

Olympin Collectors Club Media Guide

Note to members:

As a member of Olympin, from time to time you may be asked to do an interview about our hobby with newspapers, radio, TV, etc. Below are some points that may help you with such interviews. In addition, many of our members contact local media in their area to volunteer information. There has been much success with this.

Questions to expect:

How did you get started in collecting?

How many Olympic Games have you been to? Which was your favorite and why?

Which is your favorite pin or item in your collection? Your most valuable one?

Do you have a favorite pin trading/collecting story?

Any particularly interesting people you have met and traded pins with?

Be sure to mention the Olympin Collectors Club, which is open to all.

Facts about the Olympin Collectors Club

Mission statement:

The Olympin Collectors Club is dedicated to promoting Olympic pin trading -- one of the earliest Olympic traditions -- and the collecting of Olympic memorabilia. Through member interaction, collections grow faster and new friendships are established that often last a lifetime. The Club encourages members to learn more about the Olympic Movement and its goals.

- Created in 1982 by Don Bigsby, who still serves as its president.
- Has over 500 members from more than 30 different countries.
- Each year in the fall (barring pandemics) hosts an Olympic memorabilia show.
- On its website Olympin offers a resource called Ask the Experts where the public may contact a Club member who is an expert in a particular area of Olympic collecting to have their specific questions answered.

More information is available online at olympinclub.com.

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Categories of Olympic Collectibles

Pins

The primary groups of Olympic pins are IOC (International Olympic Committee), NOC (National Olympic Committee), media, sponsor, and commercial (souvenir). (Most pins at any given Games are produced by the host city to be sold to help fund the Games.)

Other types are bid, international federation (e.g. FIFA), national governing body (e.g. USA Hockey), and agency (law enforcement, fire, FBI, etc.).

Olympic pins may also be grouped according to endless themes, such as, logos, specific countries, specific sports, mascots, venues, etc.

Other Areas of Olympic Memorabilia Collecting Include:

- Autographs
- Bid books
- Coins
- Diplomas
- IOC session badges
- Mascots
- Medals
- Official reports
- Participant badges
- Photographs
- Posters
- Programs
- Stamps
- Tickets
- Torches
- Uniforms

If you have a question about any of these areas, see the [Ask the Experts](#) section of our website:

To date, **the most expensive piece of sports memorabilia ever sold** is associated with the beginning of the modern Olympics. An annotated, handwritten draft of Pierre de Coubertin's 1892 proposal to revive the Olympic Games was purchased by Alisher Usmanov, President of the International Fencing Federation, for \$8.8 million at a Sotheby's auction held in December 2019. This beat the previous record holder, a Babe Ruth Yankees jersey, by \$3 million. In January 2020, Usmanov donated this historic manuscript to the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland.

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Brief History of Olympic Pins and Pin Trading

Sports pins are the precursors of Olympic pins. Photographs as far back as the mid-19th century show athletes wearing pins from their towns, clubs, and associations on their uniforms during competitions.

Many articles state that the cardboard ID badges worn by athletes and officials at the Athens 1896 Games were the first Olympic pins. They were not. They were, however, the first Olympic identification badges, which are an important but different type of Olympic collectible.

The first known Olympic pins were from Greece. Handmade of cloth, they depicted the Greek national emblem, a white cross on a blue background, and were awarded to a select number of Greek athletes who had finished first in the Athens 1896 preliminary trials.

The first known National Olympic Committee (NOC) pins (from Sweden and Canada) appeared at the 1908 London Games.

The first commercial souvenir pins were sold at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics to help fund the Games.

In 1936 Germany produced a million souvenir pins to help cover the expenses of the Winter and the Summer Olympics, which were held in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and in Berlin respectively.

During the early Games, athletes, coaches, and other insiders sometimes traded pins to promote friendship and good will. Collectors from Eastern Europe were among the first to assemble high-quality collections before the hobby took off in the West.

In 1976 at the Montreal Olympics for the first time the general public got involved in pin trading on a large scale although the variety of Olympic pins was limited.

The popularity of pin trading grew in 1980 at the Lake Placid Olympics and then exploded at the Los Angeles 1984 Games as more and more sponsors became involved in promoting their brands through pins.

The first Olympic pin trading center was provided by Budweiser in Los Angeles in 1984 but was not official. Coca-Cola created the first official pin trading center in Calgary in 1988 and has sponsored one at every Games since, through 2018.

For [more discussion](#) on Olympic pin collecting, please visit the website of the International Association of Olympic Collectors (AICO).

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