

= Rugby union at the Summer Olympics =

Rugby union has been a men 's medal sport at the modern Summer Olympic Games , being played at four of the first seven competitions . The sport debuted at the 1900 Paris games where the gold medal was won by the host nation . It was subsequently featured at the London games in 1908 , the Antwerp games in 1920 and the Paris games in 1924 . The United States is the most successful nation in Olympic rugby tournaments , having won the gold medal in both 1920 and 1924 ; France has the most medals , one gold (in 1900) and two silvers (in 1920 and 1924) .

Shortly after the 1924 games , the International Olympic Committee (IOC) dropped rugby union as an Olympic sport . Since then there have been numerous attempts to bring the sport back to the Olympic programme . In October 2009 the IOC voted at its session in Copenhagen to include the sevens version of the sport in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro . The event made its debut in an Olympic programme at the 2014 Summer Youth Olympics .

= = Inclusion = =

The sport was introduced by Pierre de Coubertin , who is famous for reviving the modern Olympics . He also helped to establish rugby in France , refereeing the first domestic French club championship in 1892 and France 's first international , on New Year 's Day , 1906 , at Parc des Princes . Coubertin formed the IOC in 1894 , but rugby union was not featured until the II Olympiad .

= = = 1900 = = =

Three National Olympic Committees (NOCs) , France , Germany and Great Britain , entered teams at the 1900 games . The German and British teams were not national teams in the current sense of the word : Moseley Wanderers RFC represented Great Britain and the Frankfurt Club represented Germany . Rules were also different from today 's ; 3 points , not 5 , were awarded for tries and 4 , not 3 , were given for a drop goal . Also , 4 points were awarded for a goal from mark , which would be reduced to 3 points in 1905 and eliminated completely in 1977 . Points for penalties and conversions , 3 and 2 respectively , were the same as in the modern game .

France won the gold , beating Great Britain 27 points to 8 and defeating Germany 27 points to 17 . Other sources list the German team as second , because of the points difference , but no such determination was made in 1900 . 6 @, @ 000 people watched the game between France and Great Britain , which was the largest crowd at the games . Constantin Henriquez , a player on the French team , is the first known coloured athlete to compete in the Olympic Games .

= = = 1908 = = =

Rugby union was not played at the 1904 games in St. Louis , nor at the 1906 Intercalated Games , but was included in 1908 , when the Olympics were held in the sport 's native country . The Rugby Football Union (RFU) was involved in the organization of the sport at this edition of the Olympics . Like the 1900 games , three teams entered : Australasia (representing Australia and New Zealand) , France , and hosts Great Britain (which included the whole of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland) . France pulled out prior to the commencement of the tournament , being unable to field a representative team . Australasia was represented by the Wallabies , who were already on tour in Britain . As the best English and Welsh players were on tour in New Zealand at the time , Great Britain was represented by the Cornwall county team , who were chosen by the RFU as an appropriate side after they defeated Durham in the 1907 English county championship . The choice of Cornwall was controversial , as only three of their players had ever represented England and the Wallabies had defeated them 18 points to five .

As expected , Australasia defeated Great Britain , claiming the gold medal , the score being 32 points to three . The match at the White City Stadium was played under poor conditions , in fog and

on a slippery field . Two of the Australian team members would later win another Olympic gold medal . Danny Carroll would win another rugby gold with the United States in 1920 , while Sydney Middleton would win a gold medal in rowing at the 1912 Games , where rugby was not on the programme . The sport also failed to appear on the provisional schedule of the 1916 Summer Olympics , which were cancelled due to World War I.

== 1920 ==

A campaign to send an American side to the 1920 games in Antwerp started in California after a Berkeley rugby union touring party returned from British Columbia undefeated in 1920 . The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) granted permission for entry . A pool of players from Stanford , Berkeley , and Santa Clara made up the squad . 1908 champion Danny Carroll , a player @-@ coach at Stanford at the time , was the team 's most prominent member . When the U.S. arrived in Antwerp , the Czechoslovakian and Romanian teams had withdrawn , leaving only France and the United States . The English RFU had decided not to enter a team , so as not to interfere with the start of the English domestic season .

The only match was played in rain in front of around 20 @,@ 000 spectators . The U.S. , featuring many players new to the sport of rugby , caused a shock by winning the only match eight points to zero , all points being scored in the second half . One of the U.S. team members , Morris Kirksey , took home two more medals from Antwerp , finishing second to Charles Paddock in the 100 meters dash , and anchoring the winning 4 x 100 meters relay team .

== 1924 ==

The sport was again included in the subsequent 1924 games in Paris . The USOC decided to send a team in order to defend their gold medal . Along with the U.S. and the host nation , Romania entered . The American team was again made up of mainly Californian players , seven of whom were members of the 1920 team . The U.S. squad departed on a seven @-@ day voyage to England on an ocean liner from New York City .

The U.S. defeated Romania 37 to 0 in front of a crowd of 6 @,@ 000 . France then defeated Romania 61 to 3 and entered the final game as favorites . The gold medal game was played on 18 May in front of 21 @,@ 000 spectators at the Colombes venue , which had a large wire fence built around the field for the game . The U.S. defeated France 17 to 3 , becoming the only team to win gold twice in the sport . At the final whistle the pitch was invaded and the French team , aided by the police , did their best to protect their opponents . The medal ceremony took place with police protection ? gold for the U.S. , silver for France , and bronze for Romania .

Rare vintage footage of the 1924 Gold Medal match was included in the rugby documentary , A Giant Awakens : the Rise of American Rugby . 6 + +

== Exclusion ==

The pitch invasion at the 1924 Paris Olympics had given rugby a poor image and this , together with the problems of attracting sufficient teams to make it a viable sport and the desire to include more individual and women 's events , spelled the death knell for rugby at the Olympics .

Baron Pierre De Coubertin stepped down as head of the Olympic Movement after 1925 and with his departure the sport lost one of its major advocates . In 1928 the IOC turned down a request to stage rugby at the Amsterdam games . An exhibition tournament was held at the 1936 Berlin Games , with France , Germany , Italy and Romania competing . In what was , to date , the last rugby match played at the Olympics , France beat Germany in the final 19 to 14 .

In 1976 , 22 African countries and Guyana boycotted the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal , after their demand to have New Zealand excluded was not met . A New Zealand rugby team had toured South Africa , which had been banned from the Olympics since 1964 because of its apartheid politics . Rugby union not being an Olympic sport , the IOC declined to exclude New Zealand .

= = Efforts for re @-@ inclusion = =

Italy in 1960 , the Soviet Union in 1980 , and South Korea in 1988 made requests to have rugby union brought back . The 1980 request did not pass , and the 1988 games came close but failed to see the sport 's admission , which was backed by the International Rugby Football Board (now , World Rugby (WR)) .

Apart from supporting the individual host cities ' requests , the IRB did not focus its own efforts on returning the sport to the Olympics until the early 1990s , when efforts began to reunite the two movements with a series of informal meetings between the then IRB Secretary , Keith Rowlands , and the British Olympic Association Secretary , Dick Palmer . In 1994 , when Vernon Pugh QC of Wales was elected Chairman of the IRB , the march towards Olympic recognition began in earnest . Pugh convinced the IRB Council that Olympic membership ? initially as a non @-@ participation sport ? would be beneficial to rugby and offer the IRB member unions membership of their National Olympic Committees . Many European Federations , such as France , Italy and Romania , had been members of their National Olympic Committees for decades . The demand to get rugby back in the Olympics mounted as more rugby nations from Africa , Asia , Oceania and the Americas joined the IRB , because it was a sport seen as providing a realistic medal opportunity for a number of smaller nations .

A significant step in the process of acceptance back into the Olympic Movement was achieved at a ceremony held in Cardiff in November 1994 , when the IRB was officially confirmed as a Recognised International Federation of the IOC . At that ceremony , International Olympic Committee President , Juan Antonio Samaranch , pointed out that rugby 's history and values were very much in tune with the Olympic philosophy and traditions . This historic meeting in Cardiff led to IRB representation at annual IOC meetings and consideration for inclusion in the programme of future Olympic Games . In 2002 , a plan was presented to induct rugby sevens , golf and the Chinese martial art of wushu .

Sevens was one of five sports that submitted a proposal to the IOC at a meeting in Singapore for inclusion in the 2012 games . The IOC stated that no sport would be added unless others were dropped . The IRB was confident that the sport would finally be included in the official Olympic programme . However , the selection of two sports out of the five nominees as potential 2012 sports went to squash and karate , as determined by a voting procedure .

Most recently , rugby sevens competed with golf for two available spaces in the 2016 Olympics . The final decision was made at the IOC Session in Copenhagen in October 2009 . The IRB used a number of high @-@ profile people and events to influence the IOC to include sevens at the 2016 games . In March 2009 , two senior delegates from the IOC attended the Rugby World Cup Sevens in Dubai at the invitation of the IRB . The event attracted 78 @,@ 000 fans over the three days and saw Wales crowned Men 's World Champions and Australia won the first ever Women 's World Cup .

Along with the World Cup , the IRB enlisted some of rugby 's biggest names to assist in the bid . In March 2009 , Jonah Lomu and Lawrence Dallaglio were announced as ambassadors for the bid and in April 2009 Waisale Serevi was unveiled as an ambassador to coincide with the Oceania National Olympic Committees ' general assembly . May 2009 saw the IRB announce that they would drop the Rugby World Cup Sevens in order to improve the chances of the sport being included . The benefit of this move would be to make the Olympics the premier event in international rugby sevens .

As well as rugby sevens , baseball and softball , which were dropped from the Olympic programme in 2005 , karate , squash , golf and roller sports (inline speed skating) were all seeking to be included in the 2016 games and leaders of the seven sports made formal presentations to the IOC executive board in June 2009 . A new system was in place at this session in which a sport now needs only a simple majority rather than the two @-@ thirds majority that was required before .

On 13 August 2009 it was announced that the IOC executive board was recommending rugby sevens for inclusion in the 2016 Olympic Games and on 9 October 2009 the full IOC , at its 121st IOC Session in Copenhagen , voted to include Rugby Sevens in the 2016 games .

Separate competitions for men and women will be held , using a similar format to the existing IRB Sevens World Series . The IRB had originally proposed including 12 teams of each sex , the same number as other team ball sports events . During the IRB 's presentation at the IOC Session , two IOC members asked why only 12 teams were included . IRB Chief Executive Mike Miller responded , " We followed the guidance of the Executive Members of the IOC , but if the IOC feels we should have more teams , we will add more . "

= = Results = =

= = = Games = = =

= = = Cumulative = = =

= = Nations = =

Only players who participated in at least one match are counted .

= = Notable rugby players involved in the Olympics = =

A number in other fields have also been notable rugby players , these include :

Pierre de Coubertin , founder of the modern Olympics , was a rugby fan and referee of the first ever French championship rugby union final on 20 March 1892 between Racing Club de France and Stade Français .

Jean Bouin , France and track events .

Stan Harris

Eric Liddell , Scotland and track events .

Chris MacKintosh

Heather Moyse , Canada and gold in Olympic bobsleigh .

James Cecil Parke , Ireland and track events (also represented Ireland in cricket and golf , and as well as competing at Wimbledon and in the Davis Cup)

Noel Purcell , Ireland and gold in Olympic water polo ? the first Olympic internationalist to represent two countries , Great Britain and the Irish Free State .

David Robertson (golfer)

Jacques Rogge , Belgium international and former IOC president .

Constantin Henriquez , Haitian rugby player who won gold for France .

Attie van Heerden

Danny Crates , who has carried the torch twice at the Olympics , and is a notable Paralympian , also plays competitive rugby .

Kevin O 'Flanagan , Ireland international . Represented Ireland on the International Olympic Committee

Victor Costello , who competed for Ireland in the shot put at the 1992 Games in Barcelona before winning 39 caps for the Ireland rugby union team .