

# Israel at the 2024 Summer Olympics

The 2024 Summer Olympics are noteworthy for a number of reasons: Paris is set to become the second city ever to host the Summer Olympics three times; the events will feature the debut of new Olympic sports like breakdancing; and the Games will be the first since the COVID-delayed Tokyo Olympics. For Israel, these Olympics are rife with opportunity and risk. Israel will send 88 athletes to compete in 17 different sports, including a combination of former medalists and new competitors. Their participation comes amidst the ongoing Israel-Hamas War and international calls intended to prevent Israel's attendance. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) maintains that barring Israel from competition has never been an option, and has assured Israel's Olympic Committee that unprecedented safety measures will be taken to ensure Israeli athletes' security.

As these Games get underway, athletes, lawmakers, fans, and spectators of all sorts are grappling with what it means to represent one's country, especially during such challenging times. The discussion questions below are intended to aid in these conversations and provide a gateway into understanding the complexities of these Olympics; they can be used together with or independent of the suggested activities provided.

For a brief chronology of Israel's Olympic history, see [here](#).

To follow along with the Games in real-time, see Israel's official Olympic team page [here](#).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is it about the Olympics that makes the whole world want to watch? What makes you want to watch?
2. How can the Olympics serve as a platform for promoting peace and understanding between nations?
3. Can sports, especially on a global stage, be apolitical? Should they be?
4. How are these Olympics an opportunity for Israel? How are they a risk?
5. How do the 2024 Olympics resonate with the 1972 Munich Olympics?

*(See page 4 for more information)*

*Beyond this discussion, this resource provides options for Olympic-themed activities, information about a number of notable individual Israeli athletes, and the stories most worth following during the 2024 Paris Olympics.*



## ACTIVITIES

According to the IOC, “the three values of olympism are excellence, respect and friendship.” Originally, the Olympic Charter aimed to “encourage effort,” “preserve human dignity,” and “develop harmony.” With these values in mind, the goal of the Olympics has always been to bring diverse people together from around the world to demonstrate that there is more that unites us than divides us. For more, see [here](#).

To emulate the Olympic values in sports, try combining athletic activities with collaborative tasks. Here are several examples:

- > A relay race that requires participants to find something they share with a teammate (i.e. where they are from, extracurricular activities, academic interests, etc.) at each juncture before they are allowed to continue. To make things more difficult, teams might have to find a common element among the entire group.
- > “Human Bingo Team Style,” where teams race to be the first to complete a custom Bingo card. Each box on the cards is populated with a common trait or shared experience (i.e. find someone who: has a younger sibling, has been outside the US, has an allergy, etc.) and gets their signature for proof. When a round starts, each team sends one person to find someone else who possesses the assigned trait. Each time they find someone, they hand their card over to the next person in their relay time to do the same. The first team to fill the bingo card wins!
- > Have campers design their own game to fit with the Olympic values/your camp’s values/ etc. Create teams of 3-5 people and give each one of them a well-known game (in the first round, it can be a sport). Each team then has to change the rules of the game so that it exemplifies the values you chose. For instance, how would you play basketball if the most important element was demonstrating the value of “encouraging effort”? Or friendship? Other rounds can be done with board games, video games, camp games, etc.
- > For a full day of activities, *Yom Olympics* (Olympics Day) is a tried and true classic. Assign the participants to represent real countries, or have them invent their own. Activities might include: designing a national flag, writing an anthem, and, of course, competing in any number of activities where teams can compete on behalf of their countries like “World Cup,” a pentathlon with custom events, or any regular old sport. Throughout the day, be sure to make time to investigate the importance of Olympic values and where we can observe their resonance in our lives.

## WHO TO WATCH



### Artem Dolgopyat

a Ukrainian-born gymnast, expected to medal in Paris.



### Daria Atamanov

a rhythmic gymnast and the 2022 European all-around Champion.



### Inbar Lanir

a judoka who won gold medals at the 2023 World Masters and is the reigning world champion in the women's 78 kg.



### Raz Hershko

part of the 2020 bronze-winning judo team in Tokyo. Nickname: Hershkules!



### Men's Soccer Team

the group will be ending a five-decade absence from the Olympics!



### Avishag Semberg

an Olympic bronze medalist in 2020 in taekwondo, she became the youngest Israeli medalist ever!



### Sharon Kantor

the reigning world champion in windsurfing who won gold at this year's iQFoil World Championships.



### Matan Roditi

a swimmer who placed fourth in Tokyo, the closest Israel has come to an Olympic medal in swimming.



### Maru Teferi

Israel's best ever finisher in the Olympic half-marathon. These will be his third Olympics representing Israel.



### Peter Paltchick

a Ukrainian-born judoka, current number 1 ranked under 100kg in the world and one of Israel's flag bearers.



### Andrea Murez

a swimmer returning for her third Olympics and one of Israel's flag bearers in Paris!



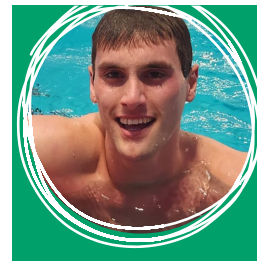
### Tachlowini Gabriyesos

a marathoner from Eritrea who was a flagbearer in 2020, one of Israel's two competitors on the refugee team. For more, see [here](#).



### Jamal Abdelmaji

a competitor in the 5,000 meter race and Israel's second member of the refugee team. For more, see [here](#).



### Adam Maraana

a swimmer in the 100-meter backstroke. He will be just the third Arab Israeli in Olympic history! For more, see [here](#).



### Anat Lelior

she secured her spot by placing sixth out of 113 competitors at the ISA World Surfing Games! For more of her story, see [here](#).



## STORIES TO FOLLOW

### ***Israel's Goals and Challenges* | Times of Israel**

Israeli officials say their goal is to bring home 4-5 medals at the 2024 games, having upped the state grant to gold medalists to NIS 1 million—double that of Tokyo. Their highest hopes have been placed on the gymnastics team, judokas, and sailing athletes. These goals come after winning four gold medals in Tokyo, Israel's best-ever showing.

Israel's soccer team will face Mali—a Muslim majority nation with no diplomatic relations with Israel—in its first match, and could go on to compete against Egypt, Iraq, or Morocco in later rounds. While competing or on the podium, athletes cannot express any political statements, including wearing a hostage pin, but are free to make any comments in post-game interviews. Despite calls (mostly from Russia) for Israel to be barred from competition, the IOC has refused.

For more on this story, see [here](#).

### ***Dangers in Paris* | Times of Israel**

The state of high alert at these Olympics harkens back to the 1972 Munich Games, a massacre marked with a special ceremony at every Olympics. The threat of protests and provocations will also play a role. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has always reverberated in France, home to Europe's largest Jewish and Muslim communities. France has witnessed a spike in antisemitic incidents since October 7th. An Israeli soccer player, Sagiv Jehezkel, was [arrested](#) in Turkey back in January for marking 100 days since the hostages were abducted by Hamas.

For more on this story, see [here](#).