



Understanding the Olympics

John Horne, Garry Whannel

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The Olympic Games is unquestionably the greatest sporting event on earth, with television audiences measured in billions of viewers. By what process did the Olympics evolve into this multi-national phenomenon? How can an understanding of the Olympic Games help us to better understand international sport and society? And what will be the true impact and legacy of the London Olympics in 2012?

Understanding the Olympics answers all of these questions, and more, by exploring the full social, cultural, political, historical and economic context to the Olympic Games. It traces the history of the Olympic movement from its origins in ancient Greece, through its revival in the nineteenth century, to the modern mega-event of today. The book introduces the reader to all of the key themes in contemporary Olympic Studies, including:

- Olympic politics
- nationalism and internationalism
- access and equity
- festival and spectacle
- urban development
- political economy
- processes of commercialization
- the Olympics and the media
- Olympic futures.

Written to engage and inform, the book includes illustrations, information boxes, chronologies, glossaries and 'Olympic Stories' in every chapter. No other book offers such a comprehensive and thoughtful introduction to the Olympic Games and is therefore essential reading for anybody with an interest in the Olympics or the wider relationship between sport and society.

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