

MEN

GENERAL

Football featured at the Olympics for the 21st time in Athens in summer 2004. Apart from the war years in 1940 and 1944, and in 1932 when the IOC and FIFA failed to agree on amateur regulations, football has been an Olympic sport at every Games since 1908, the very first Men's Olympic Football Tournament run under FIFA auspices.

A total of 78 associations have sent teams to the men's Olympic football tournament. For some of them, it has marked a rare appearance at an official FIFA finals. Ireland Republic, for example, were present in 1924 and 1948, while the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania took part in 1924, but have yet to appear in a FIFA tournament since regaining independence at the beginning of the 1990s. India competed at every Games from 1948 to 1960, while the 1952 tournament featured the Netherlands Antilles for the first and only time. Indonesia appeared at the Olympics in 1956. The 1972 Games in West Germany saw a duel between two teams making their first (and to date only) finals appearances: Burma (now Myanmar) beat Sudan 2-0 after narrow defeats to Mexico and the Soviet Union to end with a highly commendable goal difference of zero. Venezuela made a single appearance at the Moscow Games in 1980.

For close on four decades, the Olympic football tournament was the zenith of amateur football. Professionals of all nations were permitted to take part from 1992 onwards. The rules state players must be aged under 23, with the exception of three so-called over-age players.

This momentous change in 1992 led to a decisive shift in the balance of power. Poland's silver in Barcelona was the last medal won by the previously dominant East European associations.

Italy lead the way with 13 appearances, but they have claimed gold only once, in 1936.

Hungary is the most successful nation in the history of the Olympic football tournament with three gold medals, in 1952, 1964 and 1968, a silver in 1972 and bronze in 1960. Few observers doubt there would have been a medal in 1956 to complete an unbroken run lasting two decades had it not been for the tragic circumstances of the 1956 uprising. Three nations boast a brace of tournament triumphs: Great Britain claimed gold in 1908 and 1912 before Uruguay repeated the feat of defending a maiden title in 1924 and 1928. The Soviet Union emerged triumphant in 1956 and 1988.

Denmark and Yugoslavia have earned a reputation as perennial runners-up: both have collected silver on three occasions, while the Netherlands and the Soviet Union have three bronze medals apiece.

At the second tournament in 1912, Great Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands took to the podium - exactly the same three teams in exactly the same order as at the first-ever contest.

In contrast to the FIFA World Cup™, European nations have dominated the Olympic football tournament, claiming 16 of the 20 gold medals awarded to date.

Uruguay are the only South American representatives to have won gold, but since their second triumph in 1928 more than 75 years ago, they have failed to qualify for the tournament.

Olympic football is the only official FIFA trophy still missing from Brazil's collection. Brazil have silver medals from 1984 and 1988 and bronze from 1996 to show for 10 attempts at the title - and the 11th will have to wait until Peking 2008 at least.

Just as African nations began to shine in FIFA youth tournaments, the continent's representatives benefited from the 1992 change in age regulations. Nigeria claimed gold in 1996 against Argentina before Cameroon defeated Spain in 2000.

The hosts have only triumphed on three occasions: Great Britain in 1908, Belgium in 1920 and Spain in 1992.

Belgium's victory in 1920 was overshadowed when Czechoslovakia walked off the pitch after half an hour in protest at what they saw as biased refereeing. Czechoslovakia are the only team to be disqualified in the history of Olympic football.

1928 remains the sole occasion in which a replay was necessary to decide the destination of the medals. Uruguay and Argentina drew 1-1 after extra time, before the Uruguayans battled to a 2-1 victory three days later.

Cameroon's triumph in 2000 was the first and only time the winners have been decided in a penalty shoot-out. Athens 2004 saw another first-ever achievement when Argentina won gold without conceding a single goal.

Fate has been unkind to the host nation in the three of the most recent tournaments. The USA (1996) and Greece (2004) were knocked out at the group stage, while Australia finished last in their group in 2000.

The record attendance at an Olympic football match remains the third place play-off between Mexico and Japan at the Azteca stadium in 1968 (105,000), although the 2000 Final at Sydney's Stadium

Australia fell not far short with some 104,000 packed into the ground.

MATCHES, PLAYERS, VICTORIES, GOALS

Italy, the nation with the most appearances, have also played the most games, winning 30, drawing 5 and losing 22 of their 57 matches.

With 27 wins, Hungary come a close second to Italy, although the East Europeans proved considerably more effective, claiming three gold medals, a silver and a bronze between 1952 and 1972.

Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro since February 2003) are the most prolific scorers in tournament history on 118 goals, one ahead of Italy.

The 2004 Final, Argentina vs Paraguay, was the first all-South American final in the Olympic Football Tournament since 1928 (i.e. never after the FIFA World Cup was established had there been a South American encounter in the Final. Athens also bore witness to the first Asian team (Iraq) to qualify for the semi-finals since Japan took bronze in 1968.

Denmark's Nils Middleboe scored the first-ever Olympic football goal against France on 9 October 1908. Denmark's 9-0 victory included the first Olympic hat-trick as Vilhelm Wolfhagen ran up a total of four goals.

Wolfhagen scored another four goals in the second match of the 1908 tournament and remains the only player to perform this feat. However, his achievement is overshadowed by that of fellow-countryman Sophus Nielsen who scored no less than 10 times on the same day, a record at the Olympics and any FIFA finals, and one he shares with Germany's Gottfried Fuchs who struck 10 times against Russia in 1912.

The matches in question, Denmark's 17-1 defeat of France and Germany's 16-0 triumph over Russia, are the biggest margins of victory and highest scoring matches in tournament history.

Two players share the accolade of leading scorer at an Olympic football tournament: Sophus Nielsen (Denmark) and Antal Dunai (Hungary) lead the way on 13 goals. Dunai's fellow-countryman Ferenc Bene scored 12 goals in the 1964 tournament, paving the way for Hungary's march to the gold medal.

Around a dozen players from Uruguay (Olympics 1924 and 1928, FIFA World Cup 1930) and Italy (FIFA World Cup 1934 and 1938, Olympics 1936) won both Olympic gold and the Jules Rimet trophy. England's 1966 FIFA World Cup triumph came more than half a century after Britain's Olympic football gold, and France also added a FIFA World Cup title to Olympic glory, the 1998 triumph on home soil

following gold at the 1984 Los Angeles Games. The 1954 "Miracle of Bern" prevented the majestic Hungarian side of the Fifties from achieving the feat.

Hungary's Dezsö Novak is the single most successful player with three Olympic medals: bronze in 1960, and gold in 1964 and 1968.

No striker has finished leading scorer at both the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup. Some of the goal-getters at the Olympics since 1984 have gone on to become some of the biggest stars in world football: Romario, Zamorano, Bebeto, Crespo, Dobrovolski, Ronaldo, Kiko...

Tenema Ndiaye, who scored three goals against the Korea Republic in Athens 2004, and tournament top scorer Carlos Tevez are in good company: in the last 20 years, only eleven players have managed to score a hat-trick in an Olympic game, among them Juergen Klinsmann, Bebeto, Romario and Zamorano.

Four players share the distinction of scoring at least once in five consecutive games: Igor Dobrovolski (URS, 1988), Ottmar Hitzfeld (FRG, 1972), Milan Galic (YUG, 1960) and Adolfo Baloncieri (ITA, 1928), although only Dobrovolski ended up with a gold medal.

No less than seven players have scored in the very first minute of a match. Ferenc Puskas was the first in the 1952 meeting between Hungary and Sweden, while the USA's Claudio Reyna was the most recent with his early strike against Argentina in 1996. In between times the roll of honour reads: Uribe (PER, 1960 vs FRA), Galic (YUG, 1960 vs DEN), Streich (GDR, 1972 vs COL), Seminov (URS, 1972 vs MAR), Bommer (FRG 1984, vs YUG).

Of the 26 own goals, three have gone against Spain, the most recent proving pivotal. In the 2000 Final, Spain led 2-0 but Ivan Amaya's unlucky own goal offered Cameroon a way back and the Africans duly equalised before claiming the title on penalties. The most recent own goal in the Olympic finals came from Portugal's Fernando Meira in the 68' of his country's group match against Costa Rica. The Central Americans went on to win 4-2.

The youngest-ever medallist is Ghana's Sammy Kuffour, not yet 16 when he collected bronze in 1992. Idris Kameni, Cameroon's outstanding goalkeeper in 2000, won gold at the age of 16 years and 7 months, whereas Sweden's 1952 bronze-medal winner Erik Nilsson was more than twice as old at nearly 36. Before the war, Nilsson had appeared against Brazil at the 1938 FIFA World Cup.



FIFA

For the Good of the Game

WOMEN

GENERAL

Athens 2004 hosted the third Women's Olympic Football Tournament. The event was introduced at the 1996 Games in Atlanta.

The Women's Olympic Football Tournament is regarded as a 'Masters' of sorts, as some continents still choose their Olympic representatives based on results at the FIFA Women's World Cup™.

The first two events stipulated players must be at least 16 years old, but that rule was scrapped for Athens.

The 2004 event was the first to feature 10 teams, while the 2008 version in Peking is likely to see a field of 12. Since 1999, 16 nations have competed for the FIFA Women's World Cup.

A total of 12 associations have sent teams to the Women's Olympic football Tournament, five of them qualifying for all three events: Germany, Sweden, China PR, USA and Brazil.

Nigeria represented Africa, and Australia were Oceania's qualifier in 2000. Both repeated the achievement in 2004. Brazil are the only team to have represented South America at all three women's Olympic Football Tournaments.

Norway and the USA claimed medals in both 1996 and 2000. USA went on to take their second Olympic gold in 2004, leaving their golden oldies (Hamm, Lilly, Foudy) with a brace of titles – 2 Olympic golds (1996, 2004), an Olympic silver (2000), and two FIFA World Cups (1991, 1999).

Brazil and the USA have reached the semi-finals in all three events to date, while the USA are the only team to have appeared in all three Finals.

The USA is the only nation to have won a medal at all FIFA Women's World Cups and Women's Olympic Football Tournaments, and held both titles simultaneously in 1999.

No reigning world champions have claimed Olympic gold. Norway won the silver medal in 1996, and the USA were defeated in the 2000 Final.

The record crowd for a women's Olympic football match is likely to stand for some time. The Stanford Stadium in Athens, Georgia, was packed with 76,000 fans to watch the USA defeat China in 1996.

MATCHES, PLAYERS, VICTORIES, GOALS

No women's team has won all its matches at a Women's Olympic Football Tournament, while Denmark and Japan (1996) and Nigeria (2000) lost every game.

The golden goal ruling has now been abolished, but two games at a Women's Olympic Football Tournament have been decided by this method, both of them featuring the USA and Norway. In the 1996 semi-final MacMillan's golden goal saw the USA through, and four years later Dagny Mellgren sealed gold for Norway.

The highest-scoring match was Germany's 8-0 victory over China PR in 2004, also the highest goal total for a single team and simultaneously the biggest margin of victory. Second was Greece's 7-0 defeat at the hands of Brazil in 2004. This was Brazil's first FIFA Final in a women's competition. Brazil won Olympic silver in 2004, having lost two Bronze medal matches in 1996 and 2000.

Birgit Prinz of Germany, the leading scorer at the FIFA Women's World Cup 2003™, carried her record over to the Olympic Games, ruling the roost with a whopping total of 9 goals. Behind her on 8 goals is Brazil's Pretinha, followed USA's Hamm and Milbrett, both on 5 goals, and Sun Wen of China PR (also with 5 goals) despite not having participated in the 2004 tournament.

The women's Olympic Football Tournament has borne witness to just two hattricks to date, both scored in Athens 2004: goal-getter Prinz (GER) sealed the first one against China PR, while Brazil's Cristiane claimed the second hattrick against hosts Greece.

The fastest Olympic goal belongs to Germany's Pia Wunderlich who scored in the first minute of the meeting with Brazil in 1996.

The youngest scorer in the history of the women's OFT was Brazil's Martha, who played in Athens 2004 aged 18 years and 6 months. USA's Lilly was the oldest scorer in that tournament, aged 33 years and 1 month. But Sweden's Lena Videkull remains the oldest goalscorer over all when she found the net at the age of 33 years and seven months in Atlanta 1996.

Joy Fawcett, the oldest player in Athens 2004 at 36 years of age, is the all-time leading women's football Olympian with 16 matches and 1540 minutes played, closely followed by teammates Kristine Lilly, Julie Foudy (also 16 matches) and Mia Hamm (15 matches, 1366 minutes). All of them have participated in all women's OFTs. This applies to

another three US players: Cindy Parlow, Brandi Chastain, Briana Scurry.

The oldest player to date is Brazil's goalkeeper Meg, a 40 year-old when she took part in the third-place play-off in 1996. Fellow countrywoman Daniela is the youngest player after making her debut in 2000 aged 16 years and eight months.

The oldest medal-winner is Norway's Heidi Støre, aged 33 years and one month in 1996, while the youngest is American Cyndi Parlow at just 18 years and one month in the same tournament.