

Kaj

Women and the Olympic Dream

The Continuing Struggle for Equality, 1896-2021

On an April morning in 1896, unemployed single mother Stamata Revithi ran the 40 kilometers from Marathon to Athens, finishing in 5 hours 30 minutes. Barred from the first Olympic marathon, she was determined to prove herself. Through more than a century of Olympic Games history, women athletes who were held back from swimming because long skirts were required, limited to running single-lap races because of fallacies about fragility or forced to endure invasive gender exams competed in spite of endless challenges and denials of their abilities. From Athens 1896 to Tokyo 2020, this history of women's participation in the Olympic Games centers on athletes who overcame entrenched inequity to gain inclusion.

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