he trained. This is just how it was with e.g. "that little guy, working away in the corner, who is going to be a champion one day" – Jerzy Kulej. Kulej remembered one of the conversations he had with Stamm while preparing for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Stamm said: "You'll be the Olympic champion if you listen to what I tell you and do what we arrange now in the ring." The strategy of waiting to attack in the final match was hell for Kulej, but everything Stamm said came to pass. Whenever his opponent, the Russian boxer Frolov, lowered himself, Kulej would deliver a volley of punches to the head. When Frolov attacked, Kulej would let him come in close enough to deliver a volley to the torso. The first round went to Kulej. In the second round, Stamm told Kulej to give Frolov a chance to develop a new idea, and then attack decisively and not leave him any room to counterpunch, as soon as he had done so. In the third round, Stamm finally let Kulej be himself. And Kulej won the Olympic gold medal. Kulej suffered when he had to hold back.



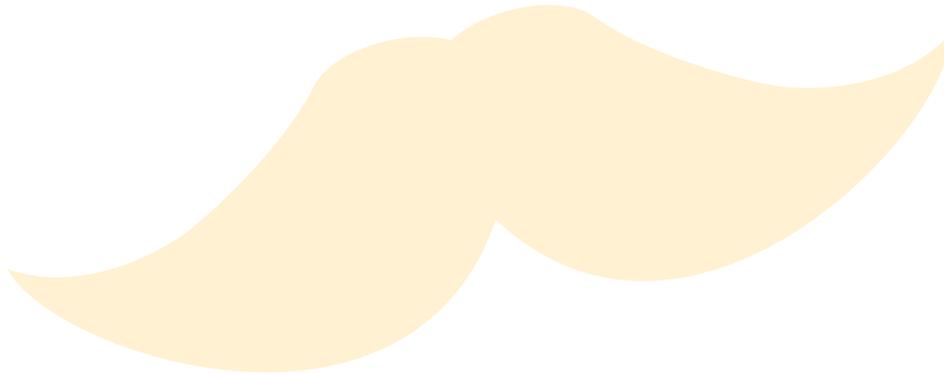
“Friendship... is not something you learn in school, but if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything.”

Muhammad Ali



When he was finally allowed to play to his strengths, he won. But that final match required that everything went according to plan. Both Kulej and Frolov were relieved when it was over.

Boxers coached by Stamm won 6 gold, 7 silver and 11 bronze Olympic medals between them, but this was only a small part of his success. There are countless more whose names do not appear in any record books. The stories of all those he trained could not possibly fit into a single book. And who can say? With all the advice he gave on how to live in dignity, and the personal example he set, "Papa Stamm" might have had even more influence outside the ring.



STOP THE WAR! HERE COMES THE DOVE

“And it is precisely mutual respect that democratic societies need, to the extent that without it they tend to fall into anarchy. The French revolutionaries felt this when in order to complete their motto they placed beside the words ‘liberty, equality’ the word ‘fraternity’ (...). It is going too far to demand fraternity from men. Fraternity is for angels. Mutual respect is something that can be asked of humanity without being overly ambitious. It may seem strange that having ventured to advance towards the utopian maximum, we could not settle for a reasonable minimum. But disregarding the tendency that is more often disposing us towards utopia than to reason, the doctrine of mutual respect is in conflict with its own prerequisite of mutual understanding. Tolerance, which is after all only a form of indifference, can prevail among people who do not know each other. Respect can only be found among people who know each other.” (1915)

We are all affected by conflicts of varying kind and extent, whether we like it or not. Conflicts can be personal, local or international, and have different consequences. They do not usually result in anything good for us. In fact, it very rarely happens that anything positive comes of them. In any case, they are best avoided. Pierre de Coubertin, having witnessed any number of armed conflicts in Europe, including World War I, announced that he had found the perfect way to resolve the world’s problems peacefully. He believed that mutual respect and understanding could be built if people of various nationalities, cultures, faiths and traditions came together on the sports field. He wanted the games to inspire disunited people to engage

in dialogue, and to be an international experience where competitors and spectators could freely express their views and opinions. Transferring the atmosphere of competitive sport to other areas of life would mean that everyone could present and defend their arguments, all in a spirit of mutual care and understanding according to the principle of fair play.

The importance of the Olympic truce is highlighted by numerous symbols. The five interlocking rings on the Olympic flag is one. These represent a chain of understanding, respect and friendship between the five continents of the world. Doves are released during the opening ceremony as a symbol of peace. Since 1936, a flame has been lit at Olympia, the site of the Olympics in ancient times, and carried by torch relay via various routes to the city hosting the Games. The Olympic flame symbolizes the connection of ancient Olympia with the site of the modern Olympic Games. The Olympic Village is a common home for all the athletes and their coaches during the Games. Unity in sport is beautifully illustrated when all the athletes enter the stadium and assemble under the Olympic flag during the closing ceremony.

These examples all go to show that peace is one of the major strengths of Olympism, and not just an empty gesture or an unrealizable dream. Nothing better illustrates the peaceful role of sport than real events, and there is no better example than the story of Jesse Owens and Lutz Long.

It all happened at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The talented U.S. athlete Jesse Owens had won gold in the 100m and 200m sprints. The stadium was filled to capacity as Owens was warming up for the long jump. His only

The Olympic Truce for Summer and Winter Olympic Games has been proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly first time for the 1994 Lillehammer Olympic Winter Games.

Since 2014, the 6th of April in the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.





serious rival was Ludwig "Lutz" Long from Germany. Owens was not having much luck, having fouled on his first two tries. Seeing that Owens was having difficulties, Long helpfully suggested that he change the length of his run-up so as to start just behind the take-off board and make a qualifying jump. Owens later went on to set a new world record and win. Long was the first to congratulate him. Owens said that even if all the medals and cups he had won were melted down,



they would not be a plating on the friendship he felt for Long at that moment. Owens and Long often wrote to each other after the Berlin Games. In his last letter in 1943, Long wrote: "One day, I'm going to tell my son, what relations between people living on Earth can be like." These words led to friendship, which meant much more than winning a medal.

Jesse Owens and Lutz Long forged a bond that lasted years; a bond that withstood war, ideology and racial division. They experienced their own Olympic peace, and demonstrated that, despite a difficult political situation and World War II, sport can be a force that can, in Coubertin's words, "break down any barriers."



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MOVIE "STOP THE WAR! HERE COMES THE DOVE"



THE OLYMPIC FLAG

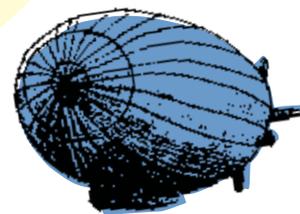
“The emblem selected to illustrate and represent the 1914 Olympic Congress which was to place the final seal on the restoration of the Olympics began to appear on various preliminary documents: five rings linked at regular intervals, their various colors – blue, yellow, black, green and red – standing out against the white of the paper. These five rings represent the five parts of the world now won over to Olympism, ready to accept its fruitful rivalries. In addition, the six colors combined in this way reproduce the colors of every country without exception. The blue and yellow of Sweden, the blue and white of Greece, the tricolor flags of France, England, the United States, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Hungary, and the yellow and red of Spain are included, as are the innovative flags of Brazil and Australia, and those of ancient Japan and modern China. This, truly, is an international emblem. It was made to be turned into a flag, and the look of the flag would be perfect. It is a light, appealing flag, a delight to see fluttering in the wind. Its meaning is largely symbolic. Its success is assured, to the point that after the Congress it can continue to be raised on solemn Olympic occasions. However this may turn out, the celebrations of 1914 now have the eurhythmic messengers they needed to announce them. The great poster, the first copies of which have been given to the national Olympic Committees and which continues to be available to them, met with immediate general admiration. The reduction to postcard format is equally successful for that medium. The five rings and their various applications will also be deeply appreciated. Are these five rings solidly riveted together? Will war someday shatter the Olympic framework? This is an issue we have been asked about before, and since the occasion presents itself, we are pleased to respond. Olympism did not reappear within the context of modern civilization in order to play a local or temporary role. The mission



entrusted to it is universal and timeless. It is ambitious. It requires all space and all time. One must acknowledge that its initial steps immediately marked it out for that future. That being the case, war can merely delay, not stop, its advancement. As the preamble of the Regulations for the next Congress state, 'an Olympiad may fail to be celebrated, but neither the order nor the interval may be changed'. If, God forbid, the Seventh or Eighth Olympiads were unable to be celebrated, the Ninth Olympiad would be held. If bloody memories, still too fresh, made it impossible to hold the necessary celebrations in one part of the world, there will be people on the other side of the world ready to honor the eternal youth of humanity. In addition, a more sporting conception of war – the word is not inappropriate – is becoming predominant. This will not make the heated exchange any less harsh, but it will make the aftermath somewhat more easily tolerated. People will learn a great lesson from the athlete: hatred without battle is not worthy of man, and insult without blows is utterly unbecoming. Perhaps we have strayed from our topic. Let us return to it, repeating that war cannot influence the future of the Olympics. Once peace is restored, the International Committee will be at its post ready to continue its worldwide work. That is why the new emblem eloquently evokes both conquered terrain and guaranteed endurance.” (1913)



ADDRESS TO YOUTH



"Today, amidst the glorious ruins of Olympia, has been inaugurated the monument commemorating the reestablishment of the Olympic Games thirty-three years ago. Thanks to the generosity of the Hellenic Government, the initiative it was good enough to honor has now materialised into an event of historic importance. It is for you now to keep the flag flying. My friends and I have not laboured to restore the Olympic Games to you in order to make them a fitting object for a museum or a cinema; nor is it our wish that mercantile or electoral interests should seize upon them. Our object in reviving an institution twenty-five centuries old, was that you should become new adepts of the religion of sports, as our great ancestors conceived it. In this modern world, so full of powerful possibilities, and yet threatened by so many risks of degeneration, Olympism may be a school of moral nobility and purity as well as of physical endurance and energy; but only on condition that you continually raise your conceptions of honour and sporting disinterestedness to the height of your muscular strength. The future depends on you."

Olympia (1927)



A PERFECT MATCH

The association between sport and art goes back a long way. Ancient pottery, sculpture and literature tell us a great deal about the Olympic Games. Art conveys the essence, describes the events, and glorifies the winners. Sculpture brought Olympians closer to the ideal, music added harmony of movement, and poetry saved them from oblivion.

“Discobolus” by Myron typifies classical beauty. The sculpture is a study of the human body and strength, and is a fine example of Greek harmony.

When Pierre de Coubertin revived the Olympic Games, he wanted to combine the spiritual, intellectual and physical achievements of humankind in a single place and time, just as they had been in antiquity. In 1906, Coubertin convened a two-day conference at the legendary Comédie Française in Paris entitled “Advisory Conference on the Arts, Literature, and Sports”, where he proposed holding an arts competition as part of the official Olympic program.

Dozens of delegates turned up hear Coubertin, who opened the proceedings by saying “We have gathered in this unique place to hold a unique ceremony. Our purpose is this: to reunite the Muscles and the

Mind." Coubertin proposed incorporating arts competitions into the Games. While this idea captured the interest of people from many different backgrounds, they initially approached it cautiously. A "Pentathlon of the Muses" of architecture, sculpture, music, painting and literature was selected. The works had to be inspired by sport, portray the beauty of the "spirit of sport", and be displayed in the Olympic stadium. Coubertin stressed that the artists should have some sporting experience themselves, so that their works would be authentic. The delegates weighed up the assessment criteria, including esthetics and familiarity with the different artistic disciplines being displayed, but they mostly deliberated on organizing the first Olympic art competition for 1908. The Games were to be held in Rome, but Vesuvius erupted and the ensuing destruction forced the Italians to withdraw. London was chosen as a replacement, but only had two years to get ready. The artistic world did not have enough time to prepare either. The 1908 Olympic report, however, mentions a competition, although this was held in Stockholm in 1912.

Several athletes have entered the artistic competition throughout Olympic history. Hungarian architects Alfréd Hajós and Dezső Lauber were awarded a silver medal at the 1924 London Olympics for their stadium design. Hajós was a swimmer, who had won two gold medals at the 1896 Athens Games and Lauber was a tennis player, who had competed in London in 1908. Walter W. Winans was a U.S. shooter, who won gold in 1908 and silver in 1912, and was awarded another gold medal for his sculpture in 1912.

Coubertin believed that having art recognized as an Olympic discipline would add a touch of glamour to the Games, and strove to have art included in the Olympic program from day one. As he put it, this was the “second stage” of reviving the Olympic idea. In Paris in 1900 and again in St. Louis in 1904 the Games were incorporated into World Expositions, which showcased scientific, technical, and artistic accomplishments. Coubertin initially hoped that having sport placed in a scientific and artistic environment would bring about an increase in the number of Olympic spectators especially from the intellectual world. These exhibitions were enormous and lasted several months. Sports enthusiasts, however, were given very little information about the Olympics. Some of the athletes did not even know when or where they were due to compete. Coubertin decided that the Olympics would be held independently and have a comprehensive program in future, and, without further delay, convened the Paris conference.

The firmness and consistency of the action Coubertin took to strengthen the alliance between sport and art, despite the difficulties, led to positive results, although the early 20th century was not overly favorable to Olympic art competitions. The decadents, the modernists, and the European avant-garde were busy frequenting cafés and creating scandals, and did not consider competitions to be important. What mattered to them were their own manifestos and creative expression. The sheer scale of the Olympic Games – people united by a single ideal coming together from all over the world – was at odds with the creative independence and individualism of many artists. The slogan “art for art’s sake” became “sport for sport’s sake”. Things began to change when

Coubertin, moving with the spirit of the times, turned to the power of advertising. Posters advertising the Olympics were first printed in 1912 to announce that the V Olympiad would be held in Stockholm from June 29 to July 22. Athletes, whose profiles brought Olympia to mind, proclaimed the event against a background parade of national flags. The poster was printed in a number of languages a year before the Games and distributed around the world. It was hung in shops and cafés as well as in the streets, and encouraged people to get involved. The artist was Swedish and the style was art nouveau.

Life flourished in Europe and in Western countries generally during the 20 years between the two world wars. Artists began to show a keen interest in social topics, including sport, which was already very popular all over the world, including Poland. The glamour that began to surround Olympic medalists after the Stockholm Games (in both the artistic and the sporting competitions) was another thing that made artistic circles more open to the Olympic competition. Nearly a thousand works of art in five disciplines were entered into the artistic competition in Amsterdam in 1928. They were diverse, which made them interesting, but most importantly, they were inspired by sport – just as Coubertin had wanted.

Poland shone in 1928 when Kazimierz Wierzyński, editor of *Przegląd Sportowy* [Sports Review] was awarded the gold medal in literature. Wierzyński had been a sprinter and a footballer before becoming a writer and a sports editor. His volume of verse, *Laur olimpijski* [Olympic Laurel], was inspired by the 1924 Paris Olympics, the Olympic idea, and his own sporting experiences. Wierzyński's poetry changed the way people viewed and thought about sport, and had a significant influence on the language



“O Sport,
you are Beauty!”
Pierre de Coubertin, 1912

“There is no sport
without beauty.”

Halina Konopacka

used by commentators and sports journalists. Also in 1928, Halina Konopacka, a promising poet and all-round athlete, won Poland's first ever individual gold medal. Her volume *Któregoś dnia* [Some Day] was highly regarded by critics and literary figures. Wierzyński and Konopacka showed that sport and art are a perfect match. They inspire each other, and lead people to that which is beautiful and make them good. People have a need to express beauty in words and deeds. Sport and art fulfill that need.

By the 1930s, Pierre de Coubertin was an old man, who observed the progress of his work with a great deal of satisfaction. Although he had stepped down as president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1925, he continued to be involved until his death in 1937. Olympic art competitions, however, were held for the last time in 1948. The decision taken by later IOC presidents to abandon Olympic art competitions was based on the philosophy of the day, which held that artists were professionals and that this conflicted with the amateur status of athletes. Another obvious reason was that judges found it difficult to select winners from the works submitted. Results are measurable in the stadium, e.g. the winner is the first to cross the finish line. Appraising art is more difficult, and is subject to personal considerations and the spirit of the times.

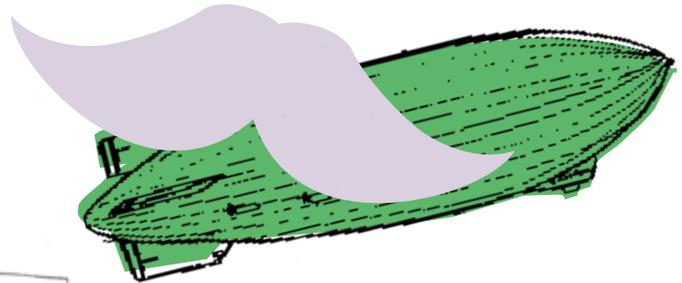
Coubertin said that “Olympism is an esthetic concept”. Olympism can therefore concern itself with the nature of art and beauty. He used to say that beauty, as an esthetic category, is created by humanity, and that its meaning lies in the way it adorns reality and improves life. To put it simply: beauty makes life better. From there, it is a short step to find the bonds between art and sport for which beauty is either a motivation or a common goal. The body

of an athlete is a source of esthetic experiences and artistic inspirations. As it was in the ancient gymnasium, so it is in the modern Olympic stadium. Gatherings of people are accompanied by contemplation and by studying the human body and human exertion, which in a certain specified way, generally make the world beautiful.

Sport is a form of presenting the perfection of the human being through his or her greatest attributes and accomplishments. This is reflected in art. This is how it was in ancient Olympia and how it has been since Pierre de Coubertin revived the Olympic Games.

“By chiseling his body through exercise as a sculptor does a statue, the ancient athlete honored the gods.”

Pierre de Coubertin, 1935



ODE TO SPORT

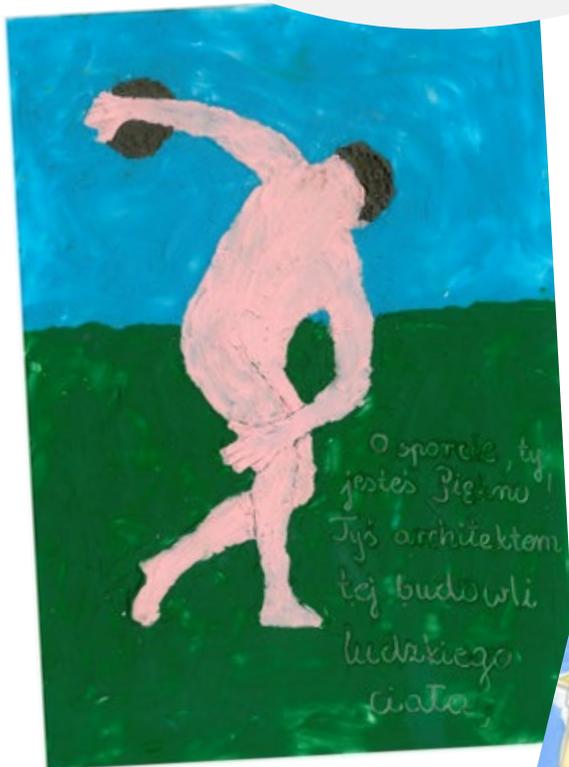


Ania Borzyńska, 9 years,
Pierre de Coubertin
Primary School
in Budy Siennickie



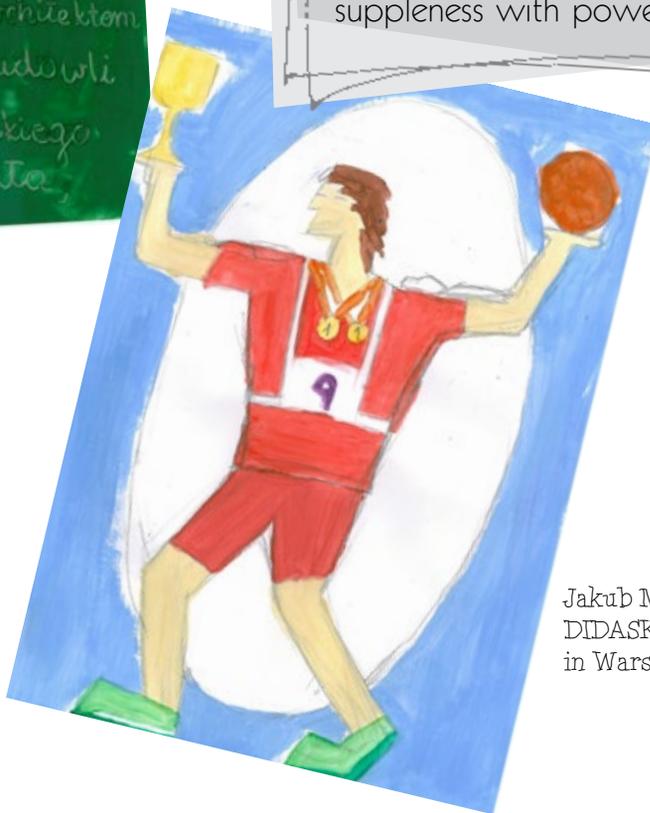
Aleksandra Kwiatkowska, 12 years,
Polish Olympians
Primary School No. 323
in Warsaw

O Sport, pleasure of the Gods,
essence of life, you appeared suddenly
in the midst of the grey clearing which
writhes with the drudgery of modern
existence, like the radiant messenger
of a past age, when mankind still smiled.
And the glimmer of dawn lit up
the mountain tops and flecks of light
dotted the ground in the gloomy forests.



Eliza Borzym, 8 years,
Pierre de Coubertin
Primary School
in Budy Siennickie

○ Sport, you are Beauty! You are the architect of that edifice which is the human body and which can become abject or sublime according to whether it is defiled by vile passions or improved through healthy exertion. There can be no beauty without balance and proportion, and you are the peerless master of both, for you create harmony, you give movements rhythm, you make strength graceful and you endow suppleness with power.



Jakub Maliszewski, 11 years,
DIDASKO Primary School No. 98
in Warsaw



Julia Kamińska, 7 years,
Pierre de Coubertin
Primary School
in Budy Siennickie



Paulina Dudek, 12 years,
DIDASKO Primary School No. 98
in Warsaw

○ Sport, you are Justice! The perfect equity for which men strive in vain in their social institutions is your constant companion. No one can jump a centimetre higher than the height he can jump, nor run a minute longer than the length he can run. The limits of his success are determined solely by his own physical and moral strength.

○ Sport, you are Audacity! The meaning of all muscular effort can be summed up in the word 'dare'. What good are muscles, what is the point of feeling strong and agile, and why work to improve one's agility and strength, unless it is in order to dare? But the daring you inspire has nothing in common with the adventurer's recklessness in staking everything on chance. Yours is a prudent, well-considered audacity.



Iga Krakowiak, 9 years,
Polish Olympians
Primary School No. 323
in Warsaw



Helena Zdrojewska, 11 years,
DIDASKO Primary School No. 98
in Warsaw



Antoni Podębski, 12 years,
Polish Olympians
Primary School No. 323
in Warsaw



Ada Raciawska, 10 years,
DIDASKO Primary School No. 98
in Warsaw

○ Sport, you are Honour! The laurels you bestow have no value unless they have been won in absolute fairness and with perfect impartiality. He who, with some shameful trick, manages to deceive his fellow competitors feels guilt to his very core and lives in fear of the ignominious epithet which shall forever be attached to his name should his trickery be discovered.

O Sport, you are Joy! At your behest,
flesh dances and eyes smile; blood races
abundantly through the arteries. Thoughts
stretch out on a brighter, clearer horizon.
To the sorrowful you can even bring salutary
diversion from their distress, whilst the happy
you enable fully to savour their joie de vivre.



Oliwia Chróst, 10 years,
DIDASKO Primary School No. 98
in Warsaw

Diana Jaroszkiewicz, 7 years,
DIDASKO Primary School No. 98
in Warsaw





Jakub Śmigasiewicz, 12 years,
 Pierre de Coubertin
 Primary School
 in Budy Siennickie

Zosia Hryniak, 10 years,
DIDASKO Primary School No. 98
in Warsaw



Bartosz Hoffmann, 11 years,
DIDASKO Primary School No. 98
in Warsaw



○ Sport, you are Progress! To serve you, a man must improve himself both physically and spiritually. You force him to abide by a greater discipline; you demand that he avoid all excess. You teach him wise rules which allow him to exert himself with the maximum of intensity without compromising his good health.



Marta Różycka, 12 years,
DIDAŠKO Primary School No. 98
in Warsaw

O Sport, you are Peace! You promote happy relations between peoples, bringing them together in their shared devotion to a strength which is controlled, organized and self-disciplined. From you, the young worldwide learn self-respect, and thus the diversity of national qualities becomes the source of a generous and friendly rivalry.



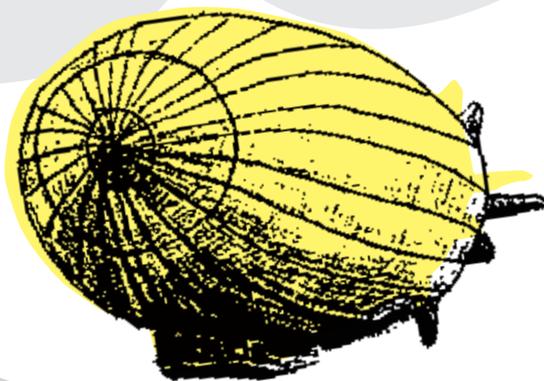
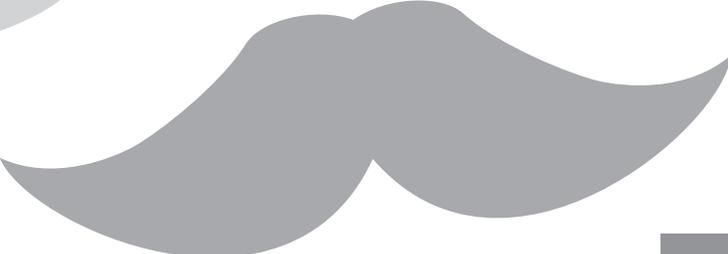
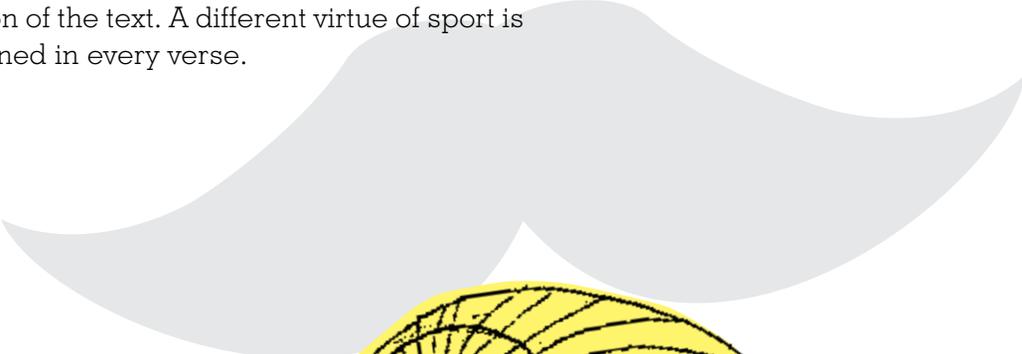
Kornelia Wilczek, 9 years,
Pierre de Coubertin
Primary School
in Buły Siennickie



Szymon Śmigasiewicz, 10 years,
Pierre de Coubertin
Primary School
in Buły Siennickie



This work was written by Pierre de Coubertin under the pseudonym Georges Hohrod – M. Eschbach and was awarded the gold medal in the literature competition at the V Olympiad in Stockholm in 1912. He decided to write the “Ode” using French and German names to show that the Olympic idea could reconcile nations that were hostile to one another. The work is bombastic but genuinely lofty. Poetic considerations are secondary to the human dimension of the text. A different virtue of sport is mentioned in every verse.

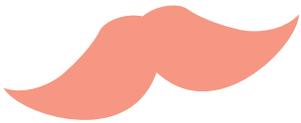




WHY DOES COUBERTIN MATTER?

Krzysztof Zuchora is a poet, essayist, sports historian and academic. He is also an expert on the Olympic Games and the philosophy of Pierre de Coubertin. Zuchora answers the questions young people most often put to him by saying that "Olympism is about knowing yourself."

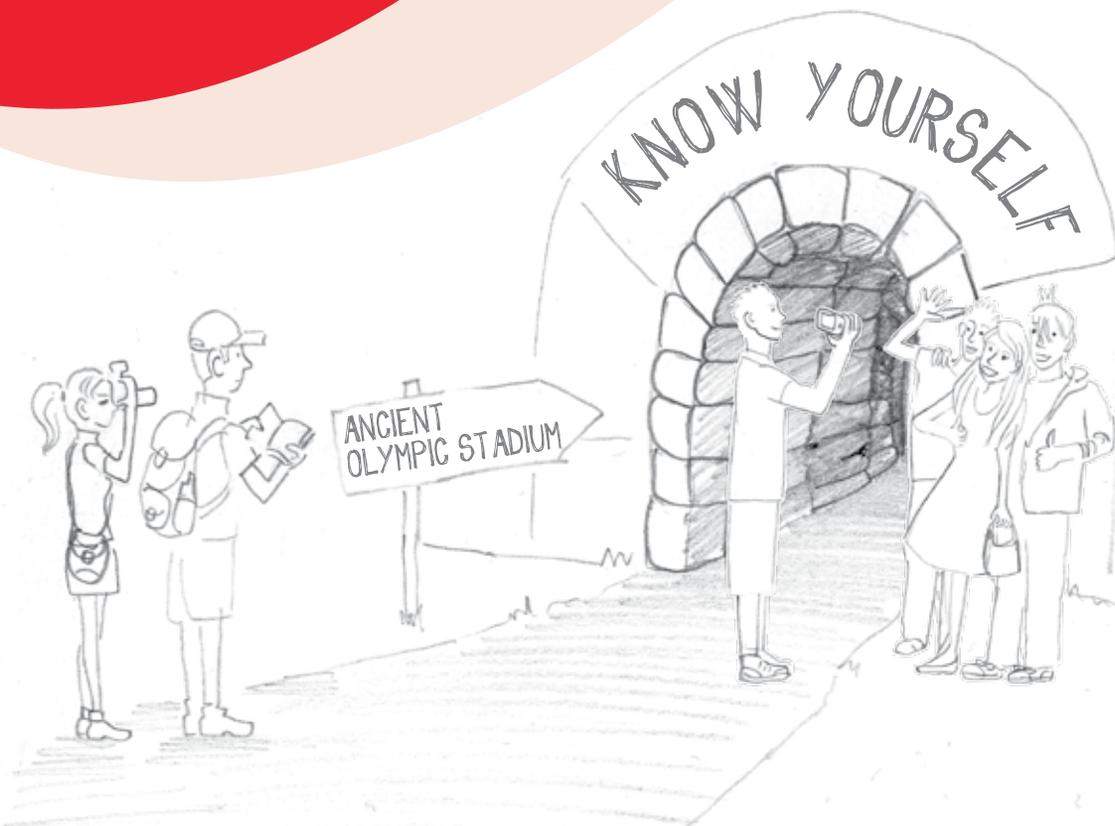
Why does Coubertin matter?



Pierre de Coubertin created what has become the greatest theatrical spectacle in the world – and one where only the best of the best get to perform. Every four years, we take part in an event that is followed by thousands of millions of people on every continent. Coubertin set up a standard sporting competition with a variety of events and gave it a celebratory touch. It was he who came up with the idea of having an Olympic Games Opening Ceremony with symbols and values to highlight the unbroken Olympic tradition from ancient Greece to the present. This

idea encompasses things held dear by people of every race, religion and culture, e.g. mutual respect, a strong feeling of personal pride, the principle of fair play, Olympic solidarity, fostering peace, and having fun as a form of education, where playing in the backyard can one day lead to the Olympic Stadium.

Pierre de Coubertin noticed that the Greek schools of old taught gymnastics, music, and physical and mental exercises in such a way that young people would leave school broadly prepared for life in times of war and peace. Games were held in various cities in order to combine physical exercise with moral training. These were



grand affairs designed to attract the attention of Greek youth, who could then adopt behavioral models and get enthusiastic about their sporting prowess.

The oldest and largest games were held in Olympia in honor of the god Zeus. The ancient philosophers tell us that they proceeded peacefully and that order was maintained in the periods immediately before and after the games, as well as during the competition itself.

This ancient custom was known as “the sacred truce” and made every Greek personally responsible for protecting the competitors and spectators during the games and for ensuring their safe arrival at Olympia by road and sea. The sacred truce was proclaimed a couple of days or three months before the games commenced, depending on the political situation. This was a sort of armistice concluded between the Greek city-states so that the competi-



tion, sanctified with centuries of tradition, could be held according to sacred rituals.

Pierre de Coubertin cited this extraordinary political act in the hope that the modern Olympic movement would create an opportunity for nations and individuals to live together in peace. The “Modern Olympia” was meant to be a symbol and would be assigned the following role: “Ancient Olympia was a city of athletics, art, and prayer. The order of these three terms has at times been wrongly reversed. The sacred nature and the esthetic nature of Olympia were consequences of its athletic role. The city of athletics was an intermittent thing. The city of art and prayer were permanent. The same will hold true for the modern Olympia.”

This project got no further than theoretical considerations. The concept of a “theater of pilgrimage” won out through the will of Coubertin himself. The modern games have since been hosted by large cities that have introduced the defining values, signs and symbols of their own

cultures and civilizations while keeping the traditional opening and closing ceremonies and observing standard sporting regulations. This has enriched and invigorated the Olympic movement. The Games were made the property of the whole world following a personal appeal from Coubertin, the man whose commitment and dedication to their international revival had made it possible for athletes to come together in stadiums around the world in a spirit of peace, friendship and respect. If not for Coubertin, our culture would be all the poorer for not having a competition that unites rather than divides.

Is Pierre de Coubertin’s Olympic idea still relevant?

Few things have captured the public imagination the way the Olympic Games have. The Olympic competition was considered an exceptional event by the ancient Greeks and was not even interrupted when Athens was directly under threat from the



“Olympism was born fully equipped, like Athena!”

Pierre de Coubertin, 1934

Persian army. New directions in art sprang up in Olympia. The best plays had their premieres there, philosophers advertised their latest works there, and any number of merchants and artisans came in search of profit. Most important, however, were the athletes, who were few in

number but trained to perfection, and the visiting spectators, who sometimes numbered as many as 45,000. They additionally had to spend a lot of preparation time in Elis, two days by road from Olympia, to acquire the necessary polish and familiarize themselves with the rules. There was an examination before an official group of trainers and judges, who decided who would be included and excluded. Pythagoras is supposed to have said that three kinds of people made it to Olympia. First, the athletes came to win Olympic wreaths and immortal fame. Second, artisans, philosophers, theatrical performers, sculptors, musicians and poets came to make money and advertise their goods and services. Third, the spectators came to take part in religious ceremonies, watch the running, wrestling and horse racing, and admire the beauty of old and new works of art. Pythagoras described this last group as being the only true Olympians. This is an important observation as it shows how greatly he honored



art lovers and sports spectators. Olympians, then, were not just those who engaged in competitive sport, but also those who participated in the religious celebrations and artistic events at Olympia, and watched the athletic contests. Poets and musicians

many journalists, twice as many volunteers, and around 2,500 judges, and the television audience is a billion people. It is important that the TV transmission of the Games reach the farthest corners of the globe, as this influences people's attitudes to

Competitors now have to go through years of grueling training before they make it to the Games. Only the very best obtain the honor of competing. But the question of whether the Olympic concept is still relevant touches on a far more important issue, namely whether the values promoted by the International Olympic Committee still hold their appeal in the 21st century.

were worthy of being called creators in Greece, because they created things that did not exist in nature. Artists who created with their hands were treated the same as those who practiced handicrafts.

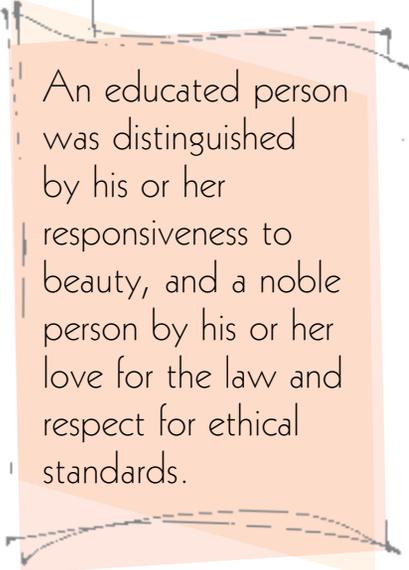
If this way of thinking was applied to the Games today, we could draw up a profit and loss statement as follows: 10,500 athletes are competing in the Summer Olympics; there are just as

sport and teaches them how to live in harmony and regard others as fellow participants and not as rivals. Coubertin's hope that modern Olympism would open up new ways of looking at international development might find expression here too. The "Global Olympic Village" may be an example of this. The Olympic movement has been extending its influence to cover more territory, reaching deeper

into the fabric of society, and proclaiming the joy of engaging in sport. The Olympic idea is not just relevant today; it continues to gain in strength every year as the population of the "Global Olympic Village" increases.

What is the "Spirit of Sport"?

Pierre de Coubertin wrote that the Germans had dug up Olympia and exposed the ruins of the city. As a Frenchman, however, he was determined to resurrect the ancient spirit of the Games, which has survived unchanged until now. The word "spirit" is a synonym for culture, with the proviso that what is meant is symbolic (or spiritual) culture, and not what can be distinguished as technical culture (i.e. civilization). Reviving up the ancient spirit and pressing it into present day service required restoring long lost humanistic values and revisiting the philosophy of the person who strives for self-awareness and the "justifiably proud" person who is prepared to rise above the run-of-the-mill for something



An educated person was distinguished by his or her responsiveness to beauty, and a noble person by his or her love for the law and respect for ethical standards.

important. Those philosophical models were put into practice and are now broadly applied in modern schools. We are more than happy to quote the ancient Greeks, because we understand our place in the world better because of them.

The sports field is a kind of school where children and young people can learn by doing, and develop mental fortitude, no matter how heated the game gets. The "spirit of sport" accompanies every game. It signifies a tradition of competitiveness according to specified rules and does not change over time. The idea



of sport is not to subdue or humiliate an opponent. We do not meet with a rival but a fellow player on the sports field, and the purpose of the game is to have fun, and get to know ourselves and the other players.

Where did the idea for games come from?

Games are older than literature. Homer mentions Nestor, who fought in the Trojan War, in Book XXIII of *The Iliad*, which is dedicated to “the Games in honor of Patroclus”. Nestor says that he is too old to compete, but a few Greeks kept fields for battles and games for him at one time, and he is now helping his son Antilochus get ready for a chariot race by advising him how to behave on the track. This is the oldest historical record of a talk between a coach (the father) and an athlete (the son).

Games also appear in Greek mythology. Pelops is considered the founder of the games at Olympia. He won the kingdom of Oenamaus and the hand of

Hippodamia in a chariot race. The Olympian gods also played games, e.g. Apollo beat Ares, the god of war, in a fist fight.

Games evolved from having fun. Over time, different kinds of fun took on the form of games, and winning, rather than enjoyment, became the main aim. It is due to these beginnings that contemporary professional sport has not completely shed its former selfless nature, for all its seriousness and elaborate technology. Sport has retained a cultural identity in which the more the result is left to chance, the greater the likelihood of it being referred to as playing a game or having fun.

The original Olympians were given a palm leaf and had a tainia placed on their heads on the day of their victory. On the final day of the Games, the winners had wreaths bestowed upon them before a statue of Zeus as the ultimate proof that they were the best. The wreaths were made from the sprigs of olive trees that grew wild in a sacred grove. On their return home from Olympia, the winners

were presented with material prizes of enormous value. This prompted Solon, an Athenian lawgiver from the 6th century B.C., to set an upper limit of 500 drachmas on Olympic victory prizes. This could have purchased a country property or financed a lifetime of city living. Two hundred years later, the prizes were smaller but still impressive. By way of comparison, a professional soldier serving at sea was paid 1.5 drachmas per day.

The Greeks had games in their blood. They had to constantly improve and monitor their own progress in order to nurture a sense of personal pride and win the social approval of their peers. As there were no objective measurements, they kept comparing themselves to others – in art, philosophy, public activity and war. Some say the ancient Greeks were “greedy for fame”, loved wisdom and beauty, and prized virtues so much that they were ready to lay down their lives for them. The Games were how they found out what they were made

of during peacetime. The children and youth of today similarly enter competitions to find out who they are and what they can do.

What is the role of Olympism in sport?

Olympism is a modern concept. There were all sorts of reasons why people played sport at the turn of the 20th century, but there were two main ones. The first concerned working class people. Playing sport after work was a form of relaxation and a fun pastime that made up an important part of the local rituals and seasonal festivities. Practical skills, strength, endurance, wrestling and boxing, i.e. anything that could be used at work, were what mattered in folk festivals. Organizational ability, group leadership, and various artistic skills were also valuable social qualities. Having fun playing sport relieved the monotony of lives full of chores, and gave a brief feeling of freedom and hope for a change of fortune. The conditions for concentrating



on self-perfection were simply not present.

It was a different story for the upper classes, as they did not have to work. The physical activity they engaged in substituted for work. Sportspeople from the upper echelons of society were

gatherings and cultural events came to be held regularly, and old sporting events were revived and new ones introduced, e.g. cycling, motor racing, ice skating, rowing, horse riding, fencing and tennis. Sport might have retained its casual nature, but

On this view, Olympism, as previously stated, refers to sport that is not played for large prizes. Every competitor should get a high from exerting him or herself and from playing by the rules. The main thing is neither the result nor the prospect of a valuable prize, but the chance to overcome their own limitations, know themselves, push the limits of their abilities, and experience the sense of fulfillment that comes from having done something well.

not paid and competed solely for their own benefit. They saw sport as an opportunity to hone their bodies and improve their characters. Prizes were mementos of the competition rather than financial benefits. As such, their value was symbolic. Upper-class sport was viewed as an amateur activity. Club life was considered to be the most important thing. Sporting and tourism associations focused on the elite. Social

even then, there were some who played sport professionally, although they were not all that interested in money. This was the group that Coubertin was referring to during the first Olympic Congress in Paris in 1894, when he announced the establishment of the International Olympic Committee. This was to be a non-governmental institution charged with popularizing Olympism as a philosophy of sport



and the Olympic Games as a social practice.

On this view, Olympism, as previously stated, refers to sport that is not played for large prizes. Every competitor should get a high from exerting him or herself and from playing by the rules. The main thing is neither the result nor the prospect of a valuable prize, but the chance to overcome their own limitations, know themselves, push the limits of their abilities, and experience the sense of fulfillment that comes from having done something well.

Are the principles of Olympism universal?

If the code of conduct between competitors was not universal in application, Olympism would be an example of local and short-lived culture. There are now over 200 countries and independent territories in the Olympic family. What binds them is the affinity of their own values with Olympic ones. They praise freedom, equality and solidarity,

and in so doing, they demonstrate their readiness to defend these values, as they are vital to the future of our world.

Olympism is also about knowing yourself, whether you can persistently strive for the goals you have set yourself, how you conduct yourself after winning and losing, whether you compete in an artistic and beautiful way, and whether your opponent is a partner in sport or an adversary out to capitalize on your mistakes. Finally, it is about whether the "other person" is an outsider or a fully-fledged Olympic competitor.

Olympic values have also been adopted by societies that never used to recognize them. Olympism has thus paved a road for people of different races, religions and cultures to make their way towards the Olympic Stadium, where they confirm, by their very participation, the reality that a world based on friendship, justice and mutual respect between people entitled to the same rights is possible. At present, this happens on the sports field, but its influence is such





that it could embrace our entire lives from kindergarten.

What is the future of the Olympic movement?

The Olympic movement is still a young and developing institution, but it is firmly and deeply rooted culturally. An illuminated olive tree held center stage during the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. The generations that have grown up in its shadow have changed. People have come and gone, but the tree is still there and has withstood the ups and downs of history. Its sacred branches are used to make wreaths for

the best. Restoring the Olympic Games 15 centuries after they had fallen into oblivion, and even giving them a much greater reach than they had in ancient times, builds hope for the future.

The modern Olympic Games are threatened by civilizational development and social culture changes. The modern world of knowledge, the world of constant and rapid change, the IT world, and the virtual world are colliding with the old world of sport, which is based on a culture of chivalry, an ethos of personal excellence and “pilgrimage theater” across the world. This cannot help but spark conflicts, revolts, protests and demonstrations. As an example,

“Citius – Altius – Fortius”: running and knowing yourself faster; rising higher above the horizontal bar and mediocrity; and becoming stronger, i.e. so that the power of the spirit can overcome the natural limitations of the body.



the Defenders of Tibet came out to meet the Olympic torch relay on its way to Beijing from old Olympia. They saw the Olympics as an opportunity to draw attention to human rights violations in China. This was contrary to the peaceful mission of the Olympic movement, which had granted the right to host the Games to the city and not the country against which they were protesting.

Why is such a great man so little known?

We are now trying to make up for this neglect. Coubertin, the creator of the modern Olympics is famous all over the world. He is held in very high esteem for giving us the Olympic Games, a festival of youth and sport, where young people come together in the Olympic Stadium to express their attachment to the Olympic motto "Citius – Altius – Fortius": running and knowing yourself faster; rising higher above the horizontal bar and mediocrity; and becoming stronger, i.e. so that the power

of the spirit can overcome the natural limitations of the body. Coubertin is also esteemed for introducing sport to schools, not through a hole in the fence but through the main gate, and not just so that the playground could ring to the sounds of children having fun, but mainly to introduce autonomy to the pupils and to revive school activities in the local community outside lessons and after hours. He was familiar with school and knew its weak points. Coubertin tried to build a future school education on the assumption that education should occur through development and development should occur through enjoyment.

The contemporary school has changed in this direction, although this is not normally attributed to the educational activities of Pierre de Coubertin. He also coined such terms as "moral exercises" and "moral training", and emphasized "muscle and mind" and body and soul coordination as a prerequisite for any kind of education. The school playground is the best field



Kalokagathia (Ancient Greek: “kalós kai agathós” means “beautiful and good”). In ancient Greek philosophy, this was the perfection of the harmonious fusion of beauty and good in a person and was a virtue of both body and soul. The concept of kalokagathia is timeless. Sport develops the mind and the soul as well as the body. A lot of sportspeople have shown that it is possible to be a champion in life as well as in sport.



kalós + kai + agathós = kalokagathia = person

to cultivate kalos kagathos (good and beautiful) as an education ideal directed at the individual child and his or her relationships with others.

Coubertin gave the world the Olympic Games as a transformed battleground where people of equal importance and dignity could compete in a game where the most important thing was playing, not winning. Participating builds a community that shares socially accepted values, while winning has an individual dimension in that it highlights personal identity and independence. There is supposedly more pleasure in giving than in receiving. The beauty of this thought is definitely born out in sport.

Coubertin's greatest contribution was undeniably in education for peace as a new social outlook. He believed that the Olympics would draw people cordially disposed towards each other together to cultivate universal values, such as freedom, beauty, dignity, and respect for religious, racial, national and political

differences. These people would bring a "Global Olympic Village" into being as a sort of social utopia that would take shape once every four years. The Olympic movement has attracted an increasingly large following as it has developed, and the concept of Olympic Peace has become increasingly significant.

What would you ask Pierre de Coubertin if you had the chance?

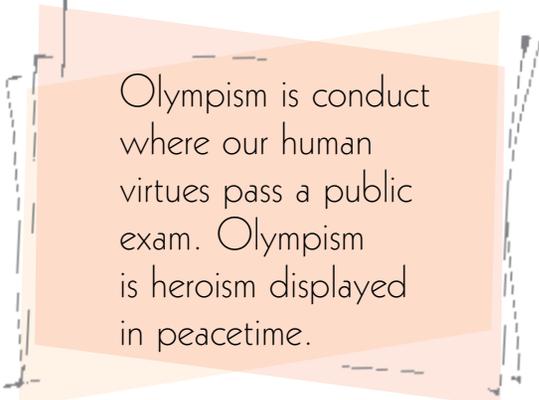
I would ask the question he himself did at the end of his life, viz. how it came about that "Olympism has sailed serenely over the world like a gleaming airship." The Olympic Games have become a visible symbol of the modern world and a kind of "religion of beauty", which draws young people in and inspires them to make an effort, teaches them to respect their opponents and abide by the rules of sport, and becomes an object of art and a source of humanistic values. It has worked beyond all expectations and it has never





wavered in its zeal. Olympic education has turned out differently as it has borrowed the methods of moles.

What needs to be done if sports education is to regain the force it had in ancient times, when young people came out of the gymnasium ready to give their all, eager to compete, respectful of the rules, and appreciative of the beauty of the human body as a work of art created through years of training and subjected to the cultivation of muscle and mind and nature and culture? Young people with the spirit of Icarus, fulfilling their dreams in a romantic flight to the sun. Sports records are still being broken by proud people who reach where their sight cannot reach and break what their minds cannot break. These people are not, however, adventurers or circus performers walking a tightrope between life and death. Coubertin said that caution and restraint had to be exercised on the sports field, as victory only matters when it is won in a fair and full-fledged contest between equally matched com-



Olympism is conduct where our human virtues pass a public exam. Olympism is heroism displayed in peacetime.

petitors, i.e. *primus inter pares* (Latin: first among equals).

Sport without TV would be unthinkable these days. TV has livened up sporting events and made them more dynamic, although it has simplified the cultural narrative. TV viewers watch sport with foreign eyes in a sense. Instead of watching and reading about a game or heat with empathy and understanding, they are often content to just listen to information about e.g. the medal tally. Information is stored and facts are committed to memory, but there is no change in their appreciation of sport and athletics as works of art. It has therefore been necessary to invite artists from different fields to enter Olympic

design competitions once more. The best works are honored with Olympic medals and put into community circulation. Art shows the spiritual depth of sport and athletics and the greatness of the person who determines the limits of his or her own excellence. This might be a time, a distance, artistic skill, or courage and valor. The valor shown in a fist fight was the reason

Poetry Reading / Wisława Szymborska (excerpt)

To be a boxer, or not be there
at all. ○ Muse, where are our teeming crowds?
Twelve people in the room, eight seats to spare —
it's time to start this cultural affair.
Half came inside because it started raining,
the rest are relatives. ○ Muse.

The women here would love to rant and rave,
but that's for boxing. Here they must behave.

(...)

Szymborska, W. (2012). *Nic dwa razy. Wybór wierszy / Nothing twice. Selected poems.* Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Literackie (transl. by Clare Cavanagh and Stanisław Barańczak).



Homer and Szymborska introduced boxing into their poetry.

It has already worked before. Olympic art competitions were on the program of the Olympic Games from 1912 to 1948. The sculpture, painting, architecture, music and literature on the sports field learned the dynamics of movement subjected to spontaneous emotions that occasionally spanned life and death, but always held in check by reason and conscience. The sports field is especially made to glorify human beings. Olympism is conduct where our human virtues pass a public exam. Olympism is heroism displayed in peacetime.

Olympic education will determine the future of the Olympic movement. The civilizational resources that support the development of, and maintain a high level of appeal for, contemporary sport are dwindling. We can see how esthetics win out over ethics and results win out over beauty. Advertising has turned competitors, e.g. ski jumpers, into mobile

advertising poles bearing the logos of companies and the names of goods. Sport itself is slowly but surely becoming a free-market commodity. The Olympic Games might still be held in advertising-free stadiums, but as soon as they are over, the ads return to the sports fields and running tracks as if they had never been away. Big companies finance the preparation and servicing of the Olympics everywhere in the world. They do so in return for naming rights, strategic sponsorships and media partnerships. As with any other field of art, sport needs financial support to make it to world standard. Sports education stresses that the individual has pride of place on the sports field. Everything else is decoration.

“The future depends on you!” This call to action Pierre de Coubertin sent out to the athletic youth of the world from Olympia in 1927 is just as relevant now as it was then.



WHY DOES COUBERTIN MATTER?



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WHO IS WHO

Muhammad Ali (b. 1942)

– U.S. boxer, light-heavyweight gold medalist at the 1960 Rome Olympics.

John Stephen Akhwari (b. 1938)

– Tanzanian marathon runner at the 1968 Mexico Olympic Games.

Thomas Arnold (1795-1842)

was the headmaster of Rugby School in England from 1828 to 1841, where he introduced a number of reforms.

Christopher Brasher (1928-2003)

– British track and field athlete, 3000m steeplechase gold medalist at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, journalist, co-founder of the London Marathon (held since 1981).

William Penny Brookes

(1809-1895) - English surgeon, magistrate, botanist, and educationalist, best known for founding the Wenlock Olympian Games and inspiring the modern Olympic Games, promoted physical education and personal betterment, friend of Pierre de Coubertin.

John Carpenter (1885-1933)

– U.S. track and field athlete, 400m sprint finalist at the 1908 London Olympic Games.

Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937)

– humanist and pedagogue, founded the modern Olympic Games.

Henri Didon (1840-1900)

– Dominican priest, friend of Pierre de Coubertin, the first to utter the words that have since become the motto of the International Olympic Movement, viz. “Citius – Altius – Fortius” (Latin: Faster, Higher, Stronger).

Ancient Greeks

(3000 B.C. – 393 A.D.)

– inhabitants of the southern part of Europe, the Balkan Peninsula, Asia Minor, and the coasts and islands of the Ionian, Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. They laid the foundations of Western culture. It is them we can thank for the Olympic Games.

Alfréd Hajós (1878-1955)

– Hungarian swimmer and architect, won two gold medals at the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, as well as the silver medal in architecture at the Olympic Arts Competitions at the 1924 Paris Olympic Games.

Wyndham Halswelle (1882-1915)

– won the controversial 400m sprint at the 1908 London Olympic Games, the only Olympic gold medalist ever to win by walkover.

Sven Hannawald (b. 1974)

– German ski jumper, three-time Olympic medalist in 1998 and 2002, Four Hills Tournament winner, the only ski jumper in history to win on all four hills.

John Hayes (1886-1965)

– U.S. athlete, marathon winner at the 1908 London Olympic Games.

Homer (8th century B.C.)

– father of the epic poetry, the greatest of Greek epic poets, author of Iliad and the Odyssey.

Jan Johnson (b. 1950)

– U.S. pole vaulter, bronze medalist at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games.

Irena Kirszenstein-Szewińska

(b. 1946) – outstanding Polish track and field athlete, won 7 gold medals in 1964-1980 in the 100m sprint, 200m sprint, 4 x 100m relay, 400m sprint and the long jump, IOC member.

Halina Konopacka (1900-1989)

– first Polish Olympic gold medalist in the discus throw at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games. Poet, rally driver, Miss Olympic Games in Amsterdam.

Jerzy Kulej (1940-2012)

– Polish boxer, sports commentator, Olympic gold medalist 1964 Tokio Olympic Games and 1968 Mexico Olympic Games, charge of the outstanding Polish boxing trainer Feliks Stamm.

Janusz Kusociński (1907-1940)

– was a Polish athlete, winner in the 10,000 meters event at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

His dream was to compete with **Paavo Nurmi (1897-1973)**

– an outstanding Finnish long distance runner (9 times Olympic Champion). His dream never came true because Nurmi was suspended before the 1932 Games by an IAAF council that questioned his amateur status.

Larysa Latynina (b. 1934)

– Soviet gymnast, won 18 Olympic medals 1956-1964.

Ernest Larsen (b. 1926)

– Norwegian track and field athlete, 3000m steeplechase bronze medalist at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games.

Carl Ludwig „Lu(t)z“ Long

(1913-1943) – German track and field athlete, silver medalist in the long jump at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, posthumously awarded the Pierre de Coubertin medal for his exceptional sportsmanship, friend of Jesse Owens.

Petra Majdič (b. 1979)

– Slovenian cross-country skier, sprint specialist, Olympic bronze medalist in 2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games and two-time World Championship medalist in the sprint event.

Adam Małysz (b. 1977)

– Polish ski jumper, one of the most successful ski jumpers of all time, four-time Olympic medalist (Turin 2006, Vancouver 2010), awarded the Fair Play Prize by the Polish Olympic Committee.

Albert Roger Mooh Miller (“Roger Milla”) (b. 1952)

– Cameroonian striker, one of the first African footballers to become a major international star, played for Cameroon in three World Cups.

Thomas Morgenstern (b. 1986)

– Austrian ski jumper, three-time Olympic champion (Turin 2006, Vancouver 2010), bronze medalist at Sochi 2014.

Wolfgang Nordwig (b. 1943)

– German pole vaulter, gold medalist at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games.

Tadeusz Olszański (b.1929)

– Polish publicist, writer, sports journalist and author of numerous books on sport, created the “Gentleman of Sport” award in 1963, which has since become the Fair Play Prize.

Jesse Owens (1913-1980)

– U.S. track and field athlete, gold medalist in the 100m sprint, 200m sprint, long jump and 4 x 100m relay at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, set numerous world records, fought for the rights of black people in the U.S.

Adriaan Paulen (1902-1985)

– Dutch sports official, IAAF President 1976-1981, track and field athlete, competed in three Olympic Games.



Dorando Pietri (1885-1942)

– the most famous loser in Olympic history. First to cross the finish line in the marathon at the 1908 London Olympics. Pietri entered the stadium at the point of exhaustion. Officials standing close by grabbed him and helped him across the line – in breach of the rules. A protest lodged by U.S. runner John Hayes was upheld, despite the sympathy for Pietri and his effort.

Michael Phelps (b. 1985)

– U.S. swimmer, the most successful Olympian of all time with a total 22 medals, won 8 gold medals at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Robert "Bob" Seagren (b. 1946)

– U.S. pole vaulter, actor, sports industry manager, gold medalist at the 1968 Mexico Olympic Games.

Mark Spitz (b. 1950)

– U.S. swimmer, nine-time Olympic champion, won seven gold medals at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games.

Feliks "Pappa" Stamm (1901-1976) – Polish boxing trainer, participated in seven Olympic Games from 1936 to 1968, taught and trained many Olympic medalists.

Wisława Szymborska (1923-2012)

– was a Polish poet, essayist, and recipient of the 1996 Nobel Prize in Literature. Her favorite sport was boxing.

Ian Thorpe (b. 1982)

– Australian swimmer, specialized in freestyle, known as "Thorpedo", won 9 Olympic medals in 2000 Sydney Olympic Games and 2004 Athens Olympic Games.

Demetrius Vikelas (1835-1908)

– was a Greek businessman and writer. He was the first president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) from 1894 to 1896.

Kazimierz Wierzyński (1852-1920)

– Polish poet, journalist, track and field athlete and footballer. Gold medalist at the Olympic Arts Competition at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games.

Walter W. Winans (1852-1920)

– won the gold medal in shooting at the 1908 London Olympic Games, and the silver medal in shooting and the gold medal for sculpture at the Olympic Arts Competitions at the 1912 Stockholm Olympic Games.

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Polski Komitet Olimpijski
Polish Olympic Committee

**A manual for high school
and undergraduate university students.**