

Olympic Winter Games Medals from Chamonix 1924 to Sochi 2014

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Introduction

This document looks at the evolution of the Olympic Winter Games medals, from the first <u>Games in Chamonix in 1924</u> to those in <u>Sochi in 2014</u>. Each medal is presented with a photo of its obverse and reverse, with a description of the design and the technical details available.

Taking a journey from the first Winter Games to the start of the 21st century using the emblematic Olympic medals is a fascinating artistic and cultural experience.

1. It All Started With The Summer Games Medals

At the first Olympic Games of the modern era in Athens in 1896, the winner was crowned with an olive wreath and received a silver medal. James B. Connolly of Massachusetts was the first modern Olympic champion to be rewarded thus. The 1904 Olympic Games in St Louis, were the first at which gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded for first, second, and third place.

With the exception of the medals for the 1956 equestrian events, the medals for the Games of the Olympiad became standardized starting in 1928. On one side, there was the traditional design of the goddess of victory, holding a palm in her left hand and a winner's crown in her right hand. On the other, an Olympic champion was carried triumphantly by the crowd, with an Olympic stadium in the background. For the 1972 Games in Munich, the Organising Committee started a new trend, with a reverse designed by an artist from the Bauhaus school, Gerhard Marcks. A further design adaptation was introduced for the 2004 Games in Athens when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) approved the Organising Committee's (OCOG) proposal for an updated version of the goddess of victory and the stadium.

At the 1904 Olympic Games in St Louis, the medal was attached to a coloured ribbon with a pin to fix it to the athlete's chest. It was not until 1960, in Rome however, that the medals were first designed to be placed around the winners' necks. On this occasion, a laurel leaf chain was designed for the purpose. At subsequent Games editions, however, it has most often been a coloured ribbon that was used.

2. The Winter Games Medals

In the beginning, it was stipulated that the medals for the Winter Games must be different from those of the Summer Games. Today, their design must take into account certain visual elements defined by the IOC and the OCOG, with the IOC having the final approval. The Greek goddess of victory must not appear on the obverse. They must show the Olympic emblem, the full name of the Games in question, the name of the sport or discipline concerned and the OCOG's emblem.

Additionally, the Winter Games medals should reflect the visual look, plus cultural and aesthetic elements selected by the OCOG. For the <u>2010 Games in Vancouver</u>, for example, the obverse of each medal featured a unique cropping taken from a contemporary First Nations piece of art. The Sochi medals for 2014 meld metal with an etched polycarbonate core.

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3. From Chamonix to Sochi

3.1. Chamonix 1924





Obverse

Reverse

On the obverse, a winter sports athlete, arms open. He is holding in his right hand a pair of skates and in his left a pair of skis. In the background, the Alps with Mont Blanc.

On the reverse, the inscription: "CHAMONIX MONT-BLANC SPORTS D'HIVER 25 JANVIER - 5 FEVRIER 1924 ORGANISES PAR LE COMITÉ OLYMPIQUE FRANÇAIS SOUS LE HAUT PATRONAGE DU COMITE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIQUE A L'OCCASION DE LA CELEBRATION DE LA VIIIE OLYMPIADE".

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Raoul BENARD	Raoul BENARD	Raoul BENARD
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	55 mm	55 mm	55 mm
Mint	Administration des Monnaies et Médailles	Administration des Monnaies et Médailles	Administration des Monnaies et Médailles



3.2. St. Moritz 1928





Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, a skater with her arms spread out, surrounded by snow crystals.

The reverse comprised of the Olympic rings at the top with the inscription "<u>II. JEUX OLYMPIQUES D.HIVER ST.MORITZ 1928</u>" underneath. On each side an olive branch.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Arnold HUNERWADEL	Arnold HUNERWADEL	Arnold HUNERWADEL
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	50 mm	50 mm	50 mm
Mint	Huguenin Frères	Huguenin Frères	Huguenin Frères



3.3. Lake Placid 1932



Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, in the top half, a winged goddess above the clouds holding a laurel crown in her right hand. In the background, the Adirondack mountains with, at their feet, a winter sports stadium, ski jump and the Lake Placid landscape. The curved shape of the medal symbolizes the ridges of ancient columns.

On the reverse, in the top half the Olympic rings, under which can be seen a laurel crown. In the middle, the inscription "III OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES LAKE PLACID 1932".

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	-	-	-
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	54 mm	54 mm	54 mm
Mint	Robbins Company	Robbins Company	Robbins Company



3.4. Garmisch-Partenkirchen 1936



Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, in the upper half, an ancient chariot pulled by three horses, driving on a triumphal arch composed of four rays. A Goddess of Victory sits on the chariot holding a laurel crown. In the bottom half, in front of a picture, an illustration of winter sports equipment with some examples. Around, there is the inscription "GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN".

On the reverse, which is deliberately simple, the Olympic rings and the inscription "IV OLYMPISCHE WINTERSPIELE 1936".

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Richard KLEIN	Richard KLEIN	Richard KLEIN
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	100 mm	100 mm	100 mm
Mint	Deschler	Deschler	Deschler



3.5. St. Moritz 1948



Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, in between two snow crystals, the inscription "Vmes JEUX OLYMPIQUES D'HIVER ST.-MORITZ 1948".

On the reverse, a hand holding a lit torch with the Olympic Rings in the background. Six snow crystals decorate the empty space right and left. At the top, curving round, the motto "CITIUS ALTIUS FORTIUS".

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Paul-André DROZ	Paul-André DROZ	Paul-André DROZ
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	60 mm	60 mm	60 mm
Mint	Huguenin Frères	Huguenin Frères	Huguenin Frères



3.6. Oslo 1952





Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, the Olympic rings with a superimposed torch, a composition based on the design by the Greek artist Vasos Falireas (1905-1979) and approved by the International Olympic Committee. In the background "OLYMFIA". Around the design, the motto "CITIUS ALTIUS FORTIUS" and the inscription "JEUX OYLMPIQUES".

On the reverse, designed by Knut Yran, included the inscription "<u>DE VI. OLYMPISKE VINTERLEKER OSLO</u> 1952" complemented by the pictogramme of the Oslo Town Hall and three snowflakes.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	V. FALIREUS; Knut YRAN	V. FALIREUS; Knut YRAN	V. FALIREUS; Knut YRAN
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	71 mm	71 mm	71 mm
Mint	Th. Marthinsen	Th. Marthinsen	Th. Marthinsen



3.7. Cortina d'Ampezzo 1956



On the obverse, the head of an idealized woman, crowned with the five rings. The Olympic flame appears in the foreground. The inscription "VII GIOCHI OLIMPICI INVERNALI" surrounds the scene.

On the reverse, Mount Pomagagnon, one of the principal symbols of the Games, topped by a snow crystal. The inscription around reads: "CITIUS ALTIUS FORTIUS CORTINA 1956".

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Costantino AFFER	Costantino AFFER	Costantino AFFER
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	60 mm	60 mm	60 mm
Mint	Lorioli A.E	Lorioli A.E	Lorioli A.E



3.8. Squaw Valley 1960





Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, the profile of a young woman and, in the background, that of a young man, symbolizing the youth of America and the world. Surrounded by the inscription "VIII OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES".

The reverse remained sober, with the Olympic rings, with the motto "CITIUS ALTIUS FORTIUS" surrounding the top half. The space in the middle of the bottom half was reserved for the name of the sport, in accordance with the rule of the Olympic Charter in force at that time.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	-	-	-
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	55 mm	55 mm	55 mm
Mint	Jones Herff	Jones Herff	Jones Herff



3.9. Innsbruck 1964



Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, an imposing Alpine scene, with the inscription "INNSBRUCK 1964" going round it. For the first time, the name of the discipline appeared on the medal at the foot of the mountain.

On the reverse, the official emblem with the coat of arms of the City of Innsbruck linked with the Olympic rings, with the inscription "IX - OLYMPISCHE WINTERSPIELE" going round it.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Martha COUFAL- HARTL; Arthur ZELGER	Martha COUFAL- HARTL; Arthur ZELGER	Martha COUFAL- HARTL; Arthur ZELGER
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	70 mm	70 mm	70 mm
Mint	Hauptmünzamt, Wein	Hauptmünzamt, Wein	Hauptmünzamt, Wein



3.10. Grenoble 1968





Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, the official emblem with the inscription "XEME JEUX OLYMPIQUES D'HIVER GRENOBLE 1968".

On the reverse, the pictogram of the relevant discipline, for the first time in the history of the Olympic Games.

The process used was a photographic transfer onto acid-impregnated steel.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Roger EXCOFFON	Roger EXCOFFON	Roger EXCOFFON
Composition	Gilt silver (silver 925/000 + 6 gr. fine gold)	Silver (925/000)	Bronze
Diameter	60 mm	60 mm	60 mm
Mint	Administration des Monnaies et Médailles	Administration des Monnaies et Médailles	Administration des Monnaies et Médailles



3.11. Sapporo 1972





Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, some lines cast slightly in relief represent the soft, feathery snow, as well as the sharp, pointed ice- evocative of a typical Japanese scene of peace and serenity. The obverse was designed by Kazumi Yagi.

On the reverse, the inscription "XI OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES SAPPORO'72" (and in Japanese) and the official emblem of the Games. The reverse was designed by Ikko Tanaka. The medals were made at the Mint Bureau of the Finance Ministry.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Yagi KAZUMI; Ikko TANAKA	Yagi KAZUMI; Ikko TANAKA	Yagi KAZUMI; Ikko TANAKA
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	60 mm	60 mm	60 mm
Mint	Mint Bureau of the Finance Ministry	Mint Bureau of the Finance Ministry	Mint Bureau of the Finance Ministry



3.12. Innsbruck 1976





Obverse Reverse

The obverse depicts the emblem of the 1976 Olympic Winter Games (the same as the 1964 Games), comprising the Olympic rings and the coat of arms of the city showing the bridge on the Inn which gives the city of Innsbruck its name. For centuries, this bridge has been the link between the old town and the Hötting district. It symbolizes friendship and the people of the world coming together. The inscription "XII OLYMPISCHE WINTERSPIELE INNSBRUCK 1976" surrounds the scene.

The reverse shows the Bergisel skiing area with the Alps in the background and the Olympic flame in the foreground on the right hand side.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Martha COUFAL- HARTL; Arthur ZELGER	Martha COUFAL- HARTL; Arthur ZELGER	Martha COUFAL- HARTL; Arthur ZELGER
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	72 mm	72 mm	72 mm
Mint	Hauptmünzamt, Wein	Hauptmünzamt, Wein	Hauptmünzamt, Wein



3.13. Lake Placid 1980



Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, a hand holds the Olympic torch against a mountain background together with the Olympic rings and the text "XIII OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES".

On the reverse, a pine branch with cones, the official emblem and the inscription "LAKE PLACID 1980".

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Tiffany & Co.	Tiffany & Co.	Tiffany & Co.
Composition	Gilt silver (210 gr. Fine gold – 92.5% pure – 11.2% gr. Gilt silver)	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	80 mm	80 mm	80 mm
Mint	Medallic Art Co.	Medallic Art Co.	Medallic Art Co.



3.14. Sarajevo 1984





Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, the official emblem, a stylized snowflake with the Olympic rings above, and the words " $\underline{\text{ZIMSKE OLIMPIJSKE IGRE SARAJEVO 1984}}$ ".

On the reverse, the stylized head of an athlete crowned with a laurel wreath.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Nebojsa MITRIC	Nebojsa MITRIC	Nebojsa MITRIC
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	71 mm	71 mm	71 mm
Mint	Majdanpek / ZIN	Majdanpek / ZIN	Majdanpek / ZIN



3.15. Calgary 1988





Obverse

Reverse

On the obverse, the official emblem and the words "XVes Jeux Olympiques d'hiver XV Olympic Winter Games Calgary 1988".

On the reverse, the profile of an athlete crowned with an olive wreath and an Indian with a headdress composed of ski sticks, a bob, skis, skate blades, a stick, a luge and a rifle.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Friedrich PETER	Friedrich PETER	Friedrich PETER
Composition	Gilt silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	69 mm	69 mm	69 mm
Mint	Jostens Inc.	Jostens Inc.	Jostens Inc.



3.16. Albertville 1992





Obverse

Reverse

On the obverse, the five Olympic rings can be seen in the foreground, with a valley in the background, in gradation, thus giving the impression of perspective. On the upper part of the metal is an intagliated stylised laurel branch featuring the words: "ALBERTVILLE 92 XVIes JEUX OLYMPIQUES D'HIVER – XVI OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES".

On the reverse of the medal, decorative motif is intagliated in the colourless glass. The lines symbolise the mountains.

Created for the first time in glass, set with gold, silver and bronze, the medals were entirely hand-made. Detailed and precise work required several different stages of production. The production of a medal required the contribution of 35 people, and took several hundred hours for Lalique to create the medals.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Sous la direction de Marie-Claude LALIQUE	Sous la direction de Marie-Claude LALIQUE	Sous la direction de Marie-Claude LALIQUE
Composition	Gilt silver; Crystal	Silver; Crystal	Bronze; Crystal
Diameter	92 mm	92 mm	92 mm
Mint	Lalique	Lalique	Lalique



3.17. Lillehammer 1994



Ingjerd Hanevold, who created the <u>1994 Olympic Winter Games</u> medals for Lillehammer, says she designed them to be "humorous, sober and recognizable" and that their design "is Norwegian through and through". Her innovative surprise was to use granite - sparagmite to be precise - as the basic material. "I tried to create something that reflects what Norwegians like and appreciate, i.e. nature. There is plenty of granite in our country, and it is beautiful in its simplicity. I think that, thanks to the other components - gold, silver and bronze - the medals are very stylish."

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Ingjerd HANEVOLD	Ingjerd HANEVOLD	Ingjerd HANEVOLD
Composition	Gilt silver; Sparagmite	Silver; Sparagmite	Bronze; Sparagmite
Diameter	78 mm	78 mm	78 mm
Mint	Th. Marthinsen	Th. Marthinsen	Th. Marthinsen



3.18. Nagano 1998





Obverse

Reverse

On the obverse, the rising sun in Maki-e, surrounded by olive branches and accompanied by the emblem in cloisonné.

On the reverse, the emblem of the Games in Maki-e, with the sun rising over the Shinshu mountains.

To convey local characteristics the <u>1998 Olympic Winter Games</u> medals were created in lacquer (Kiso lacquer). The decoration technique adopted was embossed gilding (or Maki-e), with so-called shippoyaki (i.e. cloisonné techniques) and precision metals work. The lacquered parts were done individually by artists from the Kiso region.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	-	-	-
Composition	Gilt silver; Lacquer	Silver; Lacquer	Bronze; Lacquer
Diameter	80 mm	80 mm	80 mm
Mint	Japan Mint	Japan Mint	Japan Mint



3.19. Salt Lake City 2002





Obverse Reverse

On the obverse, an athlete bursts from flames carrying a torch, representing the resilience of the human spirit and the power to inspire. The figure has triumphed over adversity and is thus released from a mountain of ice and rock. The Olympic Rings anchor the image of the athlete, while the 2002 Games' theme, "Light the Fire Within" is etched into the medal, marking the first time that an organizing committee's vision statement is included on a medal.

On the obverse, Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, holds a small victory leaf, symbolizing the olive wreaths that were presented to winners of the ancient Olympic Games. Within Nike's embrace is an illustration of the event for which each medal is being presented. The 2002 Games emblem and the name of the event figure on the obverse of each medal. At the base of the ribbon loop is the Roman numeral XIX, signifying the XIX Olympic Winter Games.

The medals are designed in the shape of river rocks, like those found in Utah's streams and rivers. Part modern and part rustic, they embody the spirit of the American West from the forging of the West to the technological present. Each medal is hand-finished and is slightly different from the other medals similar to individual rocks sculpted by water and wind.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Scott GIVEN ; Axiom Design	Scott GIVEN ; Axiom Design	Scott GIVEN; Axiom Design
Composition	Gilt silver (6 gr. gold – base : 92.5% silver et 7.5% copper)	Silver (92.5%) ; Copper (7.5%)	Copper (90% ; Zinc (10%)
Diameter	85 mm	85 mm	85 mm
Mint	O.C. Tanner	O.C. Tanner	O.C. Tanner

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3.20. Turin 2006



On the obverse, the graphic elements of the Games.

On the reverse, the pictogram of the sports discipline in which the medal was won.

The 2006 Olympic Winter Games medal is round like the Olympic rings or a symbolic victory ring and, with its open space at its centre, it reveals the place where the heart beats, the symbol of life itself. To highlight the three-dimensional characteristics of the medal, its surface has been carefully made using full and empty spaces, with shiny and satiny textures. The medal is only complete, however, when it is hanging geometrically from the athlete's neck, lying on its chest, circling and revealing the area near its heart and focusing attention on the athlete's vital energy and human emotions.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Dario QUATRINI	Dario QUATRINI	Dario QUATRINI
Composition	Gold (6 gr.); Silver	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	107 mm	107 mm	107 mm
Mint	Ottaviani	Ottaviani	Ottaviani



3.21. Vancouver 2010





Obverse

Reverse

On the obverse, the Olympic rings marked in relief accompanied by Aboriginal designs taken from the orca work produced by laser and giving the impression of additional texture.

On the reverse, the official name of the Games in English and French, the two official languages of Canada and the Olympic Movement. Also present are the <u>2010 Olympic Winter Games</u> emblem and the name of the sport and event concerned.

The undulating shape of the medals was devised by Omer Arbel, a Canadian industrial designer and architect originally from Vancouver. This distinctive look requires the medal to be struck nine times as part of the 30-step fabrication process. The inspiration for these medals came from a large artwork by Corrine Hunt, a Vancouver-based artist of Komoyue and Tlingit heritage. Each of the medals has a hand-cropped section of the artwork, thus making each medal one of a kind.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Omer ARBEL; Corinne HUNT	Omer ARBEL; Corinne HUNT	Omer ARBEL; Corinne HUNT
Composition	Silver; Gold	Silver	Bronze
Diameter	100 mm	100 mm	100 mm
Mint	Royal Canadian Mint	Royal Canadian Mint	Royal Canadian Mint

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3.22. Sochi 2014



On the obverse, the Olympic rings.

On the reverse, the name of the event in English and the symbol of the 2014 Games.

The mosaic "patchwork quilt" of national designs from the various culture and ethnicities of the Russian Federation is featured on the metal and polycarbonate parts of both sides of the medal. On the rim, the inscription "XXII OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES" (also in French and Russian).

The medals represent the landscape of Sochi with the snowy mountain tops reflecting the sun's ray onto the sandy beaches of the Black Sea coast.

	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Designer	Leo Burnett advertising agencies (Sergey TSARKOV; Alexanda FEDORINA; Pavel NASEDKIN; Sergey EFREMOV)	Leo Burnett advertising agencies (Sergey TSARKOV; Alexanda FEDORINA; Pavel NASEDKIN; Sergey EFREMOV)	Leo Burnett advertising agencies (Sergey TSARKOV; Alexanda FEDORINA; Pavel NASEDKIN; Sergey EFREMOV)
Composition	Gold; Silver; Polycarbonate	Silver; Polycarbonate	Bronze; Polycarbonate
Diameter	100 mm	100 mm	100 mm
Mint	Adamas	Adamas	Adamas

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