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How did the Olympic Games begin?



The Greeks loved sport and the Olympic Games were the biggest sporting event in the ancient calendar.

The Olympic Games began over 2,700 years ago in Olympia, in south west Greece. Every four years, around 50,000 people came from all over the Greek world to watch and take part. The ancient games were also a religious festival, held in honour of Zeus, the king of the gods.

There were no gold, silver and bronze medals. Winners were given a wreath of leaves and a hero's welcome back home. Athletes competed for the glory of their city and winners were seen as being touched by the gods.



Married women were not allowed at the Olympic Games. However, one story tells of a mother so keen to see her son compete that she broke the no-women rule and got in disguised as a man.