

Call for Papers
Special Issue of *Sport History Review*
Regional Games: Another History of Sport and Olympism

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Background

Research on Regional Games—whether recognized or not by the International Olympic Committee (IOC)—has expanded significantly over the past three decades (Bernasconi, 2011). Some of this scholarship situates Regional Games within the globalization of sport in order to better understand national rivalries (Keys, 2013), while other studies focus on decoding the forms of regionalism they have generated since the late nineteenth century (Stoddart, 1988; Philipps, 2000; Henry & Mahfoud, 2003; Kissoudi, 2009; Sotomayor & Torres, 2020).

These works are part of a broader epistemological renewal associated with global microhistory (Bertrand & Calafat, 2018; Revel, 1996), aiming to analyze the circulation and transfer of people, ideas, and cultural practices. Regional Games constitute a space distinct from the Olympic Games, sports championships, or traditional games; they offer a heuristic field for examining the dynamics, processes, and socio-historical transformations linking sport and Olympism.

This special issue seeks to explore the contribution of Regional Games to writing an alternative history of sport and Olympism.

Research Questions and Issues

First, by their nature, role, and function, Regional Games are institutionalized sporting events where nations, areas, and cultures encounter one another. Their development has been reinforced by recognition from the IOC (Olympic Charter, 1956, Rule 10), which has led to the institutionalization and standardization of national sporting structures and encouraged cooperation. Such cooperation may arise from geographical proximity (Polycarpe & Charitas, 2025), distance (Houpert, 2008), or

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shared cultural ties with neighboring nations (Huebner, 2014).

Other forms of cooperation are more explicitly diplomatic, reflecting emerging political and ideological sovereignties (Gounot, 2012). In this respect, political and cultural geography—particularly analyses of borders, regions, and hinterlands (Nordman, 1997)—offers an original contribution to the historical study of Regional Games, prompting a reconsideration of national, regional, subcontinental, and continental frameworks.

Moreover, Regional Games connect the local, national, and international levels, illustrating how “the images nations construct of one another play a fundamental role in international relations” (Frank, 2000, p. 18). These events may thus help break isolation, affirm openness to others, or reinforce internal cohesion. They provide models for constructing national images, whether through the appropriation of Olympic universalism or through alternative positioning in relation to it.

Regional Games are shaped by multiple processes (diffusion, circulation, transfer, acculturation, mimicry, hybridization, (de)colonization, etc.) embedded in the historical evolution of sporting and Olympic movements (Moore, 1989; Adami, 2004; Houpert, 2008; Mangan et al., 2014; Kidd & César, 2018).

This special issue therefore aims to examine the history of sport and Olympism through the lens of “regional” sporting events. The concept of “Regional Games” raises several questions: Are they sub-Olympic Games, counter-Olympic Games, or part of a broader process of Olympicization? Do they reflect the globalization of modern sports or the defense of local identities?

Editorial Project

This call for papers aims to initiate sustained research on Regional Games through two complementary objectives. First, through case studies, it seeks to show how sport historians currently approach Regional Games. Second, it aims to develop a shared analytical framework among scholars, addressing both similarities and differences across cases.

Ultimately, this special issue seeks to contribute to an epistemological definition of Regional Games.

To avoid Eurocentrism, Western bias, and ethnocentrism, the call adopts a broad temporal scope (from the late nineteenth century to the present) and encourages case studies from diverse regions, continents, hemispheres, cultures, and geographical areas.

Suggested Themes (Non-Exhaustive)

Proposals may address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Regional Games examined across multiple scales (local, national, subcontinental, continental), highlighting multiscalar dynamics and forms of multiterritoriality.
- The organization of Regional Games as sporting events for a nation or state, including analysis of sports and political institutions, stakeholders, and interactions between local and national levels, as well as continental and global visibility.

- Social and cultural dimensions of Regional Games, including the circulation of knowledge, models, and bodily techniques (athletes, coaches, media, etc.), and their role in transcending cultural boundaries within local/global tensions.
- Mobilizations, resistance, and controversies surrounding Regional Games (associations, counter-movements, polemics, identity defense, doping, commercialization, etc.), including analysis of sub-Regional or counter-Regional Games.
- Processes of normalization, standardization, and globalization in sport and Olympism, and their implications for Regional Games in relation to the global sporting system and Olympic system (recognition, affiliation, regulation, etc.).
- Political uses and diplomatic functions of Regional Games, including zones of influence (postcolonial contexts, Cold War, etc.), cooperation, conflict, and power relations in international relations and geopolitics.

Provisional Timeline (Special Issue scheduled for SPRING 2028)

- Submission of abstracts (maximum 500 words): **May 30, 2026**
- Notification of acceptance: **June 30, 2026**
- Full paper submission deadline: **January 30, 2027**
- Expected publication date: **May 2028**

Submission Guidelines

Authors are invited to submit abstracts (maximum 500 words), in French or English, outlining their proposed contribution by **May 30, 2026**. Notification of acceptance will be provided by **June 30, 2026** at the latest.

Full papers must be submitted by January 30, 2027, via:

https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/shr/shr-overview.xml?tab_body=author-guidelines

Submitted articles should be between **7,000 and 8,000 words**, double-spaced, including footnotes, and formatted according to *Sport History Review* author guidelines. All submissions will undergo **double-blind peer review** and may require revision based on reviewers' and guest editors' comments.

The special issue is expected to be published in **Spring 2028**.

Contact Information (Special Issue Editors)

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