



*Olympic Games  
Track and Field*



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

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# Olympic Games

## Track and Field

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site of the 1990 U.S. Olympic Festival*

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Dallas, Texas*

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Olympic track and field, the subject of this U.S. stamp, consists of a variety of running, walking, jumping, and throwing competitions. It is the oldest form of organized sport, dating back to the early Egyptians and several Asian civilizations.

The Greeks gave enormous impetus to the sport. Track and field contests were an integral part of religious festivals. The very first event of the ancient Olympics was the "stade," a sprint of just over 200 yards. Field events including the discus throw, javelin throw, and

long jump were added to the Games in 708 B.C.

Men's track and field events have been an important part of the Olympic roster since the revival of the Games in 1896. Women's events were added in 1928. The sport ranks alongside soccer as one of the two most popular athletic pursuits in the world. Olympic gold medalists have come from many countries, including nations newly emerging in Olympic competition such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Because of the different training requirements for the various events, most Olympians are specialists in one of the four major disciplines of the sport. Competing in both track and field is unusual, and rarer still is becoming a champion in both categories. At the 1936 and 1984 Games, two Americans wrote their names in the record books by winning four track and field gold medals—three in running events and one in the long jump.