Olympic Games Essay, Research Paper

The first Olympic games took place in the ancient civilization Greece. Like today, they were brutal competitions of skill and athleticism. In Greece the Olympics were thought as the ultimate in. They were not looked at as being merely a sport, but life. Today however, we do not see them as such. The Olympics are still very important To be in the Olympics and succeed is still the life goal of many athletes. Today people compete in the Olympics for the honor of their country, on a team; whereas a long time ago people fought only for the purpose of bringing glory and success to themselves. The original Olympics included a mere six event categories: boxing, equestrian events, pankration, pentathlon, running, and wrestling.

The fighting games of ancient Greece, boxing, and the pankration, and wrestling were violent sports. The original boxing had no rules. One could do whatever they wanted to beat their opponent, even biting was acceptable. They did not even have boxing gloves, instead the Greeks would protect their hands by wrapping them with leather strips called himantes. The way a man won was to have the other opponent admit that he lost, or beat his opponent until he could no longer get up. The pankration had more rules regarding the way one treated their partner, but was inherently more violent. This competition was a combination of wrestling and boxing. It was very dangerous and the fighters were not even permitted to use the himantes to protect their hands. In this competition biting, gouging of eyes, punching in the nose, or hitting mouth with fingernails were all against the rules. There were, however, still no rules against things like kicking in the stomach, or hitting your opponent when they were already down. Wrestling had the most rules. It had most of the rules of today. A wrestler was required to throw his partner down correctly on either the back or hip and things like biting were not permitted. However, things like breaking fingers were considered entirely acceptable.

The equestrian events, all of which no longer take place in the modern Olympic games, were broken up into the two subcategorizes of chariot racing and riding. Chariot racing had three competitions: the two horse race, the 4 horse race, and the two mule race. Held outside of the stadium, the all of the chariot races consisted of 12 laps each, or nine miles. The riding competition was very similar. Instead of taking place outside of the stadium, the riding (or jockeying) events were inside and took a total of six laps, 4.5 miles, to complete. There were two riding events, one for full grown horses, and one for foals.

People also raced each other. There were four different racing events with laps measured in stadium lengths, or one stade. There was the short 1 stade (192 m) race, the 2 stade (384 m), and the long distance 24 stade (4,608 m) race. Even harder than the long distance race, was the 4 stade. Although this race as only 768 m it was extremely difficult because the competitors ran in full armor weighing up to 60 pounds.

The pentathlon was a combination event made up of five different competitions designed to test an athlete’s endurance. These competitions were discus and javelin throwing, jumping, and the aforementioned wrestling and running. The discus was usually made up by either stone, iron, bronze, or lead and differed in size between the men and boy’s competitions since boys were not expected to carry as much. The javelin was a long stick the height of a man, with a sharp point on one end, and a leather strap in the middle for throwing. The jumping competition of the Greeks was exactly the same as that of the long jump competition of today. The only difference in the two was that the Greeks received large stones, called halters to hold so that they would travel farther forward.