

PARADE OF NATIONS

BRIEF HISTORY AND FACTS

1908

LONDON SUMMER GAMES

The first Parade of Nations takes places.

1924

1924 Olympic Winter Games: Chamonix, France

For the Parade of Nations at the first Olympic Winter Games in 1924, athletes marched with their equipment: skis, skates, luges, and bobsleighs.

1928

1928 Olympic Summer Games: Amsterdam, Netherlands

The tradition of the Greek delegation marching first is introduced - owing to the status of the founding country of the ancient Olympic Games.

1932

1932 Olympic Winter Games: Lake Placid, New York, U.S.A.

The first ever female flag-bearer was Mollie Phillips, a British figure skater. The 1932 Games were also the first time that winter athletes finally marched without their equipment.

Being selected a flag bearer is a very big honor. Olympic flag bearers are selected through a vote of a nation's team captains. However, team captains are not allowed to vote for their own sport.



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Alphabetical order for the nations has always been used, but it depends on the language and spelling of the host nation. For example, at Mexico City in 1968, "United States" in Spanish is "Estados Unidos," so Team USA entered the stadium near the beginning of the parade.

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Exceptions: Greece always enters first and the host nation traditionally enters last.

1932

17 Nations
252 athletes
USA Flag Bearer:
Billy Fiske
Bobsled

1980

37 Nations
1,068 athletes
USA Flag Bearer:
Scott Hamilton
Figure Skating

1908 SUMMER GAMES OFFICIAL REPORT EXCERPT:

"On the Parade, it is expected that every athlete taking part will be in the athletic costume of his country, or of the sport in which he intends to compete."



Ralph Lauren has been the current official outfitter for Team USA since 2008. In the past, other designers have included Levi's, Roots, and Champion.



LAKE PLACID
OLYMPIC MUSEUM

1932 OPENING CEREMONY

KEY FACTS

When: February 4th, 1932

Where: Olympic Stadium

Who: 17 Nations

Athletes: 252

Events: 14

Length: ~45 mins.

As the Great Depression grips the world, 252 athletes from 17 nations overcome economic hardships and arrive in Lake Placid. The Opening Ceremony is held in the Olympic Stadium, also known as the Speed Skating Oval. Many VIPs were in attendance: members from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), New York State Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Olympic Association President Avery Brundage, and Lake Placid Olympic Committee President Godfrey Dewey.

The Opening Ceremony for the 1932 Olympic Winter Games proves to be a spectacular event. The flags of the 17 participating nations flew around the stadium, all the buildings in town itself was decorated with colorful bunting, and there was a grand bandstand for the musicians.

As the Parade of Nations begins, each team marches in alphabetical order with a designated flag bearer from each country proudly waving their nation's flag. For Team USA, bobsledder Billy Fiske receives the honor of being a flag bearer. In front of each flag bearer is a boy scout with a placard to clearly indicate the name of the national delegation.

As the Parade of Nations comes to a close, Governor Roosevelt officially opens the Games by stating "and so we are glad to welcome this nation, our sister nations, as guests of the American people and of the State of New York, and I proclaim open the III Olympic Winter Games, celebrating the Xth Olympiad of the modern era."

1980 OPENING CEREMONY

KEY FACTS

When: February 13th, 1980

Where: Horseshow Grounds

Who: 37 Nations

Athletes: 1,068

Events: 38

Length: ~1 hour

On February 13th, 1980, the 1980 Olympic Winter Games officially opens at the Horseshow Grounds with several VIPs in attendance including the U.S. Vice President Walter Mondale, New York State Governor Hugh L. Carey, IOC President Lord Killanin, and Lake Placid Olympic Committee President Bernard Fell.

The hour-long Opening Ceremony features a trumpet and drum corps, a 600-member Olympic Orchestra and Concert, skaters, sky divers, hot air balloons, the cauldron lighting, and the Parade of Nations.

The teams march in alphabetical order with a designated flag bearer from each country proudly waving their nation's flag. For Team USA, figure skater Scott Hamilton is appointed the honor of carrying the nation's flag in the parade.

After the Parade of Nations ends, torchbearer Dr. Charles Kerr lights the Olympic cauldron and it is raised to the top so the flame can be seen from all of the Olympic Venues. U.S. Vice President Walter Mondale proclaims the Games open and U.S. speed skater Eric Heiden takes the Olympic Oath.