

# PINS AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES...

... they go together like a victory and a gold medal, like a torch and a flame. Originally mere identification badges and later tokens of goodwill exchanged among athletes and officials, Olympic Games pins have become a major catalyst in bringing people from all nations together in a spirit of camaraderie and cultural exchange.

Pins transcend politics, ethnicity, and language. They build bridges and open doors. They're tiny storehouses of Olympic Games memories. They dominate the social scene at the Games' major gathering places and venues, and they help fans become more than just passive spectators. Best of all, they're fun.

As we approach the 100th anniversary of the modern Games and of the tradition of Olympic Games pins, the 1996 Olympic Games Pin Society is proud to furnish its members with this comprehensive look at the hottest hobby of the '90s. Here you'll find the big picture on pin collecting and trading—all the background and basics on the number-one spectator "sport" of the Games, never before gathered into one book. The *1996 Olympic Games Countdown* complements the 1996 Olympic Games Pin Society newsletter, *PIN POINTS*, which takes the pulse of the pin-trading scene on the way to Atlanta.

We dedicate these publications to pinheads everywhere.

Happy collecting!



LOUI ADAMSKI/PEEK

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Historical commemorative pin of the poster from the 1952 Summer Games, issued by The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games for the 1996 Centennial Games.



From top:  
sterling-silver primary logo pin (Atlanta, 1996); IZZY, Atlanta's official Character (1996); commemorative of ancient Greek Games (1972).



U.S. Olympic Committee souvenir pin.



From ATHENS to ATLANTA

# 100 YEARS OF OLYMPIC GAMES PINS

Like a torch whose flame keeps getting brighter, Olympic Games pins have grown from triviality to phenomenon. Here's a chronicle of their century-old journey.

**DID YOU KNOW . . .** Europeans call pins badges; in Russia, they're *znachki*. • **Name those Games:** The 1924 Games in Chamonix, France, were actually called "International Winter

**P**ins—or at least badges, their ancestors—have attended every modern Olympic Games. Their evolution as part of the Games experience might be divided into three "ages"—bronze, silver, and gold—each of which reflects pins' increasing level of importance. This is the story of how something so small could come to have such an impact on the world's biggest sporting event.

## THE BRONZE AGE (1896-1920)

**1896**

Thanks to French educator Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the ancient Olympic Games rose



Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who led the campaign to revive the ancient Olympic Games.

like a phoenix in 1896 in Athens, Greece—the country of their origin.

Pins, however, had no such illustrious past in ancient Games that could be reborn, so the earliest Olympic Games pins made a modest debut. Judges, athletes, and officials wore badges that were little more than cardboard disks with the

appropriate titles of the bearer imprinted on each (see picture, left).

They came in three colors: blue for athletes, pink for judges, and red for officials. Most of these badges also had light blue ribbons attached through eyelets



An official's badge from the first modern Olympic Games, held in Athens, Greece, in 1896.





One of the first NOC (National Olympic Committee) pins, issued by Sweden for the Intercalated Games of 1906.

and tied in bows, and the badges were affixed to lapels by pushing straight pins through the eyelets at the top.

Just as these "pins" were primitive, the inaugural Games themselves were a primordial version of today's affair; only 13 nations and 311 athletes competed in 43 separate contests.

### 1900-1908

The next two Olympiads—in Paris and St. Louis, respectively—were both held in conjunction with international expositions and, unfortunately, wound up being dwarfed by them. As a result, exposition badges were issued to participants at the 1900 Games; in 1904, however, Games badges (which,



An intricately crafted judge's badge from the 1908 London Games.

incidentally, had been upgraded from cardboard to metal) were issued for Olympic Games participants only.

At the 1908 London Games, though, official badges of different styles and colors were created exclusively for various other groups with a role at the Games—the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the press, for example—in addition to the athletes and judges. Many of these badges resembled fine jewelry, featuring scalloped edges and a variety of metallic colors.

Also appearing at the London Games was perhaps the first official National Olympic Committee (NOC) badge created for an Olympic Games: a blue flag with a yellow cross representing the Swedish delegation. The Swedish badge had made its debut at the 1906 Intercalated Games in Athens.

(These Games were inserted between the official Olympic Games of 1904 and

1908 in an early effort to maintain the public's interest.) But that competition has never been recognized by the IOC as an official Olympic Games.



This souvenir pin of the 1912 Stockholm Games poster was one of the first ever sold to the public.

### 1912-1920

Even with their increasing status and visibility, badges remained the preserve of those directly involved with the Games. It wasn't until the 1912 Stockholm Games that souvenir pins and official Olympic Games pins were produced for sale to spectators.

Indeed, the term *pin*, as it is used today, can be applied for the first time at these Games to describe those souvenir offerings, since they were made available to the public rather than just issued to Games partici-



THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

pants and officials (as were *badges*).

This was also the first time that pin offerings were advertised (in the Games' official program) as part of a fund-raising campaign by the organizing committee. Among the most popular pins was a representation of the Stockholm Games poster (shown above).

The 1916 Berlin Games,

## THE GAMES RETURN

Spectators gather in Athens, Greece, in 1896 for the Opening Ceremony of the first modern Olympic Games, which was held in a restored stadium that dates from ancient times.



a casualty of World War I, were never held. And pins at the 1920 Games in Antwerp, Belgium, were scarce. Two other Olympic icons—the five rings and the Olympic flag—first appeared at Antwerp, having been adopted by the IOC in 1914.

But what of pin trading during this bronze age? Some accounts claim

## THE SILVER AGE

(1924-1976)

### 1924

As Europe's economy improved during the 1920s, so did the prospects of the Olympic Games pin. The first evidence was seen in 1924 at Chamonix, France, site of the first Winter Games, where for the first time some athletes wore extra pins on their garments not because they had to but because they wanted to. At previous

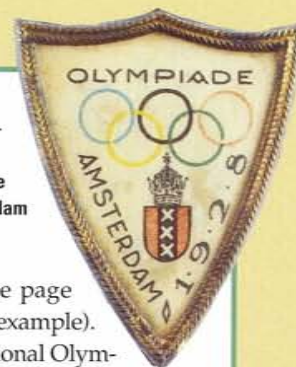
Games, wearing pins had been merely a perfunctory exercise for denoting team affiliation and for being granted access to venues.

Later in 1924, at the Summer Games in Paris (featured in the 1981 Academy Award-winning film *Chariots of Fire*), pin trading received a huge boost—thanks to the creation of the first Olympic Village, which was actually little more than a tightly packed collection of hutlike structures. Still, it accomplished one of the

primary goals of the Olympic Movement: to bring people of many nations together in one place in a spirit of camaraderie. That the athletes-in-residence would end up exchanging more than handshakes and greetings was only to be expected.

Significantly, the Olympic rings were featured in the designs of sizable numbers of pins for the first time. Debuting at the same time was the embryonic version of today's most common pin clasp—many of the Paris Games pins had a rounded-end post that fastened to a screw back. Today's standard pin has a sharp-pointed post welded to its back and attached through clothing with a butterfly

A commemorative pin issued for the 1928 Amsterdam Games.



clutch (see page 86 for an example). More National Olympic Committees also produced their own pins for these Games. All in all, 1924—including Winter and Summer Games—must be considered a breakthrough year for pins.

### 1928

The pin *joie de vivre* of Paris carried over into both the Winter and Summer Games of 1928—held in St. Moritz, Switzerland, and Amsterdam, respectively. At these Games, spectators and participants alike began to wear pins. Some of the pins from these two Games featured an oddly shaped post that was designed to be inserted through the buttonhole on a lapel.

Left: a Swiss NOC pin for the 1924 Paris Games. Above: the Czechoslovakia NOC pin for the 1928 Amsterdam Games.



## GREAT SKATE

Norwegian figure skater Sonja Henie (pictured here at the 1924 Chamonix Games, when she was 12) wasn't just a three-time Olympic Games champion—she was also a champion of Olympic Games pins and was often seen wearing them. Left: an official's badge from Chamonix.



that it took place as early as 1908, but no one can really say for sure exactly when the first trades were made. At any rate, pin trading had not yet become a visible, documented public phenomenon. Perhaps, since the first pins (or badges) were mainly for purposes of identification, those who wore them likely were not willing to part with them during the course of the Games.



## 1932

The Great Depression, as could be guessed, slowed the momentum that pins had gained. At the 1932 Winter Games in Lake Placid, New York, for example, only two versions of souvenir pins were available to be purchased, and though the Summer Games in Los Angeles were awash in official pins for athletes, judges, the press, Games employees, and the like, spectators had little opportunity to garner any souvenir pins for their collections. But that would not be the case with the twin Olympic Games that took place in Germany four years later.



A souvenir pin from the 1932 Los Angeles Games.



An official's badge from the 1932 Winter Games in Lake Placid.

## 1936

In anticipation of first the Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and then the Summer Games in Berlin, more than a million souvenir pins were sold to the public between 1933 and 1936 to help underwrite the two events.

Never before had official Olympic Games souvenir pins been offered for purchase in years preceding a particular Games; this was also the first time that pins were advertised in the newspapers and sold through the mail. Among the pins produced for general sale were nine different varieties featuring a depiction of Berlin's famous Brandenburg Gate and three designs incorporating the Olympic rings.

Pins and badges from the Berlin Games are among today's most sought after (and, unfortunately, counterfeited) pins. Particularly controversial are 1936 pins that feature the swastika in their design: many collectors have suspicions about their origin and authenticity.



UPI/BETT MANN ARCHIVE

## 1940-1944

If 1936 was any indication, pins were on the verge of becoming a public phenomenon. But war again intervened, and the Games of 1940 and 1944 were canceled. Originally, the 1940 Winter and Summer Games had been awarded to Japanese cities—Sapporo and Tokyo. But when Japan and China became embroiled in the second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the Japanese Olympic Committee relinquished its role as host,

and the IOC eventually picked Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Helsinki, Finland, to stage the Winter and Summer Games, respectively. Ultimately, however, both of those Games were canceled because of World War II.

But that doesn't mean that 1940 Olympic Games pins don't exist. Japan had already commissioned souvenir pins for Sapporo and Tokyo (see front cover), and these have since become some of the rarest and most expensive of Olympic

## THE SWASTIKA'S SHADOW

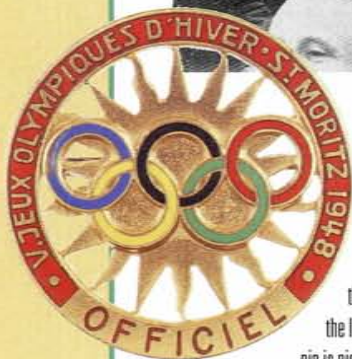
Nazism pervaded the 1936 Berlin Games, the first to include the Torch Relay. World War II broke out three years later, which caused the Games of 1940 and 1944 to be canceled. Below: a commemorative pin from the ill-fated Helsinki Games.







© I.O.C./LOTHAR RÜBILT



## SWISS CHEERS

Actually, those are Norwegian fans rooting from the stands at the 1948 St. Moritz Games in Switzerland, the first Games since the beginning of World War II. Note the pins on the lapels of more than a few spectators; a similar pin is pictured at left in the form of an official's badge.

Games pins. A greater number of pins for the Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Helsinki Games were produced, including some team and NOC pins. Apparently, pins for the canceled 1944 Games—set for Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, and London—were never manufactured.

## 1948

On January 30, 1948, with Europe on the mend both physically and emotionally, the Winter Games opened in St. Moritz, Switzerland, as the Olympic flame was relit for the first time in 12 years. Pin

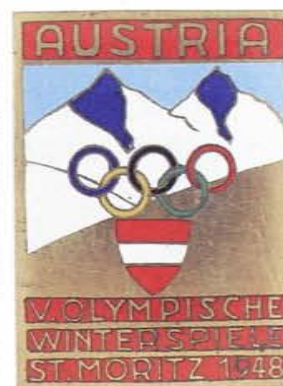
fervor was likewise rekindled during these Olympic Games.

Not only did athletes get caught up in spirited trading (thanks in particular to the generous numbers of team pins with which they were being furnished), but spectators liberally adorned their garments with the shiny accessories.

At London's Summer Games the status of pins was bolstered in a rather formal way, as the organizing committee's Official Report pronounced pins as having "some value from a historic point of view." Consequently, the committee urged the competing nations to limit the numbers of pins issued to their various participants and staff members.

"It was felt," the report stated, "that if all officials from the most important umpire, referee, or timekeeper down to those persons of lesser stature within the framework were to receive badges and medals, the value of both articles as mementos would be seriously impaired."

But NOC pins were hard to come by for a dif-



The Austrian team pin issued for the first post-World War II Games at St. Moritz, Switzerland.

ferent reason: many nations were strapped for extra funds after the war.

## 1952-1956

The 1952 Winter Games in Oslo, Norway, were noteworthy in that the official badges used there relied on inscriptions to denote various roles at the Games (such as that of athlete or official) rather than on colored ribbons or varied sizes and colors of the badges.

Many pin collectors mark that year's Summer Games in Helsinki for the unprecedented number of participants' badges—some 218 variations, many

of which sported ribbons—including ones for trainers and technicians.

Much sought after as well were pins from the U.S.S.R.—which had last participated in the Games 40 years earlier as Russia—and from the newly established Communist-bloc countries.

Although pins from the 1956 Winter Games in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, are now relatively rare, the official badges that were issued for those Games mark probably the first time that this type of pin was composed of two separate pieces: the Games logo was bolted onto a background base.

The 1956 Summer Games broke precedent in two unusual ways: first, they actually were held in late autumn, and second, they featured two host cities—Melbourne,

Australia, and Stockholm, Sweden. The former idiosyncrasy can be explained in that Melbourne is located in the Southern Hemisphere, where summer begins in late December. But why two cities and two



A Romania NOC pin for the 1956 Melbourne Games.



1956 Melbourne souvenir pin.



official logo pins? Because of legislation requiring that horses brought into Australia be subject to a six-month quarantine, which made the equestrian competition untenable for the Melbourne Games.

Therefore, the IOC scheduled that event for Stockholm in June—and onto the pin-collecting scene galloped a group of seven pins bearing the likeness of a horse and rider (one souvenir pin, which was made available to the public, and six different participants' badges).

These pins and badges have since become extremely prized among collectors, not only because of the singular nature of the Stockholm event but also because of the small number of competitors.

An official's badge from the 1956 Stockholm Games, which featured only equestrian events.



**1960-1968**

The Winter Games of 1960 in Squaw Valley, California, were an important milestone on the journey of Olympic Games pins: the first sponsor pin, from Sylvania Electric, which featured a microphone juxtaposed with the Olympic rings. That was a fitting design, for just as microphones spread the spoken word to a vast audience, sponsor pins would eventually expand the scope of Olympic Games pins.

Likewise, the host-city organizing committees would soon begin selling the rights-of-usage for their emblems and mascots to private companies for the production of Olympic Games souvenirs, including pins.

The proliferation of Olympic Games pins continued at the Winter and Summer Games of 1964, held in Innsbruck, Austria, and Tokyo, respectively. Media pins in particular became prominent as more international television networks de-

voted significant coverage to the Games. Increasing interest by corporations in the Games also spawned new batches of sponsor pins—IBM at Innsbruck, for example, and Seiko and Puma at Tokyo.

The Mexico City Summer Games of 1968 saw the debut of the type of pin that has become the norm among today's Olympic Games pins: one employing the butterfly or military clutch to secure the pin to clothing. Why the preference for this particular pin? According to collectors, it's the ease with which the pin can be attached and removed, as well as the fact that each pin makes only one hole



The first-ever sponsor pin, from Sylvania.

**1972-1976**

As the Olympiads of the 1970s unfolded, everything was in place



Kenya's NOC pin from the Mexico City Games.

for Olympic Games pins to ascend the gold-medal platform of status and popularity. Certainly the requisite variety of pins existed: mascot pins, sponsor pins, media pins, NOC pins, and souvenir pins.

The numbers were there, too; hundreds of thousands of pins were now being produced for each Olympic Games. Pin trading—that ebullient, contagious pursuit that today is practiced by tens of thousands of Games attendees—had finally begun to escape the confines of the Olympic Village and was no longer limited to just athletes and officials.

Yet, as the 1976 Montreal Games came to an end, who could ever have predicted the Olympic

Games pin explosion that four years later would rock a sleepy village about 100 miles to the south in upstate New York's Adirondack Mountains?



A commemorative pin from the 1972 Munich Games.



## ONE OF A KIND

Beneath a metal participant's badge for the Mexico City Games hangs the first plastic ribbon ever used on an Olympic Games pin. Also noteworthy about these Games: They were held closer to the equator and higher in altitude (more than 7,300 feet) than were any other Summer Games before or since.





DUOMO / PAUL SUTTON



## THEY LOVED L.A.

From beginning (see pin at left) to end (above, Closing Ceremony), the Los Angeles Games of 1984 were a smash hit—especially with pin traders, who engaged in an unprecedented frenzy of swapping a more numerous and varied assortment of pins than had ever been seen at any previous Games.

## THE GOLDEN AGE (1980-1996)

### 1980

Ask many Olympic Games followers in the U.S. who the heroes of Lake Placid were and they'll probably say Eric Heiden or the U.S. hockey team. Ask a pin enthusiast, on the other hand, and the likely answer is Roni the raccoon,

the official 1980 Olympic Winter Games mascot who was featured on dozens of pin designs.

Without a doubt, the Games in Lake Placid represented a pivotal juncture for pins, a fortuitous fortnight in which these tiny marvels were finally transformed from curiosity to craze. A major reason for such a transformation was the minuscule size of the



Torch Relay commemorative pin from Lake Placid Games.

village of Lake Placid: anybody who came to the Games inevitably ended up on Main Street—since the town pretty much is Main Street. Plus, the street was closed to vehicles during the Games, so it became a jam-packed pedestrian thoroughfare and a convivial international melting pot, as well as an ideal incubator for pin madness.

It didn't hurt, either, that so many companies and organizations that had ties to the Games were now commissioning their own pins for distribu-

tion there. Even the transportation glitches that plagued the early days of the Lake Placid Games—leading to hourslong waits in the cold for bus rides to venues—gave pin traders plenty of time to mingle and swap. And the fact that so many dated Lake Placid souvenir pins had been issued and sold since 1978 addressed a rather simple dilemma that had hampered pin trading at past Olympiads: *It's hard for people to trade pins when*

*they don't have pins to trade.*

Once the feverish trading that marked the Lake Placid Games began, these newly hatched "pin-heads" wore their recently won pins on hats, scarves, coats, sweaters, and nearly every other article of their clothing. Pin collectors recalling the



A commemorative pin for the 1980 Lake Placid Games.

experience describe the trading as "spontaneous," "crazy," "manic." The lake itself may have been placid (or, rather, frozen) in 1980, but Main Street in the normally quiet town was apparently any-

thing but that.

Though there was a pronounced shortage of Americans in Moscow for the Summer Games of 1980—due to the U.S. boycott, which resulted from the Soviets' invasion of Afghanistan—Olympic Games pins flooded the environs. This was to be expected, for the Russians have a historic fanaticism for their *znachki* (pins), which can be purchased at almost any retail outlet. Even so, the trading scene cooled considerably from





Commemorative pin from 1980 Moscow Games.

that at Lake Placid, with most exchanges in Moscow taking place between athletes and their home-country followers instead of among the mélange of international visitors.

## 1984

Although the 1984 Winter Games didn't make the sort of groundbreaking pin-related news that was generated by its American predecessor in 1980, Sarajevo did witness the birth of one important pin innovation: the framed commemorative set,



The first official bridge pin, linking the Sarajevo and Calgary Winter Games.

which has since become a staple among collectors and a frequent adornment on their walls. This first set was a 16-pin collection featuring Vuchko the wolf, the Sarajevo Games mascot.

But another type of pin at these Games represented a sort of throw-



Mirror-finish pins of the Moscow Games mascot, Misha (1980).

back to earlier Games—the participants' badges for the athletes featured ribbons, which once was the customary way for badges to be trimmed.

If pin power could so utterly subjugate a New York village of 2,000 people, what would it do to a California city of eight million? Well, let's just say that at the 1984 Summer Games the initials L.A. might as well have stood for *Lapel Accessory*, so overwhelming was the collective urge to acquire Olympic Games pins.

Never had so many pins descended upon one place at one time—perhaps as many as 17 million, in nearly 1,300 designs. In the tradition of sprawling L.A., trading was spread across the environs of the Games, from venues to street corners to the Olympic Village. And when a corporate sponsor of the Games set up a space at a parking lot



the traders and sellers who had set up shop on card tables.

Not surprisingly, the American media began covering the pin scene in an extensive way for the first time; wire stories about the phenomenon were peppered with quotes from local folks who had been converted into pinheads. The first Olympic Games pin-collectors' guide (for L.A. pins only) also appeared.

On a darker note, pin counterfeiting plagued the L.A. pin scene after the Games concluded, as unscrupulous profiteers, realizing how much money was being shelled out for pins, arranged for the manufacture of knockoff versions of the more popular pins—especially sponsor pins.

Compounding the problem, most

across the street from the Los Angeles Coliseum, as many as 10,000 people per day swarmed the area to ogle the offerings of



China NOC pin for 1984 L.A. (China's first Games since 1952).



PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD JACKSON / SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

## WINGING IT

of the pin traders and collectors at the Games were so new to the hobby that they had not yet learned how to detect counterfeit pins. (Doing so is often difficult even for experienced collectors.) To this day, many veteran collectors still tend to shy away from sponsor pins from the 1984 Los Angeles Games, for fear that any given pin might be bogus.

The Games-inspired pin craze maintained momentum in the months following the Games: Los Angeles pin collectors quickly organ-

At the 1988 Calgary Winter Games, British ski jumper Eddie Edwards certainly wasn't chicken: he had the nerve to hurtle into space with only minimal ski-jumping skills. His last-place finishes—coupled with his thick glasses, lantern jaw, and comic ad libs—made him the antihero hero of Calgary and inspired an unofficial pin saluting his nickname (while misspelling his first name).







DUOMO/STEVEN E. BUTTON

## HEART AND SEOUL

At the 1988 Summer Games Opening Ceremony, each spectator received a commemorative pin (left). Intended to portray global unity in the spirit of the Olympic Games, it was created by a 9-year-old South Korean girl, the winner of a nationwide pin-design contest sponsored by The Coca-Cola Company.



ized weekend pin shows and started pin shops and pin-collecting clubs, much as their counterparts in New York had done after the 1980 Games. (Most of these clubs, however, had largely local memberships and had disbanded by the next Olympiad.)

Still, the twin pin explosions in Lake Placid and Los Angeles left a passionate nucleus of Olympic Games pin collectors on both coasts, and steered the hobby on a course from which there has been no turning back.

### 1988

It was probably a good thing for the cause of Olympic Games pins that

the 1988 Winter Games were to be held in Calgary, Canada; the Alberta city's relative proximity to both Los Angeles and Lake Placid made it easier for many North American pinheads to attend. In fact, these Games saw the now-common practice of visitors coming for the sole purpose of adding to their pin collections. Licensees produced some seven million pins specifically for sale and distribution during the 16-day event.

The Coca-Cola Company, whose support of the Olympic Games dates back to 1928, launched its enduring association with this red-hot spectator "sport" by setting up an expansive tent that served as the Olympic Games' first Official Olympic Pin Trading Center; it was visited by an estimated 17,000 people a day.

The University of Calgary sponsored an Olympic pin-trading symposium, featuring a panel of experts expounding on such topics as "When Do

You Trade Two for One?" Local businesses as diverse as barbershops and delicatessens converted themselves temporarily into pin-selling shops, and—as was the case in Los Angeles—the city's sidewalks were lined with the fold-up tables of pin vendors.

At the 1988 Summer Games in Seoul, South Korea, however, the number of North American attendees was much lower than at the previous Summer and Winter Games; nevertheless, the

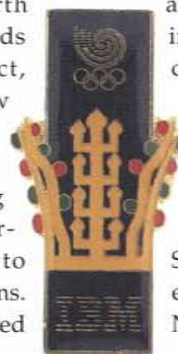
level of pin-trading activity scarcely diminished from that in 1984. What's more, a whole new region of the world got a first-

hand introduction to the pursuit.

Coca-Cola set up two official pin-trading centers near the athletic venues; traders also flocked to the Itaewon shopping district and the Olympic Village area.

### 1992

The Winter and Summer Games returned to Europe, a continent whose affection for pins predates U.S. pin fever by decades. (One probable reason: 24 of the past 39 Olympic Games have been held in Europe.) The first great collections of Olympic Games pins were assembled by Europeans. So it's natural that trading was top-notch in both Albertville, France, and Barcelona, Spain.



An art-series sponsor pin issued by IBM for the Seoul Games.



MICHAEL PUGH

Above: the Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Centre at the 1992 Albertville Games. Right: a pin honoring the Coca-Cola PinMobiles that toured the event venues.





The setting of the former city's Winter Games, however, posed something of a challenge to traditional pin trading: the venues were scattered among several Alpine villages throughout the Savoie region.

So in addition to opening its Official Olympic Pin Trading Centre in the town of Albertville itself (to which 350,000 visits were made during the Games), Coca-Cola arranged for two Pin-Mobiles, vans that were outfitted to serve as selling and trading hubs for



An American pin collector models typical Games wear from the summer of 1992.

pins. These Pin-Mobiles made regular rounds to each of the venues.

By the end of the Games, more than a million pins had been exchanged with Coca-Cola's support. (That

figure does not include the pins traded at the city of Albertville's own pin-exchange center.)

Pins that were highly coveted included U.S. hockey-team pins, figure-skating pins, and team pins from former Soviet-bloc republics Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

When the scene shifted to Barcelona in July, pin trading once more hit high gear, as shouts of "Cambio, cambio!" (the Spanish word for trade) resounded again and again among the milling crowds at the primary event site, Montjuïc, the majestic seaside hill that dominates the center of Barcelona.

The most popular ones included those featuring the Games mascot, Cobi, and the sensation-creating human "skyscrapers"

from the U.S., the basketball "Dream Team"; also popular was the pin of the Unified Team of former Soviet Union republics, which competed together under that name only at the Barcelona Games.

Though selling pins on the street was forbidden by local police, trading sessions popped up spontaneously in all sorts of locales,

from the airport to fast-food restaurants to venues—even to the lines of people waiting to use the portable toilets. Perhaps as many as a half-million people became swept up

by pin trading in this historic Mediterranean port city.



Unified Team NOC pin for the 1992 Barcelona Games.

## 1994

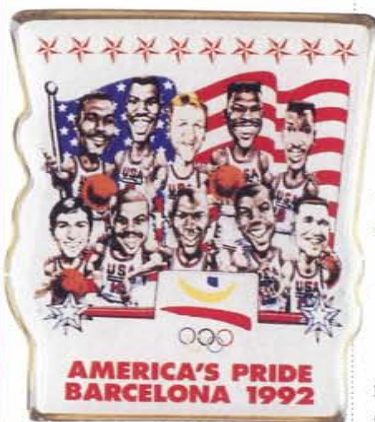
Olympic Games pin traders would have to wait a mere 550 days or so until



MICHAEL PUGH

## CENTER STAGE

The Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Centre was the hub for thousands of buyers and swappers in Barcelona, where pins featuring the Games mascot, Cobi (right, on a Coca-Cola sponsor pin), were hot items.



Part of the 25-pin "Dream Team" set (1992).





LOTH ADAMSKI-PEEK

## FAN FARE

A hatful of Olympic Games pins and a handful of her country's flags made Pia Clarholm of Østenstadveien, Norway, typical of the pin-thusiastic home crowd at the 1994 Winter Games in Lillehammer. Left: pewter cultural commemorative pin of Mother Earth, honoring the 1994 Games' ecological sensitivity.



their next reunion, as the Lillehammer, Norway, Games of 1994 inaugurated the new two-year staggered schedule for Winter and Summer Games.

When visiting pinheads arrived in this small town 100 miles north of Oslo, they found that their hosts had been preparing for pin mania seemingly with as much care and enthusiasm as they'd devoted to staging the Games.

The Norwegians had organized more than 30 pin clubs throughout the nation, the largest one boasting more than 25,000 members. They had published a series of guides to official Norwegian Olympic Games pins from 1952

and 1994. And before the Games had even begun, the Norwegians had already bought 17 million or so official Lillehammer pins—which works out to more than four pins for each Norwegian. Add it all together, and you get what many North American pinheads in attendance later described as the best Olympic Games pin trading ever.

Where Lake Placid had its Main Street, Lillehammer had the Storgata, the pedestrian-only boulevard in the center of town that daily became a veritable river of fans—most of whom wore pins.

Unlike in Barcelona, pin selling was permitted, so the Storgata was also lined with multinational pin vendors, some of whom rented shops and turned them into temporary pin emporiums. Even more vendors displayed their offerings along the sidewalks, braving daytime temperatures that usually hovered between 0 and 20 degrees Fahrenheit.



Czech Republic NOC pin from the Lillehammer Games.

The Coca-Cola Official Olympic Pin Trading Center (opened by the company's polar-bear mascot) occupied two floors of a former clothing store on the Storgata and became a beehive of trading activity; celebrities seen there included First Daughter Chelsea Clinton, who exchanged presidential-seal lapel pins for

Olympic Games varieties; her mother, Hillary Rodham Clinton, donned an Olympic Games cap festooned with pins.

Just as they had done in Albertville, two Coca-Cola PinMobiles made frequent rounds to the competition venues. And a satellite pin-trading center was set up in the Olympic Park. In all, some 600,000 pins were traded by nearly 400,000 people at the locations sponsored by Coca-Cola.

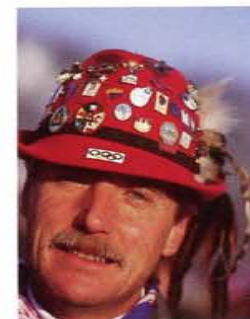
What were the hottest



Coca-Cola's first two Pin of the Day pins from the Lillehammer Games.

pins in Lillehammer? The CBS guest pin that depicted a Viking ship, a Turner Network Television double-heart pin, the Jamaican bobsled team pin, the British Broadcasting Company pin, the Swiss delegation badge, the Fiji team pin, and Lillehammer's pewter sports-pictogram series were among those most sought after.

The biggest sensation on a daily basis might well have been the Coca-Cola Pin of the Day, for which buyers lined up at the Official Olympic Pin Trading Center an hour before its 10 a.m. opening.



Eskil Stengrundet of Elverum, Norway, sports a hatful at Lillehammer.

LOTH ADAMSKI-PEEK





Each dated version usually paid tribute to a particular attribute of the day it represented—for example, the Opening Ceremony and Valentine's Day.

Also at Lillehammer, Coca-Cola and The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games announced the formation of the 1996 Olympic Games Pin Society, setting the stage for Atlanta in 1996, when Olympic Games pin trading will again return to American soil.

## 1996

So what awaits pinheads in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1996, the centennial anniversary of Baron de



Jim Clarkin of Gloversville, N.Y., strolls the Storgata of Lillehammer ready to trade.

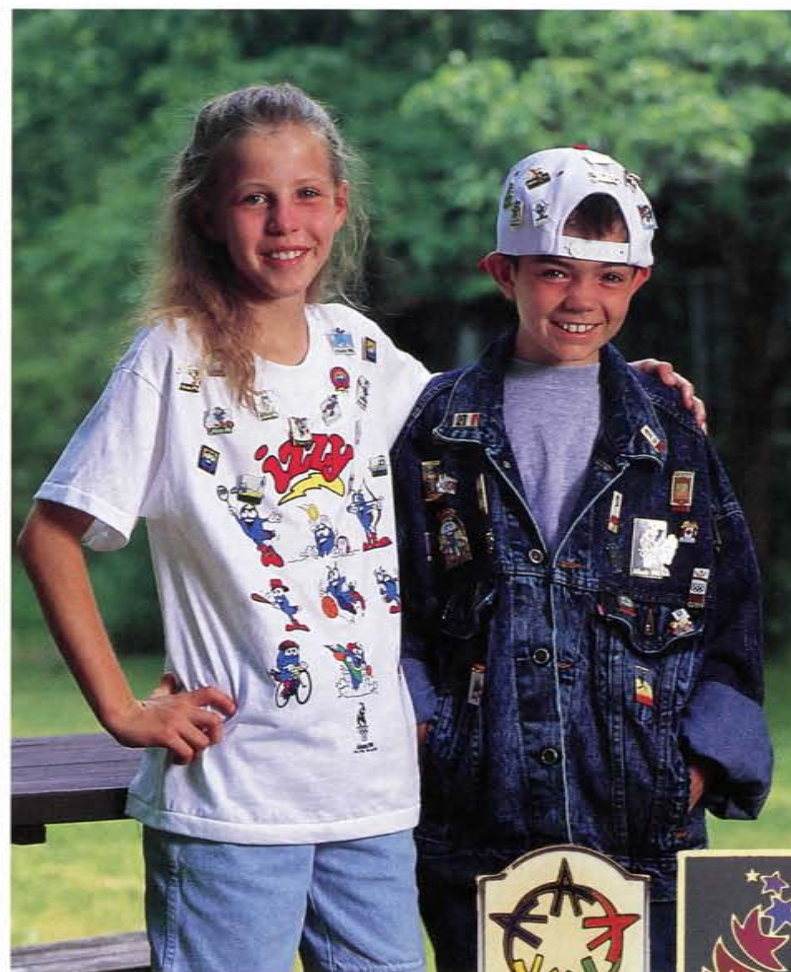
Coubertin's revival of the ancient Greek Olympic Games? If past is prologue, the numbers of pins and pin trades at these Summer Games may well surpass those of all previous Olympic Games combined.

The elements are all in place. First, there's the excellent accessibility of the city, which not only has become a major international air destination but also is within a two-hour flight of more than three-fourths of the U.S. population. Moreover, millions of

officially licensed pins in more than 3,000 different designs are expected to be manufactured for these Games. As at Lillehammer, many of these pins will be sold to the public well before the Opening Ceremony on July 19, 1996, which means that many attendees will be able to arrive in Atlanta with sizable trading stocks.

And don't forget the 1996 Olympic Games Pin Society, which, like the Norwegian clubs, will produce thousands of new pinheads, educate them about the art of collecting and trading, and expose them to the vast array of available pins—all pointing to the 1996 Games and the biggest gathering of pinheads ever.

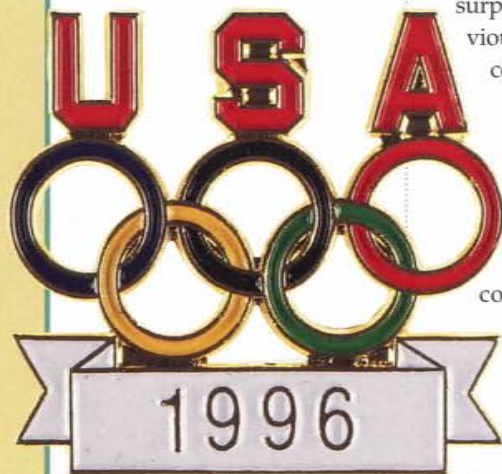
It's tempting to say that Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Games—which will also be the 100th anniversary of Olympic Games pins—represent a fitting conclusion to an improbable and irresistibly entertaining story. More likely, though, Atlanta 1996 will represent the beginning of an entirely new chapter for this exciting hobby.



DAVID LUTTRELL

## LOOKING TO ATLANTA

All the elements are in place for the Centennial Games to be the biggest pin-fest ever—including plenty of enthusiastic new pinheads like Annie Lawson and Dillon Luttrell of Knoxville, Tennessee. Near right: an Atlanta bid pin with an early Summer Games logo; far right: a later pin bearing the official Torch Mark logo.



United States Olympic Committee souvenir pin for the 1996 Centennial Games.