

A selection of Olympic-related programmes from across the BBC

Greek Gods And Goddesses: The Odyssey/Jason And The Argonauts Sunday 25 July BBC ONE

Greek Gods And Goddesses sails back in time to revisit the lives of two of the greatest heroes of ancient Greece: Jason, who led his Argonauts on a fantastic quest for the magical Golden Fleece, and Odysseus, whose epic journey home from Troy was recorded by Homer.

Presented by former Olympic athlete Jonathan Edwards, the programmes bring the Greek myths alive and relive the stories that have been a source of inspiration and revelation for generations.

Through dramatic reconstructions, both programmes explore the meaning of these myths and what they reveal about ancient Greek society and their religion.

A Question Of Sport – Olympics Special Friday 6 August, 7.00pm, BBC ONE

Quiz-master Sue Barker hosts a special edition of the popular sports quiz, themed around Olympic Games past and present. Team captains Frankie Dettori and Ally McCoist are joined by Olympic gold medal winners Mark Spitz, Lord Coe, Sir Steve Redgrave and Sean Kerly.

Songs Of Praise Sunday 8 August, BBC ONE

Gold medallist Jonathan Edwards visits Athens to find out how Christians are preparing for the Olympics.

Sprinter Darren Campbell talks about how his sporting life and Christian faith interact; Jonathan meets the Rev Malcolm Bradshaw, an Anglican chaplain, who will provide pastoral care for the athletes; and he visits the new Ecumenical Chapel at the Olympic Village.

Also in the programme, Jonathan takes viewers on a whistle-stop tour of Athens and looks at the history of the Olympic Games.

Music comes from Greek tenor Mario Frangoulis and singer Nana Mouskouri.

Animal Games Sunday 8 August, BBC ONE

Is the flea the greatest jumper in the animal world, or a skittering frog one of the hot contenders for the swimming title? *Animal Games* looks at how some of the planet's most amazing creatures would fare if they were able to take part in the world's greatest sporting challenge.

In an arena filled with an animal audience, and narrated by sport commentators, this is the Olympic Games as never seen before, with special effects scaling the competing creatures

to human size. The tiger beetle, only 20mm long, has a running speed of 800km per hour when scaled up, but does this make it the champion sprinter in the Olympic arena?

Through a fusion of science and entertainment, mammals, fishes, birds, reptiles and invertebrates demonstrate their unique talents in six Olympic events.

Newsround **Weekdays CBBC ONE and** **THE CBBC CHANNEL**

Newsround, the only dedicated news service for children, is viewers' one-stop shop for all the news during the Olympic Games.

In the run-up to the Games, *Newsround* has been given exclusive access to British medal hopeful Mark Lewis-Francis. The programme follows Mark's training, his hopes and his fears as he prepares for his first ever Olympic Games.

Presenter Ellie Crisell will be based in Athens for the duration of the Games, reporting on Great Britain's medal progress and also going behind the scenes of one of the world's biggest sporting events and chatting to local children in Athens.

Newsround will also be giving one lucky viewer the chance to go to Cyprus to report from Team GB's training camp.

Xchange **Weekdays, 7.30am (repeated at** **1.00pm) and 4.30pm** **THE CBBC CHANNEL**

Xchange is going sport crazy this summer! The show that is packed with celeb gossip, music, film, TV news and guests galore will be providing daily updates during the Olympic Games. The usual crew – Ortis, Anna, Sarra, Steve, Joe, Tony, Rhodri and Vinnie the Ferret – are on hand to keep viewers posted on what's going down in Athens.

Xchange will also be celebrating the Paralympics every day in a *Tips & Tricks* feature. *Xchange's* very own Paralympian presenter, Ade Adepitan, will look at a different Paralympic sport each day for the two weeks of the Games, explaining the rules and different skills required for a variety of categories.

Ade's usual hectic schedule of switching from TV presenter to basketball player is hard work and, for the past few months, he's been busier than ever, training hard to compete to be part of the Team GB Men's Basketball Team in the Paralympics. *Xchange* has been filming him in training and will follow the team's success this summer with regular reports from Athens.

Xchange is The CBBC Channel's daily magazine show and transmits live twice a day, five days a week.

**Wheels Of Gold
BBC ONE**

Wheels Of Gold is an observational documentary following the Great Britain Men's Wheelchair Basketball team as they prepare for the Athens 2004 Paralympics. At the Sydney Paralympics, the Great Britain team came fourth, narrowly missing out on bronze in the dying seconds of the match. Four years later, only gold will do. Coach David Titmuss has brought in new training techniques, nutritional advice, sports psychology and expertise from around the world to make sure this Great Britain team is in better shape physically and mentally than any previous squad.

However, their biggest challenge is selection – only 12 players will make it to Athens from a squad of 17.

BBC Sport has had full access to the squad over the last year. The programme follows individual players in their battles against broken bones, learning the sport from scratch and fighting each other for a coveted place on the team for Athens. Through traditionally shot footage and the players' own personal home videos, viewers hear their private thoughts and learn how they juggle family life with the expectations of a demanding coach and tough training regime. The programme also explains the personal stories about their disabilities and how much it means to them and their families to make it on to the team for a shot at gold. As the deadline for selection looms, self-doubt and bad performances creep in for the players as the coach makes his final decision.

This is a programme about a unique bunch of lads preparing for the biggest competition of their lives.

**The Elgin Marbles
Saturday June 26, BBC TWO**

In the year in which the Olympic Games return to Greece, art critic Andrew Graham-Dixon unearths the many layered story which lies behind the greatest artistic controversy of the last 200 years – the Elgin Marbles.

This is the tale of an extraordinary man and the sculptures he took – some say stole – from the Parthenon in the early 1800s. An aristocrat, lieutenant colonel in the Army, elected MP and British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Lord Elgin was a highly successful man, married to a beautiful young heiress and with a bright future ahead of him. Yet his obsession with the marble sculptures was to destroy his fortune, reputation, health and marriage, and create a bitter controversy which continues unabated today.

Filmed on location in Greece, Scotland, Germany and London, *The Elgin Marbles* uses drama reconstruction, computer-generated images and expert debate to tell the story from its origins in 5th-century BC to the present day. The film hears arguments from both sides of the debate, enabling viewers to draw their own conclusions about whether the marbles should be returned to Greece or remain in the British Museum.

**Sunday Grandstand –
50 Greatest Olympic Moments
Sunday 8 August, BBC TWO**

In a special *Olympic Grandstand*, BBC Sport reveals the results of the public's top 50 *Greatest Olympic Moments*. From Jesse Owens winning the 100m at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, to Sir Steve Redgrave's fifth Olympic

gold at Sydney 2000, the Olympic Games have produced countless moments of unforgettable drama.

Hazel Irvine presents the programme live from the Greek capital, with Sue Barker and Steve Rider, and Steve Cram is at the British Olympic training camp in Cyprus. The programme talks to the athletes who are responsible for some of the most memorable Olympic moments, such as Mark Spitz, seven-times gold medal winner at the Munich Olympics; Carl Lewis, four-times gold medal winner at the LA Olympics; Steve Redgrave, five-times gold medal winner and one of the greatest Olympians of all time; Lord Coe; and Michael Johnson, the fastest man on Earth.

The phone lines are now closed, but viewers can still vote by logging on to bbc.co.uk/Olympics

**Sunday Grandstand –
The Big Interview
Sunday 12 September, BBC TWO**

Clare Balding speaks to Great Britain’s most famous Paralympian, Tanni Grey-Thompson, about her aspirations for Athens, following her success at the last Olympics in Sydney.

**Horizon – First Olympians
BBC TWO**

Two and a half thousand years ago, sport was tough. Few athletes survived the rigours of the great sporting arenas of the Ancient Greeks and only one athlete has survived the ravages of time to offer a unique insight into a remarkable ancient world. *First*

Olympians tells the “Athlete of Taranto’s” fascinating story.

Fifty years ago, a skeleton was found in Taranto in Southern Italy. On opening an ancient tomb, archaeologists found the skeleton with four richly decorated jars in each corner of the tomb, revealing that the owner had an obsession for sport.

In *First Olympians*, scientists explain how the mystery of the tomb and its contents was solved and, using dramatic reconstruction, the programme brings to life the world in which the athlete lived and competed – the world of the ancient games.

**My Big Fat Greek Olympic Dream
BBC THREE**

As a gangly teenager, BBC Radio 1 DJ Nemone Metaxas had two big dreams: one was to become a Radio 1 DJ and the other was to run the 400m at the Olympic Games.

A decade on and she’s already a regular on Radio 1 but her other ambition has, until now, been just out of reach. In *My Big Fat Greek Olympic Dream*, cameras follow Nemone in her training as she bids to be fast enough to compete at the highest level.

**Gory Greek Gods – Divine
Violence/Divine Sex
Begins Sunday 1 August, BBC THREE**

The Olympians – the mythical Greek Gods – operated like a fantasy family firm of mobsters. While not dealing directly in crime, these ancient-world *Sopranos* were certainly in the protection business ... divine protection.

Presented by Ninia Benjamin of *3 Non-Blondes* fame, *Gory Greek Gods* illuminates the sometimes outrageous world of these mythical Gods and their ancient worshippers.

In this two-part series – *Divine Violence* and *Divine Sex* – rotoscope animation is used to bring to life the world of the Gods in all its gory detail, while the documentary explores the life and legacy of the ancient Greeks.

**Storyville – Track Dreams
BBC FOUR**

In August 2002, to celebrate the end of the civil war, Sierra Leone sent its biggest ever team of athletes to compete in the Commonwealth Games in Manchester. The Games were the first outing for the Sorbonne-educated and newly-appointed Minister of Sport – and he wanted to impress the world.

Instead, by the closing ceremony, 21 of Sierra Leone's 23 athletes had "disappeared". Humiliated by a showdown with the British High Commission, the Minister swore never to send a team abroad again. *Track Dreams* is a revealing look at Sierra Leone's attempt to field a team for the Olympics, uncovering corruption that not only engulfs sport's hierarchy, but also the talented Sierra Leoneans, who are fighting to compete in the most prestigious competition on Earth.

**Storyville – Selling Greece
BBC FOUR**

As Athens – the birthplace of the "Olympic spirit" – gets ready to host the 2004 Olympic Games, *Storyville* investigates just how

Athenians really feel about hosting the greatest show on Earth.

Following the story of the run-up to the Olympics, the film looks at opinions from everyday men and women on the street, cleverly juxtaposing their down-to-earth concerns with the high ideals of the Athens Olympic Committee, senior politicians and local glitterati.

Two of the main characters are Helena Smith and Geirge Koumendakis. Helena is British, and a foreign correspondent, who is looking for a scoop behind the preparations for the Olympics, and the film follows her endeavours. George is the composer of the music for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies; he is trying to avoid, at all costs, perpetuating the traditional clichés and kitsch that has predominated at similar events in the past. The film reveals his fears and anxieties as he strives to find the right "tone" for the event.

Selling Greece is a fascinating insight into Greek national pride, as Athenians battle with organisational shortcomings, and inbuilt prejudices, to achieve the unachievable.

**Sunday Worship – Olympics:
Run The Straight Race!
Sunday August 15, 8.05-8.45pm,
BBC RADIO 4**

This special service to celebrate the Olympics comes live from the First Greek Evangelical Church in Athens and is led by Jonathan Edwards.

An eclectic mix of people from throughout the world join together for prayers and readings, hosted by the international congregation of this lively central Athens

church. The preacher is Pastor Panagiotis Kantartzis and music is provided by the musicians of All Souls Church, London, who are visiting Athens during the Olympics.

**Olympic Stories
Begins Monday 16 August
Weekdays, 3.45-4.00pm,
BBC RADIO 4**

Diane Modahl presents five fascinating programmes which explore what it is to be an Olympian through the remarkable stories of some very different sportsmen and women.

Programme 1: 1976 – Montreal: Henry Rono. The programme looks at the realities of the lives of African sportspeople. Rono's chances were destroyed by the politics of the time and the boycotts of that year.

Programme 2: 1988 – Seoul: Jurgen Schult and Sigrund Wodards. Schult, the GDR discus medallist, tried to buck the system and was imprisoned for speaking out. The programme looks at how the relationship between athlete and coach was destroyed by the pressure.

Programme 3: 1992 – Barcelona: David Grindley. The programme looks at the highs and lows of a short-lived Olympic career, cut short by injury and lack of interest from sports bodies.

Programme 4: 1996 – Atlanta: Read Ahmed. The Iraqi champion defected to the US and was sentenced to death in Iraq. The programme asks whether the Olympics was used to promote repressive regimes.

Programme 5: 2000 – Sydney: Fatima Gerashi. Fatima Gerashi was the youngest competitor from Bahrain. The programme

examines the Olympic underdogs and asks how being humiliated can enrich an aspiring sports star's life.

**The Odyssey
Saturday 28 August, 3.30-4.00pm and
8.30-10.00pm, Sunday 29 August,
3.00-4.00pm, BBC RADIO 4**

Homer's *The Odyssey* is an amazingly modern piece of poetic storytelling, dramatised for radio by one of Britain's leading poets, Simon Armitage. It's a great sea adventure in which fabulous fantasy mixes with dramatic reality, and a major love story unfolds over 20 years as Odysseus struggles to sail home and the Gods bicker over his fate.

The Odyssey is the fantastic sea-farer's tale of Odysseus (the mastermind of the Trojan Horse) and his struggle to get back to his island of Ithaca, to reclaim his kingdom and his wife, Penelope. Listeners join him in the last month of his journey, after 20 years away: 10 fighting at Troy and 10 buffeted around the seas by a vengeful God, Poseidon. En route, he has many adventures involving sexy enchantresses, the ghosts of his dead war comrades, man-eating giants, six-headed monsters, whirlpools, cannibals, sea nymphs and the enticing Sirens.

Like *The Iliad*, it has big emotional themes, wonderful set pieces of fantastic adventure and all-too-recognisable human dramas of love and betrayal, greed and stupidity. It's a moral tale of men taking responsibility for their own actions (and not blaming the Gods for their misfortunes when it is their own fault).

Simon Armitage is a major contemporary poet and playwright. He has dramatised *The Odyssey* so that it brings the story and the language alive for a modern audience. He has a particularly

direct way with words, full of humour and yet also fully aware of poetic resonance, and has previously worked on Greek classics.

Tim McInnerny plays Odysseus; Amanda Redman is his faithful wife, Penelope; Janet McTeer is the goddess Athena; John Wood is Zeus; Cheryl Campbell is Arete; Benedict Cumberbatch is Telemachus; Adjoa Andoh is Calypso; and Frances Barber is Circe.

The Odyssey is broadcast over a weekend to coincide with the end of the Olympic Games.

A Game Of Marbles BBC RADIO 4

In this play about the Elgin Marbles, Lord Elgin battles to convince the Government of his day that the Marbles are really worth buying.

Sports International – Olympic Games That Changed The World Begins Friday 23 July, 1.05-1.30pm, BBC WORLD SERVICE

Sports International investigates momentous events in Olympic history. Politics, finances, drugs and controversies past and present all come under the spotlight in the four-part series *Olympic Games That Changed The World*.

The series is presented by Michael Johnson, one of the greatest athletes of all time, who made Olympic history by winning both the 200 and 400m at Atlanta in 1996.

Hitler used the Berlin Games of 1936 as a mass rally to promote German supremacy, the first, but not the last, time the Games were

used for political purposes. Other notable examples feature in the programme on Friday 23 July. In Mexico in 1968, Black American sprinters, Tommy Smith and John Carlos, bowed their heads and raised gloved fists in a Black Power salute on the awards stand while The Star-Spangled Banner played. Their gesture reverberated around the world.

Munich 1972 was the first time terrorism ever hit a sporting event. An attack on the Israeli team by Black September shocked the world and left 11 athletes, five terrorists and one policeman dead. In later years, there were boycotts of the Moscow Games of 1980 and Los Angeles in 1984.

The Olympics is now a multi-billion dollar business but that hasn't always been the case. Montreal taxpayers are still paying for the Olympics of 1976. It was in 1984, at the Los Angeles Games, that the big money started rolling in. The role of Peter Ueberroth, who ran those Games, is scrutinised on Friday 30 July, as is the pervasive influence of adidas and its ties with former IOC President, Juan Antonio Samaranch.

The controversial issue of drugs in Olympic sport is investigated on Friday 6 August. In 1998, the world was shocked when Ben Johnson failed a drugs test after winning gold in the 100m.

On Friday 13 August, listeners discover how different the 2004 Games are from those of 1896, the last time they were held in Athens.

Discovery – The Ancient Olympics Begins Wednesday 28 July 9.00-9.30am, BBC WORLD SERVICE

This weekly, four-part series about training, performance, gamesmanship and the special

qualities that make a champion, is presented by Jonathan Edwards.

**Play OfThe Week –
Birth OfThe Olympians
Saturday 7 August 6.30pm
BBC WORLD SERVICE**

Zinnie Harris's play looks at Greek myths from a modern perspective.

***Please note: All transmission times are subject to change.**