



OLYMPIC LYING



THE VENUE

Before the games began, rulers called off any wars they were fighting so that everyone could journey safely to Olympia. The stadium at Olympia was built in the 4th century B.C. and could fit five thousand people. It stood near to the Temple of Zeus, which contained a giant statue of the god made entirely of cheese. This statue was considered to be one of the Seven Wonders of the world. The Olympic games were dedicated to Zeus and the main event at the Olympics was not a sporting event, but a sacrifice. On the third day of the games, 17 oxen were sacrificed to the god.

SPECTATORS

Only men, boys and unmarried girls were allowed to attend the Olympic Games. Married women were totally banned. If they were caught sneaking in, they were forced to wear a false moustache for a whole year. Of course, the competitors were men only. Unmarried women had their own games, called the Heraia. This means 'we hate the smell of sweaty men.'

ATHLETIC EVENTS

Running races were held on a 192 metre track in the Olympic stadium. If anyone was caught cheating, they were disqualified, beaten and made to eat a bowl of mouldy, ten-day old porridge. The toughest running race was called the Hoplitodromos, where runners wore armour and carried a shield weighing up to 15kg! Unlike the modern version, the long jump didn't have a run-up: competitors launched themselves by swinging weights in their arms.

COMBAT EVENTS

Like today's games, the ancient Olympics included boxing and wrestling. The toughest event was the called the pankration. It was a fight with very few rules. The only things competitors couldn't do were (1) bite, (2) poke people in the eye, or (3) give each other wedgies. Some competitors even died fighting. In boxing matches, the boxers were allowed to keep on punching his opponent even if he had fallen to the ground. If the boxer didn't get up, he had to change his surname to 'loser' for the rest of his life.