

Beat: Sports

## THE OLYMPIC FLAME ARRIVED AT THE MYTHICAL BELEM IN MARSEILLE FROM ATHENES

HOLD BY FLORENT MANAUDOU, NANTENIN KEITA

Paris, Washington DC, Marseille, 08.05.2024, 20:34 Time

**USPA NEWS** - The long-awaited Olympic flame has just arrived in Marseille, at 7:30 a.m. (CEST time) from Athens, after twelve days of travel, aboard the legendary BELEM, the oldest French three-masted ship. Marseille was a very judicious choice and brought a very strong symbolism to the arrival of this Olympic flame because this city which was founded by the arrival of traders from Greece, the Phoceans, and which is also called Marseille, the Phoenician city », for Paris 2024. This milestone, marks the first kick off of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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More than a thousand boats welcomed the Belem, in a majestic manner, with the acrobatic figures in the sky, of the French Air show, on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea, and where a hundred and fifty thousand people came together to welcome this fame, and enter sleep and already in the games, as declared the President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron, present in the Old Port with his wife Brigitte "Everything went well for this arrival of the flame and the Belem, which is a tremendous success", he declared to journalists.

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It is true that usually, the most important events take place in Paris, i.e. in a very centralized manner, and the commitment of Emmanuel Macron, his "favorite" city "I am in love with Marseille because I love cities "Mediterranean tragedy. Because everything is both complex and possible. Because there is a crazy generosity there," he declared.

OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS FLORENT MANAUDOU & NANTENIN KEITA & RAO SIGNER JUL CARRY THE FLAME IN THE OLD PORT OF MARSEILLE

After a day of parade, the Belem moored in the Old Port, to the cheers of the many Olympique de Marseille supporters present for the occasion. For this historic arrival of the Flame in France, it was important for Paris 2024 to choose an Olympian as the first torchbearer. It was the swimmer, Olympic champion and four-time medalist Florent Manaudou, captain of the Torch Relay, who took the Torch out of its case, a unique trunk specially designed by Louis Vuitton, before lighting the Torch using Lantern. A graduate of the Marseille Swimmers' Circle, Florent Manaudou, an adopted Marseillais, symbolically passed the baton to Nantenin Keita, Paralympic champion and quadruple medalist in the 100m, 200m and 400m. Already qualified for the Paris 2024 Games, it is also strongly committed to the integration of people with disabilities. As in Athens, where the French Olympic and Paralympic champions Gabriella Papadakis and Béatrice Hess passed the Torch to each other, Paris 2024 chose two Olympic and Paralympic athletes for the arrival of the Flame in Marseille.

This first handover on French soil symbolizes the ambition of Paris 2024 to bring together and unite the Olympic and Paralympic Games. After being acclaimed by the crowd, Nantenin Keita handed the Torch to singer JuL. Paris 2024 has chosen an iconic ambassador from Marseille representing the youth, energy and festive spirit that characterize the Torch Relay. A native of the Phoenician city where he still lives, his music brings together millions of fans across France. Like our Olympic and Paralympic champions, he has amassed records: more than 8.2 million albums sold in 10 years, the largest sale in the history of French rap, and in the last decade for all musical genres combined. An essential figure in the Marseille city, the choice of JuL was obvious to participate in this first stage in Marseille, the real kick-off to the great Olympic celebration. "I wanted the Flame to be welcomed in Marseille by emblematic personalities who embody what we are going to honor and celebrate through the Relay: first of all, it is the choice of an

Olympian as the first bearer of the the Flame on French soil, Florent Manaudou, iconic athlete of his generation; the first passage of Relay in France f

1000 BOATS, 150,000 SPECTATORS IN THE OLD PORT TO WELCOME THE BELEM BRINGING THE FLAME FROM ATHENS  
After leaving the port of Piraeus in Greece on April 27, the Belem appeared on the horizon of the Marseille coast on May 8 early in the morning with 3 Guardians of the Flame and 16 Scouts aged 17 to 25 on board. , whose 12-day crossing of the Mediterranean Sea was a unique and instructive experience. The passage of the Corinth Canal, the crossing of the Strait of Messina... these images, both impressive and magnificent, of Belem at sea have gone around the world! The three-masted ship entered the north harbor of Marseille around 11 a.m., the starting point of an impressive six-hour parade in the north and south harbors. From 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Belem paraded along the coast, accompanied by a spectacular armada of 1,024 local boats, all present to celebrate the arrival of the three-masted ship and its crew. From the entry of the Belem at 11 a.m. in the northern harbor to its majestic arrival in the Old Port at the end of the afternoon, the welcome of the Flame was marked by a succession of festivities, workshops and performances at the height of the event.

Nautical workshops first, with 526 additional boats: jousting, light sails, old rigging, traditional oars, pleasure boats, Marseille boats, rowing, kayaking, canoeing... Then an artistic performance at the Château d'If, with 37 dancers from La Horde, from the Marseille ballet, and the Grenade Company, who performed "Room with a view" to music by Rone, a key DJ on the French electro scene. A plea for raw and instinctive dance, this creation labeled "Cultural Olympiad" was imbued with the exceptional setting of the Château d'If as well as the natural elements that surround it, and enhanced by the plastic installation by Miguel Chevalier. Invited to gather from 5 p.m. around the central stage installed in the Old Port, the public and the many personalities present were able to attend the rest of the festivities and artistic performances in the colors of Marseille: humor with Marseille standupers Lison Daniel and Moustazou, but also a breaking show with the Marseille troupe Original Rockerz Crew.

THE FRENCH PATROUILLE OFFERED A UNIQUE AIR SHOW ABOVE THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA MARKING THE ARRIVAL OF OLYMPIC FLAME IN HOTS COUNTRY

After the impressive Torch formed in the air using 800 luminous drones on April 26 in Marseille, then a pyrotechnic show with hundreds of drones yesterday as a prelude to the prologue, the Marseille sky was once again the object full attention: the show continued in the air, with an exceptional show by the Patrouille de France (Military Air show), which in addition to fluttering drew the Olympic rings in the sky. The evening continued with the spotlighting of another symbol of France and the Marseille city, the Marseillaise, performed a cappella by the Marseille tenor Naestro. Nicknamed the "Pavarotti of the street", this former karate champion with an extraordinary voice discovered opera in prison: singing offered him a new chance, to the point of choosing to make it his profession. At the end of this thrilling performance, the official musical theme of Paris 2024 was revealed and performed by the Marseille National Orchestra from the Palais du Pharo: this original soundtrack composed by Victor Le Masne, Music Director of the ceremonies and composer

Music Director of the ceremonies and composer of the musical theme of Paris 2024, will accompany the Olympic Torch Relay Games to the celebration and competition sites. After this revelation, the Marseille singers Soprano and Alonzo, founding members of the group Psy 4 de la Rime, will ignite the stage of the Old Port during a major free concert organized by Coca-Cola. The artists will perform their iconic songs on a floating stage. Closing this day full of highlights and emotions, this concert will kick off the Olympic Torch Relay across France! The Olympic Flame and its 10,000 bearers will crisscross France and overseas territories for 69 days, crossing more than 450 cities and covering 17,000 kilometers until the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games on July 26. On the program: festivities, meetings, promotion of the heritage and talents of the region... Tomorrow, the Flame will pass through the most emblematic places of the Phocaeen city, from Notre-Dame de la Garde to the Stade Vélodrome" Source: Paris 2024

PROGRAMME OF 9TH MAY FLAME BEARERS ARE FRENCHG CELEBRITIES FROM ART TO SPORT

This May 9, the team of Flame bearers will look like Olympique de Marseille: Basile Boli and Didier Drogba, emblematic footballers of the club, will be respectively the first and last torchbearers of the day. The Flame will also be carried by Marseille football figures Eric Di Meco, Jean-Pierre Papin and Valentin Rongier, as well as by Colette Cataldo, 82, one of OM's oldest supporters, and Louisa Necib, French international native of Marseille and having played at Olympique Lyonnais. Land of sports in the plural, well beyond football, Marseille has seen the birth or development of many other high-level athletes who will participate in the Marseille stage of the Olympic

Flame Relay as torchbearers: among others, the fencer Pascale Trinquet-Hachin, born in Marseille and the first French individual Olympic fencing champion in 1980; the skateboarder Vincent Mathéron, also a native of Marseille, and who distinguished himself during the Tokyo Games;

**LEGENDARY BASKETBALL CHAMPION, TONY PARKER WILL BEAR THE TORCH & PASS THE FLAME**

swimmers Frédéric Bousquet and Fabien Gilot, Olympic medalists licensed from the Marseille Swimmers' Circle; the céiste Denis Gargaud Chanut, Olympic champion and licensee of the Marseille Mazargues club; or the athlete Anouk Garnier, ambassador of the Paris 2024 Volunteers program who has just established a new world record for rope climbing by climbing 110 meters high under the Eiffel Tower... Alongside these native Marseillais and adoption, renowned athletes will also carry the Flame on May 9, notably international basketball players Tony Parker and Nando de Colo. Finally, the Flame will also be carried by public figures who maintain a close link with Marseille: the Marseille comedian Redouane Bougheraba, the starred chef and head of the Village des Athletes restaurant Alexandre Mazzia, whose eponymous establishment with three Michelin stars is found in the city,

the actress Nicole Ferroni, who grew up near Marseille, the presenter Camille Combal who studied there, or the Marseille author and actor Adda Abdelli who, for ten years, has been highlighting disability by co-creating and co-writing the successful series Vestiaires, which breaks taboos by featuring actors with disabilities. In total, nearly 200 torchbearers will pass the Flame during this stage in Marseille, the first stage in a long series of festivities\* across the entire territory!" Source: Paris 2024

**Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-24444/the-olympic-flame-arrived-at-the-mythical-belem-in-marseille-from-athenes.html>

**Editorial office and responsibility:**

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jedi Foster, Rahma Sophia RACHDI

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