

In The Name of GOD

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English texts for students of

Physical Education & Sport Sciences

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History of sport

The development of sport throughout history teaches us a great deal about social changes, and about the nature of sport itself.

There are many modern discoveries in France, Africa, and Australia of cave art (see, for example, Lascaux) from prehistory which provide evidence of ritual ceremonial behaviour. Some of these sources date from 30000 years ago. Although there is direct evidence of sport from these sources, it is reasonable to extrapolate that there was some activity at these times resembling sport.

There are artifacts and structures which suggest that Chinese people engaged in activities which meet our definition of sport as early as 4000 BC. Gymnastics appears to have been a popular sport in China's past. Monuments to the Pharaohs indicate that arrangements of sports were well developed and regulated several thousands of years ago, including swimming and fishing. Other sports included javelin throwing, high jump, and wrestling. Ancient Persian sports such as the traditional Iranian martial art of Zourkhaneh had a close connection to the warfare skills. Among other sports which originated in Persia are polo and jousting.

A wide range of sports were already established at the time of the Ancient Greece. Wrestling, running, boxing, javelin, discus throwing, and chariot racing were prevalent. This suggests that the military culture of Greece was an influence on the development of its sports and vice versa. The Olympic Games were held every four years in Ancient Greece, at small village in Peloponnisos called Olympia.

Sport has been increasingly organized and regulated from time of the Ancient Olympics up to the present century. Activities necessary for food and survival became regulated activities done for pleasure or competition on an increasingly scale, for example hunting, fishing, and horticulture. The industrial Revolution and mass production brought increased leisure which allowed increases in spectator sports, less elitism in sports, and greater accessibility. These trends continued with the advent of mass media and global communication. Professionalism became prevalent,