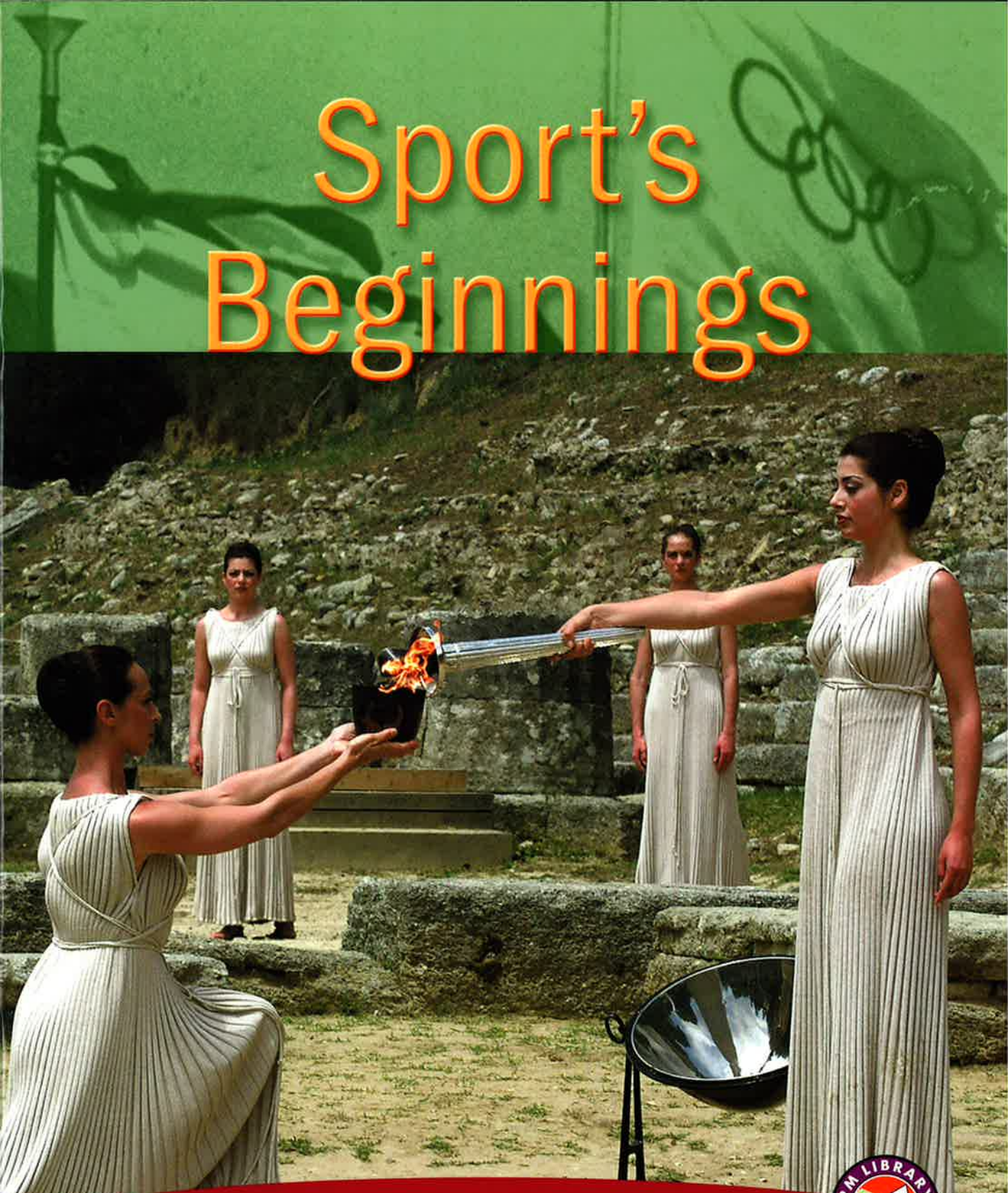
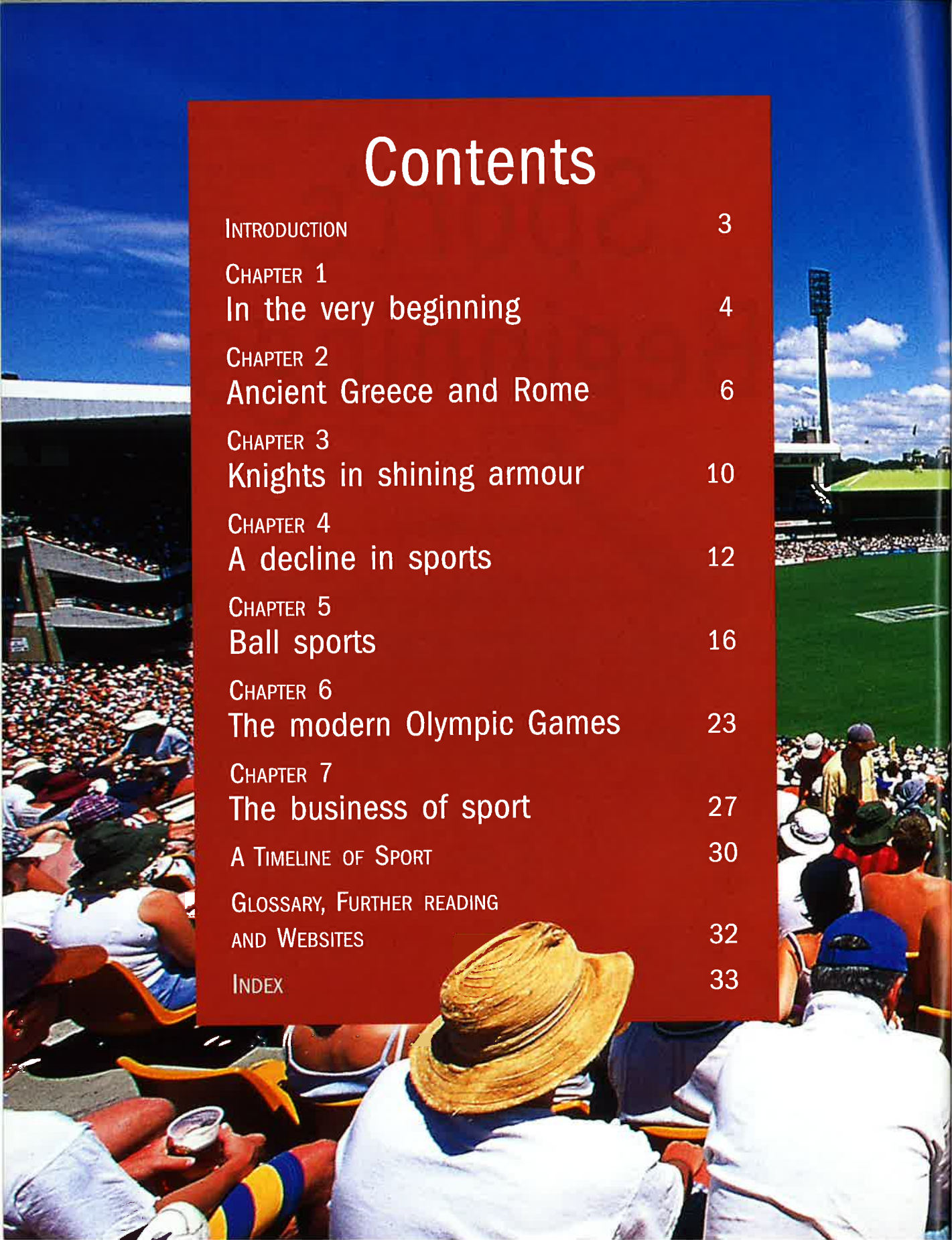
Sport's Beginnings



Mike Dobbie

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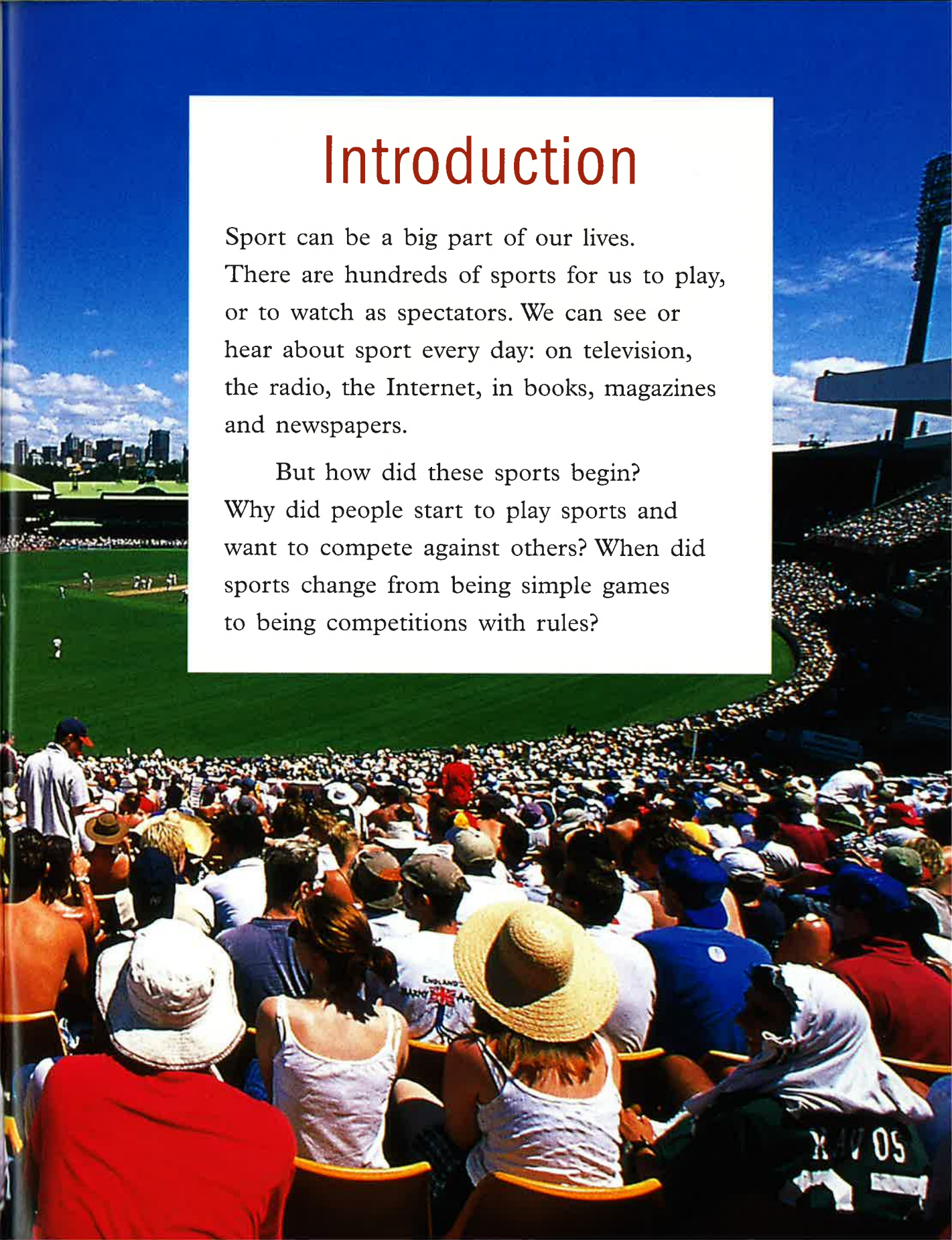
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Introduction

Sport can be a big part of our lives. There are hundreds of sports for us to play, or to watch as spectators. We can see or hear about sport every day: on television, the radio, the Internet, in books, magazines and newspapers.

But how did these sports begin? Why did people start to play sports and want to compete against others? When did sports change from being simple games to being competitions with rules?

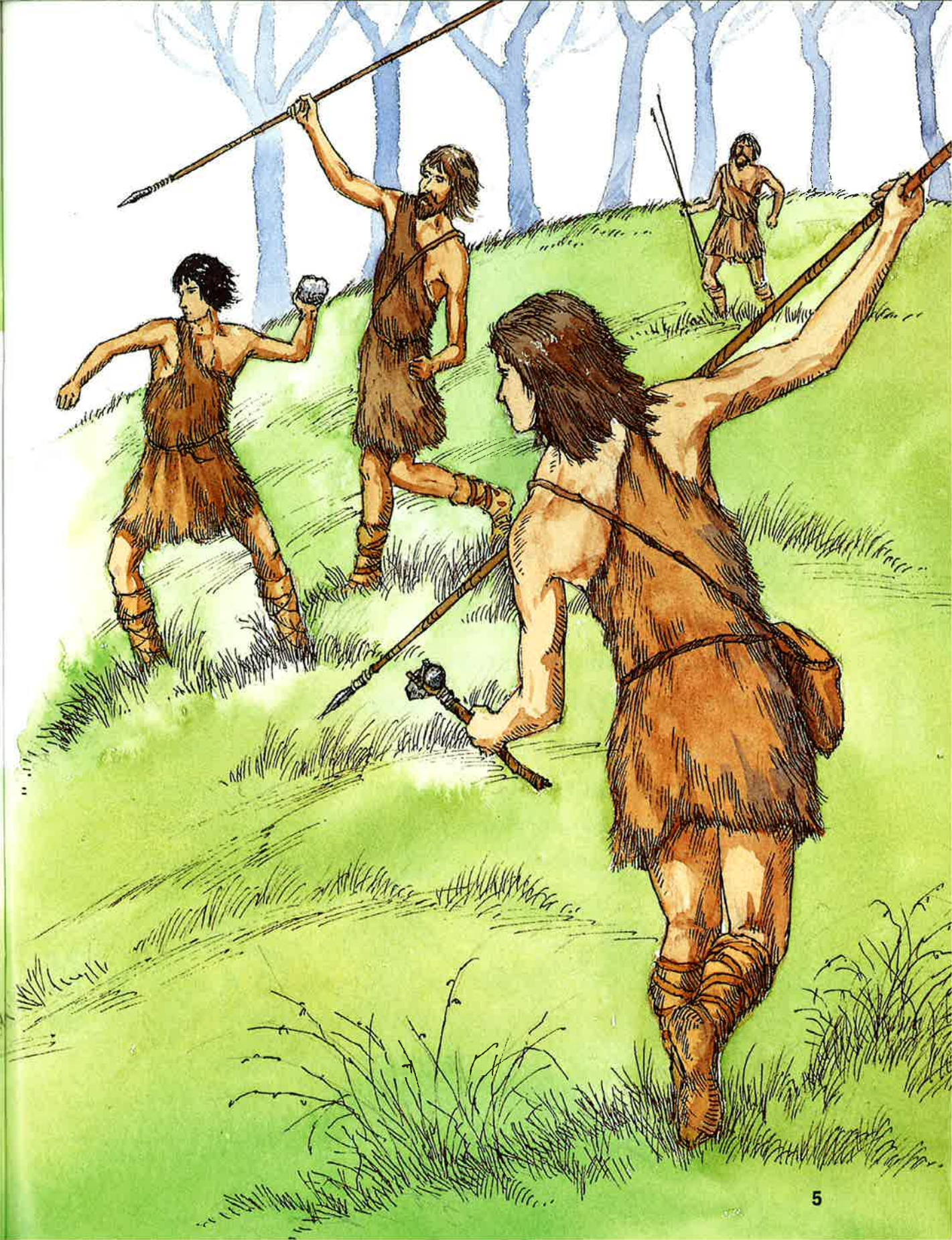
Chapter 1

In the very beginning

Sports really began in *prehistoric* times. Centuries ago people slept in caves, dressed in animal skins and hunted for food. To survive they needed many skills, such as running quickly, throwing spears, hurling rocks, and even working together in teams to hunt.

Prehistoric people also developed games to test and improve those skills that were most important for them to survive. They had contests to see who was the fastest at running, the best at using a club and the most accurate at throwing a spear over long distances.



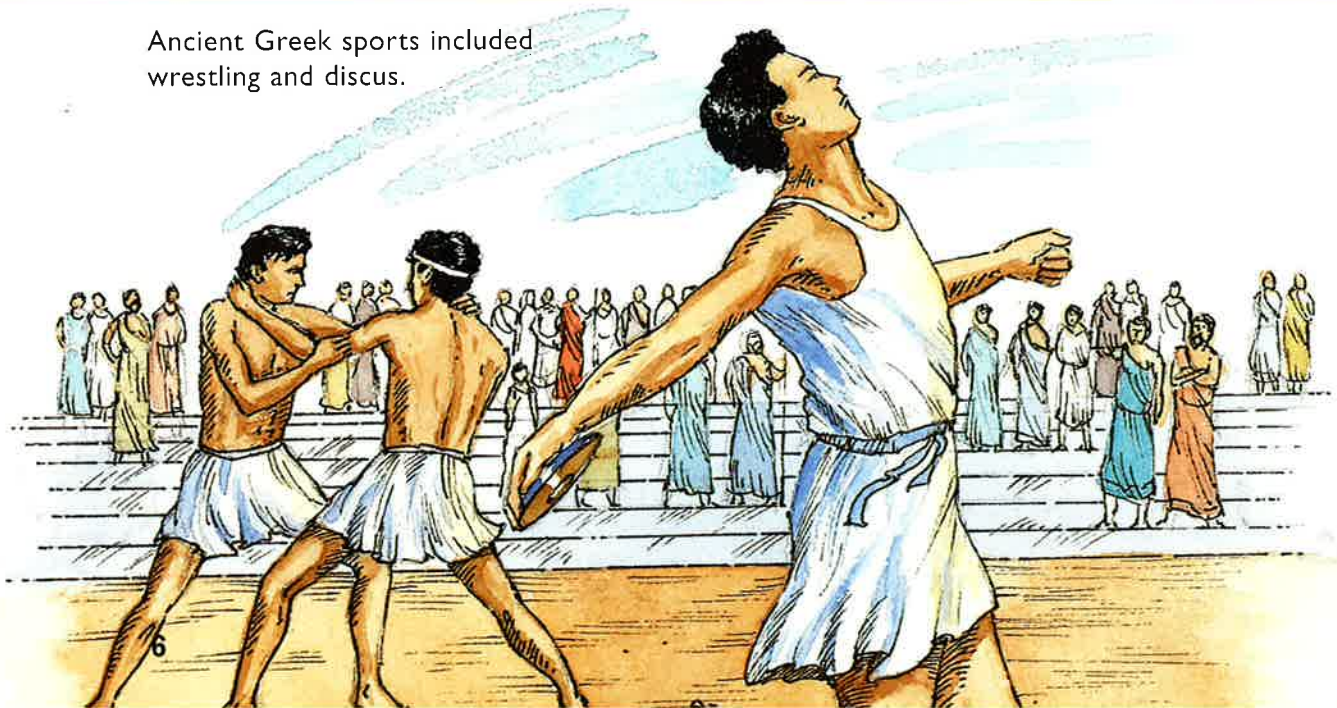


Chapter 2

Ancient Greece and Rome

Sport in ancient Greece

The word 'athlete' comes from a Greek word for prize: 'athlon'. In ancient Greece, sporting carnivals took place in 1700 BC. That's nearly 4000 years ago! Men went to these carnivals to show how good they were at using different weapons, and to compete in tests of strength. The winners were given a wreath of olive branches as a prize.



Ancient Greek sports included wrestling and discus.



The ancient Olympic Games began with a ceremony to light the Olympic torch. This ceremony is still used today for the modern Olympics.

Athletics and gymnastics became very popular. The Greeks realised that playing sport would keep them fit and healthy. They also understood that playing sport helped people to think more clearly. Sporting champions were treated as heroes.

In 776 BC, a sporting festival called the Olympic Games was created. At first, there were five main Olympic sports: a foot race, leaping, *javelin*, *discus* and wrestling. Later, boxing and chariot races were added. These games were so important that all wars stopped while the games were in progress.