

OLYMPIC CHEATS

The pressure to win a medal has driven some Olympians to break the rules and cheat in competition. Cheating goes all the way back to the ancient Greek Olympics. In 388 BCE, the boxer Eupolus of Thessaly bribed three opponents (Agenor the Arcadian, Prytanis of Cyzicus and Phormio of Halicarnassus) to let him win.

▼ Soviet modern pentathlete Boris Onischenko is remembered as **one of the sneakiest cheats in Olympic history**. At the 1976 games, he rigged up his fencing épée sword so that it registered a hit on his opponent even when one wasn't made.



---A dejected Boris Onischenko after being caught cheating in 1976

Puerto Rico's Madeline de Jesus injured herself in the long jump during the 1984 Olympics. With the 4 x 400m relay coming up, Madeline secretly got her twin sister Margaret, who was just a spectator, **to step in for her**. The team qualified for the final but were pulled out by the head coach when the deception came to light.

At the 2000 Paralympics, Spain's basketball team won the event for athletes with learning difficulties. But team member and journalist **Carlos Ribagorda confessed** that 10 of the team had no learning difficulties and the team was **stripped of its medals**.

Hungary's Robert Fazekas competing at Athens, 2004

For a bit of skulduggery, how about when, in 1984, skater Tanya Harding's ex-husband **hired a man to attack** Tanya's rival, Nancy Kerrigan. Kerrigan recovered to win silver at the winter Olympics while Harding became a professional boxer!



In 1904, American marathon runner Fred Lorz had already been photographed with the daughter of the US president, and was about to receive his gold medal, when people learned that he had **hitched a lift in a car** for 11 of the marathon's 26 miles!

Three of East Germany's women's luge competitors were disqualified at the 1968 winter Olympics for **heating their sled runners** to make the sled go faster on the ice!

Drug tests

YEAR	NUMBER OF DRUGS TESTS
1968 Mexico City	667
1972 Munich	2079
1976 Montreal	786
1980 Moscow	645
1984 Los Angeles	1507
1988 Seoul	1598
1992 Barcelona	1848
1996 Atlanta	1923
2000 Sydney	2359
2004 Athens	3667

Source: IOC.

Testing, testing

Drugs testing began at the 1968 Olympics although it is only in more recent years that testing has become rigorous.

The very **first Olympian to fail a drugs test** was Sweden's Hans Gunnar Liljenwall, and some people may think that he was unfortunate to be penalised. In 1968, he was nervous about the shooting part of the modern pentathlon and **had a few glasses of beer to calm his nerves**, only to fail a drugs test and be disqualified.

► **More than 20 competitors failed drugs tests** at the 2004 Olympics, including Colombian cycling bronze medallist, Maria Luisa Calle Williams, Hungary's gold medallist in the men's discus, Robert Fazekas, and Russian shot-putting gold medallist, Irina Korzhanenko.

British skier Alain Baxter won Britain's first ever alpine skiing medal with a bronze in the 2002 slalom event. Unfortunately, he failed a drugs test for a **banned drug found in his nose inhaler**. Despite appeals, he had to return his medal but he was cleared to ski in competition again.

Drugs and doping

The **use of drugs to improve performance** doesn't always work. Shooter Paul Cerutti of Monaco was disqualified in 1976 for drug-taking, after coming 43rd out of 44. He is the oldest known **Olympics drugs cheat**.

► Ben Johnson became the world's fastest man at the 1988 Olympics. Days later, he tested positive for a banned drug and became **famous as a drugs cheat**. He was stripped of his gold medal and his world record and was banned for two years. In 1993, after another positive test, he was **banned for life**.



Ben Johnson (no. 159) in the 100m final at the Seoul Olympics in 1988

Winner of the 1904 marathon, Thomas Hicks was fed a potentially lethal cocktail of **raw egg, brandy and strychnine** to keep him going during the race. He collapsed over the line, had to be looked after by doctors and lost over 4kg in weight. At the time, there were no anti-drug rules so Hicks kept his medal.

Many drugs are banned because they are unfair, but they are also dangerous. Danish cyclist Knud Jensen crashed and died in a race at the 1960 Olympics. An examination after his death showed that he had been riding under the influence of amphetamine, a drug that if abused can lead to heart, lung and liver problems.

Russian hurdler Lydumila Narozhilenko (now Engquist) was banned in 1993 for four years after testing positive for a banned drug. In 1995, **the ban was lifted** when her husband admitted spiking her food with steroids as **revenge after she wanted a divorce!**

And it's not just humans. Irishman Cian O'Connor was stripped of the individual show jumping gold medal that he won at the 2004 Olympics when **his horse, Waterford Crystal**, was tested positive for banned drugs.