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In commemoration of the XXVth Olympiad, the International and United States Olympic Committees have teamed up with S.E.A., Multimedia of Israel and The Discovery Channel to create a multimedia reference for the Olympic games. It includes biographies of medal winners, summaries of each of the Games up to Barcelona, sections on events and participating nations, and topics concerning the history of the Games from women to drugs. The disc has hundreds of articles, pictures and short videos, with hyperlinks between articles. Unfortunately, it does not contain the actual numbers for the Olympic records, current or past, nor does it include all the information you need to run the program. However, it is a good basic introduction to the Olympics.

### [Content](#)

The content of this disc concentrates on giving the user an introduction to the history and events of the Olympics. Articles about the athletes, organizers, issues, and events form the core. These are well written linked to each other wherever one article mentions another and supported with many photographs and a number of videos. I found the articles to be better

than I expected in giving me a broad overview of individual Olympiads and athletes. Especially useful and interesting were the rulebooks which gave an animated overview of the rules of each event. That answered a lot of questions I had about some of the more unfamiliar events.

Some of the history articles, which discuss topics related to the Games like drugs, politics, and the like, were simply too brief in my opinion. I think the issues are complicated, involved, and important enough to be dealt with in a more substantial way. But the disc at least tried to be comprehensive and went a lot farther than many reference discs. For that I am impressed and pleased.

The most glaring omission of content was in the scores, times, and records. The disc provides medal breakdowns by country and event, but it does not have the information about the actual winning scores or world records of the Games. I may know that Carl Lewis won the long jump over consecutive years, but I would also like to know how far he jumped each year. I would like to know Mark Spitz's winning times in swimming or even how far the gold-medal winner in Barcelona threw the javelin. None of this is here, and that is a major weakness for a sports disc.

#### Features

There are several features to recommend on the disc. First, the search features for topics and "statistics" are nicely done. You can search by keyword and limit by video or text or photo as formats, or you can limit search by location by choosing nation, event, or Olympiad. You can even simply look at a list of photos, articles, or videos as well.

On the “statistical” search, you are walked through a query building process that looks like a sentence when completed, “Which person won Australia’s first medal in swimming?” The result is not really numbers, but a listing which can include the name of the person, when and where they won, the medal they won and the event, their gender, and their nation. Again, I would have like to see scores and times, but this kind of search was still very nicely done.

The linking of text and quality of the visual materials are also noteworthy. The hyperlinking was useful, well-done, and not the least bit overwhelming. I was able to easily jump out and go back to my main topics numerous times without getting lost. I was also impressed with the quality of the images and video included in the product. These are of high quality and span the entire history of the Games. They constitute a very good selection and support the text entries well in the process.

There are also a number of context specific features which show up at the bottom of the screen. Depending on what you are viewing, you can take a guided tour of a topic, jump to a list of medal winners for a nation, Olympiad, or event; go to the rulebook for a particular event, learn that a particular athlete is one of 100 Olympic Legends listed in the disc, or look at a grand total of the medals won by each country since the games were renewed in 1896.

### Design

Olympic Gold is a well-designed disc, to be sure. The organization of the main content parts into athletes, events, games, history, and nations present the user with a manageable information space. They reflect the focus of the Olympics on these topics in every Olympiad. Also, the navigation buttons at the top, which are always present, are useful and well done, allowing the user to go back, jump to any section of the program (Map), jump to searching, change settings, get help, quit, or play a trivia game.

Interface-wise, Olympic Gold is almost a model of use. The names of buttons appear as you drag the mouse over them. When searching, the list of entries scrolls with each letter you enter, so if you make a mistake you are not given a rude “no results” message. The entire structure of the disc is very flat, so you are never more than three clicks away from any given section, an admirable feat. Lastly, the interface often gives you, the user, the option of whether to load or include additional images or other material when looking at a certain section. This flexibility allowed me to create a more comfortable interaction with the product, choosing to look at some image while not others. I appreciated it as a user, and I think other folks will as well.

### Performance

The main performance areas I looked at were loading, starting, and running. Loading was very simple, but the program does take about 4 MB of space, so keep that in mind. There was no problem with installing, but you will have to restart after the installation. Starting the program was another matter. It turns out that this product does not like Virtual Memory or Ram Doubler. This fact is not in the documentation or the Read-Me file. Now, I was familiar enough to know what to do, but there may be a number of folks out there who will get thrown for a loop by this. This disc was originally released earlier this year, but both Virtual Memory and Ram Doubler were around then, so the lack of mention of the limitation in the documentation is a major oversight.

Once running, however, the program was robust, speedy, and smooth. Regardless of how many places I went or the kinds of searches I did, the program did not hesitate or crash. In searches, navigation, and loading, the disc was fast with little waiting even on a double-speed CD-ROM drive. Also, the pictures displayed smoothly and videos ran very well. I had no complaints in that regard. Just remember I looked at them on a double speed CD-ROM

drive. A quad should make a good thing even better.

### Summary

This is an excellent disc for someone who wants a basic, informative encyclopedia-like discussion on the Olympic Games. For folks who want more in-depth information, especially in regards to scores, times, and records, I would suggest this is not for you. While a good reference source, it is not the definitive multimedia work it could have been.

### Pros

- Great images
- Speedy
- Comprehensive topical approach
- Rules to all the events
- Good searching capability
- Excellent interface

### Cons

- History articles could have been more in-depth -Lack of numbers - scores, times, records - a key element to any sports reference
- No mention of incompatibility with Virtual memory and Ram Doubler

### Publisher Info

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