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CHAPTER

1

A Global Event

An Italian **underdog** wins gold. A star player from Japan sets a record. Their stories inspire. The action pulls people in. Every two years, the Olympics **unite** the world.



The Olympic Games began thousands of years ago. They were first held in Greece. Early contests were popular but small. There was only one race, and just a few people took part. Much has changed since then.

Today, the Games are two huge events. One is held during the summer. The other is in the winter. There are many sports. Thousands of athletes come from around the world to compete. Each one wants to be the best. Who will take home a medal?



FAST FACT: The Olympic Games are made up of sports. Each sport has events. Swimming is a sport. The 200-meter backstroke is an event.

Making It Happen

Cities are picked to host the Games. Hosts are **responsible** for everything the event needs. Hosting is a big honor. But it is not easy to pull off. There is much to do to prepare. Sports arenas must be built. Safety has to be planned for. Expenses can add up quickly. Some cities struggle to make it all happen.

There are **benefits** to hosting the event. Host cities are put in the public eye. People wonder how they will top the previous Games. Billions tune in to find out. Media rights bring in big money. Cash flows in from tourists too. It is not always enough to cover the cost of hosting. This is a risk some cities are willing to take.

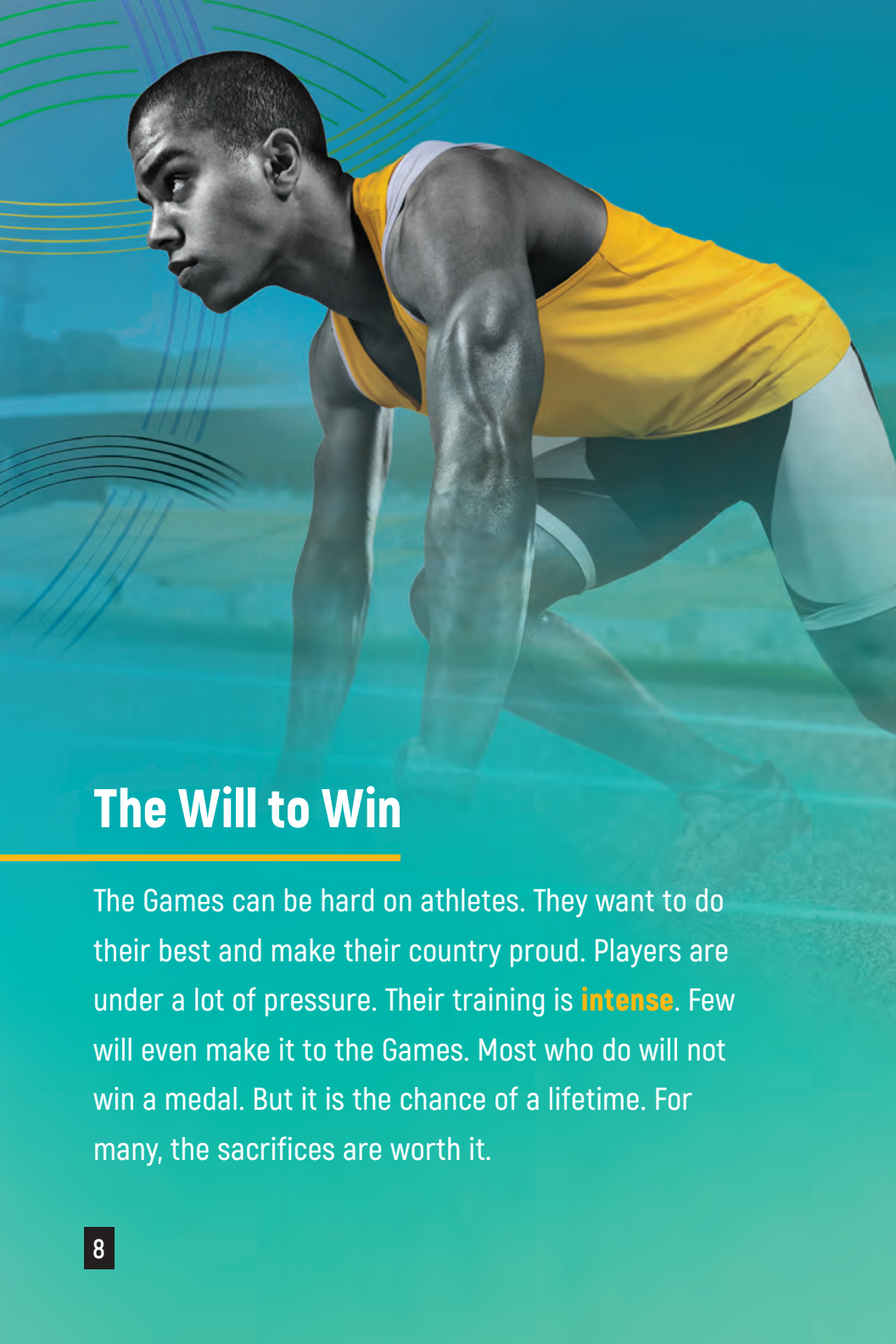


FAST FACT: About 3.6 billion people watched the 2016 Summer Games on TV. Nearly half the world tuned in.

THE OLYMPIC FLAG

There are five rings on the Olympic flag. They link together. This is meant to show unity. Each ring is colored for the flags of the countries that took part in the 1912 Games. The top rings are blue, black, and red. The bottom two are yellow and green. The Olympic flag was designed in 1912. It was first flown at the 1920 Games.





The Will to Win

The Games can be hard on athletes. They want to do their best and make their country proud. Players are under a lot of pressure. Their training is **intense**. Few will even make it to the Games. Most who do will not win a medal. But it is the chance of a lifetime. For many, the sacrifices are worth it.

What Is Next?

Scandal fills the world of sports. The Games are no exception. Officials have taken bribes from hosts. Drugs help athletes win. **Conflict** turns whole countries against each other. Still, the events continue.

What does the future look like for the Games? Many see the benefits of bringing the world together through sports. But there are complex issues surrounding the events. Changes are likely coming.



FAST FACT: The Winter and Summer Games used to be held in the same year. That changed after 1992. The Games were moved to two years apart. This gave winter sports more attention.

Glossary

bankrupt: unable to pay back money that is owed

benefit: a good outcome

bid: to make an offer on something you want

boycott: to refuse to take part in an event as a way of protesting

broadcast: sharing on radio or TV

conflict: differences that keep groups from agreeing

cyberattack: an attempt to access a computer system with the intent to cause damage or harm

debt: money that is owed

drug test: a test that shows if someone has used illegal or banned substances

fixed: in a place that does not change