

History

Coca-Cola and the Olympic Games Through the Years

The Coca-Cola Company and the modern Olympic Games have enjoyed parallel growth and some common historical bonds. On May 8, 1886, Atlanta pharmacist John S. Pemberton invented the secret formula for Coca-Cola. Six years later, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, of France, conceived the idea for a new Olympic Games. The International Olympic Committee was founded on June 23, 1894, and in 1896 the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens, Greece, with 311 athletes from 13 nations. At the same time, Coca-Cola was becoming available outside the United States.

Here are some of the historical highlights and breakthrough programs from the enduring relationship between The Coca-Cola Company and the Olympic Games.

Amsterdam 1928

The 1928 Olympic Games, which included 46 nations, marked the beginning of Coca-Cola involvement with the Games – a presence that would continue to grow to this day, through sponsorships, donations and innovative consumer programs. That summer, a freighter delivered the U.S. Olympic Team and 1,000 cases of Coca-Cola to the Amsterdam event. Vendors sold the bottled drink from kiosks located around the Olympic Stadium and rowing course, but – with the exception of customized bulletins created by an American art student and placed over each stadium entrance – no advertising or promotional materials connected Coca-Cola to the Games.

This was also the first time Olympic Games competitions were held for women, in track and field (athletics) events. Meanwhile, the tradition of lighting an Olympic Flame at the Games was revived from ancient times.

Los Angeles 1932

For the Los Angeles 1932 Olympic Games, Coca-Cola broadened the stadium experience by introducing an Olympic Games personal record keeper, compliments of The Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Los Angeles. While more than 200 teenagers wearing white gloves served Coca-Cola to crowds of 105,000 in the Los Angeles Coliseum, spectators could compare the athletes' performances by dialing the wheel-shaped indicator to any of 18 records for Olympic Games events. Coca-Cola also distributed 3 million miniature sports-action cutouts, which included Olympic Games records on the back, to young people around the United States.

In 1934, Johnny Weissmuller, swimming gold medalist in 1924 and 1928 (and later an actor), became the first Olympian to endorse a product of The Coca-Cola Company when he was featured with actress Maureen O'Sullivan on Coca-Cola serving trays and posters.

Berlin 1936

The Berlin 1936 Olympic Games marked the debut of the modern Olympic Torch Relay, with the Olympic Flame being delivered from Olympia, Greece, to Germany. A young Harvard University undergraduate, J. Paul Austin, competed in the Games for the U.S. Rowing Team. Austin went on to become president (in 1962), chief executive officer (in 1966) and chairman of the board (in 1970) of The Coca-Cola Company. Coca-Cola sponsored the 1936 Games, which were followed by a 12-year hiatus surrounding World War II.

London 1948

The Olympic Games resumed in 1948 in London. Overcoming lingering effects of the war that made local bottling and transportation difficult, The Coca-Cola Company shipped equipment from Glasgow, Scotland, and Belfast, Northern Ireland, to meet the thirsty demands of athletes and spectators in England.

Oslo 1952

In conjunction with the 1952 Olympic Winter Games in Norway, local Coca-Cola bottlers provided Oslo residents with their first look at a helicopter. The aircraft initially was used in a fund-raising effort for Norwegian athletes and then to direct traffic during the latter part of the Games.

Helsinki 1952

Despite the fact that Finland did not have a local bottler, Coca-Cola still was served to athletes and spectators at the Helsinki Olympic Games. More than 30,000 cases of Coca-Cola were brought to the event from the Netherlands aboard the M.S. Marvic, a rebuilt World War II landing craft, in what became known as "Operation Muscle." Ice coolers and trucks from around northern Europe also were brought in, turning the ship into a floating stockroom. The Coca-Cola Company donated much of its product to be sold by the Disabled Ex-Servicemen Association.

Also during the Helsinki event, the Company printed daily menus for athletes in the Olympic Village and provided them with sacks and cooler bags.

Melbourne 1956

To provide attendees some relief from the sun, Coca-Cola bottlers in Australia distributed more than 100,000 trademarked visors to spectators at the Melbourne 1956 Olympic Games, while 420 vendors sold ice-cold Coca-Cola throughout the venues. Coca-Cola also placed newspaper ads offering consumers an opportunity to attend the first Olympic Games in the southern hemisphere.

Squaw Valley 1960

While the underdog U.S. ice hockey team surprised the world with a gold medal performance at the 1960 Olympic Winter Games, spectators at the Olympic Games were served Coca-Cola in 12-ounce cans for the first time.

Rome 1960

During the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, Italian bottlers of Coca-Cola showed their support by presenting thousands of athletes, officials, media and spectators with

an original, 45-rpm recording of the favorite song of the day, "Arrivederci Roma."

Innsbruck 1964

The Coca-Cola Company published a history of the Olympic Winter Games for athletes, officials and visitors at the Innsbruck 1964 Olympic Winter Games.

Tokyo 1964

Coca-Cola continued its tradition of enhancing the Olympic Games experience for the fans and media at the 1964 Tokyo Games with the production of street signs, guide maps, sightseeing information and an indispensable Japanese-English phrase book. The translation book and other material proved so popular that they were used as a model twice more for the Olympic Winter Games in Japan (Sapporo 1972 and Nagano 1998), as well as for the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City and 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, Germany.

Grenoble 1968

The Coca-Cola Company joined other U.S. corporations as a sponsor of the ABC-TV broadcasts from France of the Grenoble 1968 Olympic Winter Games. Subsequent sponsorship of the Mexico City 1968 Olympic Games marked the first time Coca-Cola sponsored national television coverage of both the winter and summer editions of the Olympic Games, for U.S. viewers.

Mexico City 1968

The Coca-Cola Company outfitted its venue servers at the Mexico City 1968 Olympic Games with special backpack dispensers, prompting some spectators to refer to the servers as "astronauts." Meanwhile, Olympic Games-themed television commercials, including a Coca-Cola TV spot starring 1960 swimming gold medalist Lynn Burke, helped bring the Games experience into the homes of millions of viewers.

Munich 1972

Coca-Cola managed the entire food-and-beverage service for 15,000 athletes and officials at the Munich Games. In the United States, the Company created a "Great Olympic Moments" series of 17 commemorative medallions, with sales proceeds donated to the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) to support American athletes.

Innsbruck 1976

The feature film, "Olympic Harmony," was produced by The Coca-Cola Company in conjunction with the Innsbruck 1976 Olympic Winter Games.

Montreal 1976

As a gift to the people of the host country of the 1976 Olympic Games, Coca-Cola Ltd., of Canada, purchased the horse "Regardez" and donated it to the Canadian Equestrian Team, for use by its captain.

Lake Placid 1980

Coca-Cola conducted a national fund-raising tour for the USOC featuring “Kobot,” the world’s first figure-skating robot. The Company also initiated a version of the Coca-Cola Olympic Radio Network, which broadcast Olympic Games results to millions of fans.

The Lake Placid 1980 Olympic Winter Games also produced an unprecedented amount of promotional goods available to the general public. Among the most-popular items from The Coca-Cola Company were a special set of eight commemorative bottles featuring Olympic Games events; apparel with the joint Lake Placid 1980/Coca-Cola logo; Frisbees; and the first Coca-Cola lapel pin created for spectators. Interest in Olympic Games-related memorabilia – from cooler bags and commemorative packaging to key chains, clothing and the soon-to-be-ubiquitous pins – would begin to rise at a phenomenal rate during subsequent Olympic Games.

Moscow 1980

Coca-Cola was the Official Soft Drink of the Moscow 1980 Olympic Games.

Sarajevo 1984

More than 1.1 million Coca-Cola cans were produced in the Netherlands and Germany, filled in Austria, and shipped to Yugoslavia for the Sarajevo 1984 Olympic Winter Games.

Los Angeles 1984

During the year, Coca-Cola implemented a series of U.S. youth programs, including a national Coca-Cola Olympic Youth Soccer Competition, a Coca-Cola Olympic Games educational program for schools, and Coca-Cola Olympic Youth Jamborees, which provided underprivileged children a chance to experience the Olympic spirit.

Coca-Cola was the first corporate sponsor of the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games. The event’s mascot, Sam the Eagle, was depicted on a series of 23 commemorative Coca-Cola cans. The mascot also was shown with a bottle of Coca-Cola on a limited-edition, prototype Olympic Games lapel pin – today a very rare artifact. Trading cards featuring “America’s Greatest Olympians” were included in 12-packs of Coca-Cola products.

Calgary 1988

The Coca-Cola Company broke new ground in 1988 by creating the “Coca-Cola World Chorus,” which performed at the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Olympic Winter Games in Canada. Comprised of 43 young people selected from 23 countries through competitions sponsored by local Coca-Cola bottlers, the international chorus performed the specially commissioned signature song of the Games, “Can’t You Feel It?” for the local throngs and millions of television viewers. Calgary 1988 also saw the debut of the first Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Center, which drew more than 17,000 visitors each day and transformed pin trading into another tradition – “the No. 1 spectator sport of the Olympic Games.”

Seoul 1988

For the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games, the Company hosted two Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Centers and sponsored a nationwide contest among South Korea's 11.7 million students to design the first-ever commemorative pin for an Opening Ceremony.

Albertville 1992

The new Coca-Cola Radio was introduced at the 1992 Olympic Winter Games in Albertville, France. State-of-the-art broadcast facilities, located within the Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Center in nearby Courchevel, allowed disc jockeys from nearly 30 major U.S. cities to deliver live reports about the competitions, special activities and spectacle of the Olympic Games to a daily listening audience of approximately 5 million.

Meanwhile, pin trading continued to escalate. The main Coca-Cola Pin Trading Center, plus a satellite pin operation and two traveling Coca-Cola "PinMobiles," served more than 350,000 collectors, who traded some 1.2 million pins.

Barcelona 1992

In Spain, The Coca-Cola Company brought together 150 citizens from more than 50 nations to participate in the Olympic Torch Relay for the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games. The International Olympic Torchbearers Program, Sponsored by Coca-Cola, marked the first time people from other countries participated in the host country's Torch Relay. The torchbearers were selected through local and national promotions staged by the worldwide Coca-Cola system.

Lillehammer 1994

In 1994, the Coca-Cola Polar Bear featured in Company advertising made one of its first public appearances, enchanting spectators from ski slope to street corner at the Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway. Meanwhile, the International Olympic Torchbearers Program, Sponsored by Coca-Cola, repeated its Spain success, bringing 30 torchbearers from 13 countries to Norway to help carry the Olympic Flame through Oslo as it made its journey to Lillehammer.

The Lillehammer Games also gave birth to a new sensation within the Olympic pin trading culture: the Coca-Cola "Pin of the Day" series, featuring a different pin design for each day of the Olympic Games.

Atlanta 1996

For the Atlanta 1996 Centennial Olympic Games, Coca-Cola was the exclusive presenter of the Olympic Torch Relay – up to that time the longest Relay in Olympic Games history, at 15,000 miles (24,140 kilometers) – and played a lead role in the selection of 2,500 of the 10,000 torchbearers. Coca-Cola also expanded its International Olympic Torchbearers Program by selecting as many as 500 participants from approximately 70 countries.

When the Games unfolded in Atlanta, Coca-Cola put out the welcome mat in its hometown to enhance the fan experience. Specially created venues, including Coca-Cola Olympic City, Coca-Cola Refreshment Plaza, the Coca-Cola Olympic Salute to Folk Art Exhibit, and the Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Centers, became

central gathering places visited by hundreds of thousands of people.

The 12-acre Coca-Cola Olympic City theme park featured nearly 20 attractions and special events, including: a high-tech games area enabling fans to test their athletic abilities in interactive challenges; a virtual medals ceremony; an amphitheater for live entertainment; a surround-sound theater showing an inspirational film about the Olympic Games; sports demonstrations and clinics hosted by athletes and coaches; daily opportunities to meet Olympians; an exhibit of artifacts from the Olympic Museum; and an international food pavilion.

The Coca-Cola Olympic Salute to Folk Art Exhibit celebrated artistic traditions from more than 50 countries interpreted on a common canvas – the trademark Coca-Cola contour bottle. Coca-Cola Refreshment Plaza was a café-style, outdoor setting that also hosted big-screen viewings of official TV coverage of the Atlanta Games.

The Pin Trading Centers experienced unprecedented traffic levels, with an estimated 3 million pins changing hands, and hosted lighthearted Pin Trading School sessions, from which more than 2,100 "students" earned their MPA ("Master of Pin Administration") degrees. Pin popularity was further bolstered by Coca-Cola support of the official 1996 Olympic Games Pin Society.

Nagano 1998

The 1998 Olympic Torch Relay, presented by Coca-Cola and the Company's GEORGIA coffee brand in Japan, brought the Olympic Flame to Japanese citizens along three simultaneous routes. Through nationwide and international promotions, GEORGIA and Coca-Cola selected 550 torchbearers and 2,700 support runners to participate in the Relay.

Along with the familiar Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Center and its red-hot Pin of the Day, The Coca-Cola Company created a new Fan Plaza to provide refreshment, merchandise and interactive entertainment for visitors to the Nagano 1998 Olympic Winter Games. Also, for the first time at any Games, Coca-Cola warmed up fans with the sale of hot beverages alongside cold drinks, providing a full assortment of winter refreshments. In addition, 20 GEORGIA coffee "Hot Zones," with outdoor heating elements, provided visitors a warm oasis near outside sports venues and in other chilly locations.

Coca-Cola Radio brought more than 50 disc jockeys from around the globe to broadcast Olympic Games excitement from Japan, while a Coca-Cola Olympic Games Web site gave Internet users an online Games experience and virtual tour of Nagano. The Coca-Cola Company also sponsored the Kirie Art Program, which provided 3,500 prints of Japanese *kirie* art to Olympic athletes and officials as keepsakes of the Games. The artworks reflected six different themes inspired by the region's natural scenery and were used to decorate rooms within the Olympic Village.

Sydney 2000

For Sydney 2000, Coca-Cola shared the spirit of the Olympic Games with fans internationally through Coca-Cola Radio (which grew to 58 participating stations, from 13 countries) and the Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Centers, plus an expanded Coca-Cola Pin Trading School and a new Coca-Cola Pin Club.

Also new on its Olympic Games menu for young international guests were “Coca-Cola Olympic Club: Sydney” and “Powerade-Aquarius Training Camp” – two similar, once-in-a-lifetime experiences for nearly 300 teens from around the world. Both programs offered young participants unique, behind-the-scenes Olympic Games exposure, including use of state-of-the-art, Olympic Games-style facilities, tickets to Olympic Games events, visits with Olympic athletes, and tours of Sydney’s attractions and Olympic Games venues. In demonstrating to teens what it is like to be an Olympic athlete, Powerade-Aquarius Training Camp also featured sports clinics with athletes and coaches.

Local enthusiasm for the Games in Australia was captured through Coca-Cola RedFest celebrations in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. The five simultaneous events, hosted by Coca-Cola South Pacific, gave 90,000 Australians the chance to watch live, big-screen presentations of the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, while also enjoying headline musical acts, dance troupes, circus-style entertainment, celebrity appearances, an international food fair, rides and more.

Salt Lake 2002

Coca-Cola marked the 10th anniversary of its first association with the Olympic Torch Relay by serving as co-presenter and selecting more than 3,500 of the total 11,500 torchbearers for the 65-day, 13,500-mile (21,726-kilometer) spectacle that blazed through 46 American states. The Company again brought consumers from other nations (nine countries for 2002) to be torchbearers in the host country of the Games. More than 2,100 support runners also were provided through Coca-Cola efforts, and unveilings of “Coca-Cola Community Canvas” teen artworks highlighted local celebrations in cities welcoming the Olympic Flame. In addition, The Coca-Cola Company commissioned world-renowned artist Peter Max to paint a giant mural mosaic commemorating the inspirational Community Canvas artworks and paying tribute to the spirit of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games. The Peter Max creation was donated to Salt Lake City.

During the 2002 Games in Utah, more than 700,000 people connected with the Coca-Cola interactive and entertainment experiences in Salt Lake City and Park City. As at past events, crowds typically swelled at the ever-popular Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Centers (which numbered three for Salt Lake 2002), while a new attraction, Coca-Cola *On The Ice*, became the fan focal point outside competition venues.

The 20,000-square-foot *On The Ice* facility featured high-tech, winter sports simulations and plenty of crowd action, so guests could experience firsthand the thrill of the luge, bobsleigh, hockey and curling, as well as the emotion of receiving a medal on the victory stand. “Coca-Cola Live” multimedia shows and interviews with Olympic Games legends enhanced entertainment for Pin Trading Center visitors. The multicultural pin trading staff, along with a group of special “Coca-Cola Ambassadors,” hailed from five continents and spoke some 20 languages, providing an extra-warm reception and helping unite people from around the globe.

At the wintry Coca-Cola Radio broadcast hub in Park City, on-air personalities from more than 45 U.S. stations beamed eyewitness accounts of the 2002 Games atmosphere to their loyal listeners. Fans in cyberspace kept track of the Olympic Torch

Relay and Salt Lake Games through dedicated Coca-Cola Web pages that recorded well more than 1 million visitors. Meanwhile, residents in the surrounding Rocky Mountain region were randomly receiving free Olympic tickets, courtesy of roving Coca-Cola Fan Vans. The Coca-Cola Company also was helping safeguard the local environment during the high-traffic period by piloting a 100-percent biodegradable cold drink cup, as well as ensuring a complete “recycling loop” for used plastic soft drink bottles collected at the event.

Athens 2004

For the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, The Coca-Cola Company continued its tradition of creating magical moments for athletes and fans – in Greece and around the world. The Company helped take global participation to a new level through its major role in the far-reaching Athens 2004 Olympic Torch Relay Presented by Coca-Cola.

For the first truly worldwide Olympic Torch Relay – a symbol of unity and inspiration – the Olympic Flame traveled internationally to more than 30 cities on the five continents represented by the Olympic Rings. The Flame then returned to Greece, the birthplace of the Olympic Games, for a final, five-week segment of the Olympic Torch Relay that culminated with the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron at the Opening Ceremony of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. Coca-Cola selected many of the more-than 11,000 torchbearers who helped carry the Olympic Flame on its historic, round-the-world journey. The theme for the Athens 2004 Olympic Torch Relay was, “Pass the flame, unite the world.”

In Athens, the Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Center made its 10th straight appearance at the Olympic Games. Once again, the Pin Trading Center was a place where people came together to share and celebrate the spirit of the Olympic Games, as well as add to their treasured pin collections. With *Coke O.N. Air*, a first-time, multimedia program, Greek youth made their own statements about the Athens 2004 Olympic Games experience and shared them with peers through a pioneering, specially created communications network of daily television and radio programming and mobile telephone and Internet features. And Coca-Cola Radio again broadcast live from the Olympic Games, as top radio station DJ teams traveled to Greece to share the excitement of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games with listeners back home.

Torino 2006

The worldwide Coca-Cola system rolled out a variety of marketing activities inviting consumers to get caught up in an atmosphere of optimism and happiness for the Torino 2006 Olympic Winter Games. In host country Italy, the countdown to the Games included Coca-Cola presentation of the Olympic Torch Relay-Torino 2006, along with a Coca-Cola “Torch Exhibition Tour” interactive road show. In concert, the Company developed school and community torchbearer selection programs to help identify some of the more-than 10,000 inspirational people who carried the Olympic Flame throughout Italy and also into parts of France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia.

Also in advance of the 2006 Games, Coca-Cola was encouraging Italians to “Get Caught Living Olympic” and conducted an array of local promotions that featured commemorative talking cans, the Coca-Cola Polar Bear, automobile prizes and valuable event tickets. A special section on the Company’s Italian Web site featured a historical

Olympic Games timeline and complete Torino 2006 competition calendar, as well as daily Olympic Torch Relay updates and torchbearer features and photos.

During Torino 2006, the fully integrated Coca-Cola campaign included customized advertising and outdoor messages; a specially created anthem; and (in Torino's Piazza Solferino) the Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Center, historical exhibits, and several entertainment elements, such as sports simulators, video game and photo kiosks, and a postcard e-mail booth. Mobile "Coca-Cola Cruisers" provided spectators free commemorative beverage products, while the Coca-Cola Polar Bear and young Coca-Cola Ambassadors (drawn from more than 200 people from at least 20 countries who were part of a special Coke activation team) roamed the streets, instantaneously rewarding "random acts of kindness." Each evening, "The Coca-Cola Award: Live Olympic" ceremony recognized individuals from around the world who express the ideals of the Olympic Games in their everyday lives. And an international "Torino Conversations" Weblog program created by the Company brought standout, university-level journalism students from six countries to Torino to experience the Olympic Winter Games, conduct interviews and post their accounts online.

Along with chances to receive Torino 2006 Coca-Cola collectibles and win trips to the event in Italy, consumers in other countries were drawn into the spirit through a variety of local programs, including unique opportunities in Canada to win trips to other cities that have hosted (or will host) the Olympic Winter Games; an Internet-based "Win Your Olympic Dream" promotion in Austria; a multifaceted "Win Winter Fun" program in Switzerland; a fund-raising drive for the Swedish Youth Olympic Team; a "virtual cheers" mobile phone contest in Belarus and Russia; GEORGIA coffee "Cheer-on Cans" starring Olympic heroes in Japan; and a major "Drink. Watch. Cheer. Win." promotion in the United States.

Coca-Cola and IOC Partnership

On August 1, 2005, The Coca-Cola Company and the International Olympic Committee announced the renewal of their historic partnership for an unprecedented 12 years. This latest renewal of the most-enduring partnership in the history of the Olympic Games takes effect in 2009 and lengthens the role of Coca-Cola as the Worldwide Olympic Partner in the nonalcoholic beverages category through 2020. The deal also extends the Coca-Cola association with the Olympic Games – a relationship that began in 1928 – to 92 years without interruption.

With the latest, 12-year pact, support by Coca-Cola of the Olympic Games continues from the conclusion of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games through the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games, the London 2012 Olympic Games, the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games, and the Olympic Games of 2016 (summer), 2018 (winter) and 2020 (summer).

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Additional information about the partnership of Coca-Cola with the Olympic Games can be viewed in the Heritage section of The Coca-Cola Company Web site:

<http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/heritage/olympicgames.html>

Consumers around the world also can share stories, ask questions and learn more about the heritage of Coca-Cola through the new “Coca-Cola Conversations” Company Weblog. The blog shares an insider’s view from Phil Mooney, archivist and resident historian of The Coca-Cola Company:

www.Coca-ColaConversations.com