

Their target: Olympic gold in Athens

Archery has been used to defend territory, provide food, and, in the case of William Tell, spark an insurrection. This week at Mason's Heritage Oak Park, the sport will punch six Americans' tickets to the Olympic Games in Athens. Here's a modern guide to an activity that dates back at least 3,000 years.

The bow

The recurve (or Olympic) bow is being used at these trials and is the only bow used in Olympic competition.

The arrow

Made of either aluminum or aluminum with carbon fibers, arrows in recurve archery can travel more than 150 mph. If, during competition, an archer shoots the tip of one arrow into the end of another already on the target, it's called a "Robin Hood." It's the equivalent of a hole in one in golf.

Nock

The rear attachment of an arrow which holds it in place on the bow string.

Fletching

Plastic feathers used to stabilize an arrow's flight.

Crest

Markings put on the arrow to distinguish whose arrow it is.

Arrow head

Weighted and tipped with a point, designed to penetrate a short distance.

Distance

How many quarterbacks can hit their targets at this distance? Archers in the Olympic trials will stand behind a line 70 meters from the target. That's 76 yards.



The target

In most disciplines, as long as the archer hits the target, he or she has scored. A miss is worth nothing, but archers can earn extra points this week by winning one of their Round Robin matches (5 points per win).

- Gold inner 10 points
- Gold outer 9 points
- Red inner 8 points
- Red outer 7 points
- Blue inner 6 points
- Blue outer 5 points
- Black inner 4 points
- Black outer 3 points
- White inner 2 points
- White outer 1 point