

HORSE AND CHARIOT RACING

Horse races were run over a distance of about 1200m (nearly a mile). In one race, the rider ran part of the way beside his horse. Jockeys rode bareback (without saddles) and accidents were common.

Chariot racing was probably the most popular event. Chariots, pulled by teams of two or four horses, were raced 12 laps. Up to 40 chariots could take part in one race, so collisions were inevitable.

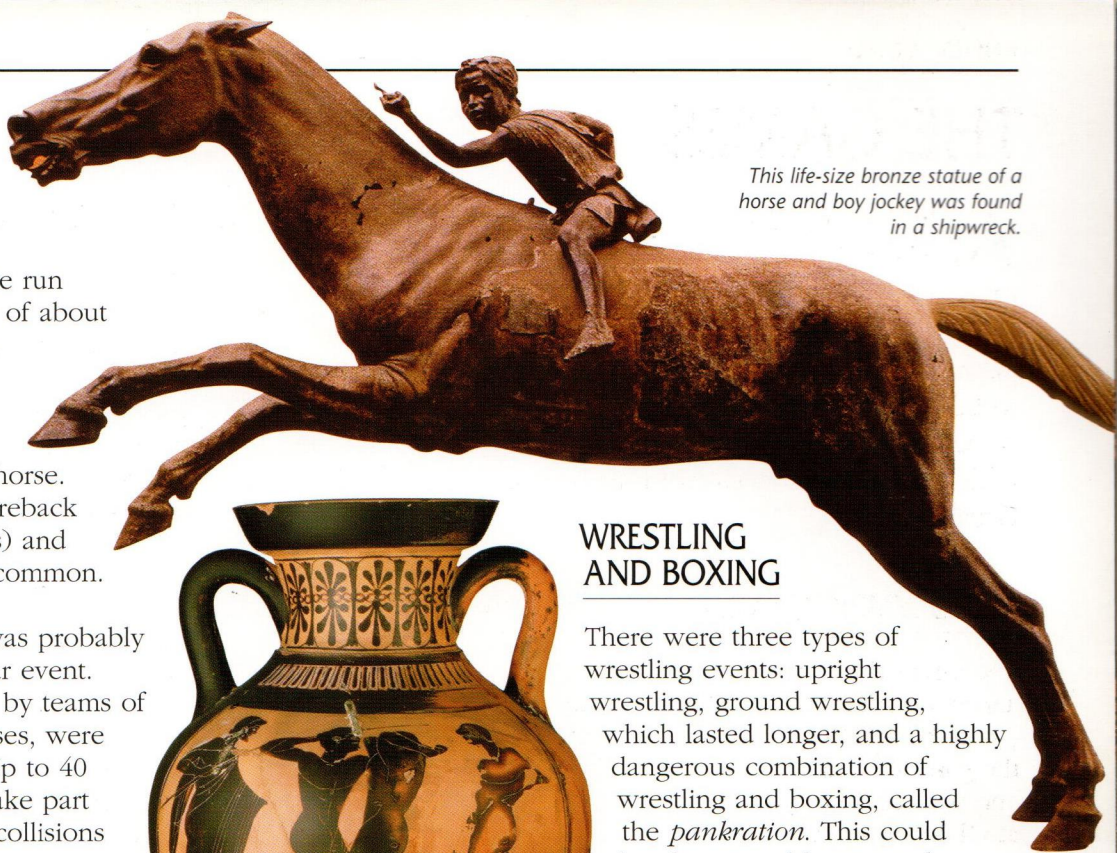


INTERNET LINK

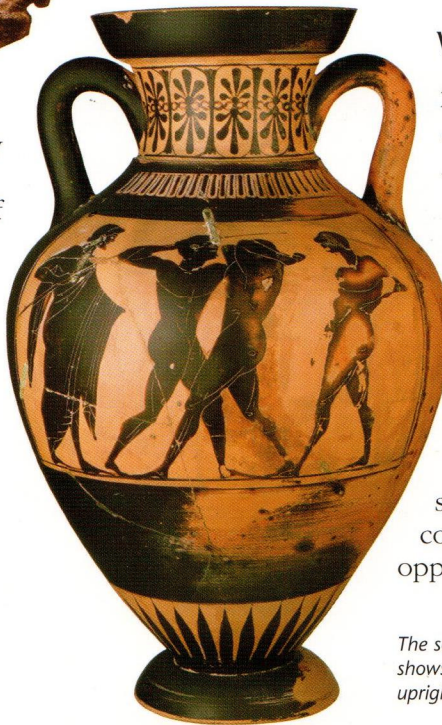
For links to websites where you can watch the ancient Games and see how they've changed, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com

The running events took place in the stadium. About 40,000 spectators could watch from embankments around the track.

This is the hippodrome, a large oval-shaped racetrack, where chariot and horse races were held.



This life-size bronze statue of a horse and boy jockey was found in a shipwreck.



WRESTLING AND BOXING

There were three types of wrestling events: upright wrestling, ground wrestling, which lasted longer, and a highly dangerous combination of wrestling and boxing, called the *pankration*. This could last for several hours, and absolutely any tactic, apart from biting and eye-gouging, was allowed. The boxers wore leather straps with metal studs, and they could make a terrible mess of their opponents. Some of them died.

The scene on this Greek vase shows two men engaging in upright wrestling.

THE WINNERS

After each event, a herald announced the name of the winner, but prizes were not awarded until the last day. The prizes, which were simple laurel wreaths, were only meant to be symbolic. The real prize lay in competing and in the glory of winning. Huge celebrations were held when the winners returned home. A victorious athlete won prestige for his city, and he was often handsomely rewarded by the city itself.

