

Hi everyone

We turn to all those of you who want to be fit, energetic and strong. We also address those who need some encouragement to take up a sport yet.

As all our group members play sports and consider it a great way to live a healthy life, our choice was rather easy – sport. We took interest in the history of sports, Olympic Games (ancient and modern), sport in Estonia, in general, and playing badminton, in particular. We did our research in two different ways: we studied online sources, and we talked to those involved in playing badminton in Estonia directly.

The history of sports

First sporting events known are related to military training. Through competitions ancient military men wanted to determine if individuals were fit enough for the service. It was important for young men to prove that they had the capability to fight and work together as a team. Interestingly enough, playing sports were directly linked to basic human skills development.

A cave painting found in France shows that around 15,300 years ago people already knew what sprinting and wrestling was. Later, in ancient Egypt around 2000 BC, wrestling as well as weightlifting, long jump, swimming, rowing, flying, shooting, fishing, athletics and various ball games were widely known and actively played.

Ancient Olympic Games

The first Olympics are believed to have taken place in 776 BC. These were a series of athletic competitions among representatives of city-states in Ancient Greece. The games started in Olympia – a sanctuary site for the Greek gods, near the towns of Elis and Pisa. To honour of the Greek god Zeus and keep the games running smoothly, 100 oxen were sacrificed each time.

The ancient games were held every four years, a period called “Olympiad” in Greek. Only freeborn Greek men were allowed to participate. The first games began as an annual foot race, which was just over 192 metres. Gradually, the program increased to twenty-three events, but only up to twenty contests were featured at any one Olympiad. Male athletes were participating, mainly. However, women were also allowed to take part in the equestrian events. The prizes for the victors were olive leaf wreaths or crowns.

Modern Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup

The first modern Olympic Games took place in the *Panathenaic* Stadium in Athens in 1896. The Games brought together 14 nations and 241 athletes who competed in 43 events. Although the games were very successful, a period of stagnation followed. Today, the games have grown to well over 10 thousand competitors from over 200 nations and the programme consists of 35 sports, 30 disciplines and 408 events. The first Winter Olympics were held in Chamonix, France, in 1924. The first Paralympics took place in 1960 in Rome.

The FIFA World Cup (an international association football competition), is the most followed sporting event in the world, exceeding even the Olympic Games. Since 1930, 20 tournaments have taken place. Eight different teams have won the cup, Brazil on the top with five wins. The final match between Germany and Argentina in 2014, with Germany winning, reached the audience of over one billion people across the world.

Sport in Estonia

Sport is an integral part of the Estonian culture. Basketball is very popular. But so are beach volleyball, cricket, cycling, skiing, and – as it is with most European countries – football. The sailing regatta of the 1980 Summer Olympics was held in Tallinn, the capital city of Estonia. When it comes to Olympic gold medals after Estonia regained its independence in 1991, Estonian athletes have won them in track racing (Erika Salumäe, 1992), decathlon (Erki Nool, 2000), cross-country skiing (Andrus Veerpalu, 2000, 2006; Kristina Šmigun, 2006) and discus throwing (Gerd Kanter, 2008).

We are also very proud of our world class cyclist Jaan Kirsipuu, who has won the Tour de France four times, and Vuelta a Espana stage 3, once. As well as that, Judo has been performing quite well in the international stage as our athletes have won three Olympic medals, four medals of the Judo Championships at world level and 15 medals of the Judo Championships at European level.

Badminton

Badminton is a racquet sport which was first played in England in the 19th century. It is played using racquets to hit a shuttlecock across a net. The most common forms of the game are singles (with one player per side) and doubles (two players per side).

Badminton racquets weigh around 70 and 95 grams. The shuttlecock is formed from 16 goose feathers. Badminton is expensive. For example, only a good racquet costs about 150 euros, and for a high quality shuttle that lasts less than one game one has to pay three euros!

There are more than 200 million players in the world. In Estonia we have about 3000 registered players in 24 different clubs. Denmark is the strongest country in Europe, but Estonia is also on a good level.

Every weekend various tournaments are held. The biggest one in Scandinavia takes place in Tallinn at the beginning of January every year. This year, it was more competitive than ever as 300 players from all over the world had come to Estonia to play. But the Estonian athlete Raul Must didn't let our country down and won the Yonex Estonian International. It was his first win in front of his home crowd.

Finally, did you know that playing badminton or any other racquet sport is highly likely to increase your lifetime? The optimal health benefits are achieved by playing badminton for at least 30 minutes a day. The main health benefit of regular badminton play is reduction of bad cholesterol. Another health benefit is protection from heart disease, especially heart attacks. These are only a few examples. Want more?

How did we do as a group?

What we've learned during the whole information seeking process is that there is a great deal of false information out there on the Internet. So we always have to check carefully, which sources are truthful, and we can't limit our search with just one or two websites. Moreover, we should keep developing our vocabulary and grammar skills in English!

We believe we have done a good job because we've created a comprehensive text and two posters for our CLICK project partners in Denmark, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Turkey. Thank you.



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