

The Olympic Games

The Olympic Games: How They Benefit Junior Shooting Programs

By Gary Anderson, DCM Emeritus



More people around the world watch Olympic Games Opening Ceremonies than any other human event. These Olympic rings in the London 2012 Opening Ceremony all came out.

Over five billion people from more than 200 countries watched some part of the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) reported that viewer numbers for the just-completed 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia were even larger. Why do more than two-thirds of the entire population of the world follow the Olympic Games? It's because the Olympics have become the world's greatest sports competition and one of the most powerful social and cultural forces in human history.

It is likely that well over two-thirds of the youth who participate in junior shooting and their families also watched those Games with awe, wonder and

enthusiasm. These young people are going to be asking questions to junior program leaders like:

"How do you get to go to the Olympics?"

"Is Shooting in the Olympics?"

"Is it possible that I could go to the Olympics?"

There are young shooters in every program who nurture an "Olympic dream." That dream can be anything from youthful adulation of Olympic stars to a serious goal of someday going to the Olympics or even becoming an Olympic gold medal winner. The Olympic dream inspires many junior shooters because their sport is an Olympic sport. To guide these dreams in constructive ways, junior shooting coaches, club leaders and parents

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need to know about the Olympic Games and the vital role Shooting plays in them. Junior leaders who do this well can bring real benefits to their programs and to the young people in them.

What are the Olympics?

The Olympic Games are an international multi-sport competition with 2,790 years of unique history and tradition. The first Games began at Olympia in 776 BC as athletic contests among Ancient Greek city-states to honor Zeus. The Games took place every four years and featured an Olympic Truce that temporarily stopped wars. Religious celebrations and artistic competitions were part of those Games. Event winners received olive branches and usually considerable sums of money.

Those Games endured for more than 11 centuries until the 4th century AD when the Romans banned them as “pagan festivals.” 16th century humanism revived interest in Ancient Greek physical culture and sport, but it was not until the late 19th century when an idealistic French nobleman, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founded the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894 and organized the revival of the Ancient Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. de Coubertin believed striving for excellence in peaceful international sports competitions could break down barriers that keep people divided and change a war-torn world for the better. His many legendary quotes expressed this ideal quite clearly.

Today, Summer Olympic Games, Winter Olympic Games, Paralympic Games and Youth Olympic Games are each celebrated every four years in different host cities around the world. The use of ritual and symbolism including the Olympic flag and five rings, the Olympic torch, Olympic motto, opening and closing ceremonies and award ceremonies that honor gold, silver and bronze medal winners give a distinguishing appeal to the Olympic Games. The Summer and Winter Games became so popular in the 1970s and 1980s that continued growth threatened their viability. This is why the Games are now limited to 13,000 athletes, 33 different sports and just under 400 events.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin:

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.



A moment of Olympic triumph – Yi Siling of China shows her joy after learning that she has just won the first gold medal of the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

Until the 1980s, the Modern Games were only for amateur athletes who could receive no monetary rewards for their victories. Today those old amateur rules are gone and the Games are truly for the best athletes in the world, many of whom earn millions from their Olympic victories. Indeed, and almost without exception, the Olympic Games are the world’s best tests of the world’s best athletes.

The Games became the world’s greatest sports competition for many reasons. No other sports competition comes close to involving athletes from 200 different countries. The Olympics bring youth from all over the world together in competitions involving the broadest possible range of sports. This has extraordinary appeal to youth because there is almost always one Olympic event where each person has the possibility of excelling. Similarly, the Games have great appeal to spectators because they present so many different sports with so many engaging young athletes from so many nations.

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How are the Olympics Governed?

The world governing body of the Olympics is the IOC. The IOC elects its own members from among world sports leaders. The 107 current IOC members include International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) President Olegario Vázquez Raña and Ms. Danka Bartekova, an Olympic Skeet medalist from Slovakia. Dr. Thomas Bach from Germany, a 1976 Olympic gold medalist in fencing, was elected IOC President in 2013.

To further the Olympic movement and govern it, the IOC recognizes one National Olympic Committee (NOC) in every country and one International Federation (IF) to govern each Olympic sport. The USA NOC is the U. S. Olympic Committee. The ISSF is the IF or world governing body for Olympic Shooting. The IOC also recognizes Continental Sports Organizations that govern multi-sport competitions like the Pan American Games and Asian Games. Every country also has a National Federation (NF) or National Governing Body (NGB) for each Olympic sport. The Shooting NGB in the USA is USA Shooting. The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is the world governing body for Paralympic sports including Shooting.

Websites with Olympic Games Information:

- IOC: www.olympic.org/ioc
- IPC: www.paralympic.org
- ISSF: www.issf-sports.org
- USOC: www.teamusa.org
- Rio 2016: www.rio2016.com/en
- USA Shooting: www.usashooting.org

How are the Olympics Organized?

The IOC selects each Games host city seven years in advance from among several cities that have spent millions and years preparing their bids to become Olympic hosts. Every Olympic host city must create a massive organization with a complex of venues for the different sports. Russia and its President Vladimir Putin



The IOC sits on top of a complex web of organizations that govern worldwide Olympic sports.

are reported to have spent over \$50 billion preparing Sochi for the 2014 Winter Games. The temporary Shooting venue in London cost the British government more than \$60 million and that was for just one sport.

Every Olympic host city establishes an Olympic Organizing Committee that must hire a staff of professional sports administrators and recruit thousands of volunteers to conduct all aspects of the Games. The IOC and its Olympic Organizing Committees must also pay for the Games. Television agreements are a leading revenue source. NBC, for example, is paying \$4.4 billion for exclusive U. S. rights for the 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020 Winter and Summer Games. Major sources of revenue are sponsors and ticket sales. Governments are sometimes major supporters. The Russian government has been a primary funding source for the 2014 Games, but when the Games were held in the USA in 1984, 1996 and 2002, no government funding was available.

How is Shooting Involved in the Olympics?

We all know Shooting is an Olympic sport, but how did it get there and where does it stand as a member of the Olympic family? Shooting got its start as an Olympic sport when it was one of nine original sports in the first Modern Games in 1896. Games founder de Coubertin may have been decisive in selecting Shooting because as a young man he had been a pistol champion in France. Shooting has been out of the Games only twice, in 1904 and 1928.

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The world famous Copacabana Beach at Rio de Janeiro will become the Beach Volleyball venue during the 2016 Olympics. Deodoro Olympic Park on the northwest side of the city will host Shooting as well as several other sports.

The IOC decides which sports are on the program. To keep the Games relevant to modern demands, the IOC conducts intensive reviews after every Games to evaluate the history and tradition, universality, popularity, governance, athlete safeguards, athlete development, technical evolution, fairness and finances of each sport. IOC policy is to drop one of the 28 summer sports out of the program and add one new sport every four years.

In addition to controlling which sports are in the Games, the IOC strictly controls the number of events in each sport, the number of athletes who may participate and what athletes must do to qualify. For the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro, Shooting will have 15 gold medal events, five each for rifle, pistol and shotgun. Separate women's events became part of the program in 1984; today six of the 15 events are for women. Now every Olympic event has a Qualification round where all participants compete and a Final round where the top eight or six qualifiers compete for medals in head-to-head eliminations that are designed for spectator and television appeal (see the Olympic Events Chart, pg 13).

Olympic events must be events that can be practiced all over the world. That is why air gun and smallbore rifle and pistol events are now on the program, but there are no longer any highpower rifle events. Olympic events must also be events practiced only for sports purposes; combat or defense-oriented shooting events are not included in the Games.

The IOC has supported growth in the sport of Shooting. The number of Olympic Shooting events increased from six in 1964 to 15, but it is extremely unlikely that any more Shooting events will be added without dropping current events.

The number of athletes is also strictly limited. In 2016, Shooting will again have 390 athlete entry quotas. This makes it one of the larger Olympic sports. Olympic qualifying for the 2016 Games will begin with the 2014 World Shooting Championship where the top finishers in individual Olympic events will win 64 of those quotas for their nations. Further quotas will be awarded in the 2014 Championship of the Americas, 2015 World Cups and 2015 Continental Championships. No country can earn more than two quotas per event.

Once a nation has a quota in an event they can enter an athlete in that event only if

Olympic Shooting Facts

- **Shooting is one of 28 Summer Olympic Sports.**
- **There are four “marksmanship sports” in the Olympic Games: Shooting, Archery, Modern Pentathlon and Biathlon.**
- **Shooting was in the 1st Olympic Games in Athens.**
- **Shooting has been in every Olympic Games except two (1904, 1928).**
- **There are 15 Olympic Shooting events for rifle, pistol and shotgun.**
- **There are nine men's events; six women's events.**
- **108 nations qualified athletes for Shooting in the 2012 Games; this ranked fourth among all sports.**
- **Shooting traditionally awards the first gold medal in the Summer Olympics.**
- **Only three athletes have won three individual Olympic gold medals in Shooting; Ralf Schumann, Germany; Jin Jongoh, Korea and Kim Rhode, USA.**

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the athlete has fired a qualifying score (MQS, Minimum Qualifying Score) in an Olympic qualifying competition. 24 of the 390 Shooting participation quotas will be distributed by the IOC to nations that do not win quotas in the qualifying competitions, but do have athletes with MQS scores. This system ensures that many more nations can enter shooters in the Games and enables Shooting to attain a high universality standing. In London, 108 nations qualified athletes for Shooting. Only Athletics, Swimming and Judo had more.

How Well Have USA Shooters Done?

Junior shooters and their program leaders have every right to be proud of the history and traditions established by USA Olympic Shooting athletes. USA Olympic Shooting Teams were first in the official medal counts in 1920, 1924, 1964, 1972 and 1984.

The first great period of USA successes was in the 1920s. Pistol shooter Alfred Lane became a double gold medal winner in 1920; rifle shooter Morris Fisher won

his second gold medal in 1924. The program then included many team matches and several USA shooters won multiple team gold medals. Carl Osburn won 11 team medals; Willis A. Lee won seven. Lee earned fame in World War II as Vice Admiral Willis "Ching" Lee who commanded the victorious American fleet in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal.

USA ascendancy waned in the years after WWII when the USSR began its concerted effort to achieve international

sports supremacy. Soviet rifleman Anatoli Bogdanov was the best rifle shooter in the world in the 1950s when he won two Olympic gold medals and six World Championships. This was at the height of the Cold War and USA Shooting leaders decided to answer the Soviet challenge by forming the U. S. Army Marksmanship Unit that was authorized by President Eisenhower in 1956. A primary USAMU mission was to win medals for the USA in Olympic and international

competitions. That endeavor paid big dividends when Army dominated USA teams enjoyed great successes in the 1964, 1968, 1972 and 1976 Olympics behind gold medal wins by Lones Wigger, Gary Anderson, Jack Writer, Lanny Bassham and Don Haldeman.

A USA shooter pioneered in what was probably the most important change in Olympic Shooting history. Margaret Murdock became the first woman in history to win an Olympic Shooting medal when she tied Bassham in the 1976 50m 3x40 rifle event only to finish second after the tie breaker. While Murdock and a small number of other women were successful in so-called "mixed" event competitions, it became clear that equal opportunities for women to participate in Olympic Shooting would only come when there were separate women's events in Shooting. Women's events were introduced in the 1984 Games and, fittingly, Patty Spurgin of the USA became the first gold medal winner



Margaret Murdock, USA, became the first woman to win an Olympic medal in Shooting when she finished second behind Lanny Bassham, USA in 1976. Murdock's successes were a major impetus in decisions to include separate women's events in Olympic Shooting.



Marine Corps marksman Morris Fisher became one of the first great USA Olympic Shooting heroes by winning 300m rifle gold medals in 1920 and 1924.

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Kim Rhode, USA, displays her third Olympic gold medal and 5th Olympic medal after with the 2012 Skeet event. The silver medalist was Wei Ning, China. The bronze medalist was Danka Bartekova, Slovakia. 2012 Olympic athletes elected Bartekova to be a member of the International Olympic Committee.

in the new 10m Air Rifle Women event.

After the Olympic world realized that the USA boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics and the USSR boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics were failures caused by futile efforts to inject politics into the

Olympics, the Games returned to a more stable course where more and more nations sought to achieve Olympic success. With new women's and air gun events, Shooting spread to many more countries to become a true world sport. Many nations emerged as Shooting powers in the post-1984 period. The great USSR machine was broken up into former Soviet republic teams in 1992, but Russia remained a dominant power. A reunified Germany relied on the world's strongest shooting club system to become a major player. Italy became surprisingly strong, first in shotgun, but also in rifle and pistol. China and Korea both poured tremendous resources into Shooting to become two of the strongest Shooting nations. China led the Shooting medal count in 2000 and 2008; Korea was the leading country in 2012.

A big change in the USA occurred in the 1990s when the USOC decided that the National Rifle Association

no longer fulfilled the requirements of federal law and the USOC Constitution and created a new National Governing Body for Olympic Shooting, USA Shooting. With support from USOC, thousands of direct mail donors, sponsors, USAMU and NCAA college rifle teams, USA Shooting continued to develop strong Olympic Teams that finished second in the medal counts in both 2008 and 2012.

New USA champions emerged in the most recent Games including double gold medalist Vince Hancock and triple gold medalist Kim Rhode. Rhode is one of only three athletes in Olympic history to have won three individual gold medals. She is also the first woman athlete to win medals in five consecutive Olympics.

USA OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALISTS SINCE 1948

Art Cook	Rifle	1948
Joe Benner	Pistol	1952
Bill McMillan	Pistol	1960
Gary Anderson	Rifle	1964
Lones Wigger	Rifle	1964
Gary Anderson	Rifle	1968
Lones Wigger	Rifle	1972
John Writer	Rifle	1972
Lanny Bassham	Rifle	1976
Don Haldeman	Shotgun	1976
Pat Spurgin	Rifle	1984
Ed Etzel	Rifle	1984
Matt Dryke	Shotgun	1984
Launi Meili	Rifle	1992
Kim Rhode	Shotgun	1996
Nancy Johnson	Rifle	2000
Matt Emmons	Rifle	2004
Kim Rhode	Shotgun	2004
Vince Hancock	Shotgun	2008
Glenn Eller	Shotgun	2008
Kim Rhode	Shotgun	2012
Vince Hancock	Shotgun	2012
Jamie Gray	Rifle	2012

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The Olympic Path for Junior Athletes

START HERE
USAS PRELIMINARY TRY-OUTS / SANCTIONED MATCHES
USAS STATE JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS
NATIONAL USAS JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS
USAS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS
OLYMPIC SELECTION PROCEDURE
USAS OLYMPIC TRIALS
OLYMPIC GAMES

USA Shooting
www.usashooting.org

Download this poster from the USA Shooting website at
<http://www.usashooting.org/library/images/YouthPrograms/USAshootingposter.jpg> and use it to explain the Olympic path to team members.

How Can Junior Programs Benefit from the Olympics?

For junior coaches, leaders and parents, the first step in realizing the benefits that the Olympics offer is education. Every youth who joins the program should know that they can take special pride in their sport because it is an Olympic sport. Dedicate time during team sessions to provide information about Olympic Shooting events and history. Ask them to select names from the list of USA Olympic gold medalists and prepare short reports on them.

Be sure to introduce the “Olympic possibility” to team members. Young people should know that if they are willing to adopt a serious training program where they work incredibly hard and seek lots of quality competitions they can advance along what is called the “Olympic path.” USA Shooting offers a downloadable poster that explains the successive steps young shooters must progress through to achieve Olympic excellence.

When young shooters buy into the Olympic dream they become part of a culture of striving for excellence. Olympic athletes’ personal stories teach Olympic values. IOC and USOC educational programs stress values like joy through effort, mutual understanding, non-discrimination and fair play. Olympic sports lead the world in the fight to prevent doping and using artificial means to improve sports results. Youth in Olympic sports benefit from links with the youth of the world that are not conditioned by discrimination, religion, race or political ideology.

Working with youth who are trying to excel has its own special challenges for coaches and parents. The path is never straight. There are lots of curves, roadblocks and detours that require corrective approaches. Youth leaders must apply code words like joy; hard work won’t continue unless youth are also having fun. Dealing with misfortune and defeats offer great teaching moments. A key virtue is perseverance; hard work often does not produce immediate results.

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OLYMPIC SHOOTING EVENTS 2016				
Event	M/W	Qualification	Advance	Final
10m Air Rifle	Men	60 shots standing	8	20 shots standing
10m Air Rifle	Women	40 shots standing	8	20 shots standing
50m Rifle Prone	Men	60 shots prone	8	20 shots prone
50m Rifle 3-Positions	Men	40 shots kneeling 40 shots prone 40 shots standing	8	15 shots kneeling 15 shots prone 15 shots standing
50m Rifle 3-Positions	Women	20 shots kneeling 20 shots prone 20 shots standing	8	15 shots kneeling 15 shots prone 15 shots standing
10m Air Pistol	Men	60 shots	8	20 shots
10m Air Pistol	Women	40 shots	8	20 shots
50m Pistol	Men	60 shots	8	20 shots
25m Pistol	Women	30 shots precision 30 shots rapid-fire	8/4 to medal matches	25 shots plus 2 medal matches scored in points
25m Rapid Fire Pistol	Men	2x5 shots in 8 seconds 2x5 shots in 6 seconds	6	8x5 shots; all in 4 seconds
		2x5 shots in 4 seconds		
Skeet	Men	125 targets on stations 1-8	6/4 to medal matches	4x4 shots on stations 3-4-5 plus 4x4 shots in each medal match
Skeet	Women	75 targets on stations 1-8	6/4 to medal matches	4x4 shots on stations 3-4-5 plus 4x4 shots in each medal match
Double Trap	Men	5 x 15 doubles, 150 targets	6/4 to medal matches	15 doubles plus 15 doubles in each medal match
Trap	Men	125 targets	6/4 to medal matches	15 targets plus 15 targets in each medal match
Trap	Women	75 targets	6/4 to medal matches	15 targets plus 15 targets in each medal match

There is a haunting concern that only a small handful of athletes from among thousands will ever stand on Olympic podiums. Coaches must be prepared to answer questions about whether pursuing an Olympic dream is realistic. But those who have lived the dream say it is OK to dream and it is OK to strive for excellence. Whether that effort ever leads to marching in an Olympic ceremony or standing on a victory podium, the life lessons that come from the process of striving for excellence yield fantastic lifetime memories and lifetime habits of trying to be better at whatever we do.

Too often, and most unfortunately, the media and television see the result of each Olympic competition as one winner and many losers. But we must remember what Baron de Coubertin said, "The most important thing in life is not the triumph, but the struggle." Everyone who pursues the Olympic dream can be a winner.

About the Author

Gary Anderson, Director of Civilian Marksmanship Emeritus, retired as the full-time CMP Director at the close of 2009. He continues to work with CMP as the senior marksmanship instructor. He won two Olympic gold medals, seven World Championships and 16 National Championships during his competition career. He is a Vice President of the International Shooting Sports Federation, Past President of USA Shooting, a former Nebraska State Senator and was one of the two Olympic Games Technical Delegates for Shooting during the 2012 Olympic Games in London. In June, 2012, the International Olympic Committee awarded Gary Anderson the IOC's highest honor, the Olympic Order "for outstanding services to the Olympic Movement."

Photo courtesy of the ISSF.

