

Beat: Sports

THE OLYMPIC FLAME FOR THE 2024 PARIS GAMES LIT DURING A SYMBOLIC CEREMONY

ON THE ANCIENT SITE OF OLYMPIA

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USPA NEWS - On the eve of 100 days until the opening of the event, the flame of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games was lit in the historic birthplace of the Olympic Games, at the ancient site of Olympia, Greece. The Olympic flame, symbol of peace and hope, will now cross Greece before reaching France. After arriving in Marseille on May 8, it will travel across France and certain French overseas territories before reaching Paris on July 26 for the opening ceremony

Dignitaries present today at this historic event include the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Thomas Bach, the President of the Hellenic Republic, Her Excellency Katerina Sakellariopoulou, the Vice-President of the European Commission, Margaritis Schinas, the president of the organizing committee for the Paris 2024 Games, Tony Estanguet, the president of the French National Olympic and Sports Committee and member of the IOC, David Lappartient, the members of the IOC in France Guy Drut and Jean-Christophe Rolland, the minister of Sports and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Amélie Oudea-Castera, the president of the IOC coordination commission for the Paris 2024 Games, Pierre-Olivier Beckers-Vieujant, and the mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo

In his speech to thousands of people, President Thomas Bach highlighted Paris 2024's commitment to upholding Olympic values and promoting global unity. As he said: "The Olympic Games are the only event that brings the entire world together in peaceful competition. Olympic athletes send this strong message: yes, it is possible to compete and, at the same time, to live together in peace, under one roof. The athletes will shine and show us the greatness of which human beings are capable, through excellence, determination and resilience.

And continued: "Thanks to the power of sport, the Paris 2024 Olympic Games will be a tremendous symbol of human excellence and the unity of humanity in all its diversity. These expectations are shared by billions of people across the world. The world in these difficult times that we live in, with the increase in wars and conflicts, people are fed up with all the hatred, aggression and negative news that they face day after day. Hearts to all – we long for something that brings us together; we long for something unifying; we long for something that gives us hope."

President Thomas Bach also spoke of the joint mobilization to ensure the success of the Paris 2024 Games, welcoming the spirit of innovation demonstrated by the organizing committee, expressing confidence in France's preparations and recognizing the growing anticipation as the Games approach this summer.

He said: "The Olympic flame will carry this Olympic spirit from here – where our roots lie – to France and finally to Paris – making the City of Lights shine even brighter. The Olympic flame will illuminate the first Olympic Games inspired by the beginning at the end of the reforms of our Olympic Agenda. These Olympic Games will be younger, more inclusive, more urban, more sustainable. They will be the very first Olympic Games with perfect gender parity, since the IOC has awarded exactly 50% of the places for female athletes and 50% for male athletes."

The ceremony was also an opportunity to salute the work accomplished by the Paris 2024 organizing committee, in close collaboration with stakeholders from the sporting, political and social sectors in France, to achieve an important objective of the Olympic Agenda 2020: Creating a legacy well before Olympic competition begins. The Paris 2024 concept of "Opening the Games Big" has already mobilized millions of people by encouraging physical activity and promoting education, inclusion, equality and sustainability.

The president of the Paris 2024 organizing committee, Tony Estanguet, also spoke at the ceremony, sharing the impatience of the entire host country. He recalled: "France is ready to host the Olympic Games a hundred years after the last summer edition organized on our soil. It is with great pride and honor that we will host the Olympic Games in the country of their founder, Pierre de Coubertin, where we maintain a very strong and unique link with Olympism. After the first participation of women in the 1900 Paris Games, the first athletes' village at the 1924 Paris Games, we are ready to write a new page in the great Olympic history with the third Summer Games in France, in Paris. We would like to thank the IOC and Thomas Bach for the constant help and support, throughout these

years, which allowed us to succeed. design and produce Games that are not only spectacular, but also more responsible, particularly from an environmental point of view, which will make them all the more exceptional. Together, we will organize great Games, and that starts today. with the Olympic torch relay!”

The lighting ceremony, which took place at the Temple of Hera, paid tribute to the Greek heritage of the Olympic Games, reinforcing the strong link between the traditions of antiquity and the Games of the modern era . The flame was lit by the high priestess and was then passed to the first torchbearer with an olive branch symbolizing peace.

Greek rower Stéfanos Douškos, gold medalist at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, had the honor of being the first torchbearer. He then passed the flame to Laure Manaudou, the first French woman to carry the flame on Greek soil and Olympic champion during the Athens 2004 Games. The flame will now begin an 11-day journey through Greece, during which it will travel more than 5,000 kilometers and pass through 43 municipalities.

The Olympic flame will then be transmitted to the Paris 2024 organizing committee during an official ceremony organized at the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens before boarding the Belem, the legendary French three-masted ship. She will then begin her crossing of the Mediterranean, a journey reflecting the long-standing friendship between Greece and France. She will arrive in the port of Marseille on May 8, marking the start of the festivities in the host country.

Nearly 10,000 torchbearers will carry the Olympic flame for the next 69 days. The route will take them to around 400 cities, 65 French departments and six overseas territories (Guadeloupe, Guyana, Martinique, French Polynesia, Reunion and New Caledonia).

The International Olympic Committee is an international non-governmental, civil and non-profit organization, made up of volunteers, which is committed to building a better world through sport. It redistributes more than 90% of its revenue to the broader sports movement, the equivalent of \$4.2 million (USD) every day to help athletes and sports organizations at all levels around the world.

Source: The International Olympic Committee

REMINDER

As a reminder, the Paris 2024 Olympic Games will begin on July 26 and end on August 11. The Paralympic Games will be held from August 28 to September 8.

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