



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

FACTSHEET

THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

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HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The modern Olympic Games encompass more than just the drama and excitement of a sporting competition. Thanks to the vision of their founder, Pierre de Coubertin, and the creative efforts of various host city organisers, the ceremonial aspects of the Olympic Games have served to set them apart from other international sports competitions. The protocol and splendour of the Olympic ceremonies, which go hand-in-hand with the celebration of the Games as everyone knows them today, make this event a unique and unforgettable festival. Although there was a Closing Ceremony at the Games of the Olympiad in 1896 in Athens, it bore only the slightest resemblance to today's ceremonies. In fact, some of the elements of Olympic protocol that have become a part of today's traditions were only gradually established over time through a series of adaptations to the ceremonies of early editions of the Games.



©IOC / KISHIMOTO. Salt Lake City 2002. Olympic flag handover

PROTOCOL ELEMENTS

A closing ceremony must be organised on the last day of the Games. It must be held in the Olympic stadium, after all the events. The announcements must all be delivered in the three languages – in this order: French, English

and the language of the host country if it is not one of these two.

Here are the protocol elements which are now an integral part of the closing ceremony:

- The first element is the entrance of the Head of State of the host country (or his/her representative) accompanied by the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the President of the Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG).
- Then the national anthem of the host country is played and its flag hoisted in the Olympic stadium.
- One of the key moments of a closing ceremony is the parade of flags of the countries participating in the Games. The Greek flag opens the march and the host country's flag brings up the rear. Each flag is generally carried by an athlete chosen by his/her National Olympic Committee (NOC).



© IOC / HUET John. The flag bearers during the Vancouver 2010 closing ceremony



© CIO / NAGAYA Yo. Beijing 2008 - Closing ceremony

- This is immediately followed by the athletes' parade. They walk en masse and in no particular order during this parade. The athletes stand in the centre of the Stadium during the Summer Games ceremony or sit in a place reserved for them in the stands for the Winter Games. The idea of having all the athletes parade in no order comes from a young Chinese man, John Ian Wing, an apprentice carpenter in Australia for the 1956 Games in Melbourne. Before these Games, the athletes marched behind their flag-bearer like at the opening ceremony.
- After the athletes' parade, a medals ceremony is held. The IOC, with the help of the OCOG, decides which event will have its medals ceremony during the closing ceremony (it is generally the marathon for the Summer Games). For the first editions of the Games, all the medals were presented on the last day.



© IOC / TOBLER, H el ene, Beijing 2008 The closing ceremony

- The next protocol element is the presentation of the athletes elected by their peers to the IOC Athletes' Commission. On behalf of the athletes, one of these new

members then presents a bouquet of flowers to a representative of the volunteers as a mark of tribute and gratitude for the work carried out during the Games.

- The seventh protocol element is the Greek flag being raised to the left of the Olympic flag. The Greek national anthem is then played. This is a symbol of the link between the Games of Antiquity and those of the modern era. The flag of the next host country is then raised to the right of the flag of the current host country to the sound of its anthem.
- Then comes a solemn moment as the Olympic flag is lowered to the sound of the Olympic anthem. The mayors of the current host city and next host city join the IOC President. The mayor of the host city hands the flag to the IOC President, who hands it to the mayor of the next host city. This handover is a symbolic highlight. The flag will usually be flown above the town hall of the host city over the next four years.



 IOC / KISHIMOTO. Turin 2006. The Olympic flag is lowered

- To further mark this transition from one city to another, an artistic segment of the closing ceremony is devoted to the next host city. This segment is an invitation launched to the youth of the world for the next Games.
- After this segment of the ceremony, which projects us into the future, the OCOG President then delivers a speech thanking the athletes and volunteers, before giving the floor to the IOC President, who declares the Games closed and invites the youth of the world to come together for the next edition of the Olympic Games four years later.



- The last protocol element is undoubtedly the most moving: the Olympic flame is extinguished in the stadium. With this last element, this time it is certain: the Games are over.



©KISHIMOTO. Beijing 2008. IOC President Jacques Rogge with the Olympic flag between the mayors of Beijing and London



©Kevork Djansezian Getty Images North America. Vancouver 2010 Closing ceremony

LIST OF MAYORS WHO HAVE HANDED OVER AND RECEIVED THE OLYMPIC FLAG

| Games | From | To |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Seoul 1988 | Kim Yong-nae | Pasqual Maragall (Barcelona) |
| Barcelona 1992 | Pasqual Maragall | Maynard Jackson (Atlanta) |
| Atlanta 1996 | Bill Campbell | Frank Sartor (Sydney) |
| Sydney 2000 | Frank Sartor | Dimitris L. Avammopoulos (Athens) |
| Athens 2004 | Dora Bakoyannis | Wang Qishan (Beijing) |
| Beijing 2008 | Guo Jinlong | Boris Johnson (London) |

| | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Calgary 1988 | Ralph Klein | Henri Dujol (Albertville) |
| Albertville 1992 | Henri Dujol | Audun Tron (Lillehammer) |
| Lillehammer 1994 | Audun Tron | Tasuku Tsukada (Nagano) |
| Nagano 1998 | Tasuku Tsukada | Deedee Corradini (Salt Lake City) |
| Salt Lake City 2002 | Rocky Anderson | Sergio Chiamparino (Turin) |
| Turin 2006 | Sergio Chiamparino | Sam Sullivan (Vancouver) |
| Vancouver 2010 | Gregor Robertson | Anatoliy Pakhomov (Sochi) |

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