

History of golf in the Olympic Games

Background

Two meetings – staged almost a century apart – have each played significant roles in establishing golf's Olympic credentials.

It was on May 27, 1899, that the Organising Committee for the 1900 Games included golf in the list of sports to be featured on the programme for the Olympic Games in Paris in 1900.

Fast forward 90 years to October 9, 2009, in Copenhagen. At the 121st IOC session in the beautiful Danish city, golf was finally reinstated to the Summer Olympics, initially for Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and Tokyo in 2020.

The inaugural golf tournament in 1900 was won by Charles Sands of the USA with scores of 82 and 85. The silver medal went to Great Britain's Walter Rutherford with another British golfer, David Robertson, collecting the bronze.

This was the first Olympic Games that included women and the only time prior to 2016 in which women's golf was featured. Margaret Abbott from the USA was visiting Paris with her mother and both entered a nine-hole golf event that they believed to be the Ladies' Championship of Paris.

Margaret Abbot, an American born in Calcutta, scored 47 and her mother came seventh. It wasn't until after Margaret's death in 1955, aged 78, that it came to light that she was, in fact, the USA's first female Olympic champion.

A new golf course, Glen Echo, was built for the 1904 Olympics in St Louis, Missouri. A 20-year-old American, H. Chandler Egan, a Harvard student and the reigning U.S. Amateur champion, was a warm favourite to claim the gold medal. After qualifying for the match-play stages, Egan met Canadian George Lyon in the 36-hole final but lost 3 and 2 in difficult conditions.

Lyon, who did not take up the game until the age of 38 but managed to win eight Canadian Amateur Championships, travelled to London for the 1908 Olympic Games, but a disagreement over the format meant that there were no competitors from the UK and the event was promptly cancelled.

Lyon, as the sole competitor, was offered a second gold medal but declined. Golf was not included in future Olympic Games, but 112 years after St. Louis, it returns in 2016.

PARIS 1900 OLYMPIC GAMES

Venue: Compiègne Golf Course

Participants: 22 (12 men and 10 women) from 4 Countries

Events: 36 holes stroke play individual events for men and women

Event	Gold	Silver	Bronze
<u>Mens</u> Individual	Charles Sands 	Walter Rutherford 	David Robertson 
<u>Womens</u> Individual	Margaret Abbot 	Polly Whittier 	<u>Daria</u> Pratt 



Baroness FAIN (FRA). © 1900 / Comité International Olympique

ST LOUIS 1904 OLYMPIC GAMES

Venue: Glen Echo Golf Club

Participants: 77 athletes -72 USA, 2 GB and 3 Canadians

Events:

- 36 holes stroke play team event
- Individual match-play event
- Driving contests, putting contests at night under the lights, handicap events, flights for non-qualifiers and match-play losers, and team Nassau competitions.

Event	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Individual	George Lyon 	Chandler Egan 	Burt McKinnie  Frank Newton 
Team	United States 	United States 	United States 



Canadian George Lyon was the last athlete to win a Gold medal in Golf in 1904.

Golf in the Summer Olympics...some interesting facts

- Golf appeared at the Olympic Games for the first time in Paris in 1900.
- 1900 was the only time women's golf has featured in the Games.
- 22 golfers competed in Paris – 12 men and 10 women.
- Margaret Abbot (gold), Pauline Whittier (silver) and Daria Pratt (bronze) completed a clean sweep for the USA.
- Abbot believed she and her mother, on holiday in France, were competing for the Ladies Championship of Paris.
- Abbot received a porcelain bowl for winning and never knew she was Olympic champion – and the first woman to win an Olympic gold medal.
- The 1904 tournament featured 77 golfers – all male.
- In total, 93 different golfers appeared in the 1900 and 1904 Olympics.
- Albert Lambert of the USA was the only person to compete both times.
- Only the USA, Canada and Great Britain have won medals.
- The United States also won the 10-man team event in 1904.
- George Lyon, the 1904 gold medalist, only took up the game at the age of 38.
- Golf was due to feature in London at 1908, played at Royal St George's, Prince's and Royal Cinque Ports.
- Due to issues over eligibility, the home players withdrew, leaving Lyon as the only competitor.
- Lyon was offered the gold medal, but declined.
- Golf was removed from the list of optional sports at the IOC Congress in Lausanne.
- After more than a century, golf was readmitted to the Olympic Games at the 121st IOC session in Copenhagen.
- The opening tee shot will be struck at 07.30am on Thursday, August 11, 2016, at Reserve da Marapendi Golf Course in Rio de Janeiro.