Summer Olympics Trivia

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which city hosted the first modern Olympic Games in 1896?
   A. Athens
   B. Paris
   C. London
   D. Rome
   Correct answer: A. Athens
   Athens, Greece, held the first Olympic Games of the modern era in 1896.

2. Which U.S. athlete won four track and field gold medals at Berlin 1936?
   A. Jim Thorpe
   B. Carl Lewis
   C. Jesse Owens
   D. Bob Beamon
   Correct answer: C. Jesse Owens
   Jesse Owens won the 100 meters, the 200 meters, the long jump, and the 4 × 100-meter relay in Berlin.

3. Which sport added its first women’s Olympic medal events at London 2012?
   A. Judo
   B. Boxing
   C. Wrestling
   D. Rugby sevens
   Correct answer: B. Boxing
   Women’s boxing joined the Olympic program in London with three medal events.

4. Cathy Freeman lit the cauldron at Sydney 2000 and later won a race in the same stadium. In which event did she take gold?
   A. The 4 × 400-meter relay
   B. The 200 meters
   C. The 800 meters
   D. The 400 meters
   Correct answer: D. The 400 meters
   Freeman won the women’s 400-meter final in 49.11 seconds. She also competed in the 200 meters and the 4 × 400-meter relay at those Games.

5. Which of these sports made its Olympic debut at Paris 2024?

A. Skateboarding
B. Breaking
C. Sport climbing
D. Surfing

Correct answer: B. Breaking
Breaking was the new Olympic sport at Paris 2024. Skateboarding, sport climbing, and surfing had appeared at Tokyo 2020.

6. Charlotte Cooper became the first woman to win an individual Olympic title. In which sport did she win it at Paris 1900?

A. Tennis
B. Sailing
C. Golf
D. Croquet

Correct answer: A. Tennis
Cooper won the women’s tennis singles. Earlier in the same Games, Hélène de Pourtalès won as part of a sailing crew.

7. Connie Carpenter-Phinney and Rebecca Twigg finished first and second in a close race at Los Angeles 1984. Which cycling event was it?

A. The women’s track sprint
B. The women’s individual pursuit
C. The women’s points race
D. The women’s road race

Correct answer: D. The women’s road race
The U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum records Carpenter-Phinney just ahead of Twigg in the first women’s Olympic cycling road race.

8. Adam van Koeverden won gold and bronze for Canada in Athens in 2004, both in single-kayak sprint races. Which pairing matches his results?

A. 500 meters silver and 1,000 meters bronze
B. 500 meters bronze and 1,000 meters gold
C. 500 meters gold and 1,000 meters bronze
D. 500 meters gold and 1,000 meters silver

Correct answer: C. 500 meters gold and 1,000 meters bronze
Van Koeverden took bronze in the 1,000-meter kayak singles, then won gold in the 500-meter race the following day.

9. A label for the Antwerp 1920 opening ceremony names Belgium’s Victor Boin and the five-ring flag. What happened for the first time at the Games?

A. The Olympic flag flew, and Boin took the athletes’ oath.
B. The Olympic flag flew, and Boin lit the stadium cauldron.
C. The athletes’ oath was taken, and Boin carried the torch into the stadium.
D. The first torch relay ended, and Boin led its final leg.

Correct answer: A. The Olympic flag flew, and Boin took the athletes’ oath.
Antwerp’s opening ceremony featured the first flying of the Olympic flag at the Games. Boin became the first athlete to speak the Olympic oath.

10. Anton Geesink defeated Japan’s Akio Kaminaga in the open judo final at Tokyo 1964. Which country did Geesink represent?

A. Canada
B. France
C. Australia
D. The Netherlands

Correct answer: D. The Netherlands
The Netherlands’ Anton Geesink won the open-class final against Kaminaga and became the first Olympic judo champion from outside Asia.

11. Usain Bolt ran 9.69 seconds at Beijing 2008, 9.58 at the 2009 World Championships, and 9.63 at London 2012. How did his time change from the first race to the second, then from the second to the third?

A. 0.06 seconds faster, then 0.05 slower
B. 0.11 seconds faster, then 0.05 faster
C. 0.11 seconds faster, then 0.05 slower
D. 0.11 seconds slower, then 0.05 faster

Correct answer: C. 0.11 seconds faster, then 0.05 slower
The time dropped by $9.69 - 9.58 = 0.11$ seconds, then rose by $9.63 - 9.58 = 0.05$ seconds. A lower time means a faster race.

12. In 1988, Steffi Graf beat Gabriela Sabatini 6–3, 3–6, 6–1 at the U.S. Open and 6–3, 6–3 in the Seoul Olympic final. Each set score lists Graf first. At which final did Sabatini win fewer games, and by how many?

A. Seoul, by 1 game
B. Seoul, by 4 games
C. The U.S. Open, by 4 games
D. The U.S. Open, by 3 games

Correct answer: B. Seoul, by 4 games
Sabatini won $3 + 6 + 1 = 10$ games at the U.S. Open and $3 + 3 = 6$ at Seoul, a difference of four games.

13. A museum draft says Athens 1896 and St. Louis 1904 both handed first-place finishers gold medals as part of the standard three-medal system. Which revision reflects the original awards?

A. Athens and St. Louis both gave winners silver medals under the same system.
B. Athens gave winners bronze medals. The gold, silver, and bronze system began at St. Louis.
C. Athens gave winners gold medals. St. Louis changed the winners' medal to silver.
D. Athens gave winners silver medals. The gold, silver, and bronze system began at St. Louis.

Correct answer: D. Athens gave winners silver medals. The gold, silver, and bronze system began at St. Louis.

Athens awarded its winners silver medals and olive wreaths. St. Louis introduced the familiar gold, silver, and bronze awards for the top three places.

14. In the Rio 2016 women's rugby sevens knockout rounds, Australia beat Spain 24–0, Canada 17–5, and New Zealand 24–17. Across those three games, how many points did Australia score and allow?

A. 65 scored and 22 allowed
B. 65 scored and 17 allowed
C. 41 scored and 5 allowed
D. 43 scored and 22 allowed

Correct answer: A. 65 scored and 22 allowed

Australia scored 24 + 17 + 24 = 65 points and allowed 0 + 5 + 17 = 22. The difference between those totals was 43.

15. In the Tokyo 2020 women's 4 × 100-meter freestyle relay, Australia finished in 3:29.69, Canada in 3:32.78, and the United States in 3:32.81. Which two medalists were closest in time, and what was their gap?

A. Australia and Canada, 0.09 seconds
B. Canada and the United States, 0.30 seconds
C. Canada and the United States, 0.03 seconds
D. Australia and the United States, 0.12 seconds

Correct answer: C. Canada and the United States, 0.03 seconds

The silver and bronze finishers were separated by 32.81 − 32.78 = 0.03 seconds. Australia led each of those teams by more than three seconds.