

WHAT'S COLLECTIBLE?

"So many pins, so little time." It's easy to become overwhelmed by the vast array of Olympic Games pins, and as the hobby expands, even more varieties will appear on the scene. But for now at least, most collectible Olympic Games pins fall under these broad categories.

COMMEMORATIVES

Also called souvenir or event pins, they're usually—though not always—issued by an Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (OCOG). Most go on sale to the public long before the Games begin. Commemorative pins comprise the following subcategories:

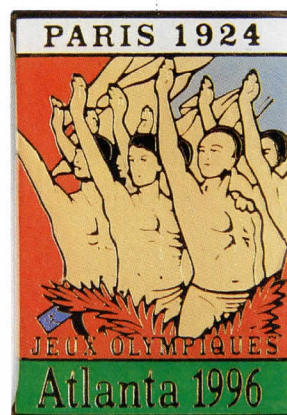
CULTURAL COMMEMORATIVES

honor aspects of the host city's local flavor (as these Russian dolls from Moscow, 1980, show) or its famous sites.



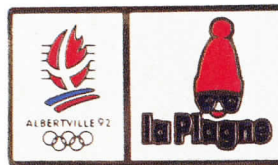
LOGO OR EMBLEM PINS

depict the official symbol or elements chosen by an OCOG for its Games. Above: Atlanta's Torch Mark, 1996.



HISTORICAL COMMEMORATIVES

celebrate past Olympic Games icons and events. Look for many in conjunction with the Centennial Games, such as the 1924 Paris Games poster pin above.



VENUE PINS

depict the locations of competitions, as seen above in a pin of the bobsled-and-luge venue at the 1992 Winter Games in Albertville.



BRIDGE PINS

debuted in the 1980s; they combine the official marks (such as logos or mascots) of two consecutive Games, as in the Lillehammer-Atlanta bridge pin above.



PICTOGRAM PINS

show the symbolic representations of the Games' sports and host-city services. Left: a 1994 Lillehammer short-track speed skating pictogram pin.

BID PINS

are issued by the organizing committee of a prospective host city to help promote awareness. There are no Olympic rings on bid pins created by a city that has not yet won designation from its NOC, unless it has used them unknowingly. (Each country can put forward only one nominee, and often several cities compete for that honor before one of them enters the worldwide competition.) Logo designs often change after a city has been awarded the Games (see Atlanta's logo designs, page 17). Right: Sydney's 2000 Summer Games bid pin.



GAMES-RELATED EVENT PINS

are made for such peripheral activities as the Cultural Olympiad or Olympic Torch Relay. Above: Calgary's Torch Relay pin, 1988.



MASCOT PINS

highlight the figure(s) chosen to personify the Games (see pages 22-23); the Nagano, Japan, Organizing Committee has selected the Snowlets (right) as its 1998 Winter Games mascots.





UNOFFICIAL COMMEMORATIVES are usually issued by public agencies and other peripheral groups within a host city, such as the transit authority or a local museum; these pins require no licensing fee to produce and as a result usually carry no Olympic symbols or words. Above: a Barcelona police pin, 1992.

COUNTDOWN PINS are also called milestone pins; they mark the number of days left before a Games' Opening Ceremony. This genre originated at the 1994 Winter Games in Lillehammer.



IOC PINS

When it convenes, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) issues session badges to individual participants and simultaneously releases a greater quantity of session pins (as handouts or for sale). The IOC also issues badges for executive board meetings and Olympic Congresses as well as pins to commemorate such special events as the Olympic Centenary Celebration held in June 1994.

NOC PINS

Issued by a country's National Olympic Committee (NOC), particularly collectible NOC pins are those that are historic (such as ones from new or bygone countries) or those from countries that send few athletes to the Games. There are two main types:

- **Dated NOC pins** Identifiable by logos, years, mascots, host-city names, or Roman numerals specific to one Games.
- **Generic NOC pins** Undated; often the same design is used for several consecutive Games.



Hard-to-come-by Burkina Faso generic NOC pin (1988, Seoul).



A dated NOC pin from the newly independent Ukraine, a country that made its Olympic Games debut in 1994 in Lillehammer.



Coca-Cola's first Olympic Games pin (Montreal, 1976).

SPONSOR PINS

Also called corporate or supplier pins, these are created by the companies that help underwrite the Olympic Games. Series of sponsor pins from a single company, such as The Coca-Cola Company, can form the basis of an entire collection.

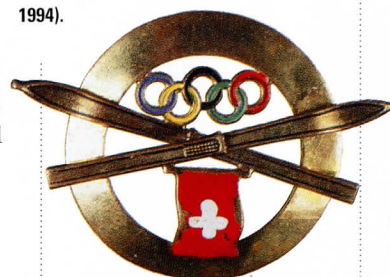
A subcategory is VIP or guest pins; given by sponsors to top executives, guests, and clients, these pins admit the wearers to special functions and confer other perks.



U.S. basketball NGB sponsor pin, issued by Coca-Cola in 1991.



Mirrored U.S. Nordic-combined team pin (Lillehammer, 1994).



Handmade Switzerland ski team pin (St. Moritz, 1928).

SPORT PINS

This category comprises pins issued by NGBs (a sport's national governing body) and IFs (the international federations that regulate NGBs) as well as team pins issued by NOCs. There are also federation sponsor pins, which bear the logos of corporations that sponsor NGBs, and sport pins that don't bear the Olympic rings and that may have been produced for competitions other than the Games. Some people collect by sport (such as cycling pins), others by country (pins of all Italian sports federations, for example).



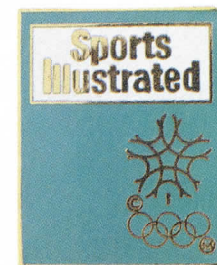
RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana) broadcast media pin (Seoul, 1988), made by an Italian jeweler.



Newsweek print media pin, (Los Angeles, 1984).

MEDIA PINS

Newspapers, magazines, TV and radio networks, and wire services covering the Games issue pins featuring their name or logo. Some collectors pursue only print pins or only broadcast pins; others go after all U.S. media or only foreign media.



Sports Illustrated guest badge (Calgary, 1988). SI designs come in six colors: white, designating editorial; black, for other staff; and red, yellow, green, and blue for guests.

CREATE-YOUR-OWN-PIN CATEGORY

Still unsure of what kinds of pins to collect? Then design your own class of collectibles. You might like a pin just because...

- It's attractive. The design or colors are eye-catching.
- It's unusual. The pin has peculiar features, such as moving parts, ribbons, or bells.
- It's finely crafted. Detailed workmanship or unique materials stand out.
- It's old. And that often makes it rare or unusual.

• It's historic. Examples include the Unified Team pin from Barcelona (1992) or a team pin from the first time a sport was played in the Olympic Games.

• It's offbeat. Often unofficial, such pins may feature a famous personality, a mascot in an unusual pose, or a humorous phrase.