

TEACHING CHARACTER

THROUGH THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM

A CROSS-CURRICULA APPROACH
TO TEACHING CHARACTER

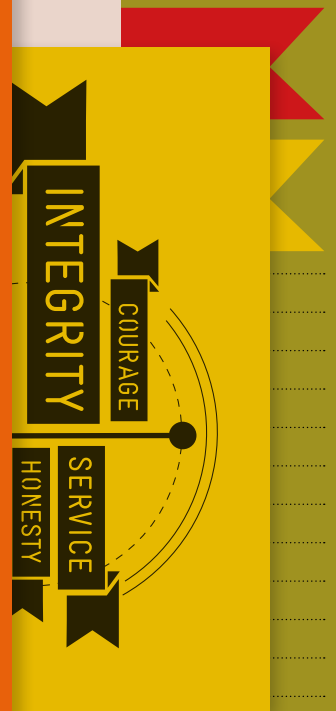
OLYMPIC SPIRIT

MAIN NARRATIVE

VIRTUE: INTEGRITY – SUBJECT: PE



THE
JUBILEE CENTRE
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES



LUZ LONG

In 1932, Berlin won the rights to host the 1936 summer Olympics. The following year, Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power in Germany. The 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles was seen by the world as a roaring success and Hitler did not want to be outdone.

Germany built a new 100,000-seat track and field stadium, six gymnasiums, and many other smaller arenas to host the Olympics. The games were going to be the first to be televised, and radio broadcasts were going to reach 41 countries. Hitler saw the games as an opportunity to promote his government and ideals of racial supremacy. It was **debated** whether nations that did not support the Nazi Party should attend the games. Nearly all countries decided to attend and the 1936 Olympics were the highest attended.

As the Olympics drew closer, people began to get excited by the different events and the competitors taking part. Germany had high hopes of winning lots of medals, and one of their biggest hopes was Luz Long. He was a 23 year old long jumper who had recently set a new European record. The German public took him to their hearts and the Nazi party used him as a poster boy for advertising the Olympics. The German public were all in support of Long as he headed into the Olympics to face Jesse Owens. Owens was an African-American athlete from the USA, who was competing in four different events. The previous year, he had broken three world records, including the long jump. This was to be one of the rivalries of the Olympics. It was not just athlete versus athlete; people described it as the might of the Nazi party versus the democracy of the USA.

This event became personally important to Hitler. His closest aides spoke to Long before the event, explaining to him the **significance** of what a victory or loss would mean to Germany. The day before the long jump, Jesse Owens won the 100 metres and his first gold medal of the Games.

The day arrived for the long jump. The crowd was a sell-out. 100,000 Germans packed the Berlin Olympic Stadium. Amongst those was Hitler himself. He had come to watch over the event and witness German **superiority**. The crowd went wild every time Long appeared. Owens, now famous around the world, got a mixed response from the crowd. Some cheered him, recognising his excellence, whilst others booed him and shouted offensive remarks. There was great pressure on both men. Long was representing the supposed racial **supremacy** of the Nazi party. It seemed as if Jesse Owens was representing the rest of the world, not just the USA, in a stance of **defiance** against Hitler.

The qualifying rounds began. Hitler watched from the stand through binoculars. The crowd clapped and cheered wildly as Long began his run and then his jump. After each jump, Hitler rose, applauded and saluted Long. When Long beat the Olympic record with one of his qualifying jumps, he went to the stands to personally **acknowledge** Hitler. Things were not going as well for Owens.

Owens had fouled all of his previous jumps and with one left, if he fouled again, he would not qualify for the long jump final. He had worked all his life for this moment, and was the reigning world record holder, but he just couldn't find the



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right rhythm. Maybe it was the crowd, or the pressure of the entire world on his shoulders? Owens walked back for his final qualifying jump. All his training was going through his head. What did he need to change to make sure he did not foul? He looked at the crowd. He saw Hitler glaring at him. He had to make this jump. As he stood at the end of the run up, he was approached by Long, his biggest rival. Long would surely win if Owens did not make this jump, and he would become a German legend in the eyes of the fans and Hitler. Owens did not know what to expect from Long. Surely Long would try to put him off so he could win the gold.

Long looked at Owens and instead of trying to **unsettle** Owens, he offered him some advice. He had been watching Owens and his run up carefully. He told Owens to move his run up mark backwards. Owens was shocked. Advice and help from the supposed enemy. Owens followed Long’s advice and he had a successful jump. He had qualified for the final. Long had helped his biggest rival qualify for the final. He had shown the true spirit of the Olympics. Hitler was not happy. During the break, before the final, he sent one of his aides to talk to Long. They told him he must win and must not talk to Owens again.

The final was just as exciting. The crowd cheered on Long. Between them, Long and Owens beat the Olympic record five times and the lead was constantly changing hands. Whilst on the track, the men forgot about the differences of their nations and competed just as athletes, each trying to jump further than the other. With one jump left, Long was winning. Hitler was captivated by the event. Owens had his final jump. He stood at the end of the run up. Some of the crowd cheered him, some booed him. Hitler looked on. Owens ran. He leapt. He landed. He tumbled. He waited. The judges checked. It wasn’t a foul. They measured. The stadium waited. Millions of people waited. It was 8.06m. It was 19cm longer than Long’s best effort. Owens had won his second gold medal! He was ecstatic. He pumped his fist in the air. He looked around at the crowd.

“IT TOOK A LOT OF COURAGE FOR HIM TO BEFRIEND ME IN FRONT OF HITLER.”

– JESSE OWENS

Long walked over to Owens and became the first person to congratulate him. They hugged and shook hands. Each had given it their all. Long was obviously disappointed that he hadn’t won, but this was sport and Long knew that he had been in a great competition. Both men stood for photographs and had their pictures taken in the long jump sandpit.

People around the world acknowledged Long’s sportsmanship. This sportsmanship did come at a cost, though, as after the Games he was confronted by the Nazi Party. He was warned about his future conduct, and criticised for **fraternising** with the ‘enemy’. Long never regretted what he did and he showed true Olympic spirit to Owens and the world.

GLOSSARY

ACKNOWLEDGE

to show you are aware of something

DEBATED

to argue before reaching a decision

DEFIANCE

to openly not do as you are told or supposed to do

FRATERNISING

to form a friendship with someone, especially when you are not supposed to

SIGNIFICANCE

importance

SUPERIORITY

to be better than someone else

SUPREMACY

to be better than all others

UNSETTLE

cause someone to feel anxious