

OLYMPICS

PREVIEW



By John Sucich
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When the Opening Ceremony takes place Aug. 5, Rio de Janeiro will become the first South American city to host the Olympics. Brazil has been in the news for all the wrong reasons leading up to the Summer Games – health concerns, political problems and Olympic venue construction issues, to name a few – but for the duration of the Games the world will see the beauty that resulted in Rio de Janeiro’s selection back in 2009 to host these Games.

Here’s what you need to know about the city that will host athletes from the more than 200 member nations of the International Olympic Committee:

PHOTOS: PIXABAY.COM

The Rio 2016 Olympics

When: Aug. 5-21

Where: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Time difference: Rio is on BRT, or Brasilia Time, which is one hour ahead of Eastern Daylight Time. Most events air starting at 7 a.m. EDT, 6 a.m. Central.

How to watch: TV coverage begins on NBC with the opening ceremony the evening of Friday, Aug. 5. NBC will have primetime and late-night coverage each day of the games, and sister channels like USA Network and NBC Sports will carry daytime coverage. All events will also be live-streamed at NBCOlympics.com and on the NBC Sports Live Extra app.

WELCOME TO RIO

A look at the Olympics’ first South American host city

History

- Rio de Janeiro was founded by Portuguese navigators exploring Brazil who misnamed Guanabara Bay, thinking the bay was the opening of a river; 2015 marked 450 years since the city’s founding.
- The official name of the city is “Cidade de São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro.” It is named after St. Sebastian and Dom Sebastian, the king of Portugal at the time, and it includes the original misnomer.
- From 1808 to 1821 the Portuguese royal family resettled in Rio de Janeiro to escape invading French troops. After Brazil declared its independence in 1822, Rio de Janeiro remained the capital city of the country until 1960.

Notable sites

- The Christ the Redeemer statue, one of the city’s most recognizable landmarks, is located on top of Mount Corcovado. It was built in



1931.

- Maracã Stadium hosted the World Cup Final in 1950, the year of its inauguration. It also hosted the 2014 World Cup Final, and this summer it will host soccer matches as well as the

The Olympic Games will be in Rio from Aug. 5-21. Paralympic Games Sept. 7-18.

opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games.

- The Sambodromo, the stage for Rio’s Carnival parade, will serve as the Olympic marathon’s start and finish line. The Sambodromo is a long alley with

tiered seating down which the Samba schools parade during Carnival.

Calendar

- The Olympic Games will be in Rio from Aug. 5-21, and the Paralympic Games will take place there from Sept. 7-18.

Website

- For a complete schedule of events and more information about the city and Olympic venues, visit rio2016.com.

Rio de Janeiro has always been a mix of man-made structures, like the Christ the Redeemer statue (pictured above), and natural boundaries, like the 12 miles the city stretches along the coast of the South Atlantic Ocean. You can expect to see those pieces of the city – as well as Brazilian sports heroes like soccer legend Pelé – as visual centerpieces throughout this year’s Summer Games.

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PHOTOS: WIKIPEDIA

Michael Phelps

4 TO WATCH ON TEAM USA

By John Sucich
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The Olympic Games give us a chance to see athletes performing at the highest level of their sport. More than 10,000 athletes will take part in the 2016 Summer Games, of which the United States will send more than 500.

There are still spots to be earned and teams to be set after trials conclude in mid-July, but here are some U.S. athletes we know you'll want to keep an eye on during this year's Summer Olympics:

- Michael Phelps, Swimming:** There's still the small matter of qualifying to deal with (the Olympic Trials for swimming will be June 26-July 3 in Nebraska), but Phelps is looking to participate in his fifth Olympics. If he does, he will be pursuing history once again. Phelps, a native of Towson, Maryland, won eight gold medals during the 2008 Summer Games, the most any athlete has won at any Olympic Games. He is the most decorated Olympian of all time, with 22 career medals, including 18 gold, and will look to add to that total in Rio.

- Allyson Felix, Track and Field:** Felix, a Santa Clarita, California, native, will attempt to qualify July 1-10 for the U.S. team in both the 200- and 400-meter events. She is looking to become the first person in 20 years to win gold medals in both events in the same Olympics. Rio would be Felix's fourth Olympic Games. She has won five Olympic medals - three gold and two silver.

- Claressa Shields, Boxing:** Shields already has an Olympic gold medal - she was the first American woman to win a gold medal in boxing in the Olympics. This summer the Flint, Michigan, native can become the first American boxer - male or female - to win gold medals in back-to-back Olympics, and this will only be Shields' second Summer Games.

- Women's Basketball Team:** The five-time defending Olympic gold-winning squad features nine returning gold medalists among its 12 players. Coach Geno Auriemma will be reunited with five of his former UConn players; the team has been the reigning NCAA champion throughout most of the 2000s and 2010s. The team also features first-time Olympians Elena Delle Donne (from Wilmington, Delaware), Brittney Griner (Houston, Texas) and Breanna Stewart (North Syracuse, New York).

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Allyson Felix



Claressa Shields



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UNFORGETTABLE SUMMER OLYMPICS MOMENTS

By John Sucich
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Why do we watch the Olympic Games? Is it for the possibility of seeing a previously unknown athlete emerge and become a star? Is it for the chance to see something we've never seen before? Yes.

Every Olympic Games ends with at least one moment worth remembering. Here are 10 unforgettable ones from the Summer Games over the years:

1 The Dream Team: There have been many iterations of the "Dream Team" over the years but the original men's basketball team, assembled for the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, was legendary. Led by NBA Hall of Famers including Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson and Charles Barkley, the team capped its dominant run through the tournament with a 117-85 win over Croatia in the gold medal game.

2 Bruce Jenner: Jenner was proclaimed the "world's greatest athlete" after winning the decathlon at the 1976 Summer Games in Montreal. He accumulated a record point total in that Olympics, his final competition. He was also the first to garner that most American of laurels: his picture on a Wheaties cereal box.

3 Kerri Strug: Entering the 1996 Summer Games no United States women's gymnastics team had ever won an Olympic gold medal. In the Atlanta Games Strug helped the team accomplish that feat by landing her second vault on a badly injured ankle.

4 Michael Phelps: Eight is a fortuitous number for the Chinese. They held the Opening Ceremonies for the 2008 Beijing Olympics on Aug. 8 (8/8/08), and eight was certainly on the minds of the fans tuning in to watch Phelps chase a record number of gold medals. Who can forget the dramatic 4x100 freestyle relay as Jason Lezak made his name helping Phelps achieve the record with his final leg performance? Phelps won his eighth gold in another relay - the 4x100 medley - surpassing the seven gold medals Mark Spitz won in the 1972 Munich Games.

5 Greg Louganis: Louganis personified the highs and lows of the Olympics during the 1988 Summer Games in Seoul, South Korea. He hit his head on the edge of the diving board during a springboard competition preliminary round but returned to win the gold medal, defending his Olympic title.

6 Tommie Smith and John Carlos: Politics often merges with athletic achievement during the Olympic Games. Nowhere was this more visible than on the medal stand of the men's 200-meters race in the 1968 Summer Games in Mexico City. U.S. sprinters Smith and Carlos raised their black-gloved fists, which symbolized the radical Black Power movement fighting for equal rights for African-Americans in the United States. The two

were subsequently banned from the national team and sent home.

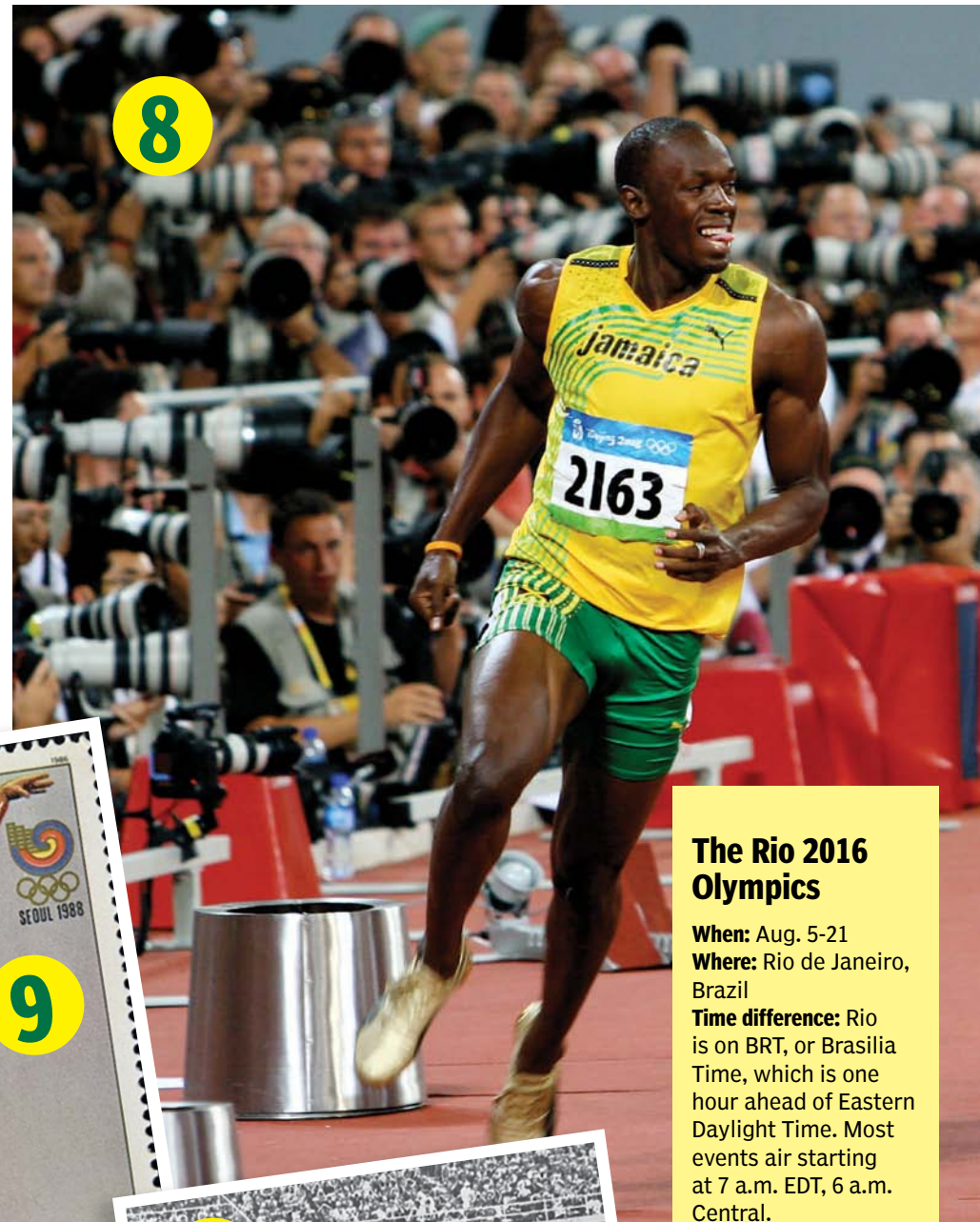
7 Muhammad Ali lights the torch: One of the most iconic moments in Olympics history came not in competition but in the Opening Ceremony of the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta. Ali, a gold medal winner in the 1960 Rome Olympics and sufferer of Parkinson's disease, lit the torch to begin the Games.

8 Usain Bolt: Why can Bolt claim the title "fastest man alive"? Not only has he won six gold medals in his Olympics career, but he is the first man to successfully defend his 100-meter and 200-meter titles, winning those races at both the 2008 Beijing Olympics and 2012 London Games. He also set another Olympic record with his time in the 100-meter in 2012.

9 Mary Lou Retton: Retton helped the United States establish itself on the international gymnastics scene with a gold medal in the women's all-around competition at the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. She won four individual medals that year

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PHOTOS: WIKIPEDIA/YOUTUBE



The Rio 2016 Olympics

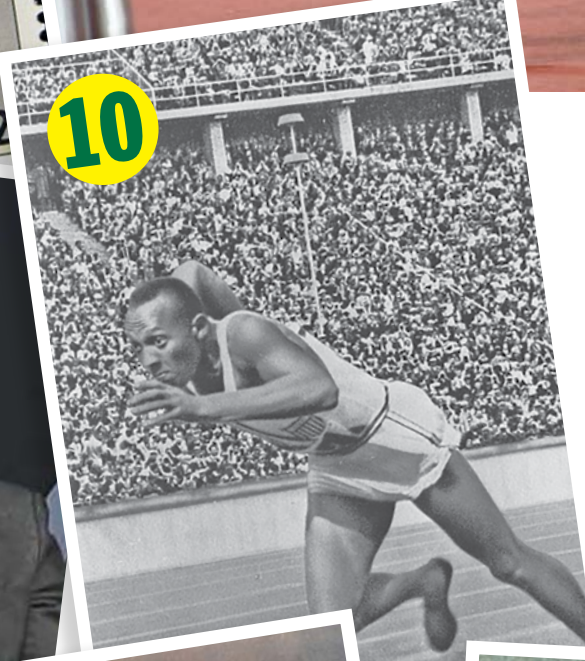
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and contributed to the silver medal-winning team that won the first Olympics team medal for the U.S. in women's gymnastics.

10 Jesse Owens: The 1936 Summer Olympics were held in Berlin, Germany, despite concerns over the rise to power of the Nazi party in the host country. Owens, an African-American, won four gold medals (in the 100-meters,

200-meters, long jump and 4x100-meter relay) to help undermine the German ruling party's attempt to prove the superiority of the "Aryan race" over athletes from other parts of the world.

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NEW SPORTS

Rugby, golf return to the Summer Games

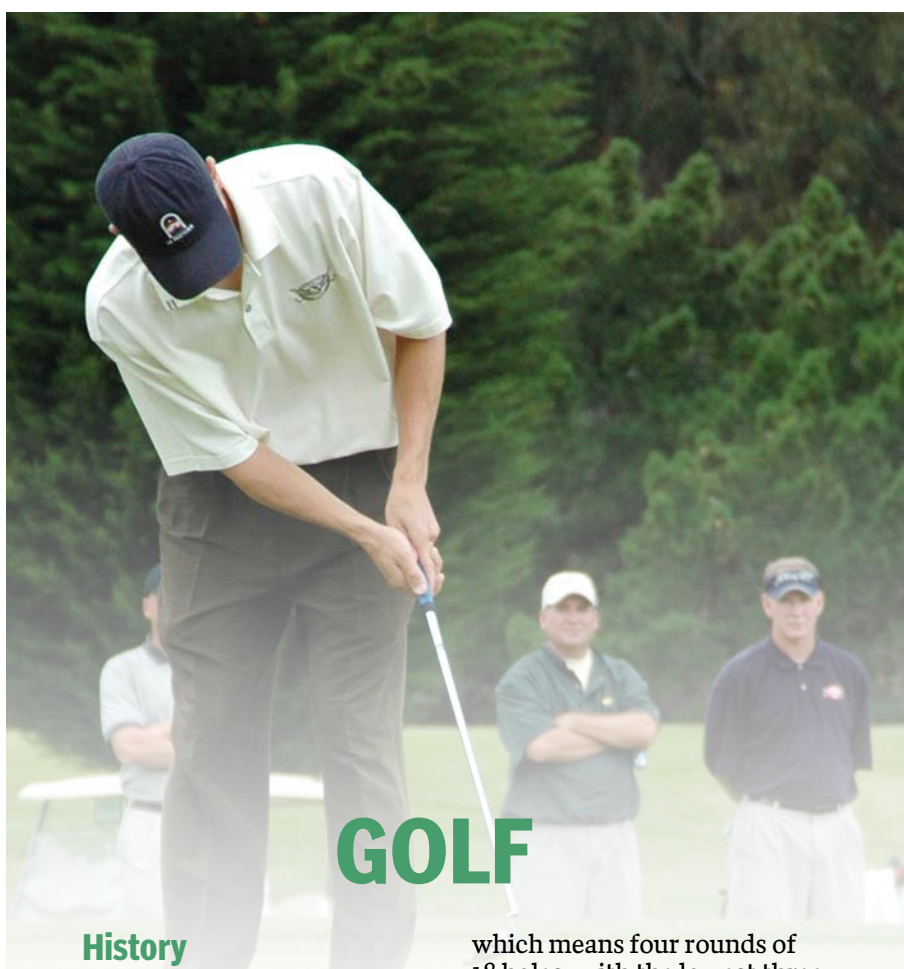
By John Sucich
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Birdies and scrums!

Nope, those aren't old-fashioned epithets. Just words that are entering the Olympic vocabulary for the first time in decades.

Golf and rugby are making a return to Olympic competition in the 2016 Rio Games, and plenty of Americans will be featured in both sports. The United States men's and women's teams have both qualified for their respective rugby sevens tournaments.

Here's what else you need to know about the newest additions to the Summer Games:



GOLF

History

- It has been more than 100 years since golf has been part of the Olympic Games – it was previously part of the Olympics in 1904 in St. Louis and 1900 in Paris.

Location

- Competition will be at the Olympic Golf Course, built for the 2016 Games in Rio.

Format

- The golf you watch in this year's Summer Olympics will very much resemble the golf you watch at any other time of the year. The competition will be stroke play over 72 holes,

which means four rounds of 18 holes, with the lowest three cumulative scores winning the medals. A three-hole playoff will be held in the event of a tie.

- There will be both a men's and a women's tournament, with both fields consisting of 60 players each, and unlike in most other golf tournaments, no one will be cut from the field after two days.

- Only individual medals will be awarded – there is no team competition.

Schedule

- The men's tournament will take place Aug. 11-14 and the women's tournament will be Aug. 17-20.

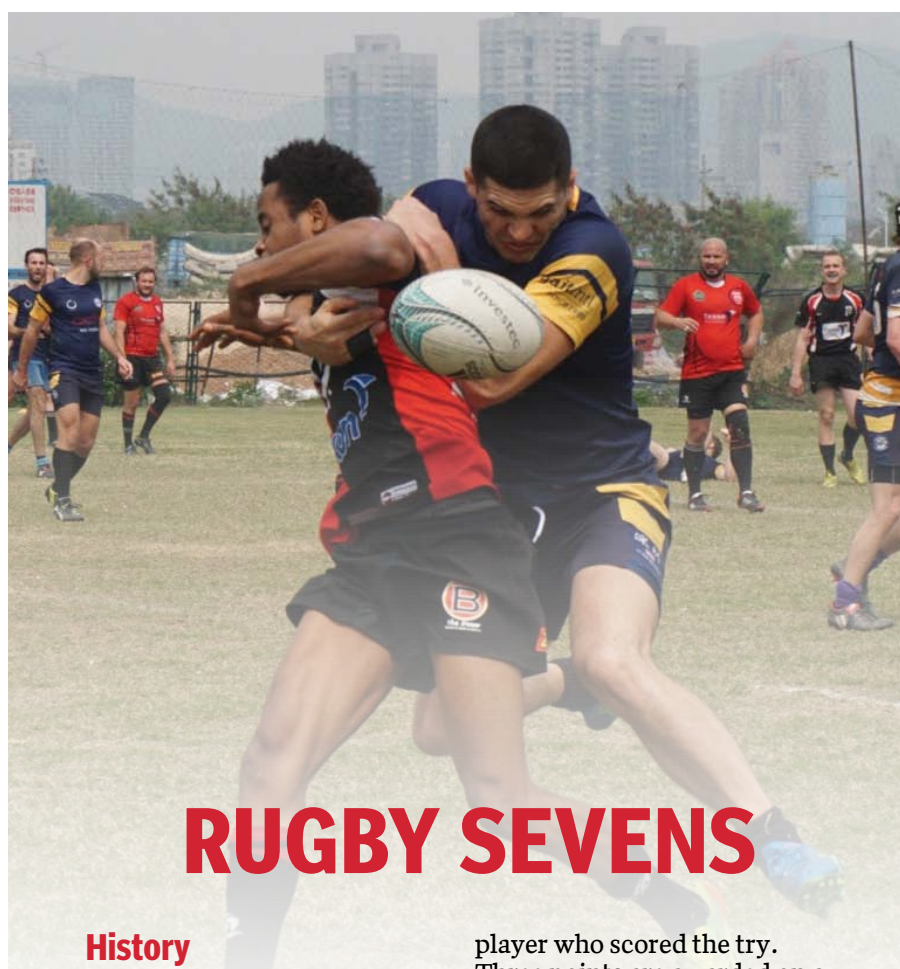
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RUGBY SEVENS

History

- The 15-player version of the sport appeared in the Olympics between 1900 and 1924, with the U.S. men winning the gold medal at the 1924 Paris Olympics. This year marks the debut of the seven-a-side version of rugby.

Location

- Rugby will be played at Deodoro Stadium, a temporary stadium built in Rio to host the rugby tournament and other events.

Rules

- In rugby, players carry an oval-shaped ball to move it up the field. The ball can only be kicked forward in rugby, and it can only be passed backward from player to player.

- The goal is to cross the opponent's try line, which gives your team five points. Two points can be added on a drop kick conversion by the

player who scored the try.

Three points are awarded on a successful drop kick try during play or after a penalty.

- So what's a scrum? It follows a penalty call where three players from each side interlock and try to hook the ball back to their own side while pushing their opponents backward.

Format

- Sevens is a faster-paced, more wide open and high-scoring version of rugby. Games are 14 minutes long, split into two seven-minute halves. A maximum of five substitutions are allowed per game.

Schedule

- Rugby will take place Aug. 6 through 11, with the three-day women's tournament up first, followed by the men's tournament over the final three days.

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