



INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY



*The Athlete in modern society:
Inspiring and fostering unity*



64th
INTERNATIONAL SESSION
FOR YOUNG OLYMPIC AMBASSADORS

ANCIENT OLYMPIA



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FOR YOUNG OLYMPIC AMBASSADORS

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64th INTERNATIONAL SESSION
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8–21 JUNE 2024

Editor
KONSTANTINOS GEORGIADIS
Professor, University of Peloponnese
Dean, International Olympic Academy

ANCIENT OLYMPIA

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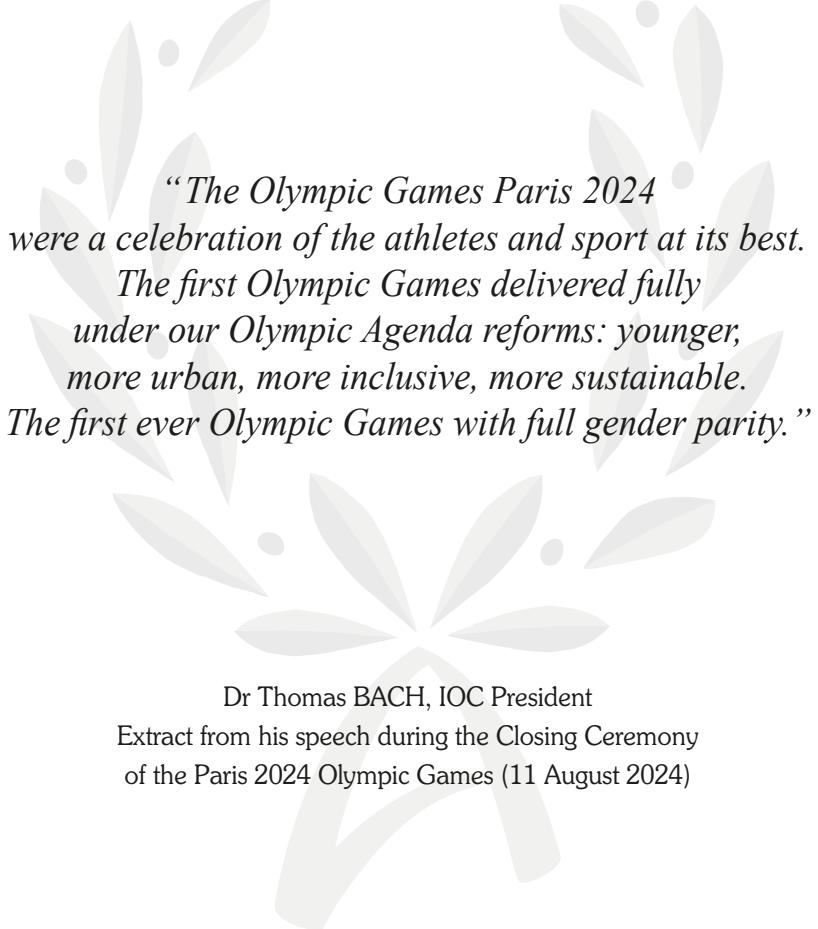
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*“The Olympic Games Paris 2024
were a celebration of the athletes and sport at its best.
The first Olympic Games delivered fully
under our Olympic Agenda reforms: younger,
more urban, more inclusive, more sustainable.
The first ever Olympic Games with full gender parity.”*

Dr Thomas BACH, IOC President
Extract from his speech during the Closing Ceremony
of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games (11 August 2024)



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FOREWORD

The 64th International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors was held from the 8th to the 21st June 2024. It was an excellent Session that started with the ceremony at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in the presence of the President of the Hellenic Republic, H.E. Katerina Sakellaropoulou, and it continued with the educational activities in Ancient Olympia. The distinguished lecturers, the two workshops on Olympism – Olympic Education and social media – new technologies as well as the coordinators who guided the participants in all the extracurricular activities during the Session contributed to the overall success of the Session.

Specifically, the lecturers of this year's Session, which are experts in their fields, were the following: Prof. Dr Manfred Lämmer (GER), Prof. Dr Stephan Wassong (GER), Dr Philip Waeffler (SUI), Assoc. Prof. Xiaoqian Richard Hu (CHN), Prof. David Howe (CAN), Yves Le Lostecque (FRA), Xenia Kourgouzova (IOC), Victoria Conde Sancho, OLY (ESP), Prof. Dr Hong Fan (CHN), Sofia Papadopoulou, OLY (GRE) and Chryssa Biskitzi, OLY (GRE). Among them, three Olympians presented their initiatives following the end of their sports careers.

During the Session, two workshops also took place: by Prof. Konstantinos Georgiadis on “Olympism and Olympic Education” and by Prof. Emilio Fernández Peña on the subject: “We are Olympic Media: Seminar on Social Media Audiovisual Reporting”.

The participants and the lecturers discussed, analysed and presented the following topics:

- How can the term excellence of the Olympic athlete be redefined in today's society and what qualities and initiatives can make an Olympian a good ambassador for peace?
- How can the NOCs instruct their athletes, future Olympians, to become influential role models in modern society and what criteria should be mandatory for athletes to possess in order to be elected to the NOC Athletes' Commission?

- Should Olympians have a mandatory Olympic education prior to participating in the Olympics?
- Which initiatives can be used to enhance collaboration between the IOC, IPC, and IOA to best integrate retired athletes into the corporate space?
- What makes a holistic coach, balancing between performance and well-being of an athlete and how could the implementation of Olympic values for coaches reduce coaching bias, which is known to affect athlete motivation and performance?
- How can NOCs support their retired athletes and how can the Olympic Movement promote the importance of mental health and well-being?
- How do we create a secure environment for athletes and promote unity among stakeholders in sports and the society?
- How can athletes use their many platforms to advocate social issues?
- How has social media changed the way people engage with Olympic events and athletes and how can social media negatively impact athletes' mental health and performance?
- What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of merging the NOCs and NPCs?
- How can the IOC help support worldwide standardisation of Safe Sports?
- How can the IOC inspire deprived communities through the inspirational character of the athletes?
- How can NOCs support women in sport and culture?
- The role of the athletes in ancient Greek society – Athletes and coaches in modern society: a study from various perspectives.
- The athlete in the Olympic Education campaigns.
- Presentation of the Sports Integrity and Values Game.

It is clear that the participants of the Session were generally very satisfied with the experiences and knowledge they gained.

The organisation of the Session is the result of long-term experiences of adaptations that combine cognitive, experiential, sporting and cultural experiences to approach the concept of Olympism.

Considering the age of the participants 20 to 30 years old, we have a group of students and officials of the Olympic Movement with a high educational level. The majority of the participants hold a university degree, and a lot of them also

have a Master's degree. By providing them with the appropriate education they are bound to play an important role in sport and the Olympic Movement.

Out of all the participants, 54% were women and 46% were men.

From the evaluation, we observe that the workshops we organised, have a greater impact on the participants, as they are actively involved in the teaching. The student-centered way of teaching encourages the creativity and participation of students in the educational activity. Given this, another workshop related to the specific theme of the Session should be initiated.

We would like to thank the International Olympic Committee and in particular the IOC Olympic Studies Centre and the Olympic Solidarity for their support to the work of the IOA.

Prof. Konstantinos GEORGIADIS
University of the Peloponnese
IOA Dean



Opening Ceremony

ATHENS, 9 JUNE 2024



ADDRESS
by the President of the International Olympic Academy
Isidoros KOUVELOS

I am particularly pleased to, once again, welcome this Opening Ceremony of the 64th International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors 140 young ambassadors from 82 National Olympic Committees, as well as, the friends of the International Olympic Academy, who always honour us with their presence.

For more than 60 years this Ceremony, which is always full of symbolism and emotions, has been organised annually at around the same time of year on the hill of Pnyx, in the cradle of Democracy, under the shadow of the Acropolis. The fact that the supreme state authority of the country is always present in this Ceremony, gives the Session a special prestige, as it showcases her staunch support not only towards the IOA, but also the principles that it advocates. Thank you warmly for your support, Your Excellency!

Unfortunately, this year the Ceremony coincides with the European elections, obliging us to change the events venue and time. Thus, we find ourselves in this especially hospitable centre, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre, with its imposing view, which remains unrivalled in the whole area of Attica.

2024 has been a very positive landmark year, for the Olympic Movement as well as for Greece!

Significant, in a positive sense of course!

This is, because it is the anniversary of three important events that have left their mark on Greece and the world as a whole.

This year we celebrate 2800 years since the first Olympic Games, as they have been recorded in history! 776 BC is when it all began and that is where the roots of the concept of Olympism lie.

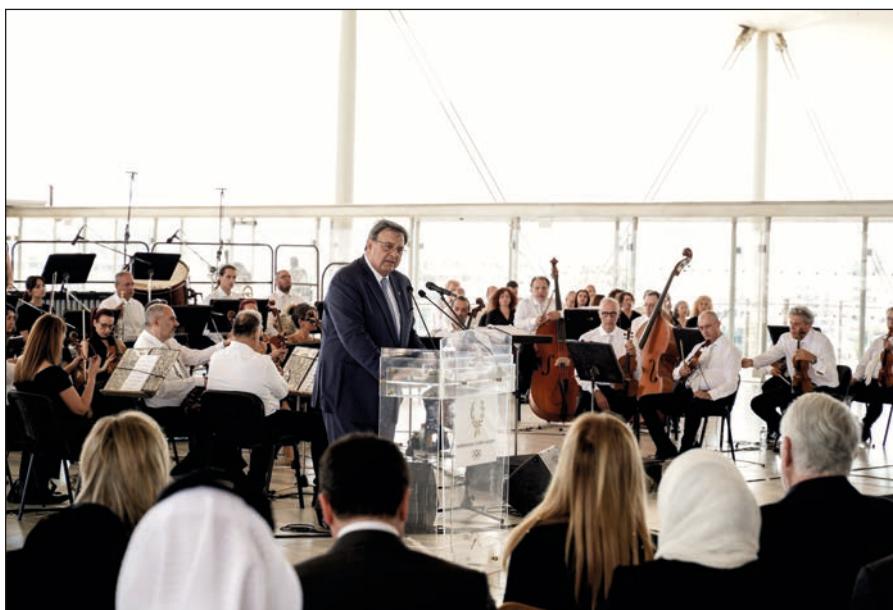
And if 776 BC was the first historically recorded appearance of the Olympic Games in antiquity, just 130 years ago to the present day, the modern world welcomed the modern Olympic Movement through the vision of the reviver of



The Opening Ceremony of the 64th International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors this year took place at the Lighthouse of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in the presence of the President of the Hellenic Republic, Her Excellency Katerina Sakellaropoulou.

the Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin! On the 23rd of June 1894, the International Olympic Committee was founded in a hall at the Sorbonne, with the Greek Dimitrios Vikelas as its first President, and it was decided that two years later the first Olympic Games would be held in Athens! Coubertin, expressed fully the liberal ideas of the late 19th century, such as equality, honesty, justice, mutual respect, understanding, autonomy and perfection, values that were born and developed 3000 years ago in Greece and have shaped Olympic history; and he created his own philosophy on which, he based the modern Olympic Movement, a cultural and sports movement with a purely humanistic character supported by three pillars: Sports, Education and Culture!

The third anniversary marks 20 years from the superb organisation of the Olympic Games in Athens, in 2004. This major sports and cultural event was staged in an exemplary manner by the Athens 2004 Organising Committee headed by Mrs Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki, whom we have with us today,



The President of the International Olympic Academy, Isidoros Kouvelos, addresses the distinguished guests.

and to whom the IOA will bestow a special award for her role in disseminating Olympic ideals in general in Greece. With these Games, Greece proved to one and all, that, despite its small size, it is able to bring about miracles when it stands united and is effective, relying on its own powers. A perfect organisation with capable executives and leadership that made all Greeks feel proud and special.

Dear young Ambassadors,

As of tomorrow, and throughout the next 12 days, you will find yourself in the land that gave birth to the Olympic Games. On the premises of the International Olympic Academy, next to the ancient site of Olympia and under the Cronion Hill, you will experience unforgettable and unique moments. You will connect with young people from other countries, religions and cultures and experience in practice all the Values of Olympism: friendship through living together, respect for diversity, inclusion, fair play, solidarity and you will pursue excellence through all of these.

From the presentations and discussions that you will have with distinguished

lecturers and through the designed workshops, you will find answers to your questions on Olympism, its creation and evolution.

Perhaps the most important thing for you will be that, throughout the Session, you are going to gain a better understanding and analyse, in depth, the role of an athlete in society, which is a challenging issue and the key subject of this year's IOA Session. This is a matter of great concern within the Olympic family. It is known that athletes' appeal is not limited to the sports in which they excel, as many would like to believe. Athletes, after they participate in such a trial, return to society after each sporting event, where they convey the messages they distilled in their pursuit of a medal. Thus, athletes are transformed into ideal role models, relaying their experiences to society and showing the way for future generations.

Otto Szymczek, the great scholar of sports and the Olympic Movement, and Dean of the International Olympic Academy for thirty years, described already in 1967, the role of athletes in simple words imbued with multiple meanings at the same time:

“The central element of the whole Olympic Movement is that of the athlete as an individual. It is to him that it is directed, and wishes to elevate and perfect the individual. Societies, nations and humanity are constituted of individuals. The quality of the whole depends on the type and quality of the individuals. From the manner of life and the behaviour of the individuals the level of the whole depends, the relations between the various societies is regulated, and the level of their civilisation can be judged”.

Dear friends,

In a few days the Olympic flame will burn over the Olympic Stadium of Paris, the Seine and Eiffel Tower, conveying the ideas and Values from Ancient Olympia to the capital of France and through it to the whole world.

The Olympic Games of 2024 have been rightly characterised as the most challenging Games in the modern history of Olympism! This is the first time that Games are organised with the sound of guns and death cries of many civilians.

Two major armed conflicts are taking place in two particularly fragile parts of the world...

The Olympic Movement is being put to test once again! However, this time developments are even more dramatic! In Berlin in 1936, in Munich in 1972,

in Moscow in 1980 and in Los Angeles in 1984, the Movement had to fight and stand up for its ideals and Values against those who attempted to exploit the Games in order to promote their political and ideological positions...

At that time Olympism won! Is it able to do so once again? For the Flame of Olympism to stop military operations, even for a short while?

Do sports and the Olympic Games have the power to impose a pause in military operations, or even better a cease fire?

The “Ode to Sport” by Pierre de Coubertin is more relevant than ever, for which he was awarded the gold medal in literature in the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm.

*“O Sport, You are Peace!
You forge happy bonds between the peoples
by drawing them together in reverence for strength
which is controlled, organised and self disciplined.
Through you the young of the entire world learn to respect one another,
and thus the diversity of national traits becomes a source
of generous and peaceful emulation!”*

Thank you for your attention.

ADDRESS
on behalf of the President of the International Olympic Committee
Thomas BACH
by the Deputy Secretary General of the Hellenic Olympic Committee
Iakovos FILIPPOUSIS

Dear President of the Hellenic Republic, Your Excellency, Mrs Katerina Sakellaropoulou,

Dear President of the International Olympic Academy, dear friend Mr Isidoros Kouvelos,

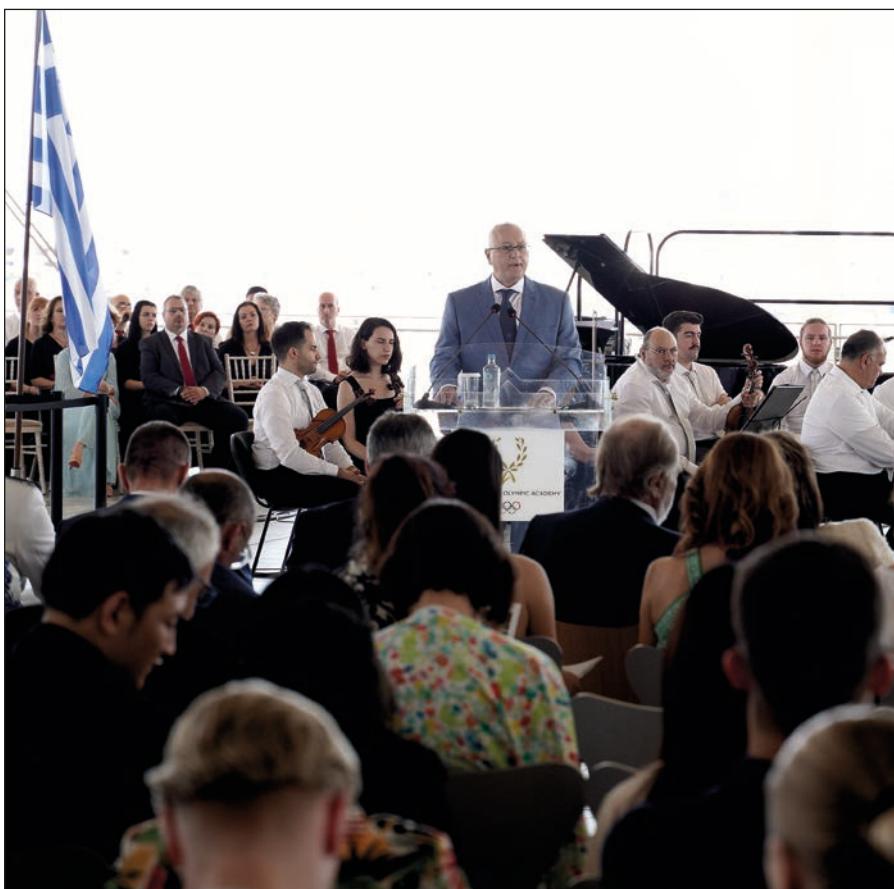
Dear Members of the International Olympic Academy,

Dear Young Olympic Ambassadors,

Please let me convey to you the greetings and best wishes of the President of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach. He unfortunately could not be here with us today, but he is very much looking forward to hearing the outcomes of this International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors. He asked me to deliver this speech on his behalf.

This International Session is a timely opportunity to reflect on one of the greatest gifts of the ancient Greek civilisation to the world: the Olympic Games. The Olympic Movement is grateful to Greece to this day and our admiration is even greater when you realise that this precious gift has stood the test of time. The presence of the President of the Hellenic Republic, Her Excellency Katerina Sakellaropoulou, demonstrates the direct connection between the ancient heritage and modern Greece. Thank you, Your Excellency, for joining the Young Olympic Ambassadors for this important gathering.

Your Session is taking place in exciting times. With the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024 only a few weeks away, the athletes, the fans, and the entire Olympic community – all of us are looking forward to Olympic Games that are younger, more inclusive, more urban, more sustainable. These will be the very first Olympic Games with full gender parity because the IOC



The message on behalf of the IOC President, Thomas Bach, was delivered by the HOC Deputy Secretary General, Iakovos Filippoussis.

allocated exactly 50 percent of the quota places to female athletes and exactly 50 percent to male athletes. For all these reasons, these are the first Olympic Games inspired by our Olympic Agenda reforms from start to finish.

The athletes are at the heart of the Olympic Games. For 130 years, the Olympic athletes have captured the imagination of people around the world. The unforgettable moments of the athletes and their sporting achievements have engraved themselves in our collective memory. When the athletes from the territories of all 206 National Olympic Committees and the IOC Refugee Olympic Team come together in Paris, they will inspire us once again. They

will be fierce competitors in sport, but at the same time, they will live peacefully together under one roof in the Olympic Village. In this way, the Olympic athletes are sending an important message: yes, it is possible to compete with each other, but at the same time live together peacefully. This is the Olympic message to all humankind.

The athletes will show us what greatness humans are capable of with all their excellence, determination and resilience. This power of sport will make the Olympic Games Paris 2024 a great symbol of human excellence and unity of all humankind in all our diversity. These expectations are shared by billions of people around the world. In these difficult times we are living through, people are fed up with all the hate, the aggression and negative news they are facing day in and day out. In their hearts – in all our hearts – we are longing for something which brings us together. We are longing for something that gives us hope.

In Paris, the athletes will inspire us with their achievements – they will inspire the world by living our Olympic motto: Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together.

This is why I would like to compliment the International Olympic Academy, under the great leadership of its President Isidoros Kouvelos, for putting the spotlight on the role of the athlete in society at this International Session. Athletes are not only at the heart of the Olympic Games – the athletes are *the* heart of the Olympic Movement. You could not have chosen a more appropriate topic to focus on in this Olympic Year.

Athletes not only inspire the world through their achievements at the Olympic Games. Many of them go on to become role models through the uplifting work they do to give back to their communities. With the rigorous programme that President Kouvelos and his team have undoubtedly prepared for you, I am sure you will discuss many examples during your International Session of how also beyond the Olympic Games, athletes are making a difference in their communities around the world.

Dear Young Ambassadors,

The future belongs to you. We rely on your ideas, creativity and engagement – so that together, we can promote sport as a force for good in our world. This is, after all, the overarching mission of the IOC and the Olympic Movement: making the world a better place through sport.

With the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024 approaching fast, you are sending an important signal. Through your active engagement at the International Olympic Academy, you are promoting Olympism, giving a

contemporary interpretation of our ancient Greek heritage and carrying the Olympic values and ideals into the future. Just like the athletes, you, the Young Ambassadors, are demonstrating our Olympic motto in an excellent way: Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together. The word “together” tells us: that no matter what challenges we might face – whether in sport or in our lives – we can only go faster, aim higher, and become stronger if we stand together – in peace and solidarity.

This is why I encourage you wholeheartedly to make the most of your time at the Academy to learn about our ancient heritage, about the uniqueness of the Olympic Games, and the important role of the athletes in society.

Like the athletes, use your voice, your platforms and your creativity to share what you have learned during your time at the Academy, in your community. In this way, like the athletes, you will play your part and shape the future.

ADDRESS
by the Vice-President of the Hellenic Olympic Committee
Stelios AGGELOUDIS

For many years now, the annual International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors has been an institution not only for the International Olympic Academy but for the whole of Olympism, as tomorrow's ambassadors of the Olympic Movement are being trained at the premises of the Hellenic Olympic Committee in Ancient Olympia.

The same will happen this year: for two weeks young men and women from all over the world will exchange ideas about the legacy of the Olympic Games, will learn about their history and will be inspired by the principles and values that govern them.

In addition to educating young people, the Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors offers an excellent opportunity to underline the timeless contribution of Olympism to modern culture and society and highlights the key role played by the International Olympic Academy throughout time as a pioneer in the dissemination of Olympic education, thus constituting a special cultural institution and a unique field of dialogue and development of ideas.

I will seize this opportunity to congratulate the President of the International Olympic Academy, Isidoros Kouvlos, as well as his colleagues at the IOA, for the high-level work they are doing in highlighting, at a global level, education based on Olympic values.

This year's theme, which refers to the Athlete's impact on Society as well as the potential it has to contribute to the unity of modern society, actually goes beyond the boundaries of the Olympic family and reflects on everyday life.

Successful athletes as role models for young individuals have great potential for social interventions and can become ambassadors of Olympic and Sports values not only through participation in competitions, and the example they set but also with many interventions in everyday life.



*HOC Vice-President Stelios Aggeloudis' address representing
the Hellenic Olympic Committee.*

Being widely recognized and accepted, they can make a decisive contribution to the achievement of the desired unity, especially since no ulterior motives or selfishness can be attributed to them.

Their asset in this strive for unity, can be none other than the values of Olympism which, at the individual level, create the moral foundation that operates as a condition for individual peace, respect and understanding of others, while at the social level, they contribute to cooperation, equality, friendship, and respect, among all social classes and groups, reject social prejudices in order to understand and achieve social peace throughout the world.

Dear ambassadors of Olympism,

You have the unique opportunity to start, from here, from Greece and the International Olympic Academy, a global dialogue about the modern role of the athlete in society. Above all, you will have the opportunity to prove that sports and Olympism are not only exercise and competition but also a philosophy of life, a system of values, for a better present and future of humanity.

Welcome to Greece! From here, Athens, where democracy began and where man's happiness was identified with freedom, I wish you success in the works of your Session.

Thank you very much.

Awarding of the Honorary Distinction “OLYMPIA” to Gianna ANGELOPOULOS-DASKALAKI

Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki is a lawyer, businesswoman with social engagement, and Ambassador at Large of the Greek State. She has been an elected member of the Hellenic Parliament and President of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games Organising Committee, as well as President of the “Greece 2021” Committee for the celebration of the bicentennial of the Greek Revolution of 1821.

She studied law at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and practiced law for several years. In 1986, she started her public career, initially as an elected member of the municipal council in the Municipality of Athens and later as a member of the Hellenic Parliament, as elected MP in 1989 and 1990. After her marriage to businessman Theodoros Angelopoulos, she resigned her seat in Parliament and devoted herself to her family, the family businesses, and social engagement.

In 1996 she successfully headed the bidding campaign for the 2004 Olympic Games, and then, in 2000 she was invited to lead the “ATHENS 2004” Olympic and Paralympic Games Organising Committee. The successful organisation of the “dream” Olympic Games, as the then IOC President Jacques Rogge described them, undoubtedly bears her stamp. Her involvement with the Olympic Movement has always been on a voluntary basis. Following the overall success of the Games, she described her experience in her book “My Greek Drama”, which was published in May 2013, and was listed among the top ten bestsellers in the New York Times, and the Wall Street Journal.

Mrs Angelopoulos supports through grants and donations with various educational initiatives and projects in Greece and worldwide. These include: the “Angelopoulos Global Public Leaders” program at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, where she is also Vice-President of the Dean’s Council, the “Angelopoulos Professorship in Public Health and International



On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki received the IOA honorary distinction “Olympia” by the IOA President, Isidoros Kouvelos.

Development” chair, again at Harvard, the annual fellowships’ program “Angelopoulos Fellowships” at the Clinton Global Initiative University for young Greek entrepreneurs, and the research program for young scientists “Gianna Angelopoulos Program for Science Technology and Innovation” (GAPSTI) at the University of Cambridge.

Mrs Angelopoulos has been awarded many times for her achievements. These awards include the Order of Honor of the Hellenic Republic (2004), the French Republic’s National Order of the Legion of Honor (2008), and the Olympic Order in Gold from the International Olympic Committee for her contribution to the Olympic Movement and the dissemination of the Olympic Values.



Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki accepted the “Olympia” on behalf and in the name of thousands of people who worked or volunteered in the Athens 2004 Olympic Games.

Mrs Angelopoulos is a proud mother of three children and grandmother of five grandchildren.

The Ephoria of the International Olympic Academy, taking into account her multidimensional contribution to the Olympic Movement and her historic role in one of the most important moments of recent Greek history, decided to award her the “Olympia” prize.

Awarding of the Honorary Distinction “ATHENA” to the National Olympic Academy of Bahrain

The National Olympic Academy of Bahrain is the evolution of the former “Bahrain Sports Institute” which was established in 1981 on the initiative of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, then Crown Prince and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth, and Sports. The Bahrain Sports Institute was later renamed as “Sports Development Centre” and in 1990, the name was changed to “Sports Training & Development Centre”. In 2017, it became the “Bahrain Olympic Academy”.

In 2000, the Bahrain Olympic Academy began implementing high level training programmes to develop elite and distinguished sports professionals.

Some of the programmes that the Bahrain Olympic Academy have been carrying out in the last years are the following: the National Coaching Certification Programme (1-2-3-4), the Sports Administrator manual programme, the Advanced Sports Administration Course (IOC), the Elite Coaches Advanced Course, the Learning Facilitators Development Course etc.

In February 2024, within the framework of a fruitful collaboration between the Bahrain Olympic Academy and the International Olympic Academy, under the guidance of His Highness Shaikh Khaled Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the first educational programme in Bahrain under the title “Advanced Olympic Studies Diploma” was launched, addressed to officials of the Bahrain Olympic Committee and the National Federations.

The Advanced Olympic Studies Diploma programme delves into current topics of the Olympic Movement. This pioneering initiative represents a significant step forward in Bahrain’s commitment to cultivating academic excellence and promoting Olympic values throughout the region.

The Bahrain Olympic Academy is dedicated to advancing the Kingdom’s Economic Vision 2030, aiming to elevate Bahrain to the highest ranks of global sports excellence. In 2011, the Bahrain Olympic Academy received the

“Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award” for Sports Innovation for the Academy’s National Coaches Certification Programme.

The Bahrain Olympic Academy plays a crucial role in promoting and sustaining the Olympic Values at both the national and international levels, with a strong commitment to the core principles and goals of the International Olympic Academy.



The NOA of Bahrain was awarded with the IOA honorary distinction “Athena”. The prize was received by the President of the Bahrain NOA, His Highness Shaikh Khaled bin Hamad Al-Khalifa.



The IOA President, Isidoros Kouvlos, and the IOA Dean Prof. Konstantinos Georgiadis, with Young Olympic Ambassadors.

Extracts from Pierre de Coubertin Writings

“The Altis itself was like a sanctuary reserved for the consecrated, purified athlete only, the athlete admitted to the main competitions and who became, in this way, a sort of priest, an officiating priest in the religion of the muscles. Similarly, I see modern Olympism as having at its core a sort of moral Altis, a sacred Altis, a sacred Fortress where the competitors in the manly sports for excellence are gathered to pit their strength against each other. The objectives of these sports are to defend man and to achieve self-mastery, to master danger, the elements, the animal, life”.

“The philosophic foundation of modern Olympism”, in *Le Sport Suisse*, vol. 31, August 7, 1935, 1-2 (*Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937), Olympism, Selected Writings*, Norbert Müller (ed.), Lausanne, IOC, 2000, 582-583).

“L’Altis même était comme le sanctuaire réservé au seul athlète consacré, purifié, admis aux épreuves principales et devenu ainsi une sorte de prêtre, d’officiant de la religion musculaire. De même, je conçois l’olympisme moderne comme constitué en son centre par une sorte d’Altis morale, de Burg sacré où sont réunis pour affronter leurs forces les concurrents des sports virils par excellence, des sports qui visent la défense de l’homme et sa maîtrise sur lui-même, sur le péril, sur les éléments, sur l’animal, sur la vie”.

«Les assises philosophiques de l’Olympisme moderne», in *Le Sport Suisse*, vol. 31, August 7, 1935, 1-2.

A black and white photograph of a large group of people, mostly young adults in white lab coats, standing on wide stone steps. They are arranged in several rows, filling the frame. In the background, there is a building with three prominent arched windows. The overall atmosphere is formal and celebratory.

Opening Ceremony

ANCIENT OLYMPIA, 11 JUNE 2024



**OPENING ADDRESS
of the Session Proceedings
by the President of the International Olympic Academy
Isidoros KOUVELOS**

Dear Members of the Olympic family,

Dear Lecturers,

Dear Delegates of the National Olympic Committees and the National Olympic Academies,

Dear Guests,

Welcome to Olympia! This sacred place stands as a powerful symbol linking the ancient Greek principles to the modern Olympic Movement. In antiquity, Olympia was the spiritual and physical centre of the Olympic Games, where athletes from various Greek city-states gathered every four years to compete in a display of strength, skill, and honour.

These Games were not merely athletic contests but also a form of worship to the gods, particularly Zeus, and a celebration of Greek culture and unity. The principles of fair play, respect for competitors, and the pursuit of excellence that were upheld at Olympia laid the foundation for the Values that the modern Olympic Movement aspires to promote today.

The modern Olympic Games, revived in 1896 by Pierre de Coubertin, which drew direct inspiration from the ancient Greek ideals embodied at Olympia. The core values of Olympism – Excellence, Friendship, and Respect – mirror the ancient Greek ethos of arete (excellence), which emphasises striving to reach one's full potential and doing so with honour and integrity. The torch relay, beginning in Olympia and travelling to the host city of the modern Games, is a poignant reminder of this historical continuity. It symbolises the transmission of the ancient spirit to the contemporary world, emphasising peace, unity, and the timeless pursuit of human greatness.

The ruins of Ancient Olympia, including the Temple of Zeus and the



Standing for the Olympic anthem.

ancient stadium, serve as a tangible link to the past, inspiring current and future generations. These remnants remind us that the Olympic Games are more than a sporting event; they are a cultural legacy that encourages a global dialogue on peace, mutual understanding, and shared human values.

Throughout this Session, we will explore the multifaceted role of athletes in society and the ways in which, Olympic athletes contribute to the promotion of Olympism.

We will celebrate their achievements on the field of play and their remarkable ability to inspire and unite people around the world. But more importantly, we will recognise their potential as agents of positive change, capable of making a lasting impact in their communities and beyond.

As we will reflect on the discussions and experiences shared during this Session, let us be reminded of the profound responsibility that comes with being an athlete in today's society.

Let us strive to embody the values of Olympism – excellence, friendship, respect, and solidarity – in all aspects of our lives, both on and off the field of play.



The IOA President, Isidoros Kouvelos.

Let us recognise the power of sport to transcend boundaries, foster understanding, and promote peace and reconciliation.

Together, we will reaffirm our shared belief in the power of sport and the enduring legacy of Olympism.

Let us carry forward the lessons and the connections that will be made during this Session as we continue our collective journey to promote Olympic Values and education worldwide.

I am certain that your passion, insight, and dedication will enrich our discussions and reinforce our commitment to building a better world through sport.

Allow me, at this point, to seize the opportunity and introduce to you the new Director of the IOA, Dr Makis Asimakopoulos. A person, with a rich past in



The amphitheatre during the Opening Ceremony.

the Olympic Movement, appointed as a Director of Sports in the ATHENS 2004 Organising Committee, holder of the Olympic Order, Senior Sports Advisor in the European Olympic Committees and a General Manager of the Athens Classic Marathon, for many years. He is committed to making every effort in order to empower our position in the Olympic Movement and lead the IOA, step by step, more closely to our vision!

I look forward to the positive impact we will undoubtedly make together in every corner of the world and here, in the land of Olympic culture.

Nikos Kazantzakis, the distinguished Greek author, describes the significance of the site of Ancient Olympia with the following simple lines:

“A sacred landscape, nobility, calm reflection. A happy valley between low, tranquil mountains, protected by the wild Northern wind and the hot Southern wind, open only in the West towards the sea from where, along the Alpheios river, the wet sea wind rushes in. There is no landscape more sublime in Greece that calls us so sweetly and persistently to peace and reconciliation”.

Thank you!

ADDRESS
by the Region Vice-Governor of Western Greece
on Citizens' Services and Digital Governance
Theodoros VASSILOPOULOS

On behalf of the Region of Western Greece, we welcome the Young Ambassadors from all over the world to the Olympic Land, with the hope that as students of Olympism they will succeed in conveying the Olympic Values worldwide, based on two main axes: "Fair Play" and "Sport", as a pillar of mutual understanding between people.

Allow me to convey the best wishes of the Regional Governor of Western Greece, Nektarios Farmakis, for a successful outcome of the Session, as reasons of force majeure did not allow him to attend.

I would like to extend our congratulations to the International Olympic Academy for their initiatives to help preserve our heritage and to foster the conditions for the Olympic spirit to inspire the next generation of leaders in sport and society.

I believe that the Young Ambassadors from National Olympic Academies and Committees from around the world will have a unique experience here, in Ancient Olympia, and they will use their presence at the Academy to learn more about the ancient heritage and the ongoing relevance of the Olympic values with the ultimate goal of building a better world for the new generation.

We have all inherited the most beautiful and great history of human upliftment through sport and I wish you to be equipped with valuable knowledge in order to continue the mission of spreading the Olympic values.

Be strong links in the chain of the great Olympic Family.

Have a good stay and enjoy your work at the Academy.

Thank you very much.

ADDRESS
by the Mayor of Ancient Olympia and IOA Ephoria Member
Aristides PANAGIOTOPoulos

I welcome you to the sacred land of Ancient Olympia, here, where the universal values of Culture, Sport, Education and Philosophy were forged and shaped. Here, where the great Olympic ideals of the ancient and modern world were born. Here, where the right to the free development of human personality was built and protected, with dignity and honour. In a dimension of mutual understanding and respect, through the spirit, the noble competition, the virtue of “fair play”, and “excellence”.

On these principles the will of coexistence was built, the acceptance of the “other”, the “foreigner” and diversity, values that establish justice in the world and the struggle of man for a better tomorrow. Culture, as a creation of this historic land, as a concept and as a tangible action, constitutes a profound spiritual expression.

As successors, therefore, of the spirit and history, we are all here to serve the example of the pioneers of the Truce and the visionaries of the revival of the Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin and Dimitrios Vikelas, and to spread the Olympic ideal throughout the world.

This year coincides with an emblematic event, as 2800 years of the history of the Olympic Games are completed. It is an honour for all of us to be able to celebrate such an event. We have an obligation, as the land that constitutes today the guardian of the Olympic values, to do so in the most glorious and meaningful way and you, to help in creating a better future for all of us through your knowledge, experience and youthful energy.

You undertake the great and important task of conveying and passing on to your country the concept of peace and the virtues of our ancestors. And, as Young Ambassadors, to renew and enrich the Olympic Movement, in an



Walking to the Pierre de Coubertin grove.

international context, where your vision, your moral education as modern people, can make the world more beautiful and, above all, peaceful.

I hope your stay here will be pleasant and above all creative, and that the work of the Olympic Education Cycle will be a success and will meet everyone's expectations.



*Professor Konstantinos Georgiadis presents the history of the stele
Pierre de Coubertin to all the guests and participants.*



Laying of wreath at the John Ketseas and Carl Diem monument by IOA lecturers Professors Manfred Laemmer and Stephan Wassong.

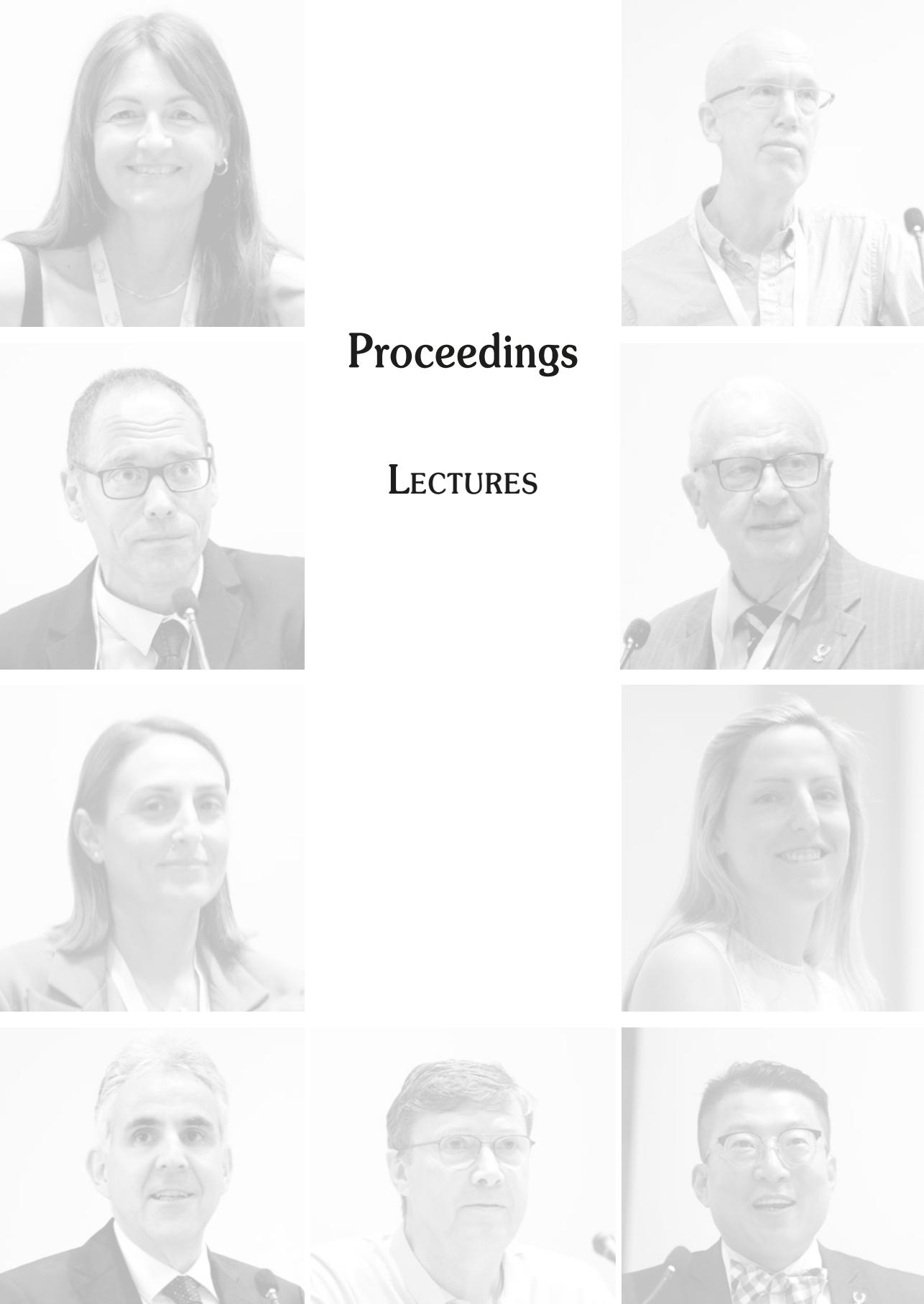


The IOA President, Isidoros Kouvlos, and the IOA lecturer Professor Hong Fan, laid a wreath at the Pierre de Coubertin stele.

OPENING CEREMONY, ANCIENT OLYMPIA







Proceedings

LECTURES

The opinions of the lecturers do not necessarily reflect those of the International Olympic Academy. Out of respect for multiculturalism and diversity of scientific research, we do not intervene in the way each lecturer chooses to present his/her bibliography and footnotes.

THE ROLE OF THE ATHLETES IN ANCIENT GREEK SOCIETY

Prof. Dr Manfred LAEMMER (GER)
German Sport University Cologne
President, European Olympic Academies (EOA)



Dear Young Olympic Ambassadors,

A few hundred metres from here are the remnants of the cult and competition sites where athletes from all over Greece fought for glory and honour 2500 years ago. You will visit them in the course of this Session. Who were these athletes, and what were their goals? What position did they occupy in society at the time? I can't cover this topic comprehensively and in detail, but the short time which is available to me, I can at least touch on a few key aspects.

Firstly, it should be noted that athletes did not exist in ancient Greece any more than in modern times. The athletes in the classical period differed considerably from those in the Hellenistic Era and the Roman Empire in terms of their social background, position, and self-image. The Olympic athletes of the first decades of the 20th century cannot be equated with the state-sponsored athletes of the “Cold War” period or with those who compete for gold, silver and bronze on the global stage today.

1. The Archaic Athlete – an Aristocrat

As an introduction to the topic, let's turn to the central term in the title. I am referring to the word “athlete”, which comes from the Greek language and has found its way into many other languages over the centuries. We see a significant reference to its original meaning in Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus, one of the

heroes of the Trojan War, wanders the seas for ten years after the conquest of Troy through the disfavour of the gods and ends up on the island of the legendary Phaeacians. At the royal court, one of the king's sons challenges him to a contest. When Odysseus, pointing to his weakened body from the shipwreck and his grief for his dead companions, asks him for understanding to refrain from competing, Euryalos, another Phaeacian, hurls the words at him: "Truly, you are not like an athlete, more like a merchant travelling with his ship and eager for profit!" This is the first time we encounter the word "athlete" in written tradition. The challenger is disappointed by the stranger's reaction and doubts his noble origin. After all, a man who refuses to compete – for whatever reason – cannot be a "man of high status". Participation in competitions (*Agones*) was a central requirement of early Greek aristocratic ethics. Through success in competition and war, the young aristocrat strove for fame and honour among his contemporaries and posterity.

However, Euryalos' words were not primarily a sporting offence but a social insult intended to strike Odysseus' sense of honour to the core. Despite his deplorable situation and advanced age, he jumps up, does not even take off his outer garment and hurls a discus heavier than the other competitors had thrown before, further than anyone else. This story is intended to illustrate a first characteristic of an athlete of the early period: He is a member of the aristocratic class, a financially and temporally independent "leisure class" that can be compared to that in Victorian England, where, as we know, the modern sport originated. The close connection between the classical competitions and the nobility is particularly evident in the horse and chariot races of the wealthy horse breeders in central Greece and Sicily.

From the middle of the 5th century BC, athletes from the new middle class, which could be compared to the European bourgeoisie in the second half of the 19th century, increasingly appeared. They had become wealthy through the Greek colonisation and the expansion of trade, and they gained political influence. However, their values were still orientated towards traditional aristocratic models in almost all areas of life. Only towards the end of the 4th century, when Alexander the Great conquered the entire eastern Mediterranean world, did the social barriers fall. The rival city-states, which had lost their political autonomy and military capacity to act, exploited every opportunity to find and promote athletic talents. More and more athletes came from the lower social classes and secured their livelihoods in this way. The modern Olympic movement shows a



Professor Manfred Laemmer's lecture on the role of the athletes in the ancient Greek society. Professor Laemmer is also the President of the European Olympic Academies.

similar development. While during the first decades, most Olympic athletes came from a bourgeois background, especially from universities, after the Second World War, the so-called “state amateurs” from socialist countries and athletes from the so-called “Third World” drastically changed the picture.

2. The Classical Athlete – a Warrior

The second characteristic of the Olympic athlete in classical times will certainly surprise you. He is an athlete **and** a warrior. It is usually overlooked that the much-vaunted Greek educational institution, the gymnasium, originated in the 6th century as a military training centre. Athletics was a result and a subsidiary of military training. Only those who had attended a gymnasium were granted citizenship and thus entitled to compete as free Greeks at the great Panhellenic Games, particularly in Olympia. Numerous reports by ancient historians confirm this fact. For example, the most famous athlete of antiquity, the wrestler Milon

of Kroton, who won six consecutive Olympic Games, led the army of his home town, dressed as Heracles with club and lion skin, into battle against the neighbouring community of Sybaris. His compatriot Phayllos, who achieved the record distance of 55 feet in the pentathlon long jump at the Pythian Games in Delphi and thus – like Bob Beamon in Mexico – “jumped over the pit”, came to the aid of the Athenians who were abandoned by all the other Greeks, as commander of a battleship when they defeated the Persian fleet in the naval battle at Salamis in 480 BC. When a Spartan candidate for the Olympics was asked what he considered to be the greatest reward if he won at Olympia, he is said to have replied: “The honour of being allowed to go into battle alongside the king in the front row”. The philosopher Plato, who had a negative attitude towards athletics and only advocated state gymnastic training for the defence of the polis, complained that many athletes had become unfit for military service due to their special way of life.

The ancient pentathlon, included discus throw, long jump, javelin throw, running, and wrestling, is so often invoked today as an expression of a harmonious educational ideal. It was originally a military all-round test. Even when Pierre de Coubertin conceived the modern pentathlon, which was on the Olympic programme for the first time in Stockholm in 1912, he had an officer in mind as the ideal image of the perfect athlete. And indeed, the new pentathlon, which at that time consisted of riding, fencing, shooting, swimming and running, was the domain of the military and police, until well after the Second World War. At first glance, Pierre de Coubertin’s idea seems to contradict the Olympic Movement’s claim to contribute to international understanding, peace and non-violence. However, it corresponds to the image of the Greek athlete in the Classical Era.

3. The Classical Athlete – a Male

As I am giving this lecture in English, I have always spoken of “the athlete”, which is gender-neutral. If I had given the lecture in Greek, French or German, I would have only used the masculine form for the ancient world. Despite the masculine and feminine forms for the modern world, the classical athlete was male.

In ancient Greece, the roles of the sexes were clearly divided: The man was responsible for politics, economy and all public affairs, while the woman

ran the household and looked after the children. While their education was limited to reading and writing lessons, the young men received a comprehensive physical and intellectual education at the gymnasium. However, as women neither attended higher education nor were involved in the defence of the polis, they did not participate in public competitions. At the Olympic Games, women were even forbidden for being in the stadium for ritual reasons, so they could not even watch the competitions, as it was the case elsewhere. So here lies a crucial difference between the athletes of antiquity and those of today. When the modern Olympic Games were founded, hardly anyone thought about women participating, least of all Pierre de Coubertin. Women did not fit into the model of the “Olympic officer”, which he had in mind. When he resigned from the office of IOC President at the Olympic Congress in Prague in 1925, the decision of his IOC colleagues to allow women to compete in track and field for the first time in Amsterdam in 1928 also played an important role. He believed that this decision would lead the Olympic Movement in the wrong direction. In an open letter to the competitors gathered in the Dutch capital, he wrote: “These Games are no longer my Games” and never again visited the festival that was his life’s work.

The participation of women in the modern Olympic Games is not a matter of course but the result of a long struggle against the backdrop of the social developments of the 20th century. Pierre de Coubertin and his contemporaries would hardly have thought its possible that the majority of competitors in Paris in 2024 would be female and that women would be boxing and wrestling.

4. The Classical Athlete – a Free Greek Citizen

In the spirit of Pierre de Coubertin’s vision “All Games – All Nations”, internationality and universality are fundamental principles of the Olympic Movement. Athletes from all over the world compete in the modern Olympic Games, regardless of race, religion, nationality or gender. However, in ancient Olympia, only Greeks were allowed to participate. Before competing, athletes had to swear they were descended from free Greek parents. In cases of doubt, relatives, coaches or companions also had to attest to this. When King Alexander I of Macedonia wanted to compete in the stadium race, the classic sprint distance, in 500 BC, his rivals objected, arguing that he was not Greek. Only after a long

discussion and with the help of a questionable genealogical construction the Olympic authorities admitted the king and thus avoided a political scandal. In Olympia, those who already belonged to a relatively homogeneous linguistic, cultural and religious community celebrated their identity. However, it should not be overlooked that the athletes came from more than 300 rival city-states, which often waged bitter wars against each other. Although the ancient Olympic Games were not international, they were “interstate”.

5. The Victorious Athlete – Pride of the Polis

In classical times, the athlete was proud to represent his polis in Olympia in front of 40,000 spectators from all over the Greek world. When he was the winner, his own name, his father's name and the name of his city-state were proclaimed. These details were also inscribed on the base of the statue, which he was allowed to erect in the sacred grove, and were intended to confer immortality on his success.

As much as an athlete was loved and admired by his compatriots when he won, he was despised, even hated, when he switched sides. For example, the sprinter Astylos of Kroton in Lower Italy proclaimed himself a citizen of Syracuse in Sicily after his second victory in Olympia because the ruler of this city had apparently persuaded him to do so through material favours (we would say “through bribery”). Although this was probably not illegal, the inhabitants of Kroton, in their anger, toppled the statue they had erected on the agora after Astylos' first victory and turned his house into a prison. The runner Sotades from Crete also proclaimed himself a citizen of Ephesos, while an athlete named Antipatros declined such an offer.

On the other hand, a city identified with its Olympic champion and showered him with rewards, privileges and honours. The high reputation is particularly understandable when you consider that the Greeks only recognised the winner of a competition and no further placings. Defeat (and shame) began with second place – a view we deplore today. Today, around 1000 medals are awarded in more than 300 disciplines at the Olympic Games, so at least 10% of all Olympic participants feel they have succeeded. At the Ancient Games, only ten wreaths of olive were awarded in athletics, including the youth competitions. This meant that apart from Sparta, Athens and the rich metropoles in Lower Italy, most

Greek cities could not boast a single Olympic champion within their walls for decades or even centuries.

6. The Classical Athlete – a Specialist

One characteristic of the Classical athlete is cited in traditional sport historiography as versatility, which found its obvious expression in the ancient pentathlon event. In this context, the philosopher Aristotle, who called the pentathletes the “most beautiful” athletes because of their balanced skills, is frequently quoted as the main authority. However, the reality was quite different. The Greeks were soon to experience that the requirement of the noble ethos of “always being the best, superior to the others”, the absolute priority of performance and victory, a concentration of one’s powers on one thing, made specialisation necessary. This development can already be observed in the Archaic Era. At the Olympic Games, the specialists in the combat sports of wrestling, boxing, and the pancratium were at the centre of public interest. Around these, legends and anecdotes would grow. By contrast, the outward appearance of the pentathlon was less attractive because of the breaks between the individual disciplines, the confusion over the state of the competition and the complicated method of determining the winner. In fact, from the introduction of this event in Olympia in 708 BC until the end of the Classical Era, we only know a handful of pentathletes by name, but all the winners of the stade race. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that only very few competitors usually entered for this event at the great Panhellenic Games. They included members of distinguished families whose victories were celebrated by poets such as Pindaros and Bakchylides. No explicit reference can be found for the pentathlon being particularly popular among the spectators or the general public compared to the specialists’ disciplines. The relatively low popularity and esteem of the pentathlon are also revealed by ancient prize lists, even though these mainly originate from the post-Classical Era, whereas, at the Panathenaic Games in the fourth century BC, victors in the pentathlon would still win the same number of amphoras of oil like wrestlers and boxers, the first-placed in a competition in the third century AD, in Aphrodisias in Asia Minor, won an even lesser prize than the winner of the boys’ stade race, and was thus ranked last.

However, there is a much more significant indicator for an appropriate

assessment of the significance of the pentathlon at the Panhellenic Games. Although there were competitions in running, wrestling and boxing for juniors (up to the age of 20) in Olympia, the pentathlon was – except for 628 BC – not held in this age group. If the idea of versatility in ancient athletics had been of such central significance, the pentathlon would not have been reserved for the adults' category. The “perfect” statues of the fifth century erected in the sacred precincts and on squares of the Greek cities do not mirror reality, but rather ideal types who were often identifiable only by an inscription on the base. When realistic representation came into being in the fourth century BC, we also found athletes of another kind: giant colossuses with unbalanced proportions, smashed noses, and mutilated ears.

7. The Ancient Amateur – a Legend

No other topic has been discussed more continuously and controversially in the history of the modern Olympic Games than the relationship between the athlete and material gain. Time and again, representatives of the Olympic Movement claimed that the ancient athletes – at least in classical times – were following an amateur ideal. However, historical sources have dispelled any illusions about this point. Already in the earliest competitions handed down to us in Homer's Iliad, noble warriors competed for valuable prizes. Even in the often-invoked “classical heyday” of the 5th century BC, we search in vain for an amateur ideal. It is true that the Olympic champions at the venue received only a branch from the sacred olive tree and had the right to erect a statue in the sacred precinct (*Altis*). In their home cities, however, they were showered with rewards and privileges. As early as 600 BC, the city of Athens paid its Olympic champions bonuses of 500 silver drachmas, which at the time could pay a labourer for three years or even buy ten slaves or 500 sheep. In almost all Greek cities, Olympic champions had the right to dine in the town hall (*Prytaneion*) together with the political dignitaries for the rest of their lives. Later, it was sometimes decided to pay the equivalent value of the meals – if desired – in daily allowances. In the Roman imperial period, the privileges previously granted by the autonomous cities were replaced by standardised pensions guaranteed by the emperor. It is clear from historical sources that at least successful athletes unless they came from wealthy families, enjoyed excellent economic security for the time after their active careers. It should also be remembered that only a few competitions, including the four

major Panhellenic Games, were so-called “crown contests” (*agones stephanitai*). The majority of regional and local events were for valuable prizes or cash.

The ancient Greeks made no distinction between “amateurs” and “professionals”. The social circumstances in which an athlete lived and the conditions under which he had prepared for the competitions were of no interest. Prizes and privileges were essential elements of the Greek competition system from the very beginning. There is no indication that material gain discriminated morally against an athlete, let alone disqualified him. Throughout antiquity, alongside competitors from wealthy families who did not need prizes but nevertheless sought or accepted them, there was an increasing number of athletes from the lower social level who were dependent on the aforementioned economic advantages. The ancient Olympic Games were, undoubtedly, “open games”.

8. The Only Goal of the Ancient Athlete – Victory

Critics of the merciless competition in today’s international high-performance sport often give the impression that the great importance of victory is a perversion of the “original” Olympic idea. Even mere participation in the Olympic Games is now seen as a partial realisation of the Olympic idea. Thousands of athletes have no chance of winning a medal from the outset. Just being there is a value in itself. The mere qualification of an athlete for the Olympic Games, a top ranking, a relatively good performance (in relation to the general expectation) or a personal best without taking into account the rank achieved are considered a success. The first three in each competition receive medals and the first six diplomas.

One of the most striking differences between the ancient and modern Olympic Games is the importance of victory. In ancient Olympia, only the winner was determined by the judges, and only he was proclaimed and glorified by statue and hymn. Only his name went down in the Olympic roll of honour. In their uncompromising pursuit of victory, the ancient competitors, especially in combat fights, accepted hardship, health risks, injury, and even death. “crown or death” (*stephanos* or *thanatos*) wrote an athlete on his tombstone in Olympia.

An ancient athlete was primarily concerned with gaining fame, honour and prestige for himself and his hometown, and the name of an Olympic champion was forever etched in the memory of his polis. The cities, in turn, used the reputation of the victors for foreign policy purposes. They often entrusted them with the

leadership of important diplomatic missions. There are several known cases of warring parties releasing well-known top athletes because of their prominence. Aristocratic chariot race winners, in particular, were convinced that they owed their sporting success to the favour of the gods and became politically active. For example, during the Olympic Games in 560 BC, the Athenian Olympic champion Kylon tried in vain to seize power by occupying the Acropolis, misinterpreting a Delphic oracle. His compatriot Kimon transferred the honour of his first two Olympic victories to the tyrant Peisistratos. During the Peloponnesian War in 416 BC, Alkibiades claimed supreme command of an expedition to Sicily because he had enhanced the reputation of the city of Athens throughout the Greek world by sending seven teams to Olympia, one of which was victorious, and several others took good places. While victorious athletes received lavish honours, there was also criticism in antiquity, especially from representatives of the intellectual elite. As early as the 6th century BC, Xenophon stated that the wisdom of the philosophers was more beneficial to the state than the physical strength of the athletes. And the playwright Euripides wrote: “There are many evils in Hellas, but nothing is more evil than the clan of athletes”. Later, the criticism culminated in widespread mocking poems about the appearance and lifestyle of athletes.

In conclusion, let me make one more important observation. As much as an ancient athlete was admired and revered by spectators and fellow citizens, he was also just a human being who was not free from weaknesses, temptations and wrong behaviour. This is shown by the statues of Zeus (Zanes), erected from the fines of those who had violated the Olympic principles and rules. The classical athlete exists twice: once in the victory songs of Pindar and Bakchylides and the idealised statues and romanticised ideas of the 19th century, and secondly in reality, which has been reclaimed by historians and archaeologists with 100 years of experience of modern competitive sport.

Even the few characteristics of the ancient competitions I have mentioned make it clear that the meaning of the Olympic Games, like the meaning of sport in general, depends on the values of a historical epoch or a particular social order. The games of antiquity are as fundamentally different from those of Coubertin as the latter are from those we experience today. But it is precisely in the difference in our values and standards that the great intellectual, cultural and social progress since antiquity manifests itself, which we owe to Christianity, the Enlightenment and modern social philosophy. There is no “eternal” Olympic idea with an unchanged canon of values and virtues.

ATHLETES' REPRESENTATION WITHIN THE IOC: PROCESSES OF CHANGES

Prof. Dr Stephan WASSONG (GER)
*German Sport University Cologne
Institute of Sport History
Olympic Studies Centre*



Even in the years when Pierre de Coubertin was President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) from 1896 until 1925 athletes were viewed as main actors of the Olympic Games. Coubertin thought of athletes as role models spreading the values of Olympism in society (Wassong, 2023). But despite this view, athletes had no voice in sports federations at the national and international level; this then applied to the IOC as well, in which there was only a one-dimensional power relationship between officials and athletes. It was a traditional viewpoint unquestioned by almost all actors involved in sports and the Olympic Movement. The situation has slowly changed and improved through intermediate steps. Decisive changes took place in the years between 1981 and 2000. These are described in the lecture and analysed as to why the athletes have a serious representation in the IOC now.

1. The First Voices of Athletes at Olympic Congresses

The Xth Olympic Congress, which was held from 30th September to 4th October 1973, took place in Varna, Bulgaria. For the first time in the history of the Olympic Congresses, a group of athletes were invited next to IOC Members and officials from National Olympic Committees (NOCs), International Sport



Professor Stephan Wassong from the Cologne Sport University spoke on the athletes' place in decision-making positions within the Olympic Movement.

Federations (IFs) and Organising Committees of the Summer and Winter Olympic Games. The athletes – most of them Olympic medal winners at the Olympic Games Munich 1972 – had the status of observers meaning that they were not permitted to deliver a speech and not even to engage in discussions. They had the role of passive participants who could not raise their concerns about the challenges of top-level sport. Athletes felt uncertain about the tension field between amateurism and professionalism, the growing commercialisation of sport, the new dimension of the politicization of sport in the Cold War, the tendency of an exaggerated strive for records, the slowly emerging doping scene and the growing difficulties to realise a smooth transition from athletic to post-athletic life (Müller, 1994).

In general, officials welcomed the initiative to invite athletes but felt strange that the athletes were not given a voice. One of them was made by Richard Pound, who was Secretary General of the Canadian Olympic Committee in 1973 before he became IOC Member in 1978. Pound viewed paying more respect to athletes as obligatory for coining a sustainable profile for the Olympic

Games in the future. In his short Congress speech, he stressed “that [the Olympic Movement] exists for the athletes, not vice versa. All of us must recognise and accept this or face losing the athletes and eventually the movement” (Pound quoted IOC 1973, 91). His wording is interesting as it has enjoyed a renaissance in important reform documents of the IOC which have been initiated since 2000. One can refer to the IOC 2000 Reform Commission driven by IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch in 1999 or the Olympic Agenda 20 + 20 put in place by IOC President Thomas Bach in 2014.

Both Pound’s words and their sentiment on the topic found support from some other Congress delegates. Historically the most remarkable statement came from Raoul Mollet, at that time President of the Belgian Olympic Committee. In order to increase the representation of athletes in the IOC Mollet suggested the foundation of an Athletes’ Commission. It was the first time in the history of the Olympic Movement that this idea appeared on the Olympic radar (Wassong, 2018).

IOC President Michael Morris Killanin, who chaired the Olympic Congress in Varna, could not overlook Pound’s and Mollet’s recommendations completely in his concluding congress remarks. However, he decided not to link the challenge of an institutional athletes’ representation with the sole responsibility of the IOC. Indeed, he stated that contact with athletes should be realised by using the normal channels by which he meant the IFs and NOCs. Of course, the IOC would offer its support in this project (IOC 1973). Probably Killanin’s passive reaction could be understood by considering that until then only very limited experiences in dealing with an institutional representation of athletes of any NOC or IF was available for the IOC as a learning model. But the question remains if the IOC as the world governing body of sport should not be confident enough to spearhead this initiative (Wassong, 2019).

Actually, a turning point of this pending initiative was reached at the XIth Olympic Congress, which was held from 23 to 28 September 1981 in Baden-Baden, Germany. New IOC President Samaranch, who was elected in 1980, chaired the Congress and gave the Congress a progressive profile with an impressive reform momentum coining the sustainable profile of the Olympic Movement for the next decades.

The Congress welcomed approximately 570 guests from the world of Olympic sports, politics, and culture, as well as 30 athletes who were invited as special guests. A novelty was that six of them were given the opportunity to deliver short

speeches. The selection of the speakers was made by the Finnish IOC Member Peter Tallberg, who was given the responsibility of coordinating the group of invited athletes at the Congress. Together with the athletes Tallberg identified topics being of interest to athletes. After intensive rounds of discussions, Tallberg then informed the Congress leadership about the selection of the athlete speakers and the topics to be addressed (Müller, 1994).

Ivar Formo (Norway, cross-country skiing), Svetla Otzetowa (Bulgaria, rowing) and Thomas Bach (Federal Republic of Germany, fencing) were to speak at the Congress theme *The Future of the Olympic Games*; the topics dealt with Olympic amateur issue, the consistent tightening of doping sanctions and the demand for a significant increase of sports disciplines for women in the Olympic programme. Kipchoge Keino (Kenya, athletics) and Vladislav Tretyak (Soviet Union, ice hockey) were to represent the athletes on the theme of *The Future of the Olympic Movement*; they spoke about the problem of the increasing political instrumentalisation of the Olympic Games and the importance of Olympic ceremonies. Sebastian Coe (Great Britain, Athletics) was to speak for the final statement of the athletes. Probably the most relevant point in his speech was the demand to establish an Athletes' Commission in the IOC. This was supported by many delegates, including IOC President Samaranch. The decision to create the Athletes' Commission was taken at the IOC Executive Board meeting held in Sarajevo from 2nd to 4th December 1981 (Wassong, 2018).

2. The Presidential-Led Athletes' Commission

As with all other IOC commissions, the members of the Athletes' Commission were only appointed by the IOC President and given an advisory role. Samaranch's selection fell on Bach, Coe, Formo, Keino, Otzetova and Tretyak; IOC Member Tallberg became chairman. Certainly, this decision was not very surprising, as all of the appointed members had proven to be competent advisors in Baden-Baden, representing the athletes with a critical but pragmatic and constructive voice. Samaranch could therefore expect that they would intend to work together rather than engage in confrontation (Wassong, 2018).

The first meeting of the newly established Athletes' Commission was held on 24th May 1982 in Rome, a few days before the 85th IOC Session. At the start of the first meeting, Tallberg thanked the IOC President for having

supported the establishment of the Athletes' Commission so proactively, and congratulated him on the decision to bring it to fruition. Tallberg also praised the 1981 Baden-Baden Olympic Congress as a success for the IOC and – above all – for the athletes, and went on to state that it was now the task of the Athletes' Commission to work as efficiently as possible to meet its responsibilities towards the IOC. Samaranch himself attended the beginning of the meeting and offered some encouraging words for the Commission members. As to Samaranch, the Commission members could reflect the varied voices of athletes by taking into account the realities of modern sport, and their experiences as athletes and Olympians would contribute to fulfilling their responsibility.

The members of the Athletes' Commission were highly motivated right from the start. For their very first task, they started working on its terms of reference. Through rather lengthy discussions, the members agreed not to be too specific, creating broad and flexible terms of reference in order not to impose restrictions on its work. As a recommendation, the Athletes' Commission put forward the following proposal which was then approved by the IOC Executive Board (Wassong 2021, 53):

"The main objects of the Athletes' Commission are to secure cooperation between the athletes taking part in the Olympic Games and the IOC and its commissions, thus furthering the aims of the Olympic Movement as defined in the Olympic Charter".

One of the first public speeches from a member of the Athletes' Commission was given by Bach. At the 22nd Session of the International Olympic Academy (IOA), held from 11th to 25th July 1982 in Olympia, Greece, Bach stressed the importance that the Athletes' Commission should not be viewed simply as a mouthpiece of the IOC:

"We want to generate a genuine impulse and become a kind of link between athletes on the one hand and the International Olympic Committee on the other. Naturally, we expect our proposals and ideas to be taken seriously and made reality where possible. In other words, the Commission is not to be degraded to a merely decorative function" (Bach 1985, 187).

In the years after the foundation of the Athletes' Commission, its members became active on a variety of topics. Of course, the athletes' lectures delivered at

the Olympic Congress in Baden-Baden provided a direction, hence future fields of activities focused on the interference of politics with the Olympic Movement, the strengthening of the anti-doping fight, increasing the number of women in the IOC and female athletes at the Olympic Games, and the liberalization of the eligibility rule. New topics perceived to be relevant included the representation of members of the AC in other IOC commissions, the editing of an athletes' brochure, setting up an office in the Olympic Village, and strengthening the institutional representation of athletes at NOCs, and discussions on the future composition of the AC Wassong 2021).

From the first meeting of the Athletes' Commission in Rome in 1982 until the Centennial Olympic Congress, which was held in August 1994 in Paris the number of members of the Athletes' Commission grew from nine to 14. In accordance with the Olympic Charter, all members were appointed by the IOC President. This limitation of responsibility remained a stable construct until the mid-1990s and indicates internal caution on the part of the IOC toward the Athletes' Commission. It must also be emphasised that at that time, Athletic Commission members were not in the IOC and thus had no mandate to participate in decision-making processes. Without a doubt, it was an advantage that a selected group of members of the Athletes' Commission could meet with the IOC Executive Board annually since 1987 to present working results. The link to the decision-making level in the IOC was reserved for the Athlete Commission chairman, who had to be an already established member of the IOC. He himself had to be appointed by the IOC President. Hence and like all other IOC commissions, the Athletes' Commission was purely presidential-led and presidential-controlled (Wassong, 2021, 1149).

3. The First Elections of Athletes to the Athletes' Commission

Concrete considerations on a changed membership composition of the Athletes' Commission began in February 1994, triggered by the necessary revision of the governance structure of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). The CAS had been founded by the IOC in 1983 to give sports organisations, officials and athletes the opportunity to avoid the often lengthy and expensive appeal proceedings before state courts (Chappelet & Kübler-Mabbott, 2008).

Until 1994, the IOC fully financed the CAS and had oversight of its rules of

procedure. Increasing criticism of the overly close institutional links between the two organisations encouraged the steady growth of individual and institutional lawsuits against CAS arbitration decisions before the Swiss Federal Tribunal (SFT). The country's Supreme Court rejected the complaints and certified the independence of the CAS, but not without reservations about the "organic and economic ties existing between the CAS and the IOC" (Kane, 2002, 616). To solve the problem, the SFT proposed the creation of the International Council of Arbitration for Sport (ICAS); a kind of supervisory board to make the CAS legally, organizationally, and economically more independent from the IOC. The IOC followed this recommendation and established the ICAS as a foundation under Swiss law in March 1994.

The ICAS is composed of 20 persons who have a high level of legal knowledge. Of these 20 persons, four are appointed by the IOC and four by the umbrella organisations of the NOCs and the IFs. These 12 individuals appoint four others "after appropriate consultation to safeguard the interests of the athletes" (Kane, 2002, 618). Then the now 16 members appoint the remaining four individuals, who must be independent of the above institutions. The four members with experience in the special assessment of the conflict situation of the athletes should ideally be nominated by athlete representatives for possible appointments. In this respect, the Athletes' Commission of the IOC naturally moved into the focus of interest (Kane, 2003, 612).

In view of this new situation, the principle of independence was to be transferred to the membership composition of the Athletes' Commission. The predominant consideration was that elected and non-appointed members could fulfil the role of representatives of the athletes' community more authentically, more transparently and thus more convincingly. To revise the composition of the Athletes' Commission several meetings were held which were attended by members of the Athletes' Commission and the IOC administration. Finally, the following was proposed:

The Athletes' Commission should be expanded by five persons in order to optimize the gender balance as well as the continental representation of members and distribution of sports; including the chairperson, the Athletes' Commission should not exceed a size of 19 members. Athletes should elect 10 of the 19 members; the remaining nine members would be appointed by the IOC President. The fact that the IOC President could appoint up to 49% of the members gave him the opportunity to raise a more balanced profile of the

commission that might not be achieved through election. Of the 10 members, seven were to be elected for the first time at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics and three at the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics. After each election and the announcement of its results, the IOC President should make his appointments based on a quota for the Olympic Games and Winter Olympic Games (Wassong, 2021, 1151).

The Executive Board discussed the proposals at its meetings in August 1994 and January 1995, agreed to them, and included them as a new clause in §5 of Rule 24 of the new version of the Olympic Charter for 1996. In April 1995 the NOCs were informed on the elections of athletes to the Athletes' Commission and the eligibility rules. NOCs were encouraged to propose one male and one female candidate for election. The athletes proposed by an NOC must be a member of the NOC's Athletes' Commission or an equivalent body, must have participated in the last edition of the Games of the Olympiad or Olympic Winter Games, and ideally fluently in English. The first elections for membership to the Athletes' Commission were held at the Olympic Games Atlanta 1996 and the Nagano Winter Olympic Games 1998.

	Atlanta 1996	Nagano 1998
Competing athletes	10.318	2.176
Nominations for election	35	16
Voting athletes	5.734 (55%)	1.366 (62%)
Elected athletes	7	3
List of members	See Appendix 1	See Appendix 1

After the Nagano Winter Olympic Games, the new composition of the Athletes' Commission, was finalised. Samaranch made use of the right to appoint up to nine members. In 1996 he had already appointed two new members. In 1998 he did not appoint new members but simply renewed the mandate of six already established members who had been on the Athletes' Commission almost since its foundation years. Samaranch did so as he wanted the work of the Athletes' Commission to be guided by some more experienced members. The Athletes' Commission remained in this composition until the Olympic Games Sidney 2000 (see Appendix 1) (Wassong, 2021).

Undoubtedly, the reform of the membership composition of the Athletes' Commission had created the basis for a more authentic institutional representation

of athletes. Although the majority of the Commission members were elected from 1996 onwards, they continued to have only an advisory role, were not elected IOC Members and hence were not directly involved in decision-making processes at the IOC. However, this changed within two years. From 1998 until 2000 the Athletes' Commission the Athletes' Commission underwent its most important reform process.

4. Becoming IOC Members

In 1998 the IOC was affected by two crises which challenged the integrity of the IOC in its position as the world leader of sport: the doping scandal of the Tour de France and the Salt Lake City Bribery scandal (Chappelet, 2020). Largely as a result of the two crises and the growing criticism of the public on the IOC Samaranch initiated the so-called Reform Agenda 2000. It aimed to restore the credibility of the Olympic Movement and to equip the IOC and the Olympic Movement with transparent and future-oriented governance structures and policies.

Like all entities of the Olympic Movement the Athletes' Commission dealt with these crises with intense discussions. A major concern of the members of the Athletes' Commission was that by the loss of integrity and credibility of the Olympic Movement athletes would be unconditionally discredited, simply because they are part of the Olympic system.

As to Samaranch and the Executive Board, the position of the Athletes' Commission was not only heard but also perceived as important for the reform agenda which included a total of 50 reform proposals. Through the involvement of the athletes, a contribution could be made to turn the focus back on the Olympic sport itself and to its most authentic and visible key actors. Their input was needed to avoid a reform debate overloaded by overtly technical, structural and administrative considerations. Consequently, the members of the Athletes' Commission were appointed to the IOC 2000 Reform Commission (RC) whose reform proposals were discussed at the IOC Session in December 1999 in Lausanne.

The input of the members of the Athletes' Commission on the reform proposals was not only of a symbolic political nature, but also part of the discussions leading to the approval of 50 reform recommendations of the RC by the IOC Session in December (Palacios, Mont-Roig, & Surroca, Juan 2015).

These reforms, amongst others, established new rules for the selection of host cities, set a maximum of 280 events for future Summer Olympic Games, backed the participation of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), strengthened international solidarity, stressed the importance of expanding educational and cultural activities of the IOC, and the composition of the IOC (Kidd & Dichter 2012). The latter point was particularly important for the athletes, as they were guaranteed representation in the IOC.

As the outcome of the reform discussions, it was decided to make 15 athletes IOC members, in equal numbers as presidents of NOCs and IFs. 12 athletes should come from the group of elected Commission members. In order to achieve this, the number of elective places in the Athletes' Commission had to be increased from the former 10 to now 12; one more place each for the Summer and Winter Games. The remaining three places for the membership of the 15 athletes in the IOC were determined by the IOC President. Furthermore, it was determined that in the future the chairperson of the Athletes' Commission would no longer be appointed by the IOC President but that they would be elected by the members of the Athletes' Commission themselves. The prerequisite for this was that the candidate was an elected member of the Athletes' Commission. The new chairperson automatically also became a member of the IOC Executive Board, which once again emphasized the special position of the Athletes' Commission (Wassong, 2021).

The new profile of the Athletes' Commission has been implemented since 2000 with the elections of the members to the Athletes' Commission at the Olympic Games Sydney 2000 and the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympic Winter Games. Tallberg, who was the founding chair of the Athletes' Commission and who led the Commission from 1982 until 2000 commented on the remarkable transformation process as follows:

“At the Olympic Congress which had taken place in Baden-Baden more than 18 years before, athletes had been invited as official delegates for the first time ever. Now, they had finally achieved their goal and were being accepted as IOC Members. The athletes should be considered as the fourth pillar of the Olympic Movement, on equal basis with the other three pillars; the IOC, the IFs and the NOCs” (Tallberg quoted in IOC 1999, 4).

5. Concluding Analysis

With the elections of athletes to the Athletes' Commission and consequently, to the IOC, a turning point had been reached in the perception of athletes. Their responsibility to represent the Olympic Movement was no longer limited to their integral athletic excellence and as a voice making recommendations. Now it includes an active involvement in elections and decision-making processes at the IOC. This showed a long-overdue trust and recognition of the athletes as central players in the Olympic Movement.

As evidence that the Commission members have accepted the required task of institutional profile enhancement, reference can be made to the *Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration*, which was adopted at the 133rd Session of the IOC in Buenos Aires 2018. Other activities include the positioning of the Athletes' Forums, Athletes 365, rule 50 of the Olympic Charter and the relationship to independent athletes' commissions.

Without a doubt, we can recognise an increase in athletes' direct responsibilities to represent and develop the Olympic Movement from their special perspectives as the central actors of the Olympic sport. This should be supported in the best possible way with the collaboration and support of all involved in the governance of the Olympic Movement and the wider sport system.

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Appendix 1

Name	Sport	Status	Year
Sergey Bubka (UKR)	Athletics	Elected	1996
Aleksandr Popov (RUS)	Swimming	Elected	1996
Charmaine Crooks (CAN)	Athletics	Elected	1996
Robert Ctvrtlik (USA)	Volleyball	Elected	1996
Hassiba Boulmerka (ALG)	Athletics	Elected	1996
Roland Baar (GER)	Rowing	Elected	1996
Jan Železný (CZE)	Athletics	Elected	1996
Vladimir Smirnov (RUS)	Cross Country Skiing	Elected	1998
Johann Olav Koss (NOR)	Speed Skating	Elected	1998
Manuela Di Centa (ITA)	Cross Country Skiing	Elected	1998
Peter Tallberg (Chair)	Sailing	Appointed	1982
HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco (MC) (second chair)	Bobsleigh	Appointed	1989
Kipchoge Keino (KE)	Athletics	Appointed	1982
Peter Montgomery (AU)	Water Polo	Appointed	1988
Tomas Gustafson (SE)	Speed Skating	Appointed	1989
Philippe Riboud (FR)	Fencing	Appointed	1989
Deng Yaping (CN)	Table Tennis	Appointed	1996
Mikado Kotani (JP)	Artistic Swimming	Appointed	1996

*Composition of the IOC Athletes' Commission, 1998-2000
(Palacios, Mont-Roig, & Surroca, 2015)*

ATHLETES AND COACHES IN MODERN SOCIETY: A STUDY FROM VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

How do athletes and coaches contribute and what are their roles in a modern society? In the last two decades, there has been a shift from an authoritarian to a more athlete-centered coaching approach. There are some typical characteristics, which make the athlete-coach unit unique in society. In this article, I will focus on how coaches play a crucial role in the development of athletes and in influencing their experiences in sport, and consequently in society. Existing literature has been studied and brought together with many years of practical experience in the field. The pursuit of excellence in sport is a key element since the ancient Greek Olympic movement. In addition to the triad of coaching knowledge (professional, interpersonal, intrapersonal) and functional competencies, there is also a need for a practical contemporary approach, that addresses one of the major challenges – the dilemma of balancing education and performance – while developing athletes within modern societal standards. This calls for a contemporary, holistic approach to sports coaching. Modern society increasingly expects lifelong learning and demands transversal skills, which we can find in sports. Olympism, with its humanistic approach, can serve as a guideline in modern sport and supports the transfer of life skills and competencies, acquired through sport, into society. I will discuss how as a coach, to develop athletes

by working closely with them, to train them not only for sport, but also develop them for life, and ultimately to be positive ambassadors in a modern society.

Keywords: Athlete-coach unit; coaching philosophy and – ethos; education vs. performance dilemma; Holistic sports coaching; life-long learning; life skills acquisition and transmission; modern society and sport; Olympism; transversal skills

A well-functioning society is like a matching puzzle, diverse and each piece has its role. Athletes and coaches are part of such a puzzle shaping society and vice versa. In particular, modern society shapes today's athletes' and coaches' roles and their working relationships. I will have a closer look at what makes athletes and coaches inspirational, and valuable assets for a society. In more detail I will focus on how coaches play a crucial role in the development of athletes and in influencing their experiences in sport, and consequently in society. What does a modern society expect from coaches? Their role has evolved significantly over time and it has become increasingly multi-dimensional and complex. Today it has to encompass a more holistic approach to athletes' development, and at the same time incorporate societal changes. Let's take a look at a contemporary interpretation of the role of a coach.

The athlete-coach relation

Historically the athlete-coach unit and their close cooperation to achieve success was already present in Ancient Greece. Three types of professional trainers existed: *paidotribes* (trainer, coach – for practical exercise), *gymnastes* (sports teacher – scientific knowledge) and *aleiptes* (anointer, religious matters). Already back then, athletes and coaches worked closely together, even the area of private life was included with the aim to progress and develop the athlete (Gialourēs, Szymiczek and Andronikos, 1982, 122-126). Unfortunately, there are few surviving documents from this period, but a scientific writing by the middle Philostratos shows that he was already discussing the competencies of trainers, sports instructors and medical doctors in the 3rd century AD (Decker, 2012, 119). Another phenomenon was their social status, which was either honoured or criticised when coaches were held responsible for potential issues (e.g. excessive training) already back then. The close

connection and mutual influence between sport and society thus dates back to antiquity.

Societal changes have not only affected the relationships between parents and children, teachers and students or employer and employee, but also between athletes and coaches.

There has been a shift, especially in the last two decades from an authoritarian approach to a more athlete-centered coaching approach.

There are some typical characteristics, which make the athlete – coach unit unique in society. Such relations are often emotionally close, trusting, caring and effective, but also critical in terms of influence, safety, trust and fulfilment of needs (Stirling and Kerr, 2013). This fact makes such relationships effective, but also vulnerable and overall challenging.

Athlete – coach relationships show strong bonds. I believe some reasons for this are:

- A mutual quest for excellence, that allows them to aim high, to strive together;
- bringing highly motivated and passionate individuals together;
- striving for constant improvement;
- being very efficient; which leads to:
- being solution focused

Some sport coaches are concerned about their new roles and today's expectations from athletes and society.



Sport in modern society: Sociological, philosophical, pedagogical and performance aspects

Many definitions have been made to differentiate, understand and explain how or why sports were made. System theoretical definitions use the following binary codes of the sport as a system: either according to Schimank "victory / defeat" (Schimank, 1988), or according to Stichweh "performance / non-performance" (Stichweh, 1990). It is a fact that the code "victory / defeat" applies for many

sports and events; but the developmental aspect is missing. Stichweh's code of "performance / non-performance" is more modern, in the sense that it allows a positive outcome in terms of development. Even in the case of a defeat, (positive) performance is possible. Many others have since pointed out that such codes do not do modern sports justice. When we talk about modern sport, we have to understand that the modernity of sport has its origins in English sport in the 17th century. It is tied to the idea of competition based on agreed rules. A contemporary interpretation of sport in the context of modern societies must go beyond the agonistic understanding of competition. Digel speaks from a "sporting" of our society and a "de-sporting" of sport. In the sporting of our society, more and more movement activities lead to new emerging sports and make sport a mass phenomenon of industrial societies. De-sporting, on the other hand, refers to the fact that it becomes less and less clear what is meant by sport, and often, the original characteristics of sport no longer appear (Digel, 2020). Lamprecht and Nagel claim that sport reflects the society and is part of societal modernization, which makes sport today as a crucial actor for development of a society (Lamprecht & Nagel, 2022).

What does this mean for athletes and coaches? What are the challenges?

Accepting the binary coding system for sport, but incorporating a modern societal perspective and development is challenging. Today the overall challenges for athletes and coaches are definitely more complex, and multidimensional. In addition to the professional sporting challenges, they have to perform in varying environments and structures. They are often exposed to power dynamics and are held accountable for what they do. Coaches must be prepared for tasks they probably never anticipated. They must possess a variety of skills to face different aspects. I divide them into philosophical, pedagogical and performance aspects.

- Performance aspects

From athletes and coaches in elite -/ high performance sport, society predominantly expects effort and sporting excellence, which is most evident during the Olympic Games (e.g., nations are proud of their medal winning athletes). The pursuit of excellence in sports is a key element since the ancient Greek Olympic movement (Bertling and Wassong, 2016) and remains important. It may be added that today it is no longer

at all costs, but the aspect of performance, even results, remains a desirable achievement in society (e.g., high recognition for outstanding performances and records, as long achieved within the rules).

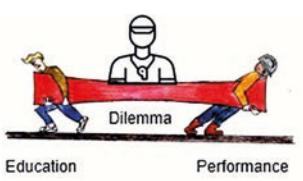
- Philosophical aspects

Coaching has become an ethical enterprise, that requires reflection and a solid philosophical foundation. In today's athlete-coach units, philosophical-ethical aspects are omnipresent through the lens of a critical, modern society (e.g., under public scrutiny, no tolerance of any ethical misconduct). Therefore, a so-called coaching philosophy is a dominant pillar in a modern coaching education and helps to create a fertile working ground for effective development, both in sports and in society equally, I believe.

- Pedagogical aspects

In order to progress and promote constant and sustainable development the necessary pedagogical coaching knowledge (Lyle and Cushion, 2017, 107, Figure 5.3) and methods are crucial. Over time, social reforms have always had a lasting impact on pedagogy, influencing the way we teach and learn. This is no different in sports, which has led to reconceptualisation of sports coaching, leading to the coach also being an educator (Bennett & Culpan, 2014). Putting the athlete in the centre and more constructivist approaches are the positive outcome (e.g., shared-decision making and collaboration, athletes take ownership of their learning process and the coach is supporting the process in various roles).

In practical work one of the biggest challenges as a coach in elite sport is facing the dilemma of performance versus education.



Coaching Dilemma Education vs. Performance (Waeffler 2005)

How can I foster excellent performance, while maintaining a balance of moderation and no harm through excessive training? How do I develop an athlete as an educator so that they be successful in sports and a valuable asset to society in the long term?

Holistic sports coaching is needed

There is a need for a more holistic approach, that takes into account the various demands of different stakeholders. A modern society creates and influences



During this lecture, Olympian Philipp Waeffler focused on the relation between the coaches and the athletes in modern society.

modern athletes, and vice versa. Athletes are passionate about their sport and are usually inspired by role models. Passion, I rate as the ever “driving factor”; although today the influence of certain environments is more influential and can affect passion. Younger generations – including athletes – are highly connected, technologically advanced, less authoritarian in their beliefs, but still interested and passionate. They simply want to know why and how things are done in a certain way, which can be challenging, but also forces teachers and coaches to reflect and adapt. Strengthening athletes’ autonomy as a coach is key in any modern approach. Over the past few years, tremendous improvements have been made in coaching education. Efforts to structure and formalise coaching education, both on international and national levels were made. However, in my opinion a holistic approach must also sufficiently address dilemmas (e.g., education vs. performance, as described above). To empower coaches (and athletes) how to deal with such challenges, and allowing the coach to train the athletes not only for sport, but also develop them as people and shape them positively life.

What is expected from athletes and coaches – what are their roles?

- **Athlete:** Gone are the days when we expected an athlete just to participate and perform in sports, thanks to their exceptional talent, skills and rigorous training, in competitions and achieve glory. Reading the IOC athletes' declaration gives an idea of the complexity of the aspirational rights and responsibilities for athletes within the Olympic Movement. (Athletes' Declaration – Who we are – Voice – Athlete365 (olympics.com)). The right to practice and compete in sports is number one, but is supported by another 11 other rights and 10 responsibilities. Interestingly this declaration was developed on the initiative of world-class athletes for athletes.
- **Coach:** What is expected of coaches today is also more complex. Here I refer to the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) and their definition of a professional coach:

“Coaches have a responsibility to improve and expand their capabilities on an ongoing basis to fully meet the needs of the athletes they serve. The organizations that employ them owe it to coaches to ensure they have sufficient educational footing, philosophical orientation and resources to fulfil the duties expected of them” (ICCE, ASOIF and LBU, 2013, 8).

Or more outcome oriented, from a practitioner:

“A coach’s role is to create an environment for success”, says Mikaela Shiffrin’s new head coach Karin Harjo (IOC, 2023).

Today, in addition to the triad of coaching knowledge and functional competencies, there is a need for a practical contemporary approach, that addresses one of the major challenges – the dilemma of balancing education and performance – while developing athletes within modern societal standards.

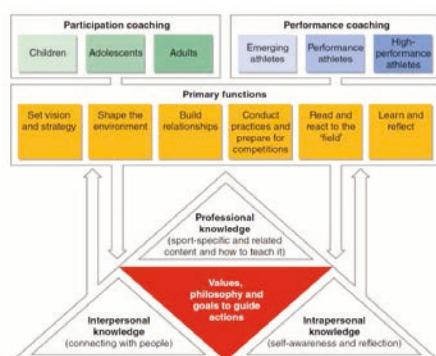
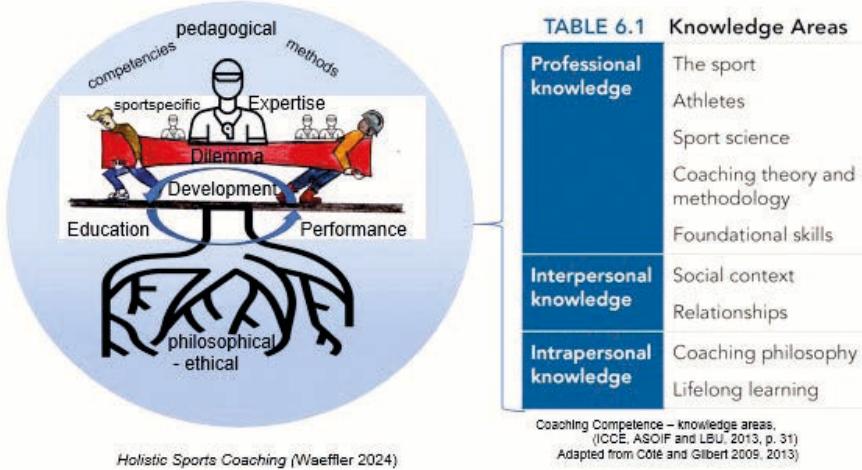


FIGURE 6.1 Functional coaching competence and coaching knowledge.
Functional Coaching Competences and knowledge areas (ICCE, ASOIF and LBU, 2013, p. 32)



A frame that promotes excellence and performance, with up-to-date sport-specific and pedagogical knowledge, effective methods and the necessary skills and competencies, but also with a philosophical-ethical rooted coaching ethos, are key for coaches today. All of this requires a truly holistic approach, a contemporary interpretation and a practical application of their role as an athlete or coach. I am convinced, that despite and/ or thanks to the influence of a modern society performance goals can be achieved. This requires the right mind set – reflective and open – and an environment that fosters development with the right coaching philosophy that respects the individual. To meet the complex and multidimensional challenges, collaboration and inclusion of (diverse) teams helps.

Olympism, ideals, values and life skills – acquisition and transmission

The concept of Olympism was created more than 125 years ago by Pierre de Coubertin and formulated in August 1935 (Coubertin, 1935). Not only the philosophical and educational dimensions of Olympism, but also the pursuit of excellence can serve as contemporary guiding principle. In Hellenic times the overarching goal was *areté* (excellence, virtue). This pursuit of excellence explicitly included the cultivation of a kind of moral and personal excellence alongside athletic achievement (Reid, 2020). Even at that time, it was fundamental to strive for excellence, in an outstanding way to attain first place, but being protected

from any unethical strategies and respecting fair play (Bertling & Wassong, 2016). If we bring today's definition of Olympism:

"Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles" (IOC, 2021, 8).

and Olympic values

EXCELLENCE - FRIENDSHIP - RESPECT (IOC)

together, we have the leverage to foster inspiration and unity in modern societies. Athletes and coaches can act as role models for the society.

Acquisition and transfer of life skills acquisition beyond sport

Since ancient times, it has been recognized that the value of sport can serve as a vehicle for personal development (Gould, Carson and Blanton, 2013). Coubertin as well believed in this transfer, as stated by Bertling and Wassong: "according to him, these character traits, developed in competitive sport, could easily be transferred to life beyond that of sport" (Bertling & Wassong, 2016, 436). In the contemporary context, such desirable life skills are multifaceted. Through sport, individuals encounter and acquire many non-sport specific skills: such as joy, effort, achievement, acceptance, respect, responsibility, perseverance, resilience, self-reflection, autonomy, conflict resolution, focus, team spirit, leadership and many more... Furthermore, they create a sense of common purpose to be achieved through collaboration, which is evident in athlete – coach units.

It is important to note that the transferable skills can be mostly found in the interpersonal or intrapersonal knowledge areas. According to Gould and Carson (2008), they can be behavioral, cognitive, interpersonal or intrapersonal, and can be transferred for use in non-sporting settings – if taught under the right conditions. Relationships, collaboration, critical thinking and lifelong learning are cornerstones in sports coaching education and in the career development of athletes, alongside sport specific progress of course. The modern society increasingly expects and demands such transversal skills and invests in their

development in young people. In addition, health, prevention, recovery and well-being are trends in the global community and these are topics people come across in sport. Recently, there have been increasing social efforts to transfer acquired skills and professional recognition to different areas of life. This also applies very much to experiences and achievements in sports.

Conclusions

Sport has an impact on individuals and societies. As multifaceted as sport is, it not only influences, but can also bring about positive change in societies. In the context of sports, especially elite and high-performance sports, expectations and complex challenges arise. This has been the case from ancient times to the present day. However, modern society tends to be more challenging in the interpersonal- and intrapersonal areas, especially with a new understanding of ethical behaviour. This calls for contemporary education, interpretation and application in the field. Athletes and coaches are at the forefront and have a vital role to play. They have the power and influence to inspire society, to promote understanding and unity, and to demonstrate excellence.

In the context of societal change, coaching education had to adapt. A more holistic approach, athlete-centered approach and a broader expertise, based on knowledge, competencies and experience are the results. To possess the ability to promote excellence, but balance dilemmas (e.g. education vs. performance) is key for effective coaching. As a coach to develop athletes by working closely with them, to train them not only for sport, but also to develop them for life, and ultimately to be positive ambassadors in a modern society is an honour. However, you have to be aware that successful work - in contrast to sporting achievements - often only becomes visible much later. To this day, Olympism, with its humanistic approach, serves as a guideline in modern sport and supports the transfer of life skills and competencies, acquired through sport, into society.

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HERO(INE) BOOMER, THE NATIONALIST CONSTRUCTION OF CHINESE OLYMPIAN

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Introduction

Nationalist narrative has been a vital element of Chinese elite sport discourse since modern sport was introduced to China in the 19th century. Such nationalist significance of elite sport has been further accentuated after the PRC was established in 1949. Elite sport performance, Olympic performance in particular is therefore identified as the political task of Chinese elite sport by the communist government, athletes with outstanding performance in the Olympics are recognised and portrayed as heroes of both the Chinese nation and the communist regime.

Thanks to the effectiveness of the traditional government-financed and administered Chinese elite sport, aka Zhuanye sport, it has witnessed a dramatic boost in the amount of Chinese Olympic heroes. Nevertheless, this planned-economy based system has also been heavily criticised for its low efficiency and neglect of the education and well-being of athletes. It is also recognised as incompatible with the reform of China, which aims to introduce a market economy to the socialist country.

It is argued by some that there has been a decrease in the political significance associated with Chinese athletes and their success in media narratives since China's economic reform in the 1970s (Wu and Wei 2017; Liu 2011). This trend has been reinforced in the post-2008 era, for instance during the Guangzhou

Asian Games, the Zhuanye system and its political tasks were even criticised by the government's official mouthpiece of, *the Xinhua News Agency* (Yang 2010; Jingyu Wang and Yang 2011).

Despite the emergence of this new development in Chinese sport discourse, as demonstrated in the paper this new trend at the discursive level is inherently consistent with the traditional Chinese elite sports discourse and the power relation within Chinese elite sports.

Findings

Li Na, a “tennis rebel” from China

Li Na, the former WTA No.2, remains recognised as China's best ever tennis player ten years after her retirement, though her Olympic performances, the best of which was the fourth place, were dwarfed by those of her compatriots' Olympic medals in the women's doubles in the 2004 and 2008 Games.

She is named by the *NY Times* as the tennis rebel and is also portrayed as an unorthodox sport heroine who symbolises the reform of Zhuanye sport (Larmer 2013). This is because she was one of the first four Zhuanye tennis players who were allowed to leave the Zhuanye system and to “fly solo” after their fight against the system (J. Wan 2011). The “flying solo” policy of the Chinese Tennis Association (hereafter, the CTA) is a significant reform, which aims to optimise the economic and political possibility through a market-driven mechanism (Pu, Newman, and Giardina 2019). It enables the “lone rangers” to a) choose their own coach and tournament, b) have full control of the majority of their prize (88%) and commercial income (92%), at the cost of covering their own expenses. In contrast, Zhuanye players are fully supported by the government, but are required to participate in the tournaments selected by the CTA, and to hand in the majority of their bonus and commercial income (65% in total) (Li 2012).

Li Na has been followed by the Chinese media throughout her career. Consistent with the traditional accentuation of athletic achievement, her unmatched success, two Grand Slam single titles, even made the state-run media forget about her overt challenge to the aforementioned nationalist task of Chinese athletes. In 2013, after her loss at Wimbledon, the upset lady rhetorically questioned in response to a Chinese journalist why she needed “to



Assoc. Prof. Xiaoqian Richard Hu analysed the image of sport hero in China, during his lecture.

carry a country on my back". Immediately, *the People's Daily* condemned the statement as "intolerable and uncomfortable", and reminded, if not warning, her that "it won't take long for people to be annoyed and thus abandon a star" (X. Zhong et al. 2013, 1).

Nonetheless, just six-month later, the same newspaper placed her photo on its front page, where reports of the country's leaders are normally found, on the day after her victory in Melbourne. This discourse suggests a forgiveness in China's official narrative for her rebellious speech and enhances the significance of excellent performances for one to be identified as a national sport hero, even for an unorthodox one who questioned her own nationalist task less than six months earlier.

This emphasis on performance, which is a feature of the traditional narrative of a national sport hero, is not only one of the main themes in the representation of Li Na but also in the interpretation of the "flying solo" policy. The CTA describes the policy as a strategy aimed at developing Olympic success, even though it is well understood as having resulted in a continuous struggle between

China's top female players and the Zhuanye system (Jiwen Wang, 2011). For instance, the then-Chair of the CTA, Ms Sun Jinfang, remarked before the London Olympics that

While kites are flying, [we] hold the string tightly and keep our eyes on her... There is no conflict between "flying solo" in professional tournament and representing one's country in the Olympics. ... Li Na has shown a stronger sense of belonging [to the country] after experiencing the professional [tournament by herself] ... and cherishes the opportunity to play in the [2012] Olympics.

(Jimin Wang 2012, 1).

Here the leader of Chinese tennis frames the post-reform relationship between the athletes and the CTA by employing terms such as "hold the string tightly" and "keep our eyes on her". It could be argued that the phrases directly construct the power relation between the two and suggest the continued dominance of the CTA over Li Na even after "kites" were allowed to fly solo (Fairclough 2009).

In addition to the maintenance of the institutional power relationship, the traditional characteristics of the discourse of Chinese national sport hero were also retained in this statement. For example, the nationalist task of elite athletes is acknowledged by Ms Sun, who associated the Olympics not only with the reform *per se* but also with Li Na in particular, by interpreting her ideological growth, for instance in acquiring "a stronger sense of belonging" and in her appreciation of the Olympic opportunity, as a positive consequence of the reform. In other words, the unchanging knowledge in relation to the significance of Olympic performance for Chinese elite sport enabled Ms Sun to endorse the reform through identifying Li Na's appropriate ideological growth.

This discourse associating Li Na's success with China's reform is in line with the other characteristics of Chinese sport hero discourse, particularly clothing elite athletes in a political rhetoric that is consistent with the dominant ideology of the country. For instance, it was commented in *China News Week*, administered by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council, that:

Li's success in Roland-Garros unquestionably confirms the correctness of ... the professionalisation of tennis. The endeavour is respect-worthy for it is a new model that is different from the planned-economy-based one, and is based on the market

economy and in line with the status quo of a diverse and open Chinese society. (J. Wan 2011, 34)

There are a number of concepts with reforming connotations in the Chinese context employed in the quotation, such as “endeavour in the direction of professionalisation”, “market economy”, “a new model that is different from the planned-economy-based one” “diverse and open”, “courageously creative moves”. These terms not only define the perspective, i.e. the reform of Chinese sport, from which the Li Na’s heroic identity is politically constructed (Fairclough, 2009), but also signify the approval of the correctness of the “flying solo” reform, which challenges the Zhuanye system.

This is to say, through framing Li Na’s identity as a spearhead of the reform, her career has been well deployed in the Chinese sport account to construct a new representation of political correctness or of the practices expected in the reforming era, namely to reform the Zhuanye sport system towards a civil-society-based one (Zhang and Liu 2013; Fairclough 2009). Though Li’s rebelliousness may, to a degree, repudiates Juguo Tizhi and state power (Pu et al. 2019), her eventual success is ultimately interpreted and instrumentalised by the government-run media to endorse not only the reform of Chinese sport but also its facilitating context, i.e. Socialism with Chinese characteristics, which, in return, politically guarantees her heroic status.

Yao Ming, from a basketball centre to a core of the reform

Yao Ming, the Chinese basketball star and the No.1 pick of the Houston Rockets of the NBA in 2002, had neither taken the Rockets to the NBA finals nor made the Chinese team go further than the best eight in the Olympics. However, Yao’s status as a national hero has been steadily maintained even after his retirement in 2011.

Throughout his career, the 7 ft 6 giant was framed as a gentle behemoth, against whom there had hardly been any criticism in a nation of 1.7 billion (Hong, 2011). In addition to his peaceful and thoughtful personality, Yao was also highly complimented by the government-run media for his commitment to the national team and his astute reaction to some humiliating situations during his NBA days, which, as we demonstrate in the following discussion, had been imbued with additional significance.

Described as “China’s single largest export to the US” by President Bill



Xenia Kourgouzova, Senior Education Manager at the IOC Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage focused on the Olympic education campaigns and athletes' place in them, during her lecture.



Lecture by Prof. Hong Fan. Professor Fan presented her lecture on the theme: "Representation and diversity in sport".

Clinton (M. Wan 2016), Yao's status was related to his political significance throughout his NBA career. For instance, it was commented by the *Worker's Daily* on Yao's retirement that

Why does Yao have such incredible influence? Besides other reasons, what is particularly important is that Yao presents a new image of the young Chinese to the world... Yao is also a great cultural ambassador, connecting China and the US...

Yao, but not anyone with a more successful career in sport, becomes the face of Chinese sport of the decade This suggests that there are changes in how sport is valued in China... Though the Olympic gold remains important, additional meanings have been associated with sport in China. [Therefore] Yao Ming and Li Na, neither of whom have any Olympic medals, both became national heroes ... [which] presents China's will to integrate with, and to be recognised by, the international community.

(Liu 2011, 1)

Through constructing Yao's identity as a national sport hero, this quote not only frames the expected behaviour from Yao but also the criteria for someone to be installed as a sport hero (Fairclough, 2009). More precisely, through acknowledging Yao and Li's limited success in the Olympics and the "additional meanings" of Chinese sport, the government-run paper suggests that it is Yao's role as a national representative and "a great cultural ambassador" that underpins his heroic identity.

In other words, while maintaining the traditional emphasis on Olympic performance, this new knowledge relating to "how sport is valued" in the post-2008 era reinforces the political connotations associated with the identity of sport heroes, enhances the importance of their additional duties, which, as evidenced in Yao's case, could be maintained even after their retirement.

In 2017, Yao was elected as Chair of the Chinese Basketball Association (hereafter, the CBA). His inauguration is identified by Chinese media as a landmark in the reform of the administration system of Chinese elite sport due to his identity as both an "insider" and an "outsider" of the Zhuanye system (T. Wang, 2017).

An "insider" official of the Zhuanye system normally refers to a former

Zhuanye athlete or coach assigned an administrative role after their retirement (Hu and Henry, 2017). Examples include the former Sport Minister Mr Yuan Weimin and the former vice Sport Minister Cai Zhenhua¹. In this sense, Yao is an “insider” undoubtedly. On the other hand, Yao is also recognised as an outsider, because he was neither enrolled into the hierarchical administrative framework of Zhuanye sport, nor had he served in any administrative roles in the system before winning the election (T. Wang, 2017).

Nevertheless, this combined, and to a degree contradictory, “insider/outsider” identity of Yao is interpreted as the consequence of the reform of the most essential part of Zhuanye sport, i.e. the Administration framework. *The People’s Daily* commented that

(The issues of) Chinese basketball, like a mirror, reflect the dilemma of the reform of the administration framework of [Zhuanye] sport... i.e. “two titles shared by one group”.

In this regard, Yao ... represents a totally different idea of reform: given that those with vested interests in sport neither want to nor are able to (implement) reform, an outsider with no administrative experience is selected to accelerate reform using external pressure.

The reform of basketball, to a degree, is a vivid and specific example of the reform of China... the best way of which, sometimes, is [to employ] the simplest way..., [which] Yao represents. The simplest way [of reform] is to name the most professional and appropriate candidate and simultaneously to release the burden of the administration system, which is expected to render its power (to civil society) ... As Yao perfectly indicates today, the administration department’s duty is to complement the environment for, rather than to compete with, the market. A lot of bureaucrats need to learn from Yao.

(Gongzi 2017, 1)

1. Mr Yuan Weimin, the Sport Minister from 2000 to 2004, was a former volleyball player and coach leading the Chinese women’s volleyball team that won five international champions in a row in the 1980s.

Mr Cai Zhenhua, the vice-Sport Minister from 2007-2018, was a former table tennis player and the former head coach of the Chinese table tennis team that has been a dominant force in the table tennis world since mid 1990s.

The phrase “two titles shared by one group”, refers to the inherent characteristics of the administration system of Zhuanye sport, in which Sport Associations are politically, financially, institutionally and administratively overseen by the Chinese sport administration departments (hereafter, the SADs), and hence are, in essence, virtual incarnations of the SADs (Li et al. 2003). Thanks to this combined identity, the SADs govern sport as government departments while competing with other stakeholders as non-for-profit organisations, or sometimes private ones (Gongzi, 2017). One of the key goals of the reform of the administration system of Chinese sport has been to make Sport Associations independent from the SADs in order to promote the civil-society-based development of sport (Hu & Henry, 2017b).

In the above quote, Yao is identified by the mouthpiece of the CPC as an outsider, who is free from the vested-interests network of Zhuanye sport and “is selected to accelerate the reform”. At the same time, the insiders, particularly “those with vested interests in sport”, are constructed as being resistant reform in their own interests.

From a CDA perspective, the construction of identities of actors regulates the way in which the actors are expected to behave (Fairclough 2005). Therefore, Yao’s pro-reform identity constructed by the CPC endorses the rightfulness of Yao’s reform, empowers other outsiders in the administration of Chinese basketball and urges the insiders to “learn from Yao” and “to complement” rather than “to compete with the market”. This account also suggests the CPC’s preference between the market-oriented reform and the planned-economy-based Zhuanye system, since the construction of practices is recognised as a discursive apparatus framing the appropriate relationship between its subjects (Fairclough, 2005). Through subtly indicating a preferred practice via its own official newspaper, the CPC thus defines the new political correctness for Chinese elite sport, which sport heroes must honour and protect.

Discussion

There are two themes in the traditional construction Chinese sport heroes, who are expected to deliver outstanding performance and to be ideologically impeccable. The first is associated with the traditional nationalist significance of elite sport in China while the second is critical in the communist regime. In other



Prof. David Howe from the Western University in Canada, talked about the Paralympic athlete and his role in modern society during his lecture.



Yves Le Lostecque, with his valuable experience as former Head of the Erasmus Mundus and Sport Unit in the European Commission, discussed the EU support to the athletes and sports organisations.

words, the images of elite athletes are politically functionalised, for instance, as an endorsement the correctness of its socialist ideology and an element for the political education of the population.

Though some argue for change in the portrayal of Chinese sport heroes, the new trend is essentially consistent with the traditional Chinese sport hero discourse, which has been carefully maintained, despite adjustments in some personal-specific details and/or at the rhetorical level. As revealed in the manuscript, the cases of Yao Ming and Li Na reveal a loosening of the association of between Olympic success and the heroic identity of athletes, for whom though outstanding achievement remain critical. In addition, sport heroes are also assigned with new political identity, for instance, a tennis rebel representing the fruitful reform of Chinese sport and a cultural ambassador who is expected to lead the reform of their sport. Whilst challenging the political task of the Zhuanye system, this altered discourse can be viewed as the perpetuation of the requirement of the ideological quality or political correctness of the national sport hero.

This production of the appropriate ideological quality and political connotations of a national sport hero is realised through power over discourse, which controls which voice is heard and produces the “truth” concerning the political correctness of the reform of China in general, and the reform of Chinese sport in particular (Jingyu Wang & Qian, 2014; Hu & Henry, 2017). Therefore, new features are evidenced in the production of the heroic status of Li Na and Yao Ming. More precisely, the portrayal of Li Na is located in a political rather than a nationalist account to which Li Na was herself not even sure if she subscribes (W. Zhong, 2013). Although renowned for his basketball talent, Yao is associated with cultural, if not diplomatic, connotations in his NBA career and then with political significance after taking over the CBA.

At the discursive level, it could be argued that this account offers a more balanced emphasis on athletic achievement and individual traits of elite athletes. Such a trend in Chinese elite sport discourse, on the one hand, retains the traditional emphasis on performance but values it less than before. On the other hand, it also reframes knowledge related to the direction of Chinese elite sport development, while reflecting Chinese government’s continuous dominant power over sport and sport discourse.

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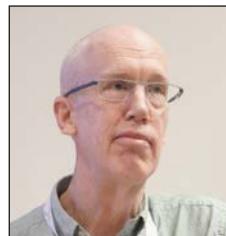
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THE ROLE OF THE PARALYMPIC ATHLETE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY¹

Prof. David HOWE, BSc, MA, PhD (CAN)

Western University, Canada



I have been asked by the International Olympic Academy to speak on the role of the Paralympic athlete in contemporary society. This is a wide-ranging brief. Of course, the first thing we have to consider is which contemporary society are we talking about. If we're talking about global north countries, such as those in Europe and North America their understanding of the role and value of Paralympic athletes will vary from most of the countries in the global south. Until relatively recently exposure to Paralympic sport has been limited in the global south with a few notable exceptions. In countries in sub-Saharan Africa for example, the general public's exposure to Paralympians is limited because Paralympic sport is far less developed. An exception is Africa is South Africa where athletes such as Oscar Pistorius have been seen as role models for the whole of the Paralympic Movement. Initially of course he was seen as a positive influence and changed the way the general public understood disability. Of course, in the events surrounding his trial for murder there became another understanding of what a disabled celebrity could "achieve". By being convicted of murder it shows those who so often put people who experienced disability on a pedestal attributing virtue to them simply for existing in an able-bodied world that they can also have flawed character.

1. Please note this is not a traditional paper but rather a transcript of a presentation given at the IOA in Olympia, Greece, in July 2024.

In this brief presentation today, I will be exploring the social justice lens for examining disability before turning my attention to my own life experience and why and how I stand before you. I will then briefly explore the history of the Paralympic sport as it relates to the Olympic Movement, before addressing the role of Paralympic athletes in contemporary society.

Using a Social Justice Lens

I am particularly drawn to the use of social justice in examining the position of marginal groups of people within society. For the last 80 years, the concept of human rights has assumed that all individuals are entitled to equitable treatment in the eyes of the law. While such an ideal is worthwhile it is very difficult to achieve because first and foremost the so-called universality of human rights is predicated upon a western understanding of such a concept. Therefore, the utility of human rights as a way of seeing the world becomes somewhat flawed. Social justice, on the other hand, is about exploring the resultant action from the behavior so we are able to see whether or not society is looking after marginal people, in this case, athletes who experience disability. Social justice is predicated upon a political philosophy that assumes that suitably informed we can overcome epistemic gaps through the exercise of moral imagination. In other words, social justice can only be achieved in practice and not simply in the confines of legislation and policy development. Marginal people are often stigmatised in part because of multiple discriminations and human rights violations.

Using the lens of social justice, I wish to turn to my own experience within the world of Paralympic sport as an athlete, anthropologist and advocate.

Athlete, Anthropologist and Advocate

I started out on the journey that brought me here today as a person who experiences disability who also was passionate about sport. When I left home to go to university, I became involved in what today is known as the Paralympic Movement. My experience as an athlete from the mid 1980s to the early 2000s representing Canada on the international disability sport stage gives me a distinctive understanding of the culture of both disability and sport and how they

come together in what can be described as an awkward dance². As an athlete within Paralympic sport I achieved some success but it was off the field of play that I have been able to make potentially, a bigger contribution.

As I began my journey as an athlete within Paralympic sport I was also training, though not explicitly, to become an anthropologist. Majoring in general anthropology at university gave and gives me a distinctive way of seeing the world where the social and physical worlds cannot be separated the way they are in the distinctions that we traditionally make between science and the humanities broadly speaking. The nature of this debate can be explored by those so inclined in the work of Tim Ingold³ who has long advocated for a connection between the natural and the social worlds.

This is important to me because concepts and understandings around disability have often been seen as a physical manifestation of flaws. The abnormal individual might be somebody who lacks the ability to walk or in my case someone who has congenital hemiplegia cerebral palsy. My physical impairment impacts my coordination in part because the right hemisphere of my body has not developed neurologically. The consequences of this are minor mobility problems but the social marginalization for being physically different can have a major impact on an individual's ability to be an active member of society. In this way it is easy to see how a physical nature of the world and its social nature are intertwined.

Along with my impairment, there are other identity markers that shape how I see the world. The fact that I am white, of Irish Canadian descent, middle aged, cisgender and an atheist all contribute to the world I see around me. You, the reader will have some similar and some different identity markers. and you will interpret what you are reading here based on what you have read before and how you interact with the world. It is important to remember that we are all individuals and that is predicated on the intersectionality of various identity markers as highlighted in the list that distinguishes me from some of you. As I continue this talk it is important therefore that you remember where I am coming

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2. Howe, P. D. and Silva, C. F. (2021), "Crippling the Dis§abled Body: doing the posthuman tango, in through and around sport", *Somatechnic*, Vol. 11(2), 139-156
 3. Ingold, T. (2013), *Making: Anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture*; Ingold, T. (2018), *Anthropology: Why it matters*. John Wiley & Sons. Ingold, T. (2020), *Correspondences*. John Wiley & Sons.

from as I speak but also it is important to remember when reflecting on the experience of the talk – how it shaped you and why.

Paralympic History and the Olympic Movement⁴

The history of the Paralympic Movement, as we understand it, today began in 1944 when Dr Ludwig Guttmann opened a spinal cord rehabilitation unit at the Stoke Mandeville Hospital in the United Kingdom. It became evident that one of the best ways to rehabilitate ex-servicemen during the closing stages of the Second World War was to get them to engage in sport as a catalyst to their return to “normal” life. In the first instance, sport was only a means to an end – getting injured soldiers to be productive members of society again. On July 29th, 1948, the first wheelchair games took place at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. The significance of the date is that it commonly sided with the opening ceremonies of that year’s London Olympic Games. The term Paralympics, while not in use at the time, uses the prefix para which literally means “by the side”. Today the agreement between the IOC and the IPC which runs until 2032 states that the official language around the games should be “the Olympic and Paralympic Games” and therefore the early developments of Paralympics sport have led to this position beside the Olympics.

Prior to the agreement between the IOC and the IPC, the relationship between the Olympic and Paralympic Movement was on a number of occasions closely linked⁵. In 1956 at the Melbourne Games the Fearnley Cup was awarded for outstanding achievement in the service of the Olympic ideal to the International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation. Signally the significance of Dr Ludwig Guttmann’s contribution in Rome in 1960 in what is considered the first Paralympic Games Pope St. John XXIII, declared Dr. Guttmann as the De Coubertin of the paralysed. The significance of this relationship between the IOC and the IPC, which was officially formed in 1989 became an official agreement in 2000.

The timing of the agreement between the IOC and the IPC is interesting. In the late 1990s, the IOC was under pressure in relation to bribery in regard

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4. See Howe, P. D. (2008), *The cultural politics of the Paralympic movement: Through an anthropological lens*, Routledge.
 5. Guttmann, L. (1976), *Textbook of Sport for the Disabled*, HM+M Publishers.

to where the games were to be held. Specifically, the IOC came under heavy criticism in regards to awarding the winter Olympic Games to Salt Lake City in 2002. While I have no proof it seems that the IOC signing an agreement with the IPC to transfer finances and enshrine the Paralympics would always follow the Olympic Games with a joint organising committee is a great get out of jail card for the IOC. Afterall – how bad could the IOC be because they are helping people who experience disability to continue to engage in high performance sport.

The Role of the Paralympic Athlete in Contemporary Society

I see the role of the Paralympic athlete in contemporary society as being in part linked to the relationship that the IOC has with the IPC. The IOC is paying the IPC in their agreement and therefore the relationship is unbalanced, and this has consequences as the two organisations move forward together. The IPC will always be seen as a younger brother or sister who cannot fend for themselves. As such the IOC is able to harness the positives associated with people who experience disability be engaged in high performance sport on a global scale and may be able to hide behind this philanthropic investment to hide many of its negative actions.

One role Paralympic athlete in society is as an object that's what has been called inspiration porn⁶. This is the objectification of disability experiences and bodies to make people feel good about their lot in life. In other words, as a member of the able-bodied moral majority, you can take pleasure in watching athletes who experience disability perform at the Paralympic Games but it gives you a sense of rather them than me. While people realise that is important to give marginal populations opportunities in the world there is also an underlying distaste for being a member of such a group.

On the positive front because the Paralympic Games is relatively high profile 4 an event where people who experience disability are front and centre you can draw people's attention 2 inequalities within society. One of the problems with contemporary society is the ubiquitous presence of ableism⁷, that is the

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6. Grue, J. (2016). The problem with inspiration porn: A tentative definition and a provisional critique. *Disability & Society*, 31(6), 838-849.
 7. Silva, C. F., & Howe, P. D. (2019). Sliding to reverse Ableism: An ethnographic exploration of (dis) ability in sitting volleyball. *Societies*, 9(2), 41.

supposition but if you are not normal for lack of a better word somehow your life is either full of hardship or the extreme not worth living. The fact that the IPC shares many of the same sponsors with the IOC and at least in the global north there is increasing media coverage of the Paralympic Games it shows how people who experience disability are breaking the mold of the traditional views of disability being charity cases who live sad lonely lives.

What rate remains to be seen is how you the young ambassadors of this session of the IOA will use the information in this talk to enhance opportunities for people of all abilities cross the lifespan. You are in a unique position to make a real difference as to how people who are marginalised in society can be better integrated thus enhancing both your lives and theirs.

Thank you and any questions?

ERASMUS+ CONTRIBUTION TO UNITY. HOW DOES THE EU SUPPORT SPORT ORGANISATIONS AND ATHLETES?

Yves LE LOSTECQUE (FRA)

*Former Head of the Erasmus Mundus
and Sport Unit, European Commission*



Dear participants, dear friends of sport,

Let me first express my pleasure to be here in Olympia. There are a couple of important places, of high symbolic value, in the world when we speak about sport history. Olympia is clearly one of them, if not the most important one.

Let me also thank Mr Isidoros Kouvilos for his kind invitation to speak to you. I consider it an honour, and I will try to do my best to provide you with the level of information and ideas expected.

It is the third time I have had the opportunity to come here within this programme of Young Olympic Ambassadors. Each time it was a good moment of exchange when, I hope, I could contribute to the training and knowledge of participants and when I could also learn from our communication.

Beyond this programme, some very important initiatives related to EU sport were born here. Some of you may know about our yearly EU Sport Forum. I remember being here in 1999 to participate in the “assises européennes du sport” (20-23 May 1999). For the anecdote, *Michel Platini* was our main guest during this conference! This event can be considered the first edition of the EU Sport Forum, or rather its ancestor.

First of all, allow me some words of personal presentation.

I meet you today at the very end of my career. Sport was always my common thread in different positions, either at the national or international level. I started

in 1984 to work for the French Ministry for Sport. At that time, I was 23 and the youngest “inspector” in the French public administration. After some years spent nationally, I joined the European Commission in 1993. In Brussels, I had the chance to occupy very diverse and challenging positions:

- Policy officer working on vocational training
- Lawyer in the Internal Market department of the Commission
- Responsible for the relations with the European Parliament
- Member of a cabinet (assisting the first ever Romanian Commissioner Leonard Orban)
- Assistant/adviser of 2 Directors General
- Head of the Commission Sport Unit
- Head of EACEA Sport and Erasmus Mundus Unit

Since February 2024, I have been retired but still very much involved in sport...

Some basic notions about the EU intervention in the field of sport

Before entering my subject, I consider it vital to give you some basic information about the EU intervention in the field of sport... About what we did, about what we do and about what we cannot do and why.

You may know that the European construction started formally between 1951 and 1957. In 1951 the Treaty of Paris created the European Coal and Steel Community (ESSC). In 1957, the Treaty of Rome established the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). On this initial basis, until now, the European construction has been progressing regularly, with from time to time significant events, initiatives, or reform of the Treaties.

In its whole history, the European Community (Then the European Union) was not very interested in sport. In its first 50 years of existence, the EU did not intervene directly in this policy field. This is not a criticism... this is not a judgement... It is a fact. The reason why is that the European Community has not been created for this purpose. Sport was not part of its initial competences. We can say the same about many policy fields such as education, training, youth, tourism, health, etc., for which the mandate for the EU to intervene directly arrived later.

Let's remember that the common market created by the Treaty of Rome was intended to eliminate trade barriers between Member States with the aim of increasing economic prosperity and contributing to “an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe”.

According to its initial purpose, the main policies of the European Community were about customs, agriculture, fisheries, transport, competition, internal market, freedom of movement, etc.

With time, the EU competencies have increased significantly. For instance, the Maastricht Treaty signed on 7 February 1992, established the European Union, paved the way for the euro and created EU citizenship.

Concerning sport, a decisive step forward has been the Lisbon Treaty signed on 13 December 2007 and which came into force on 1 December 2009. For the first time, an article referred to sport mentioning that “*The Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function*” (art. 165).

On this basis, the EU obtained for the first time the competence to intervene in the field of sport. However, sport is part of the EU’s “soft competences”. This means that the EU cannot harmonise or legislate. The EU has only competences to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States.

Sport is clearly a field covered by the principle of subsidiarity. In the sport field, EU Member States keep the basic competence and remain the key actors.

At this stage, I would just like to introduce one nuance to the idea that the EU has limited competences in the field of sport. According to the Treaty, the EU cannot intervene directly in the field of sport. However, through horizontal competences, not specific to sport, but common to other fields, the EU had a significant influence on the evolution of European Sport. I will just give you a couple of examples showcasing the decisive impact of the EU on the sport organisation or rules:

- Competition/State aid
- Freedom of movement (transfer rules)
- Recognition of diplomas.

Erasmus+ programme

In the first part of my presentation, you noticed that on the basis of article 165 of the Treaty, the EU has now the legitimacy to intervene in the field of sport this involved the possibility of the EU to support sport politically and financially.

The introduction of a sport financial instrument intervened four years after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. It happened with the adoption of the Erasmus+ programme on 11 December 2013. However, there is no specific

sport programme. Sport is integrated into a more general programme dealing with education training, youth and sport.

Maybe some of you know about Erasmus+ which is considered to be one of the most successful programmes of the EU and a symbol of the policies addressing directly the citizens. Higher Education remains clearly a major part of Erasmus. However, some important chapters of the programme are now dedicated to other policies. This is the case for sport.

These are some basic notions about the Erasmus+ programme as a whole:

Initially, when we were referring to Erasmus, we had in mind the fees introduced in 1987 to promote students' mobility. Now it is so much more! The Erasmus+ programme now involves the 27 EU Member States and six non-EU associated countries with 55 National Agencies responsible for the decentralized management of most of the programme's actions. Other countries across the world may also participate in certain parts of the programme.

The objective of Erasmus+ is to "promote transnational learning mobility and cooperation between organisations and policy-makers, as a means of improving quality and excellence, supporting inclusion and equity, and boosting creativity and innovation in the fields of education, vocational education and training, youth and sport". In all these sectors, the aim is to provide support, through life-long learning, for the educational, professional, and personal development of participants in Europe and beyond. In this landscape, sport has a particular place and the approach taken to support sport is a bit specific. However, the structure of the programme is the same for all policy fields.

The programme's objective is pursued through three key actions:

- Key action 1: Learning mobility of individuals
- Key action 2: Cooperation among organisations and institutions
- Key action 3: Support to policy development and cooperation

The overall responsibility for the program's management, direction and evaluation lies with the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture), assisted by its Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

In summary, what you have to remember concerning Erasmus+ is that:

- This programme covers seven years. We are now within the second generation of the programme (2021-2027). The first one was covering 2014-2020. This ensures security, stability, and continuity for funding.
- The budget for the whole period 2021-2027 is 26.2 billion €. This

represents almost the doubling of the period 2014-2020. This significant increase reflects the priority given by the Commission to our policies: education, training, youth and also sport.

- The ambition and coverage of the programme which goes much beyond Higher Education. One of the key purposes of the programme is now to “develop the European dimension of sport”.

Support to Sport through Erasmus+

The very good news of the introduction of a sport chapter in the Erasmus+ programme is that now the financial support for sport is secured for long periods (7 years).

We can consider that the part of the budget dedicated to sport is limited, representing 1.9% of the budget (It was 1.8% for the period 2014-2020). However, the amount is increasing every year. For example, during the first year of implementation of the programme, it was of approximately 20 M° €. It is now of 78.5 M° € for 2024.

The basic principle in order to benefit from financial support is to go through *calls for proposals*. Every year, in November in principle, a call for proposals is launched in order to collect projects in all fields covered by Erasmus+. For instance, for the projects 2024, it has been launched on 28 November 2023. The deadline is in general fixed in the first months of the following year. In 2024, for Sport, it was 20 February (mobility actions), or 5 March (for the majority of the actions).

All the information is made available in an Erasmus+ Programme Guide drafted in accordance with the Erasmus+ annual Work Programmes adopted by the European Commission, and therefore may be revised to reflect the priorities and lines of action defined.

Which countries are covered?

All EU Member States fully participate in the programme. Some third countries are also associated to the programme (North Macedonia, Iceland, Norway, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Türkiye).

Other countries can take part in one way or another in some actions of the programme.

What are the priorities?

Erasmus+ aims to promote social inclusion, equal opportunities, and awareness of the importance of health-enhancing physical activity, through increased participation in, and equal access to, sport for all.

Horizontal priorities:

- Inclusion and diversity
- Common values, civic engagement, and participation
- Digital transformation
- Environment and climate change

Specific sport priorities:

- Encouraging healthy lifestyles for all
- Promoting integrity and values in sport
- Promoting education in and through sport
- Promoting equality and European values in and through sport

What is the budget for sport?

As with the other parts of the Erasmus+ programme, sport has benefited from a substantial increase for the current period 2021-2027. On the whole period 2021-2027, 500 M° € have been made available for sport (265 M° € for the period 2014-2020).

Just for the year 2024, the sport budget is of 78.5 M° € divided as follows:

- 10 M° € for mobility actions (Key action 1)
- 53 M° € for cooperation projects (key action 2) (amount open for calls for proposals)
- 15 M° € for policy initiatives (Key action 3)

The 53 M° € dedicated to the 2024 call for proposals will be divided as such:

- 34.2 M° € for cooperation partnerships
- 10 M° € for small cooperation partnerships
- 7 M° € for events
- 1.9 M° € for capacity building

Which sport of projects can be supported?

There are several key actions within the Erasmus+ programme, including:

Collaborative Partnerships

The purpose is to bring together organisations working in the field of sports to promote cooperation, peer learning, and the exchange of best practices.

2024: 34.2 M° € available for 110 projects

Small Collaborative Partnership

The purpose is to support smaller-scale cooperation projects, fostering the development of new ideas, innovative approaches, and methodologies.

2024: 10 M° € available for 170 projects

Not-for-profit European Sports Events

The purpose is to support events that aim to promote the dual career of athletes, contribute to the development of grassroots sport, or address societal challenges through sport.

2024: 7 M° € available for 20 projects

Capacity building

The purpose is to support sport activities and policies in third countries not associated with the programme as a vehicle to promote values as well as an educational tool to promote the personal and social development of individuals and build more cohesive communities”.

This action targets especially Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹, Montenegro) and Neighbourhood East countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Territory of Ukraine as recognized by international law).

2024: 1.9 M° € available for 10 projects

Size or the projects and criterias

By nature, the projects supported must be transnational. Purely national projects cannot be supported. Depending on the number of organisations involved and of the nature of the project, the level of subsidy will vary.

1. This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Collaborative partnerships

3 organisations from 3 different Member States

3 levels of financial support: 120,000, 250,000 or 400,000 €

Small collaborative partnerships

2 organisations from 2 different Member States

2 levels of financial support: 30,000 or 60,000 €

Events

Number of organisations involved depending on the size of the project.

3 levels of financial support: 200,000, 300,000 or 450,000 €

Capacity building

4 organisations from 3 countries

Between 100,000 and 200,000 euros.

What is the impact of Erasmus+ programme in sport?

Erasmus+ has had a significant impact on the field of sports, including:

- Increased mobility: Providing opportunities for athletes, coaches, and other sports professionals to gain international experience and broaden their horizons.
- Enhanced cooperation: Facilitating partnerships between organisations from different countries, leading to the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and resources.
- Improved access: Promoting inclusivity and ensuring that everyone, regardless of background or ability, has access to sports and physical activities.

How to get involved?

For organisations interested in getting involved in Erasmus+ sports projects, there are several ways to do so:

- Explore funding opportunities: Visit the official Erasmus+ website to learn about funding opportunities and application procedures.
- Network with other organisations: Reach out to organisations working in the field of sports and explore potential collaboration opportunities.
- Stay informed: Keep up to date with news and updates related to Erasmus+ sports projects through official channels and social media.
- Be aware of the deadline for submitting projects. And respect it!

Support to athletes

In the current sport part of the programme, there is no direct support to athletes. The support to athletes is done indirectly within projects.

However, in the new generation of programmes (2021-2027), a new scheme concerning mobility has been added to the sport chapter.

For the time being it concerns only the mobility of staff, including coaches, both paid staff and volunteers.

How does it work?

Two categories of mobility can be supported.

- Job shadowing and observation periods (2-14 days)
- Coaching and training assignments (15-60 days)

The opening of this possibility to athletes will probably be an element of the negotiation of the future programme after 2027.

Contribution to unity

My task was to answer the question “How the sport part of the Erasmus+ programme can contribute to the promotion of Unity in Europe?”. This is a very challenging question since it touches on sensitive policy issues.

In a way, all aspects of the Erasmus+ programme contribute to unity in the sense that we support European projects. Participating in a common project makes people work together, know each other, cooperate on a concrete project, and exchange their practice, ideas and approaches. In this sense, the whole Erasmus+ programme contributes to the unity and to a sense of common belonging. It creates, in the spirit of the *Schuman declaration* of May 1950 “de

facto solidarities". Let's remember one of the key quotes of this declaration: "*Europe will not made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity*". The Erasmus+ programme and its sport part correspond to this philosophy.

However substantial questions remain:

- What is the final purpose of such a programme? Is it to create unity? We must try to avoid the risk of instrumentalisation. Programmes have their own logic, and their own purposes. They must be driven by political purpose or have a political agenda. They must not be a tool of propaganda in whatever direction. The EU must avoid this possible accusation.
- In sport in particular the risk exists:
- Sport is based on national grounds. There are national teams. Major leagues are national in almost all disciplines. We must not forget this reality to which many citizens are attached. So we can feel Europeans and adhere to the European project while at the same time, keeping our differences, in sport or in other fields and supporting our national team.
- There is also a permanent debate about the European model of sport. We most of the time define it in opposition to the American model (cf. NBA) or to communist models (Sport completely organised and controlled by the State). But questions deserve to be raised: is there really a common European sport model? What would be its definition? Or are there national models with common features? And do we need a common model? We know that in certain Member States, sport is much more regulated than in others, where sport is more considered as belonging to the private area, where public rules are not necessary. How to define a common model on such basis? This subject comes regularly in the discussions at the highest level. EU sport Ministers have regularly showed their attachment to the notion of European Sport model.

Conclusion

I hope you now know more about Erasmus+ and its possibilities in sport. For some of you, it is just general information about EU sport policy and budget. For others, it can even give ideas. Maybe one day, you can be involved in an EU sport initiative or even lead it.

In any case, the main purpose of this programme is to support our European Sport while respecting its autonomy and the competences of Member States, and regional and local authorities.

We are aware that at international level, European sport is strong in all its dimensions (grassroots and elite). We hope that Erasmus+ sport can modestly contribute to consolidate or even improve this position.

In any case, if through this programme, we can make EU citizens more active physically, it will be already a great achievement for us.

THE INTEGRITY AND VALUES OF GAMES

Vicky CONDE SANCHO (ESP)

Former football player

Masters in Education

Masters in Sports Ethics and Integrity



The team

FIX IT! It is a project created and managed by volunteers with direct career experience, former athletes and specialists in ethics and education. The creator of this project is Vicky Conde, a former football player from Spain, with a background in Sports Science, a football coach, and a Masters in Education and another Masters in Sports Ethics and Integrity. The team of volunteers is composed of Whitney, PhD candidate on sports governance and also Masters in Sports Ethics and Integrity; Teresa, background in Psychology and Coding; Javi, the designer of the cards, and Raymi, a current student of the Masters in Sports Ethics and Integrity.

Before the presentation starts, the participants are asked to scan a QR code to a Slido, to name from their phones “issues that happen in sport”, whether that is issues they have been on TV, suffered themselves or watched by others. Answers are anonymous and after a few minutes, they stop and the general answers are showed on the big screen and reviewed together. After this small reflection, the presentation begins.

Why FIX IT!?

Despite the plenty of evidence showing the benefits of practicing sport, mainly at the recreational level, but also at the competitive level, the sport and educational industries are facing challenges to keep athletes safe. According to the Council of Europe, 1 in 5 children in Europe are victims of abuse in sport. Abuse,

discrimination and other issues happen not only among children but also among adults, both at the recreational and elite levels. Given the challenges to raise awareness about these issues and create safe and inclusive spaces, FIX IT! was created as an educational tool for everyone.

While other resources were mapped during the creation, and these are either too expensive – for organisations and athletes themselves –, such as conferences, creating documentaries or campaigns, or they are financially accessible but lack the interactive element, like free webinars, online resources or watching documentaries. Therefore, FIX IT! is the perfect tool for both organisations and athletes to solve this problem: financially accessible and interactive.

What is FIX IT?*

FIX IT! is a card game created to help transform sport and society while playing, having an engaging and fun experience with players.

The truth is: that there is not a fun way of learning about racism, ableism or doping, among others. Until FIX IT! was created, this seemed impossible. However, after using this game for more than 1000 users from more than 30 countries ranging from 9 to +65, our data has shown that participants had fun and also learned new things.

FIX IT! is innovative, it is essential to raise awareness about real-life issues in sport, it is fun and competitive, and it is engaging and interactive for participants from all ages and knowledge levels about sport.

The game consists of cards with different functions. In sum, the player with the most medals at the end, wins the game. The game ends once a player does not have more cards to play after the draw pile has been drawn.

To collect medals, players use sport cards, which are played on the table and visible for all (vulnerable to problems). Players may use other cards such as problems, to prevent other players from collecting more medals; or solutions, to solve these problems and get rewards, but also achievement cards to get some benefits, or barrier cards for other players to. If they hold an integrity card such as doping or corruption they must keep it secretly or play it and pay a penalty.

There are other variants of the game, while the original version can be adapted to age, time and size of the group. These two variants are the traditional memory game (where players will match the problem with its solution, with the same symbol),

and the Charades or guessing game, where players learn about different sports, both describing with words or non verbal, and also learn about these issues in a more challenging way. This last version is ideal for bigger groups to be played in two teams. The Charades version of the game is demonstrated with the participants, who have 15 seconds to guess the sport randomly selected from the deck, and described verbally, for a second demonstration with a non verbal description.

FIX IT! is more than a game: it is a website, where the game can be bought but also free resources can be found: a glossary of terms with definitions and additional links, and an educators manual with activities for educators and coaches to follow up after they play FIX IT!. Lastly, FIX IT! is a cause, not only for raising awareness about these issues but also because the project is aiming to donate a percentage of each game sold to different small NGOs.

FIX IT! is committed with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and covers, in total, 10 of these goals: good health and wellbeing; quality education, gender equality; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; climate action; peace, justice and strong institutions; partnership for the goals.

The content covered in the game goes from different types of discrimination such as racism, homophobia, sexism or ableism, to different types of abuse such as child abuse, sexual abuse or sextortion, but also includes good governance, doping, and sport values.

The concept of the game is simple: play with your friends, colleagues, athletes or students. In the meantime, you will be exposed to real life issues and learn more about these topics. At the end, you will be more prepared to ensure safe and inclusive spaces, and you get to play as many times as you wish, as the game is competitive and fun.

The recommended methodology consists of asking the players before they play, to name issues in sport and collect their answers, whether it is as a group or individually. After playing the game, ask your players again to name issues in sport, and compare their answers. Some of the findings from this methodology, considering qualitative data (quantitative data has been collected but now shared yet), includes reflections like: before the game, participants names issues such as “teammates not passing the ball”, or “ego”. After playing FIX IT!, players named issues like “people with disabilities need accessible facilities to exercise” or “women need support to be pregnant and continue playing sports professionally”. This shows the impact this game has on its users.

The target group

The goal is to reach the entire sports and educational ecosystem, starting with athletes, sport bodies, integrity bodies, educational bodies and human rights bodies. Some of the pictures presented in the presentation, from previous sessions, include the following groups: coaches, elite athletes, young athletes, high school teachers, university professors, high school students, higher education students, including master students, after school participants, managers and decision makers, staff training and families.

What can you do now?

To conclude the session, there is a small call to action to the Young Olympic Ambassadors in the room: if they think this resource has an added value to their work, they can try it right after this Session and during two days at the International Olympic Academy, they can take a copy home in English or Spanish, and they can start using the game and follow up to work on additional languages.

The last part of the Session gives an opportunity for the participants to ask questions.

References

Some of the recommended readings and resources include:

IOC Safe Sport Entourage Factsheet: https://olympics.com/athlete365/app/uploads/2021/09/Health-and-Wellbeing_SafeSport_Entourage-Factsheet.pdf

IOC Safeguarding athletes from harassment and abuse in sport: https://olympics.com/athlete365/app/uploads/2021/09/Health-and-Wellbeing_SafeSport_Entourage-Factsheet.pdf

Council of Europe “Start to talk: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/campaignmaterials> 1#:~:text=About%20in%20children, and%20where%20to%20 seek%20help.

Safe Sport International Developing the International Safeguards for Adults in Sport: <https://www.safesportinternational.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SAFE GUARDDOC-Proof-3-Single.pdf>

Sport and Rights Alliance: <https://sportandrightsalliance.org/>

EMPOWERING ALL IN SPORTS FOR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Sofia PAPADOPOULOU, OLY (GRE)

*Master's degree in Olympic Studies,
University of the Peloponnese and IOA
Olympic Bronze medallist in Sailing (Beijing 2008)*



Good morning, everyone. Imagine a world where every individual, regardless of their background or abilities, has the opportunity to shine and excel in sports. My name is Sofia Papadopoulou, an Olympic medallist sailor, and today, I'm excited to share with you the transformative power of inclusivity in sports. Join me as we explore how empowering all athletes can lead to excellence, unity, and a brighter future for the sports community. As an Olympic medalist sailor, I have had the privilege of competing at the highest levels. Currently, I am assisting a Parasailor in the Hansa 303 class, training and competing alongside him. This experience has deepened my understanding of the importance of inclusivity in sports.

Importance of Inclusivity in Sports

Inclusivity in sports means ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background, physical abilities, or socioeconomic status, has equal access and opportunities to participate. This not only enhances team performance by bringing diverse perspectives and skills but also promotes social harmony and mutual respect. When we create inclusive environments, we provide opportunities for personal growth and community development. Everyone can benefit from the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of sports, from learning teamwork and leadership to improving physical health and mental well-being.

Interactive Element 1: Quick Survey

To get a sense of the room, let's do a quick survey. By a show of hands, how many of you have participated in sports activities where you felt everyone was truly included and valued? And now, how many of you have seen or experienced situations where someone was excluded from sports due to barriers like physical ability or socioeconomic status?

Barriers to Inclusivity

Unfortunately, there are several barriers to inclusivity in sports. Socioeconomic factors can limit access to resources and opportunities, making it difficult for some individuals to participate. Cultural stereotypes and biases can discourage participation, and physical accessibility issues can prevent those with disabilities from joining sports activities. These barriers not only hinder individuals but also deprive the sports community of diverse talents and perspectives. For example, a talented athlete from a low-income background might never get the chance to compete due to financial constraints, or an athlete with a disability might find no accessible facilities to train in.

Strategies for Empowering All in Sports

To overcome these barriers, we need to implement inclusive policies and practices within sports organisations. This includes providing scholarships and financial assistance to those in need, creating educational programmes to raise awareness about the importance of inclusivity, and ensuring that sports facilities are accessible to everyone. Coaches and trainers should also receive training on how to support and empower athletes from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, sports organizations should invest in adaptive equipment and accessible facilities, making it possible for everyone to participate fully.

Case Studies and Examples

Inclusivity enables athletes to showcase their talents and inspire others. Our journey together has been one of mutual learning and growth, highlighting the importance of creating opportunities for all athletes.

Hellenic Sailing Federation Initiatives

In addition to personal experiences, there are broader initiatives making a significant impact. The Hellenic Sailing Federation supports 10 sailing clubs across Greece to promote parasailing, with funding from both private sources and the federation itself. This initiative provides essential resources and fosters a culture of acceptance and support within these clubs. Additionally, initiatives like SailFem focus on the inclusion of female coaches, offering them opportunities and support to excel in their roles. These efforts demonstrate a strong commitment to breaking down barriers and fostering an inclusive sports environment.

SailFem Project

I'd also like to highlight another fantastic initiative called SailFem, which is dedicated to the inclusion and empowerment of female coaches in sailing. SailFem is making a meaningful difference by providing female coaches with the tools, support, and opportunities they need to succeed. These initiatives are crucial in creating a more inclusive and diverse sports community, encouraging women to take on leadership roles and excel in their coaching careers.

Interactive Element 2: Group Discussion

I'd like you to take a moment and discuss with the person next to you a time when you saw inclusivity in action in sports. What made it successful? What were the key elements that promoted inclusivity? Let's take two minutes for this discussion.

Call to Action

I encourage all of you to think about what you can do to promote inclusivity in your sports environments. Whether it's advocating for inclusive policies, volunteering with organisations that support diverse athletes, or simply educating yourself and others about the importance of inclusivity, every action counts. One

powerful example is participating in or supporting events like SailFem or similar initiatives in your local community. Personally, I am committed to making sports a more inclusive space, and I hope you will join me in this mission. Together, we can create environments where every athlete has the opportunity to succeed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, empowering all in sports for inclusive excellence is not just a goal – it's a necessity. By breaking down barriers and fostering an inclusive environment, we can unlock the full potential of every athlete and create a more unified and vibrant sports community. Thank you for your attention, and I'm happy to take any questions if there is time.



Chryssi BISKITZI, OLY (GRE)

Sports Management MSc

4-time Olympian in rowing

(Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000, Athens 2004,

Beijing 2008)



Sports have long been a mirror to society, reflecting its values, struggles, and triumphs. They serve as a platform for social interaction, personal development, and cultural expression. However, the full potential of sports to unify and uplift communities can only be realized when all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities, or identities, are empowered to participate and excel. Inclusive excellence in sports means creating environments where everyone can thrive, where diversity is celebrated, and where equitable opportunities are available to all. This lecture explores the importance of empowering all individuals in sports, the barriers to inclusion, and the strategies for achieving inclusive excellence.

The Importance of Empowering All in Sports

Social Cohesion and Community Building: Sports bring people together, fostering a sense of community and belonging. When inclusive practices are adopted, sports can bridge social divides and promote understanding among diverse groups. Empowering all individuals to participate in sports helps build stronger, more cohesive communities where differences are respected and celebrated.

Personal Development and Well-being: Participation in sports offers numerous physical, mental, and emotional benefits. For young people, sports can teach essential life skills such as teamwork, leadership, and resilience. For adults, sports provide opportunities for maintaining physical fitness, stress relief, and social interaction. Ensuring that everyone has access to these benefits is crucial for individual and collective well-being.

Challenging Stereotypes and Promoting Equality: Inclusive sports environments challenge stereotypes and prejudices by showcasing the talents and capabilities of diverse individuals. When people from different backgrounds and abilities succeed in sports, it breaks down misconceptions and promotes a more equitable and just society. This visibility can inspire others to pursue their passions and challenge societal norms.

Barriers to Inclusion in Sports

Despite the clear benefits of inclusive sports, several barriers still exist that prevent equitable participation. These barriers can be broadly categorised into structural, cultural, and individual factors.

Structural Barriers:

Accessibility: Many sports facilities and programmes are not designed to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Lack of accessible infrastructure, adaptive equipment, and trained staff can exclude people with physical, intellectual, or sensory impairments.

Economic Disparities: The cost of participation in sports, including fees, equipment, and travel expenses, can be prohibitive for low-income individuals and families. Economic barriers disproportionately affect marginalised communities, limiting their access to sports opportunities.

Policy and Governance: Inadequate policies and governance structures can perpetuate inequality in sports. This includes the absence of inclusive policies, lack of representation in decision-making bodies, and insufficient funding for programmes aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion.

Cultural Barriers:

Stereotypes and Discrimination: Cultural attitudes and biases can create unwelcoming environments for certain groups. Gender stereotypes, racial discrimination, and homophobia can deter individuals from participating in sports or advancing to higher levels of competition.

Lack of Role Models: The underrepresentation of diverse individuals in prominent sports roles can discourage participation from marginalised groups. Seeing role models who share similar backgrounds and experiences can be a powerful motivator for aspiring athletes.

Cultural Insensitivity: Sports organizations that fail to recognise and respect cultural differences may inadvertently exclude individuals from diverse backgrounds. This includes scheduling conflicts with cultural or religious observances and a lack of culturally competent coaching practices.

Individual Barriers:

Confidence and Self-perception: Individuals from marginalised groups may struggle with self-confidence and self-perception due to societal messages that undervalue their abilities. This can lead to a lack of participation or persistence in sports.

Awareness and Information: Limited access to information about available sports programmes and opportunities can prevent individuals from getting involved. Effective communication and outreach are necessary to ensure that everyone is aware of the opportunities available to them.

Strategies for Achieving Inclusive Excellence in Sports

Addressing the barriers to inclusion in sports requires a multifaceted approach that involves changes at the institutional, community, and individual levels. The following strategies can help achieve inclusive excellence in sports:

Policy and Governance:

Inclusive Policies: Sports organisations should develop and implement policies that promote inclusion and equity. This includes anti-discrimination policies, accessibility standards, and initiatives to increase diversity in leadership positions.

Funding and Resources: Allocating funding and resources to programmes that support underrepresented groups is essential. This can include scholarships, grants, and investment in adaptive sports equipment and facilities.

Representation and Advocacy: Ensuring that diverse voices are represented in decision-making bodies can lead to more inclusive policies and practices. Advocacy groups and advisory boards can provide valuable insights and drive change.

Community Engagement and Outreach:

Partnerships: Collaborating with community organizations, schools, and local governments can help reach diverse populations and create more inclusive sports programmes. Partnerships can facilitate resource sharing, joint initiatives, and community-driven solutions.

Awareness Campaigns: Public awareness campaigns can challenge stereotypes and promote the benefits of inclusive sports. Highlighting success stories and role models from diverse backgrounds can inspire broader participation.

Cultural Competence: Training coaches, officials, and sports administrators in cultural competence can create more welcoming environments. This includes understanding and respecting cultural differences, as well as implementing practices that accommodate diverse needs.

Accessibility and Adaptation:

Infrastructure and Equipment: Investing in accessible infrastructure and adaptive sports equipment is crucial for enabling participation from individuals with disabilities. This includes accessible facilities, transportation options, and specialised equipment.

Programme Design: Designing sports programmes that are flexible and adaptable can help meet the needs of diverse participants. This can include offering different levels of competition, adaptive sports options, and scheduling that accommodates various cultural and religious practices.

Inclusive Coaching Practices: Coaches play a pivotal role in creating inclusive sports environments. Training coaches to adopt inclusive practices, provide

positive reinforcement, and support the development of all athletes can enhance the experience for everyone.

Economic Support:

Scholarships and Subsidies: Providing financial assistance through scholarships, subsidies, and grants can help alleviate economic barriers to participation. This can enable individuals from low-income backgrounds to access sports programmes and resources.

Community Programmes: Developing community-based programmes that offer low-cost or free sports opportunities can increase accessibility. Partnerships with local businesses and organisations can help fund these initiatives.

Equipment Sharing Programmes: Establishing equipment sharing or rental programs can reduce the cost burden for participants. This can include community gear libraries or partnerships with sporting goods companies.

Promoting Role Models and Mentorship:

Visibility of Diverse Athletes: Highlighting the achievements of athletes from diverse backgrounds can inspire others and challenge stereotypes. Media coverage, social media campaigns, and public appearances can increase visibility.

Mentorship Programs: Connecting aspiring athletes with mentors who share similar backgrounds can provide guidance, support, and inspiration. Mentorship programs can help individuals navigate challenges and achieve their goals.

Leadership Development: Encouraging and supporting individuals from underrepresented groups to take on leadership roles within sports organizations can drive systemic change. Leadership development programs can provide the necessary skills and opportunities for advancement.

Olympians can play a significant role in promoting sports inclusion through various actions and initiatives.

Advocacy and Awareness:

Public Speaking: Olympians can speak at schools, community events, and sports clubs to raise awareness about the importance of inclusivity in sports.

Social Media Campaigns: Using their platforms to highlight stories and



*Vicky Conde Sancho presented the project-game “FIX IT!”
to the Young Olympic Ambassadors.*

examples of inclusivity in sports, promoting diversity and the benefits of inclusive practices.

Collaborations with Non-Profits: Partnering with organisations that focus on sports inclusion to amplify their messages and support their programmes.

Mentorship and Coaching:

Inclusive Coaching Programs: Offering coaching sessions or clinics that are specifically designed to be inclusive, ensuring that athletes of all abilities and backgrounds have access to high-quality training.

Mentorship Programs: Mentoring young athletes from diverse backgrounds, providing them with guidance, support, and encouragement.

Creating Opportunities:

Funding and Scholarships: Establishing scholarships or funds to support underrepresented groups in sports, including those from low-income backgrounds, different ethnicities, and people with disabilities.

Inclusive Competitions: Organising or supporting events that are designed to be inclusive, such as mixed-ability sports competitions or tournaments that promote gender equality.

Advocating for Policy Changes:

Lobbying for Inclusive Policies: Working with sports federations and governing bodies to develop and implement policies that promote inclusivity at all levels of sport.

Advisory Roles: Serving on boards or committees that focus on inclusion and diversity in sports, helping to shape policies and initiatives from within.

Personal Example:

Role Modeling: Demonstrating inclusive behaviour in their personal and professional lives, showing respect and support for all athletes.

Storytelling: Sharing personal stories of overcoming barriers and promoting the message that sport is for everyone, regardless of background or ability.

Community Engagement:

Grassroots Programmes: Getting involved in grassroots sports programs that focus on inclusivity, helping to ensure these programs receive attention and resources.

Volunteering: Volunteering time and expertise to support local sports initiatives aimed at fostering inclusion.

Educational Initiatives:

Workshops and Training: Conducting workshops and training sessions for coaches, parents, and sports administrators on how to create inclusive environments.

Resource Development: Helping to develop resources and materials that educate on the importance and methods of achieving sports inclusion.

By leveraging their influence, visibility, and resources, Olympians can significantly contribute to making sports more inclusive, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate and benefit from the joys and lessons of athletic involvement.



Olympians Sofia Papadopoulou and Chryssi Biskitzi answered to the participants questions following their lectures. The discussion is coordinated by the IOA Dean, Prof. Konstantinos Georgiadis.

Case Studies of Inclusive Excellence in Sports

Paralympic Movement: The Paralympic movement has been instrumental in promoting inclusion and accessibility in sports for individuals with disabilities. The Paralympic Games provide a global platform for showcasing the talents and capabilities of athletes with disabilities, challenging societal perceptions, and advocating for greater inclusion in sports and beyond. The movement has also spurred the development of adaptive sports programs and technologies that enhance accessibility.

The Women in Sport High Performance Pathway (WISH) is an initiative aimed at promoting gender equity in sports by providing structured support and development opportunities for women aspiring to leadership roles in high-performance sports environments. The key objectives and components of the WISH program include:

Leadership Development:

Training and Education: Providing specialized training programs that cover

essential skills and knowledge required for high-performance leadership roles, such as coaching, sports management, and administration.

Workshops and Seminars: Organising workshops and seminars led by experts in the field to enhance leadership competencies and strategic thinking.

Mentorship and Networking:

Mentorship Programs: Connecting participants with experienced mentors who provide guidance, support, and career advice.

Networking Opportunities: Creating platforms for participants to network with industry leaders, peers, and potential employers to build professional relationships and opportunities.

Career Advancement:

Pathway Programmes: Designing clear career pathways that outline the steps and qualifications needed to progress to higher levels of leadership in sports.

Job Placement Support: Assisting participants in finding roles within sports organizations and helping them navigate the recruitment process.

Research and Advocacy:

Gender Equity Research: Conducting research to identify barriers to women's participation in high-performance sports leadership and developing strategies to address these challenges.

Advocacy Efforts: Promoting policies and practices that support gender equity and advocating for systemic changes within sports organisations.

Supportive Environment:

Inclusive Culture: Fostering an inclusive culture within sports organisations that values and supports the contributions of women.

Peer Support Groups: Establishing peer support groups to provide a space for women to share experiences, challenges, and successes.

Visibility and Recognition:

Highlighting Achievements: Publicly recognizing and celebrating the



Two interesting workshops were conducted during the Session, one on Olympic Education by Prof. Konstantinos Georgiadis and one on Olympic Media by Prof. Emilio Fernández Peña.

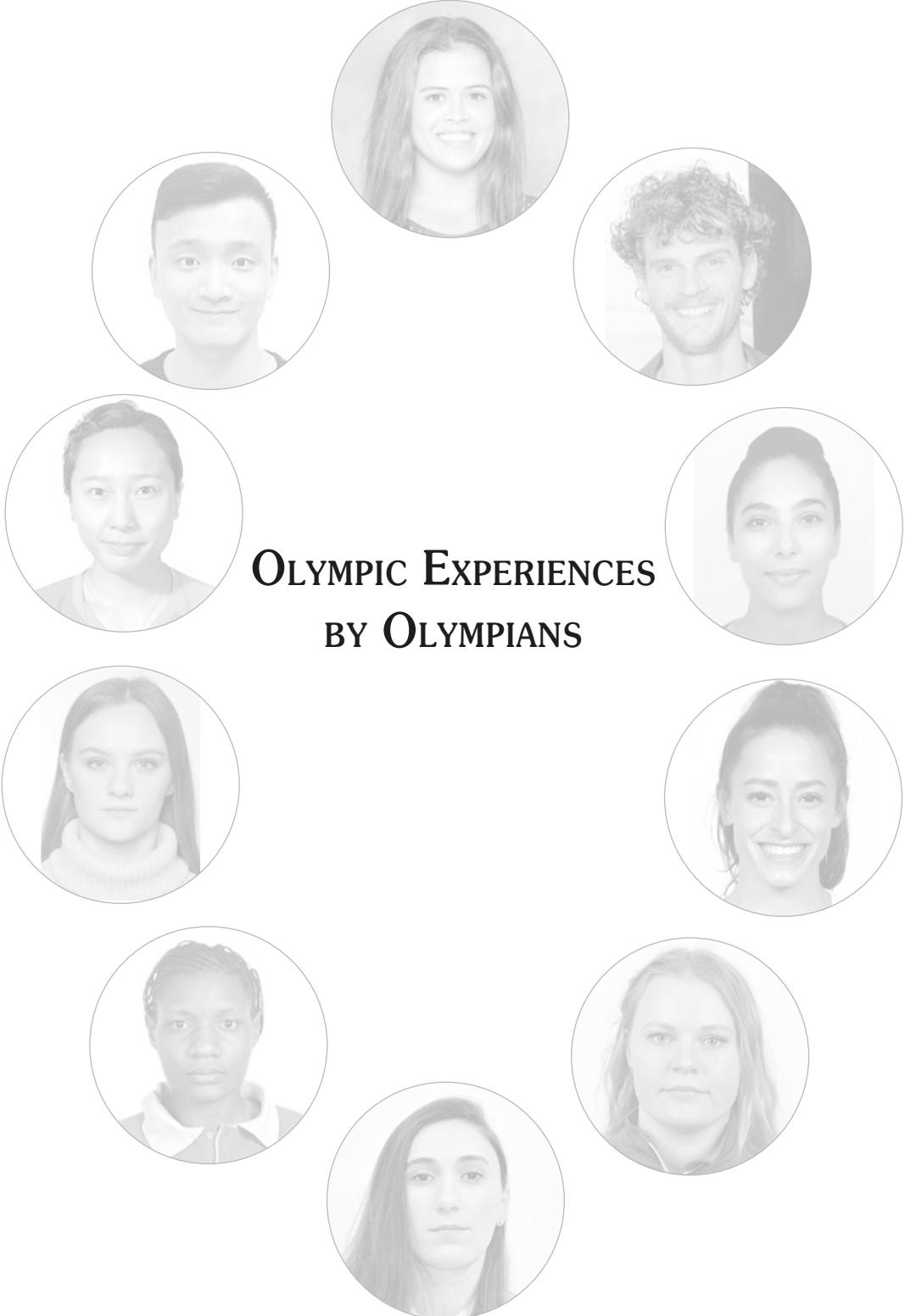


achievements of women in high-performance sports roles to inspire others and raise awareness about the importance of gender equity.

Role Models: Showcasing successful women leaders as role models to encourage and motivate aspiring female leaders.

By addressing these key areas, the WISH program aims to create a more equitable and inclusive high-performance sports environment where women can thrive as leaders and contribute to the growth and success of sports organizations.

Empowering all individuals in sports is not just a matter of fairness, but a fundamental necessity for achieving inclusive excellence. By addressing structural, cultural, and individual barriers, and implementing strategies that promote equity and inclusion, sports can become a powerful force for positive social change. Inclusive sports environments celebrate diversity, foster personal and community development, and challenge societal norms, leading to a more just and equitable world. The journey towards inclusive excellence in sports is ongoing, but with concerted efforts from all stakeholders, it is a goal within our reach.



OLYMPIC EXPERIENCES BY OLYMPIANS



*Olympians who participated
in the IOA Session.*

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Katerine SAVARD (CAN)



My name is Katerine Savard, I am a French-speaking Canadian and a three-time Olympian in swimming. I am also a teacher in a French primary school in Canada.

I started swimming at the age of 10. I grew up with a mother who had a great fear of water. To be allowed to go to my friends' houses in the summer, I had to learn to swim. Over time, I met people who got me to stay in the sport for the fun of it. I started training seriously at the age of 14. At secondary school, the head coach refused to include me in his group because, according to him, it was too late to start training at that age and, according to the statistics, I didn't have the physical qualities needed to become a top-level swimmer. I wanted to prove the contrary by exploiting my full potential.

Two years later, I joined the national team and became the emblem of butterfly swimming in Canada. It was then that I started to believe in and dream of the Olympic Games. At 18, I qualified for the London 2012 Olympic Games. During the following Olympic cycle, I built my identity through swimming, particularly butterfly. My results, my entourage and my environment contributed to the enormous personal pressure I put on myself to maintain my status. At the 2016 Olympic qualifiers, I was terrified of losing. Despite holding the Canadian record in the 100m butterfly for six years, I underperformed and didn't meet the criteria for the Rio 2016 Games. Twenty-four hours later, I entered the 200m freestyle qualifiers, a race I would have never competed in before. I eventually earned my place in the Olympic team for the 4x200m freestyle relay, in which I won my Olympic medal.



My greatest Olympic dream had just come true. But the years that followed were more difficult mentally, as I no longer had any dreams. I lost myself in the process. After several months out of the pool, I decided to return to sport with the dream of taking part in the Tokyo Olympics. I achieved that goal by qualifying in four events for Tokyo 2020NE, where I came 4th in the Canadian relay.

After taking part in these 3rd Games, I continued to swim, telling myself that I would see

what happened year after year. Fearing that I would owe my results to those who followed me, it took me two years to face up to those around me and declare my desire to become the first Canadian swimmer to take part in four Olympic Games. This dream was my last goal in the sport, before retiring after 20 years of swimming. In May 2024, during the Canadian Olympic qualifiers, I failed to achieve the standards that would have allowed me to realise this dream.

Not all dreams come true, but the journey leading up to them is the most enriching life experience for an athlete. Failures and victories, as well as values acquired and encounters, shape our identity. The doors that close are difficult to accept and those that open are frightening to face, but I am certain that great things await me in the near future.



THE STORY OF AN OLYMPIC RISE

Alexis LEPAGE, OLY (CAN)



In 2000, Canada was buzzing with the Olympic fever of the Sydney Games. I was six years old at the time and, without really understanding what the Olympic Games represented, I admired the athletes who represented our beautiful country.

A small virus kept me awake for part of the night of 17 September 2000, giving me the opportunity to watch the triathlon event live, which was held for the first time at the Olympic Games. I was able to see Simon Whitfield, the Canadian, swimming, cycling and running while wearing the maple leaf. An excellent runner, he won the highest honours by becoming Olympic champion.

From that moment on, I knew I wanted to be an Olympian and compete in an Olympic event. In fact, from the age of six to the age of 27, every time I blew out my birthday candles, the same wish kept coming back: I want to participate in the Olympics, I want to participate in the Olympics, I want to participate in the Olympics!

It wasn't until a few years later, at the age of 10, that I started triathlon, with the same wish in mind: to represent Canada at the Olympic Games. At that time, sport gave me a better sense of self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment. I had a lot of difficulties in school because of my dyslexia and dysorthographia disorders. These language disorders greatly affected my social life and my self-esteem. The practice of sport therefore helped me to find a certain pleasure in my daily life.



Thanks to the triathlon, I was able to forge my determination, which allowed me to continue my studies beyond the undergraduate level. Staying in school has been an investment in myself and my future.

With this resilience, I continued my studies and my sport. Obviously, nothing has been easy. My journey was not a perfect climb, rather resembling the stock price of a company in difficulty: injuries, accidents, underperformance, pandemic... There were a lot of difficult moments, but also good moments, including my first World Cup podium.

Despite this rollercoaster ride, in 2021 I had the honour of representing my country at the Olympic Games in Tokyo. This enriching

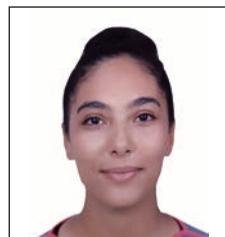
experience was the fulfillment of my dream, the one that had occupied all my thoughts during my birthday wishes for 20 years. This Olympic adventure has allowed me to make new friends, share beautiful moments with my teammates and feel a deep sense of accomplishment. Although these games were different and a little less jovial due to pandemic restrictions, my experience was more than positive. I come out determined, grown and ambitious.

The place of sport in my life has been extremely beneficial. It has allowed me to become a complete human being, reaching levels that I never thought possible, both in sports and in my studies, with the completion of a Master of Science. Sport has also allowed me to develop a good sense of esteem of myself and my projects.

Although I ended my sporting career after the fulfilment of my dream, I remain and will forever be marked by the privilege I had to represent my country at the Olympic Games. From now on, my goal is to pass on the values I have acquired to future generations so that they too can achieve their dreams and flourish through sport.

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Safia SALIH (MAR)



My name is Safia Salih, I am 23 years old and I am from Morocco. I cannot possibly talk about my Olympic experience without talking about my Olympic journey and early beginnings.

Well, I started Taekwondo when I was four years old, thanks to my dad who used to practice the sport as well. Basically, my father played a huge role in my journey. He taught me discipline and how to protect a dream. He invested in an indoor gym in our home, where we could train and have fun whenever we wanted, so we had the opportunity to dare to dream and be creative.

One day, while training and enjoying time with my siblings in our home gym, my dad called us to watch the London 2012 Olympic Games. I vividly remember being inspired by an athlete's speech, where she emphasised that Taekwondo was more than winning medals and collecting trophies; it was a game she enjoyed playing. This perspective profoundly affected me, pushing me to rejoice in the sport and have fun, which in turn enhanced my performance.

In 2015 I won the national champion title and made my debut as a professional with the national team at only 14 years old. Competing in the world championships in Korea was a fantastic experience, allowing me to share my passion with athletes from various places of the world and have a great moment together.

Later in 2016, I participated in "La caravane des sports" organised by the Moroccan NCO. In which the gold medalist got the opportunity to go watch the Olympic Games in Rio De Janeiro. As a 15 year old, this is a tremendous opportunity,

allowing me to experience the Olympic Games first hand. Watching the games up close made me believe that becoming an Olympic champion was possible.

In 2018, I qualified for the Youth Olympic Games. Preparing for the Games was demanding and challenging. I had to strive for excellence in every training. But also outside the court, I had to study for my baccalaureate exam which was decisive in my academic career. It was a challenging year filled with ups and downs, but I eventually made it to university and won a silver medal at the Youth Olympic Games. Winning my title was a euphoric moment for me, because it was a record for Morocco, it was the first Olympic medal for Moroccan Taekwondo. I won my semifinals by golden point, which made the tour of the world.



The Youth Olympic Games taught me valuable lessons, which are serving me in my life, that winning goes beyond titles and that it is my duty as an Olympian to create impact and inspire.

Now I strive to incorporate the Olympic values in my daily life, serving as a role model for the younger generation and promoting positive values. I am pursuing a Master's degree in Digital Marketing and Communication. As the president of Nexus Academy, an academy which blends values of Olympism and martial arts with personal growth and high tech, I am committed to fostering the younger generation of proactive leaders and efficient citizens. Alongside my team, I organise sport events in my school in partnership with the Moroccan

federation and other local brands, and looking forward to collaborating with the Moroccan NCO and Olympic Academy as well. Furthermore, I use my platform to inspire others and promote the positive values of fairplay and peace.



MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Natalie HERMANN (GER)



Taking part in the Olympic Games was one of the greatest achievements in my life. The journey to get there has taught me many lessons. I am Natalie Hermann a former rhythmic gymnast from Germany. I am happy to share my Olympic experiences with you today and would like to show you the great impact sport can have on your life.

I am the youngest of three daughters. My parents emigrated to Germany during the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s and had to build a completely new life in Germany. I was six years old when I started gymnastics together with my older sister. I made progress but just a few months later, my father suddenly died. Our life situation changed abruptly from one day to the next. As a family with a migrant background, we were left without any support in life. Up to that point, our dad had only been able to see us at one competition before he passed away. As things got very tight financially, my eldest sister had to give up her hobbies so that my sister Anja and I could continue gymnastics. Because of our improving results, sport quickly became a source of distraction for the whole family and got us back on track. The coaches gave me “no pity” in the gym but encouraged us to work on ourselves. We got support from our home coaches to attend training camps and improve. To continue our sport my mum worked extra shifts every week to pay for our expensive gymnastics suits, because we were living far away from the gymnastics hall, my grandad had to

drive us to training for two hours every day. We tried very hard not to lose the opportunity to continue our sport.

At the age of 15 I was called up to the national team after winning several German championships and taking part in the Junior European Championships. I moved to a sports boarding school 700 kilometres away from my family. From then on, I trained with the experienced gymnasts in a hall and had to care for myself. I was nominated for the group discipline. In rhythmic gymnastics, there are five women in the group performing on the floor. This group discipline requires a high level of coordination, and countless hours of training in order to understand the team members without even looking at them and to be able to perform all the elements in perfect synchronisation. By the way, rhythmic gymnastics is the only Olympic sport apart from synchronised swimming in which only women are allowed to compete. After a year, I was shortlisted for the main team and was the youngest athlete in the group. I always had to train more than the others. As I was left-handed, I was retrained to use my right hand for every throw and catch to increase the synchronisation in the choreography.

After missing out on Olympic qualification in 2015, we took part in the last qualifying competition three months before the Olympics, which also took place in Rio. This event was even more emotionally impactful for me than the Olympic Games themselves. Initially, I was not scheduled to take part in this competition due to my young age and less experience. I was supposed to cheer on my team from afar as a reserve gymnast. But suddenly my teammate got a serious injury at the training camp, which meant she had to end her career from one day to another. As a result, I unfortunately had to step into the team just two days before the departure to Brazil. When our coach gave us the news that she had to drop out, all eyes in the team were on me as a backup gymnast. There was immense pressure on me, because I unexpectedly had to step in for both choreographies. On top of that, the future of gymnastics in German sport depended on the German Olympic ticket for Rio and some centres were about to lose their financial support. But I didn't allow all my worries to show that moment, because I knew that my team needed me and that I couldn't show any weakness, to give the others confidence. The night before the competition, I was suddenly overcome with fear and anxiety. To make sure my team member in the hotel room didn't notice, I quietly sneaked into the bathroom and started crying. Out of desperation, I called my sister in Germany, who had always been my mentor throughout my career and understood me very well because we grew

up together in the gym. She encouraged me, built me up again and managed to ease my worries at least a little.

On the day of the competition, we were in battle mode and were ready to give everything for the ticket and keep fighting until the end.

I wouldn't be standing here today if there hadn't been a happy ending. We performed the routines of our lives, executing all the elements flawlessly. We became first in the qualification competition and finally got our ticket to the Olympics. The joy was overwhelming. I have never been so proud of any other achievement in my life.

The joy lasted only for a moment, because from now on the internal competition within the team began. Only 5 of the 7 gymnasts on the team were allowed to compete at the Olympics so everyone had to fight for their spot in the team. The announcement day of the nominated gymnasts is now exactly 8 years ago but I can still remember that day very clearly. As almost all of our teammates lived in the same apartment in our boarding school, the atmosphere was very tense for everyone. We hardly spoke to each other because we were so focused on ourselves. When we entered the gym, where our coaches were already waiting for us, everyone was very nervous. I knew I had a chance, but I was one of the two uncertain candidates. When 4 out of 5 names had already been called out, my heart was beating very fast. But happily, my name was the last to be called. I couldn't really be happy at first because it was such a difficult situation for everyone not to be able to take one of us with them and letting go another very experienced teammate.

When I called my family, my mother felt the same way. She didn't show her joy straight away. But then my sister Anja shouted into the phone: "Natalie, why do you sound so sad? Do you understand? You are going to represent Germany at the biggest sporting event in the world!", and suddenly all the weight fell from my shoulders, and I started to cry from joy. The excitement slowly grew as we received our clothing. It was very special for me. Wearing the rings made me feel very proud.

Life in the Olympic Village was very exciting. But we had to stay focused as a team, as our event was the last of the Olympic Games. Not everything went perfectly in our competition. Nevertheless, we were very happy to be among the world's top 10 teams. Apart from the competition, the most memorable moment was experiencing the German artistic gymnast's gold medal-winning party in the German house or seeing Simone Biles live at the accreditation checkpoint.



A year after the Games, I ended my career due to injuries, a switch of coach and my growing desire to pursue a university degree. Today I'm studying environmental management and urban planning for my master's degree. I live a normal life far away from competitive sport. But when I look back I can see what sport gave me. I gained the self-confidence to achieve other goals in life. I'm looking for the drive to complement the rush of adrenaline in sport. Sport helped me to get through difficult personal times, strengthened my character and gave me self-confidence.

My story is just one of many.

Nevertheless, I am sure that almost all athletes go through difficult times and find support and purpose in life with sport. I will be grateful if you take these thoughts back to your organisations, associations and countries and, above all, ensure that children and young people in difficult situations receive support so that they can pursue their sport without any worries. Thank you!



MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Greta SMALL, OLY (AUS)

Alpine Skiing 2014, 2018, 2022



I am a three-time Olympian in Alpine Skiing. Yes, there is snow in Australia and a community of winter sports legends. I come from a small country town in north-east Victoria, Porepunkah, at the foot of the Victorian Alps. My journey started as an 18-month old skiing at Mount Buffalo, which sadly burnt down in the Black Summer bushfires. Starting in my first ever race at 10 years old, as I was the only skier in my primary school grade able to compete. After that, I begged my parents to let me join the ski club. The following year after just a month of training camp I won the same race. I was hooked.

My parents were the biggest influence on my pathway in Alpine Skiing. At 12 years old I left school in Australia and was home-schooled so I could travel to live and train in Europe and Canada for eight months of the year. My passion has always been about skiing and the chance to follow my dreams.

At 16 years old I was the Flag Bearer for Australia at the first Winter Youth Olympic Games in Innsbruck 2012. The YOG learn and share education activations is where my passion for the Olympic movement started and I saw the impact sports events can have in my own community.

Two years later I made my Olympic debut in Sochi 2014. At just 18 years old I was the youngest competitor in the Women's speed events and the first Australian to compete in all five Alpine Skiing events. Leading the Olympic Games, even for a short moment was a dream come true. Placing 15th in the Combined was a historic performance for Australia since Zali Steggall won bronze medal in Slalom at Nagano 1998.



Unfortunately, my career has been plagued with injuries. After recovering from an earlier knee injury, I tore my second ACL at the Olympic test event just one year until PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Games. This was the lowest point in my career. However, just 8 months after surgery I was competing in the World Cup and qualified for my second Olympic Games. PyeongChang 2018 I placed 20th in Women's Downhill recording Australia's best result.

I sustained another knee injury in 2019 receiving five surgeries. After not skiing for over a year I was cleared to return to skiing. I skied for 7 days until Covid-19 pandemic and Australia closed its borders. I didn't compete for two years.

Leading into Beijing 2022, I had a PCR test every day for six weeks. At my third Olympic Games in Beijing 2022 I had my best ever performance placing 13th in the Combined. Now on the road to my fourth Olympic Games in Milano-Cortina 2026, I will compete on the same slopes in Cortina d'Ampezzo as the 1956 Olympic Games.

Currently I am serving as a member of the AOC Athlete's Commission and contributing to the outcomes of future initiatives of the Australian Olympic movement. Personally, I endeavour to leave a lasting impact on the athlete's voice and to empower girls and women through sport. See you in Brisbane 2032!

THE PATH TO EXCELLENCE

Wai Yam Minnie SOO (HKG)



I started playing table tennis at the age of four, wishing to become a world champion at that time. I was going to school from 8 am to 4 pm, I was training at 5 pm to 7 pm, and I was going to the tutoring lessons from 8 pm to 10 pm.

My hard work was paying off and I was given an opportunity to go professional in my sports. The path was difficult because things were not smooth. Many people undermined my ability along the way, but with my passion, it was not much of a problem. The biggest problem arose when I was 22 years old when I suffered from an incurable neurological injury. One day, as I was practising, I felt rigidity in my arm. At first, I thought it was fatigue, so I pushed myself further. Day after day, the rigidity worsened, and eventually, I lost control of my arm and my movements became twisted and abnormal. I was diagnosed with focal dystonia, a psychoneurological disorder, which involves involuntary spasms in muscles when trying to execute a task. One major thing about this disorder is that, when the symptoms surface, I would get anxious. When I get anxious, the symptoms worsen. It goes on and on as a horrible cycle.

One day, as I was training, I cried and thought I just couldn't do it anymore. I felt the extreme pressure, from hearing mocks and criticism behind my back, from the discomfort of the twisted movements and the desperation and confusion of being unable to control my own body. I consulted the sports therapist, saying that my arm was not listening to me, saying that I could have practised much better and improved if I didn't have these problems with my arms. The sports

therapist cut me off and asked, “Why do you keep referring to ‘your arm’ as if it’s a separate entity? You cannot move your ears or nose, and I don’t see you saying that ‘my ears and nose are not listening to me’. You have to embrace focal dystonia as a part of yourself, or at least, as a friend. Things that have happened sometimes cannot be changed. You have to accept the person you are right now, at this moment, and take the options that you have at this current moment, instead of thinking what could or couldn’t have happened to you”.

So, starting onwards, if I made mistakes in training due to the uncontrollable movements, I just smiled and nodded to myself, saying, “it’s ok, let’s try again”. When I made a good shot, I smiled and complimented myself. The smiles were awkward at first, but gradually, the smiles became a habit.

I must admit that this period was very hard for me because of the physical and mental pressure that existed every single day before the Olympics, but I adopted an attitude, according to which, I tried to steal the little joys and little successes in life to motivate me forward. In this stage, I don’t have passion. It is pure resilience, hanging on a cliff, trying to make it to my dream despite everything against me.

Finally, I made it to Tokyo. But having a positive mindset in training, doesn’t mean that I would be able to perform at a high level despite extreme pressure. In fact, due to overtraining, my injury has gotten much worse, and I couldn’t even lift a cup of coffee without my arm shaking and spilling the coffee. I didn’t manage to play well and lost in the first round in the individual events.

With the support of my teammates, who really gave me the courage to give everything, we worked hard together and pushed ourselves to the limit. Finally, we were at the stage of the bronze medal match. The day before the bronze medal match, I was on a daily routine to visit the physiotherapist, and I complained to her, “I have been working very hard for my whole life. I was told to be gifted since young. Why is Cheung Ka long an Olympic Gold Medallist, and how did I end up in this situation? What did I do wrong?”. The physiotherapist said, “Everyone’s path is different”. That night, as I rolled over in my bed, unable to sleep, something just clicked in my mind. I realised that this could be my first and last Olympics, and no matter whether I win or lose tomorrow, based on my current situation, it could mark an end to my career. I want to be able to tell my kids and grandkids that I had a great time at the Olympics, and not live with regrets. I decided that whether I win or lose, I was going to enjoy myself on stage.

The other day, during the match, I focused on every single point, never thinking about my past mistakes, and nodded affirmatively for every nice point I played. It was my first time in my career, the most supposedly stressful moment in my life, where I smiled in my match, because I was enjoying so much, and I didn't think of the results. When people asked me afterwards, how I kept my cool despite being behind the game, I was surprised. I said, "Was I behind? I didn't even notice". This is because I never looked at the scoreboard. This is living in the moment, liberated from worries and fears. This is the stage of liberation when you unleash all your abilities without the burden of fear, and bringing out the best in yourself.

Humans were born to aim for excellence; we are competitive. But excellence is defined differently for every person, and this is my definition of excellence. That excellence is built from passion and resilience but was unleashed in liberation. I hope all of you enjoyed my story at the Olympics, and this is the end of my sharing.

Thank you.



MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Farida AZIZOVA (AZE)



I was born on June 6, 1995 in the small Azerbaijani town of Gusar. Actually, Gusar is very popular as a resort city. I was very active as a child, but one day I had problems with blood circulation in my legs and I could not walk. After treatment, the doctors advised me to exercise. Since I liked to repeat fight scenes in films, I chose taekwondo. Planning to only do the sport for six months, I fell in love with Taekwondo and decided to be a taekwondo fighter.

I started in an abandoned room, where a year later I won my first medal. When I moved to a big city at the age of 11, difficulties began: my parents could not go with me, and I found myself alone in an unfamiliar place. But I didn't give up. At the age of 13, I won bronze at the European Cadet Championships, and then became the European champion.

In 2009, I suffered a knee injury, but despite this, I won gold at the Korea Open. After the operation, my parents wanted me to finish my career as an athlete, but I insisted on my own. In 2011, I won my first license for the London 2012 Olympics, where I lost to my opponent from Canada with a score of 1-0. This defeat was a strong blow for me.

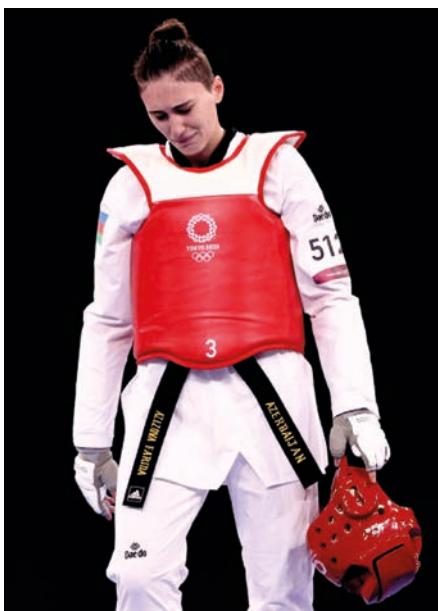
Continuing my training, I became the European U21 champion and won bronze at the World Championships. But problems began with a new coach from another country, who beat athletes and did not like me. Despite this, I won a license for the Rio 2016 Olympics and reached the semi-finals, where I lost due to the unfairness of the referee.

In 2018, I broke my finger during Grand Prix competitions, and in 2019 I suffered a spinal injury. Despite all efforts, the pain became unbearable. In 2021, I tore a muscle before the Tokyo Olympics, but still competed, losing in the first fight due to pain.

In 2022, doctors discovered a tumor in my spine, which made my bones vulnerable. Risking everything, I went to the Islamic Games in Turkey and won a gold medal. However, with the return of the coach, the doctors advised me to finish my career as an athlete and I left the sport after a 23-year career.

Now I have 11 different problems in my spine, but I continue to fight.

If you ask: "Would you change your profession knowing that there would be so much to do", I would answer "no". Because sport has given me a new life when I had a blood circulation problem in childhood. The President of our country awarded me with a house for my sporting achievements as soon as I turned 18 years old. I also want to say that sport gave me many opportunities that I could only dream of. Not every athlete can go to the Olympic Games at least once. And I had qualified three times. This already means that I have been given a great chance. I made many friends from different countries and lastly and most importantly, I got the chance to come here and take this great course with wonderful professors and coordinators and talented young people.



MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Faith OGALLO, OLY (KEN)



Sports profile

- Professional Taekwondo Athlete:
 - Tokyo 2020 OLY
 - Silver and bronze medalist(all) African games 2019, 2024
 - Three times bronze medallist in Africa games then
 - Two times bronze medalist Fujairah open international Championship 8th and 10th Edition
 - Kenya National champion
 - 1st Dan Taekwondo (Black belt)
 - Ranked 4th in Africa +73 and Olympic weight +67

Education

- Graduate in social science with a bachelor of social work second-class upper division
- Higher Diploma in healthcare support that is ongoing
- 64th International Session for Young Olympics Ambassadors

Community service

In partnership with learning institutions I voluntarily conduct mentorship programmes to promote education in the Kenyan society e.g. I use my success

stories both in school and sports to empower vulnerable groups such as young girls, youths and Para-Athletes.

- I have contributed to the development of gender policies in society through advocating for women's rights.
- Having been to the Olympics, most of the people in my country have always copied my way of living respect to others, friendship and excellence in all work that I do. Hence contributing to social reforms within societies.
- Sports for climate actions; I use sports to champion for climate change actions including mitigation, adaptation and measures I have been labeled a sustainability champion by NOCK, in partnership with United Nations Environment Programme, Stockholm Environment Institute and other sports Federations and the government of Kenya.

Living in the city as a taekwondo athlete from a rural background was and still is very tough for me. I have experienced air pollution, and poor waste management that is risking lives of the vulnerable groups in the urban slums that's why I had to open up to BBC and all other broadcasting channels in Kenya to help create more awareness. All media adopted my challenge on the effect of climate change to the society and actions I put in place were all adopted by the government, National Olympic Committee of Kenya, all sports federations and the society at large. Such actions, include Greening Kenya tree planting initiatives to increase forest cover widely in the country, proper waste management, promoting awareness through education on climate actions, and Development of county climate bills to guide the climate change unit. As a result, Green champions have been nominated in every counties and are to be taken for climate change education programme, Kenya has hosted a climate change summit, Kenya celebrates World Environment Day with a lot of environmental activities taking place through public participation e.g. cleaning wetlands, planting trees, and also create awareness.

In promoting community health, I partner with Kenya Red Cross, Greening Kenya initiative private agencies, Kibabii University and community based organisation to Campaign for the societal wellbeing of the old age groups, children and those people living with disability. For example, we've conducted an anti-jiggers campaign and the importance of community household hygiene which is a major problem of rural vulnerable communities. We advised the government to help provide feeding programmes in certain public schools. We also encourage



farming of vegetables and fruits to promote good nutrition. I am passionately driven by Olympic Values of friendship, respect and excellence. I would really like to express my appreciation to the International Olympic Academy and the International Olympic Committee for the incredible educational programme of the 64th International Session, on the theme “Athlete in the Modern society”. The programme was well equipped with a lot of knowledge and skills which building blocks in our developing society. Forever, I will live to be an Olympian ambassador for life promoting Olympics values.

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Ariana ORREGO (PER)



My name is Ariana Orrego and I'm 25 years old. I'm from Lima, Peru, but currently live in Iowa, United States. I'm a two-time Olympic Gymnast and today I will be talking about my Olympic experiences.

I've been involved in Sports since I was around five years old. My parents wanted me to be active after school and made me try all kinds of sports. I've tried tennis, swimming, squash, track and field, gymnastics, and many others. Gymnastics was my favourite and the sport I fell in love with. I started practicing every day for many hours a day and quickly realised what my dream was. I wanted to compete at the Olympic Games.

To achieve this dream, I knew I was going to have to make a lot of sacrifices. When I turned 15, in 2013, I made the decision to move without my family to the United States to start more intense training. I lived with a host family and did home schooling for my last few years of high school. I was training around eight hours a day six days a week. From 2014 to 2016 I competed in many international competitions representing Peru at the highest level. In 2015, I competed at the World championships and earned a spot for the Olympic test event in Rio which was the qualifier for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. In 2016, I competed at the test event and was able to qualify for the Olympic Games, it is a moment I will never forget. All the hard work and sacrifices paid off.

A few months later, it was time for the Olympics. I remember being extremely excited but a little nervous as well. I couldn't believe I was staying at the Olympic

Village with all the famous athletes sharing the same passion for their sport and the same Olympic values. I got to Rio a few days before the competition started to get used to the equipment and environment. In my free time, I liked to explore around the village, take pictures, meet new people, and exchange pins with other athletes.

The opening ceremony was two days before the competition, and I remember being really excited about it. Marching down the stadium with the rest of the Peruvian delegation is an experience I will never forget; it was such a unique moment. At the opening ceremony, I was able to meet some famous athletes like Rafael Nadal, Serena Williams, and others. After the ceremony, I remember getting many texts from friends from Peru saying they saw me on TV and were happy and proud that my dream was coming true.

Then, competition day came. I was a little nervous but very excited at the same time. I remember walking to the competition floor after warmups and looking at all the people in the crowd including my family. It was a great competition for me. After competing I gave some interviews to journalists from Peru. I was just happy I was able to represent my country the best way I could. One of the journalists told me “You know you just made history, right?” I first I didn’t realise it but then it all sunk in. I became the first Peruvian gymnast in history to compete at the Olympic Games. No other Peruvian gymnast had ever made it to the Olympics before.

The days after the competition, were very relaxing and entertaining. I got to see multiple Olympic event finals from different sports. It was very inspiring and motivating. It really showed me that with hard work, dedication, and perseverance anything is possible. I was not able to stay for the closing ceremony, but the overall experience was amazing.

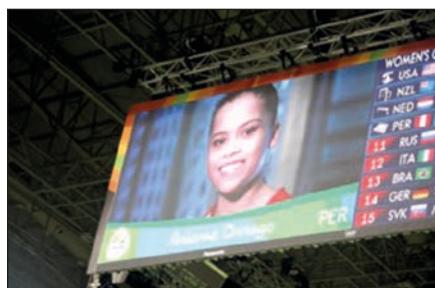
After achieving my dream, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do next. The head coach from a university in the United States had seen me at the Olympics and wanted to recruit me to compete for their university while getting a degree. It was an opportunity I did not want to pass. In 2017, I committed to Iowa State University to continue my athletic and start my academic career.

I started competing internationally for Peru again in 2018, with the goal of qualifying for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. I knew this time the road to the Olympics was going to be different. I had to manage taking university classes with training at an elite level. I’m a very determined person, and I knew I would

do whatever it took to achieve my goal. In the 2019 World Championships, I qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, making history for my country again.

The training leading up to the Olympics was going very well, my gymnastics level was improving considerably. Physically I felt great, mentally I was exhausted. But I knew I had to keep pushing. And then the unimaginable happened. The world shut down and the pandemic started. I could not leave my house; I was stuck inside not knowing what was going to happen. I felt very stressed, scared, and anxious.

The Olympics ended up getting postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At first, I was very upset, I did not think I could train at this level for another year, mentally I didn't think it was possible. But I knew I had to keep pushing. The days leading up to traveling to Tokyo were very stressful with lots of covid tests. I knew from the start this was going to be a different Olympic experience. However, I was still going to enjoy every second of it. I tried to remind myself of all the hard work and hours of training I've put in. It was time to soak every second and enjoy this opportunity.



The Olympic Village was huge and the technology they had implemented was incredible. There were little shuttles that drove themselves for example. The Opening Ceremony was very fun and motivating. I really appreciate the organisation committee for making this experience as fun as possible under the circumstances.

The Tokyo Olympics were different, no one was in the stands, my family and friends could not go to support, and we had to follow covid protocols very strictly. I still felt the support of everyone from a distance and tried to have the best competition possible under the circumstances. Once I was done competing, I was able to go watch other sports and support team Peru.

Being able to participate in the Olympic Games for the second time representing my country was a dream come true. It is something I will forever be grateful and proud of.

I retired from gymnastics in 2022 after graduating from college. And I'm currently working in the US in information systems. However, I'm looking forward to assisting with the Olympic Academy in Peru as well as the Peruvian gymnastics federation. My goal is to inspire young gymnasts.

I wanted to thank everyone for listening to my Olympic story. I really hope you enjoyed it. Let me know if you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them.

Thank you!



MY EXPERIENCE OF FACING INJURIES

Shiu-Yue LAU (HKG)



Good afternoon everyone. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude for this opportunity to share my experiences with you. While I have not participated in the Olympic Games, I had the privilege of competing in the Youth Olympic Games a decade ago in 2014. Today, I will focus on how I overcame my shoulder injuries. I would also like to echo a sentiment shared by another young Olympic ambassador from Hong Kong: the importance of smiling during competition.

Upon returning to the international arena after a five-year hiatus due to injury, I made it a point to smile before each race and capture a selfie in the call room. This practice helped me manage my nerves and pressure, allowing me to embrace the experience. To provide some background, I was fortunate to be part of the Nanjing Youth Olympic Games in 2014. This experience greatly influenced my dedication to swimming and my desire to represent Hong Kong. Additionally, I have participated in the World Swimming Championships five times, with the most memorable event occurring in 2021 in Abu Dhabi. This competition was particularly significant as it marked my first international event following shoulder surgery, making it a meaningful milestone. The setting, especially the desert and Ferrari World, added to the enjoyment of that experience. Life often presents challenges just as we strive to achieve our goals. During a swimming competition, I dislocated my shoulder, which was a painful setback. However, I now see it as a pivotal moment. During my recovery, I learned the importance of resetting my mindset to prepare for future challenges. Initially, I hesitated

to undergo surgery, but after experiencing a second dislocation, I realized I was not ready to give up on swimming. When I was selected for my second Asian Games, it reaffirmed my belief in my potential. After graduating in 2019, I committed myself fully to swimming, only to face another dislocation. I firmly believe that when one reaches rock bottom, the only way forward is up.

After enduring a challenging recovery and training period, I broke six more Hong Kong swimming records and earned a place in my third Asian Games. The key to navigating these challenges, in my experience, lies in focusing on small successes and exercising patience. I am fortunate to have received support from my network, and insights from senior athletes about their own injury experiences have been invaluable.

Lastly, I would like to share that I had not executed a block start or diving technique for over five years, relying solely on the backstroke start since my second dislocation. When I finally dove into the water again, it reinforced my belief that overcoming obstacles can inspire others to do the same. In closing, I would like to share my favorite quote: “Nothing in life is promised except death. If you have the opportunity to play the game of life, remember to appreciate every moment, for many do not enjoy the moment until it has passed”.

Thank you.



A black and white photograph capturing a large group of approximately 50 people, including students and staff, gathered in front of a grand school building. They are all dressed in white shirts, creating a sense of unity. In the foreground, a person holds a long, white flag featuring a stylized logo. The background shows the building's architecture with arched windows and a prominent staircase leading up to it. The scene is set outdoors on a grassy lawn under a clear sky.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Basketball

The basketball tournament started on June 12 with a round-robin competition between four teams. The teams were decided in accordance with the self-reported proficiency level of players with the goal of making the teams as equal as possible, while also considering gender and geographical differences. Seeking inspiration from our historical setting in Ancient Olympia and the ancient Olympic Games, the teams were aptly named Alpheus Aces, Elis Elites, Future Flames, and Temple Titans.

With temperatures rising well over 30°C and considering that some teams had no substitute players, the decision was made to play shorter games but keep the full court 4-on-4 playing format. With each match lasting 2 x 5 minutes, the games were the perfect length to provide a challenge without compromising the comfort and well-being of players. Many players reported being beginners and with that in mind, it was the belief of both players and organisers that the rules of half-court basketball might get in the way of free flow playing and fun.

Each team played one match per day for the first three days. At the conclusion, of the round robin, the standings were as follows:

Rank	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
1	Alpheus Aces	Future Flames	Future Flames
2	Future Flames	Elis Elites	Alpheus Aces
3	Elis Elites	Alpheus Aces	Elis Elites
4	Temple Titans	Temple Titans	Temple Titans

After three days of exciting competition, the stage was set for the playoffs. The semi-finals were played on June 16 and after two hard fought matchups





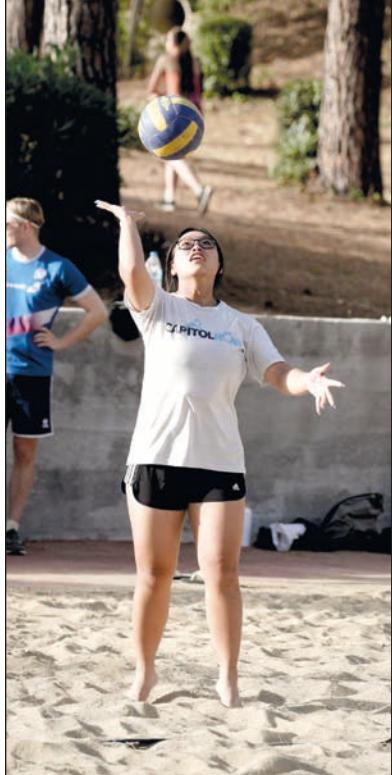
the Aces and Flames secured their spots in the final, while the Elites and Titans would go on to play in the bronze medal match. On June 17 the tournament ended with two of the most exciting matches of the tournament. The Titans edged out the Elites to clinch the third place and the Flames beat the Aces to claim the title.

As expected, there were some bumps along the way but all through the tournament players were happy to step in to help other teams when players were missing or injured. The friendships that were forged on the court continued to grow off the court and players stayed on the courts after the official games to play leisurely games in mixed teams. Overall, the tournament ran smoothly, heat exhaustion was avoided, and no major injuries occurred. The comradery between players within and outside of their teams was a key ingredient for success and an enjoyable time spent together.

Beach Volley

During the 64th Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors, a beach volleyball tournament was held.

Over six days, six teams (Zeus, Hera, Demeter, Apollo, Athena, and Poseidon) of 4-6 players were created to allow for balanced teams composed of beginners and experts (accounting for a total of 32 players from 25 unique





countries). These teams played 1 match for 25 points each day, until they played all opposing teams, to rank themselves a league.

This league considered the number of wins each team had and the differences in points between the winning and losing teams for each game played. This point differential was implemented to determine rankings in case of a tie (in the number of victories) between teams. It became a real incentive for players to give it their all during every match, even when facing defeat.

On the final day, the two leading teams faced each other to determine the final winner while the 4 other teams played to determine the rest of the final rankings.

Football

The Young Olympic Ambassadors 2024 Football Tournament took place from 12 to 18 June. Four teams were formed, each consisting of 8 players. The team names were: Waldi, Hodori, Wenlock, and Miraitowa, in reference to the Olympic mascots.

A total of 32 Young Olympic Ambassadors took part in the tournament and

to keep the number of players in each team equal, the coordinators took part in more than one team. The teams were divided according to gender and level of experience. Each team was made up of a balanced mix of male and female players of all levels (beginners, advanced, professionals). This ensured a more exciting, equal, and friendly competition.

Each team played twice against all the teams and the matches consisted of two 20-minute halves. After each team played the others, the two teams with the most points played the final. The teams did not stay the same until the end of the tournament, as some players moved on to other sports to explore other activities. However, this was not a problem as the teams were reorganised according to the same principles as at the beginning of the tournament.

In the playing field, the participants were encouraged to warm up before the games to avoid any unnecessary injuries, which, indeed, was achieved successfully. The players were also requested to bring one light and one dark T-shirt to easily identify one's teammates during the games. Although everything ran smoothly during the tournament, the only problem identified was that at times some players were more competitive than necessary and often demanding of the newcomers in their respective teams. By the end of the tournament, however, this was no longer the case and the shuffling of the teams helped a great deal.

In general, during the football tournament, all the players had the opportunity to show their skills, meet new people, feel the team spirit, have a good time, and be charged with positivity.

Table Tennis

Participants and Delegations

- Number of participants: 48
- Number of NOCs/Delegations/Organisations: 39

Champion

- Name: Shaghayegh (Sherry) Hosselinzadeh
- Delegation: Islamic Republic of Iran
- Gender: Female

Event Dates

- Start Date: Wednesday, June 12
- End Date: Tuesday, June 18

Games Played

- Approximately 75 Round Robin Matches occurred
- 10 Championship Elimination Matches occurred
- Approximately 45 matches were forfeited or missed.

Event Structure

- Group Composition: 8 groups with 6 individuals per group
- Skill Levels: A mix of beginner, advanced, and professional players, self-determined during registration
- Group Stage: Round-robin format within group
- Advancement: Top player from each group moved on to the championship elimination bracket round

Issues Encountered

1. Assumption of Mandatory Participation: Many players believed that participation was mandatory, which was not the case as it was voluntary.
2. Match Scheduling: Players were required to find their opponents and complete their matches independently, as no scheduled matches were organised.
This led to:
 - Incomplete round-robin matches within groups
 - Some players refusing to play

Recommendations

1. Limit Registration: Reduce the maximum number of participants to 24 individuals.
2. Scheduled Matches: Organise group stage matches in the evenings or during lunch periods to ensure completion.
3. Champion Announcement: Announce and present the champion at the last social/cultural night.



These recommendations aim to enhance the organisation, ensure fair play, and improve the overall experience for participants.

Olympic Day Run

The Olympic Day Run was again a great success. Running together, cheering and motivating each other creates a feeling of togetherness and joy. Participants wanting to run can choose between the 1.5km or the 4km race.



Olympic Day celebration in Ancient Olympia.



Torch relay in the Academy.



ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES

Fine Arts Workshop

With approximately two months to go until the Paris 2024 Olympics and Paralympics, the 64th International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors of the International Olympic Academy (YOA IOA) carried with it a symbolism that corresponds to the sentimental value that Olympia has as a bridge between past and future, like the Games of Antiquity and the Games of the Modern Era established by Pierre de Coubertin.

In 2024, in addition to completing 100 years since the last edition of the Paris Olympic Games, 20 years since Athens 2004 will also be celebrated. All these events are part of the history of the Olympic Movement and together represent milestones in the development of Olympism in each decade.

The Fine Arts Workshop sought to represent the historical timeline covered by the Olympic Movement from 1924 to now, highlighting relevant themes in the fields of sport, culture and education, which the YOA IOA Session seeks to highlight in its regular daily activities. Among these topics are a) the participation of athletes 1924 x 2024, drawing attention to numbers, preparation, gender equality and the number of National Olympic Committees; b) Logistics and environment, since 1924 marked the launch of the first Olympic Village and the construction of new facilities, while in 2024 many of the locations that will host events are already pre-existing and highlight the sustainable footprint and care for the environment; c) communication work and the differences between carrying out the mega event with or without social media; and d) the insertion of new Olympic modalities.

The first meeting of the Workshop had 28 participants, who discussed ways to express the chosen theme. First, the hypothesis was raised of creating paintings divided into two parts, one of them in black and white and the other in colour, expressing the contrast between the past and the present through drawings and

paintings of what each ambassador thought was relevant from the perspective of their cultures and ways of seeing the world. Afterwards, creativity took over and everyone reached a consensus to develop something that would send a message about modern Olympism, a philosophical and pedagogical idea that would convey what the Olympic philosophy proposes, of recognising people without differences, with values as the basic premise. and humanist ideals that enable a view of affection, care, tolerance, plurality, respect, friendship and peace.



And it was from this perspective that it was decided to create the Olympic Rings composed of distinct borders and designs that symbolise the evolution of the Olympic Movement from ring-1) mutual respect between people; ring-2) the union of peoples through the Olympic Spirit, ring-3) values that permeate and give meaning to sporting and educational practice for the development of human beings, ring-4)

the updating of Olympic and Paralympic modalities over the years years, and ring-5) cultural plurality that becomes interesting for all people on a global level.



If the Olympics, were hosted in different cities every four years in order to provide local people the opportunity to develop and prosper through the organisation of the event, the entire world also has the chance to understand the importance of respect for the differences that exist in each environment, and yet promote positive moments, experiences and memories that benefit society as a whole, forming bonds that can last for the rest of your life, just like those made during the preparation and conduct of the Fin Arts Workshop.

The second meeting was intended to divide the participants into five groups, which mediated the execution of each Olympic Ring and decided on the logistics to develop them within the allotted time, in addition to delegating tasks. While the third and fourth meetings were about carrying out the work. On the fifth day, the material was finalised and presented to all Session ambassadors.

Music Workshop

The music workshop aimed at fostering creativity and unity among the ambassadors through music. Their collaborative works and joint efforts were later presented during the “arts happening” night.

The first music session was an introduction for everyone to get to know each other and their diverse musical backgrounds and talents. The coordinators, Iasson and Chloé, perfectly led the session by paving the way for new ideas related to the main topic of the Session: “The Athlete in Society”. The ambassadors bonded over their love for music and started brainstorming all together to come up with shared concepts.

During the following sessions, they divided themselves into different working groups to further develop and refine their ideas. Each group came up with a unique concept for the final show. It was a fun and enjoyable atmosphere, where everyone contributed to the success of the final work.

The final show was both a celebration of unity and diversity featuring five live performances:

1 – Solo Tambourine

The “arts happening” night kicked off with a tambourine solo show by Parvis (UZB) that showcased the traditional music of his homeland.



2 – Medley “Moon Lover” x “Can’t Help Falling in Love with You” x “Hallelujah”

The medley was performed by Huan (CHN) and Hao (CHN), and accompanied on the guitar by Matt (THA). The blend of these three songs demonstrated their emotional vocal harmony.



3 – “Where is the Gold?”

Another group used the instrumental of the Black Eyed Peas famous song “Where is the Love?” and recreated lyrics that revolve around Olympism, the athletes, and the Olympic Games. Pierre (FRA), Emanuel (ITA), Eduardo (POR), Dominik (AUT), and Moises (ESP) wrote verses in their respective languages. The chorus was sung in english, and additional participants like Edgars (LAT), Ludovika (ITA), Oliver (DEN), Parvis (UZB), and Ties (NED) joined.



4 – “Olympic Ambassadors”

Estelle (TOG) wrote this song in honour of her fellow ambassadors, which was accompanied by clapping of the audience, creating an interactive and emotional experience.



5 – “*Take Me Home, Country Roads*” by John Denver

This song was the last performance presented by the music group. The ambassadors chose this sing-along song for its universal appeal, ending the show with an atmosphere of joy and unity.

The music workshop during the 64th International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors was indeed a pure success.



Arts Happening



The arts happening night was a success after five days of five sessions of activities with Fine Arts, Poetry, Dance and Music Workshop. There are 11 (9 shows have been scheduled in advance, and 2 have been added on the spot) programmes in total.

Arts happening was divided into five main sections, a poetry showcase, an art showcase, a music showcase, a dance showcase, and a voluntary programme from participants.

The theme of the poem was around but not limited to Olympia, the Olympic spirit, values, and the story of the relationship with sports and the Olympic Games.





The music workshop had four forms: solo singing, solo musical instrument, creative chorus and chorus.

The Fine Arts community was displayed in the form of a canvas, which covered the countries, sports, culture, Olympic spirit and values of the participants, and presented key themes such as diversity and equality;

The dance community was a series of dance styles, covering dance elements from Europe, Asia, the Americas and other regions, and finally paid tribute to the birthplace of Olympia and the Olympic Academy, and ended with traditional Greek dance.

In this year's arts happening night, we also invited students who love football and basketball to show their skills in football and basketball as the opening show. In addition, we also invited several Olympic athletes to show artistic gymnastics.

Poetry Workshop



a collection of poems and haikus
by Young Olympic Ambassadors

Introduction

The Poets of Olympia is a vibrant collective of Young Olympic Ambassadors, united by their shared passion for the written word. This group participated in a transformative poetry workshop designed to blend the spirit of the Olympic Movement with the creative expression of poetry. Through their engagement, these ambassadors not only honed their poetic skills but also deepened their connection to the Olympic values of excellence, friendship, and respect.

Sessions

Session 1: Indoors with Dada Poetry

Our first poetry session took place indoors, bringing together 16 enthusiastic participants. The workshop was conducted by Fred, who introduced us to the avant-garde world of Dada poetry. This form of poetry, characterised by its

playful and often nonsensical use of language, encouraged the ambassadors to break free from conventional structures and embrace spontaneity. The room buzzed with creativity as each participant crafted unique pieces, revelling in the freedom and unpredictability that Dada poetry offers.

Session 2: Haikus under the stars

The second session transported us to a magical setting under the stars at the sacred ground of Pierre de Coubertin's grove. Led by Claudia, this class focused on the art of writing haikus, a traditional Japanese form of poetry known for its brevity and connection to nature. Surrounded by the serene beauty of the grove, the young ambassadors found inspiration in the natural world, composing haikus that captured fleeting moments of tranquillity and reflection. Claudia's guidance helped participants channel their observations into precise and evocative three-line poems, deepening their appreciation for both poetry and the natural environment.

Dada

By Alfred Varnik

Expectant of the academic thrill
The inner peace I now feel within
Overwhelmed by humid weather
Wondering why I brought a sweater

Thrilled to be drilled in Fred's poems
Poems in the phloem of grateful plants
from the constant sprinklers, show 'em
Wow, Greece will never be my home
Pow

Dada

By Yilmaz Sungur

i was only expectant when i thought about olympia
in the air such a peace blowing through
no more overwhelmed feeling when you drink ouzo

i am wondering and wondering who was walking here in history
that the one who make me thrilled here in this story
grateful trees making me feeling it
wow
we are home!

Dada

By Patricia Uapunduka

i'm usually on my feet with this,
expectancy tends to come naturally for me
i expect too much or pray for too little see
i was at the back of the line when God was giving people everything!
and i am usually tip-toeing on a thin line of hope and i seem to be in
battle with suffering and most of the time i tend to find myself digging
graves so that i can relate to people who are resting in peace
i don't enjoy talking much about how i feel
so i write it down that's why poetry is family to me
it leaves most overwhelmed hence why i can't invite people into my land
because houses aren't safe for everybody

maybe after this i'll leave everyone guessing,
leave them wondering on how i've not yet learned my lesson,
on how to not make trauma my main topic when introducing myself
so i guess i should stick to comedy

i tend to leave people thrilled with amusement
not to toot my horn but if i am not drowning in
misery then i'm feeding hearts with pleasantries

i'm almost at the end of it
before anything i'm grateful that you all gave me
the privilege to hear me truthfully in fact, wow, i'm surprised
people haven't left the scenery, i can get dark with my words
so thank you for making this a safe space and a home for me

Olympia

By Claudia Olmedo

expectant like in a dream
looking at your walls and trees full of peace
overwhelmed with your silence that screams:
you can always come back here, my dear
wondering in your gardens if you have a place in your history for me

I breathe your air, olympia
and I'm thrilled. my chest aligns with the music you play when I walk over
your leaves.
forever grateful that we met, my olympia
wow is the only word that can describe you
Allow me to call you home, even if we are not close

Dada

By Terry Tay

it was a long day being dependent on the driver on the road
expectant we were, checking in
greece, oh the peace
wondering around we were overwhelmed by the village,
as the luggage went under the bed

fulfilled and thrilled we were
to the dining hall to fill our bellies we went,
full and grateful after
you know like wow we saw a cute cat that went meow
it was great, just like being at home

What is life?

By Safia Salih

«What is life?» They asked
I learnt through my days in earth
Life is stressful when we expect very much

Peaceful when we accept ourselves and tolerate each other
Amazing wonderland when we stay curious like a child
Thrilling when we face its challenges with bravery

Truly, life is a school
Life taught me to be grateful
Because you never know when storm might come
I prefer to live like a nomadic
Travel and explore the beauties of earth and say
Wow I can't believe i am saying this

But
I don't want to belong
I would prefer to keep dreaming of a life where I can live, share, love
I want earth to be my home

Dada

By Sadhvi Bhadauria

I was expectant in an unknown place where I found peace
The surroundings made me overwhelmed as I was just wandering around
The longer I stayed, the more thrilling it was for me.
Day by day, I felt grateful; the feeling was “wow”
Ultimately, I realised this is the feeling you have when you are home.
This is my home, Olympia!

Journey

By Ho Ee Jean

Expectant to embark, to grow, to level up
Endless blue big ocean, salty breeze says peace
Overwhelmed by the bond, diversity we connect
Wondering the stories we will write in the crunchy
yellow wrinkled pages of history

Thrilled and feeling pink
Grateful, blessed and loved (luved)

Cozy winds, golden shines, stars and flowers WOW
A place closer to dream, to heart is Home

A Journey to Tranquility

By Jamyang Choden

An expectant place awaited for her arrival
She finally found her peaceful place
Seeing everything for the first time,
she was overwhelmed by the sight of the sea and beach.

Her wondering thoughts wondered with the sunset.
The thrilled she felt were unexplainable
She was grateful for this new experience
Wow! She doesn't want to return to her home now, she thought.

Brothers

By Jishuvan Ramasundran and Parviz Aghakhanov

Once in a lifetime, a golden opportunity came knocking my door.
I opened the door with so much of Expectance.
Stepping my foot in the room, it gave me Peace once I saw Olympia.

Dear Olympians, my heartfelt overwhelmed looking
at the surroundings of Mother Nature in Olympia
which made me wondered of the beautiful scenery.

The thrill of being an Olympic Ambassador made me feel honoured
and grateful. Looking at various Olympians in their beliefs,
culture, dreams and hope to achieve greater heights made me felt wow.

Here I am feeling home with a huge Olympian family.

Wondrous Amazement

By Fred Quek

When I first arrived,
Expectant I was

A feeling of peace overwhelmed me,
What a wonderful place this was.

I found myself wondering the grounds, thrilled to be around.
I knew how grateful I was now, and all I could think of was wow!
Even as I had just arrived, I knew deep down this is where home was.

Collection of haikus

Early motivation

by Claudia Olmedo

felt in love with you
when I was a little child
you ask me to fly

Olympic memories

by Claudia Olmedo

we met in Sydney
i visit you in Rio
let's meet soon again

Lessons

by Claudia Olmedo

you and your heroes
taught me how to dream bigger
forever grateful

.....

by Zulaiqah Abdul Rahim

damn, it's olympics
friendship, excellence, respect
true values, no less
five coloured circles
lies a dream for all athletes
to chase, feel glory

The five circles

by Safia Salih

don't expect me to quit
i'm in love with the 5 circles
it is my personal refuge

1,2,3, olympism

by Arman Avetisyan

friendship and respect
only excellence is left
here are the values

Damn

by Fred Quek

damn they closed the gate
why though? thought we are special
guess not, zorbas then!

Wonderful night

by Fred Quek

crickets around us
friends and family surround
wow what a wonderful night

Chase

by Ho Ee Jean

age of three, still kiddo
strike of emergence to olympics pops
endless passion and beautiful
pictures
sets her heart all for it

Zombie in olympia

by Tajbiha Tun Nur

i was like zombies
no energy, fascination or love
olympia, what is you are?

Open the window

by Tajbiha Tun Nur

it's not an ending
if you have ever been to olympia
just open the window

THE MAGIC OF SOCIAL EVENINGS

The social evening is always a highlight of the IOA Session, encapsulating the essence of the Olympic spirit. It is a night where barriers dissolve, and the global community comes together in celebration of diversity and mutual respect. This year's event was particularly magical, as the participants bonded over shared experiences, fostering lifelong friendships and a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry of cultures represented.

1. Cultural Showcase: Delegations showcased their rich cultural heritage through presentations of traditional practices, music, and dance.
2. Culinary Delights: Each delegation brought a variety of traditional foods, allowing participants to savor and experience flavors from around the world. This gastronomic journey provided a tangible connection to the diverse backgrounds of the ambassadors.

Three separate social evenings were held throughout the Session in Olympia:

- Indoor Session:
 - Quizzes and Presentations: An engaging session was held indoors where participants took part in quizzes and gave presentations about their countries. This interactive format allowed for a deeper understanding of each delegation's history, culture, and values.
- Outdoor Sessions:
 - Marble Steps Gathering: The iconic marble steps of Olympia served as the venue for two outdoor sessions, where participants engaged in discussions and cultural exchanges in a relaxed and open environment.
 - Travelling the World in Olympia: Through these outdoor sessions, participants metaphorically travelled the world, sharing stories, learning new dances, and immersing themselves in each other's traditions. The natural setting of Olympia amplified the sense of unity and wonder.





In conclusion, the annual social evening was a resounding success, showcasing the power of cultural exchange and the unifying spirit of the Olympic movement. It not only highlighted the participants' diverse backgrounds but also underscored the importance of mutual respect and understanding in building a harmonious global community.

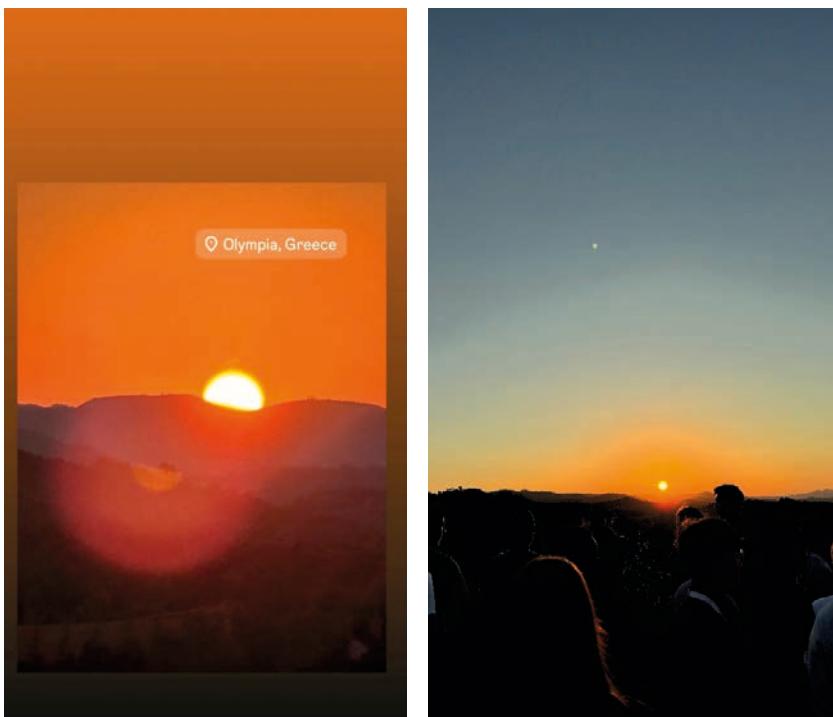


SUNRISE AT THE KRONION HILL

Date: June 19

During the 64th Session of YOA, we held the sunrise hiking in Kronion Hill. We did not set a specific date for this activity in advance; instead, we decided based on our daily schedule. To ensure the quality of the ambassadors' lectures and learning, we discussed and agreed in a meeting to schedule the sunrise hike for the morning of the closing ceremony, June 19. So that the ambassadors could participate in the activity without affecting the efficiency of the lectures.

To maximise efficiency and allow for a bit more rest, we set the latest



departure time at 5:30 am. Despite everyone's busy schedules and the exciting art performance the night before, we were pleasantly surprised to see that around 60 ambassadors joined us in Kronion.

Feedback

The consensus was that the activity was very meaningful. The beautiful sunrise combined with the bird's-eye view of the ruins left an unforgettable impression.

Challenges

The route to the summit had some steep sections, and the early start was challenging for some participants with lower stamina. However, with team support, everyone successfully reached the top. The summit itself had limited space, which constrained the number of participants it could accommodate.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKING GROUPS





CYCLE A

French-Speaking Working Group 1

Question 1: How can the term “excellence” of the Olympic athlete be redefined in today’s society?

Excellence, often associated with the achievements of Olympians, has traditionally been defined by sporting performances and medals. However, in today’s society, it is crucial to redefine this term to encompass the athlete as a whole, considering not only their sporting performance but also their values, social and environmental impact, and personal and academic achievements.

Sporting performance remains central to Olympic excellence. Medals and records are indicators of commitment, but they should be seen as gateways to a broader understanding and appreciation of the athlete. These achievements demonstrate dedication and discipline that extend beyond the realm of sport.

The values embodied by the athlete, such as leadership, integrity, sportsmanship, and resilience, are essential qualities that enable athletes to serve as role models. These values emphasise respect for the rules and for others, as well as the ability to overcome challenges, both in sport and in everyday life.

Social and environmental impact: Olympic athletes have a significant influence on society and can champion essential causes. For example, their community involvement and awareness of environmental protection reinforce their role as role models, contributing to the fight against climate change.

Academic background and personal development of an Olympian are also crucial. Well-rounded athletes can provide enriching perspectives through their actions and communication. Mental health, equally as important as physical fitness, enables athletes to perform at their best and lead balanced lives.

To educate athletes about this broader notion of excellence, it is essential to highlight that they are more than just sportsmen and sportswomen. The Olympic

athlete must be seen as an ambassador for their nation, reflecting the values mentioned above.

This holistic vision encourages athletes to aspire to greatness that goes beyond sport and to commit to building their own image. This new standard of excellence aims to inspire future generations and promote unity.

Question 2: What qualities and initiatives can make an Olympian a good ambassador for peace?

Sport is a form of soft power that generates peace by bringing people from different cultures together, promoting mutual respect, and developing communication and cooperation skills. By definition, Olympic athletes have the potential to become ambassadors for peace, as they transcend cultural and political barriers through their status and commitment. Their involvement in promoting peace can therefore have lasting effects through various qualities and initiatives.

Olympic athletes embody essential qualities that contribute not only to their sporting success but also to their status as models and leaders in society. Qualities such as resilience, commitment, determination, integrity, respect, friendship, and empathy make an athlete a dedicated and honest individual who cares about the community and shows compassion for others. These traits position them as ambassadors for peace.

Examples of initiatives that athletes can undertake as ambassadors for peace:

- **Educating and inspiring young people:** Organising workshops and sports camps to educate young people about Olympic values, including those of peace and tolerance.
- **Using social networks:** Leveraging their reputation on these platforms to spread messages of peace and encourage positive behavior.
- **Participating in events with peace organisations:** Engaging in events organised by NGOs and international institutions dedicated to promoting peace.
- **Collaborating with sports organisations:** Working closely with Olympic committees and other sports organisations to advance peace initiatives.
- **Calling for pacifism:** Making public calls for non-violence and peaceful conflict resolution.



The example of Yusra Mardini, a Syrian swimmer and refugee, stands as an inspiring model of an ambassador for peace through sport. In addition to her impressive sporting career, her humanitarian commitment – particularly as the founder of the Yusra Mardini Foundation – uses her platform to raise awareness of the refugee crisis and promote messages of tolerance and mutual aid.

Modern athletes can use their fame to embody and promote peace by drawing on personal qualities and the values of Olympism. Sports organisations could play a crucial role by supporting these athletes and establishing a specific status for ambassadors for peace, conferring additional rights and responsibilities or even by introducing specific rules that would grant certain additional rights and responsibilities to the designated athlete.



English-Speaking Working Group 2

Question 1: Which initiatives can be used to enhance collaboration between the IOC, IPC, and IOA to best integrate retired athletes into the corporate space?

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) collaborate with athletes by providing platforms for their voices to be heard. Both organisations involve athletes in decision-making processes through athlete commissions, forums (Athlete365 Career+), and representation on various committees. This collaboration ensures that athlete's perspectives are considered concerning the Olympic and Paralympic Movement, promoting athlete's welfare and enhancing the overall sporting experience.

The International Olympic Academy (IOA) on the other hand is an educational institution committed to advancing Olympic principles and philosophy. The primary goal is to provide education and motivation to people through programmes, seminars, and research on Olympism, sport, and culture.

Several initiatives have been created by the IOC and IPC to help retired athletes in their post-athletic careers. IOC and IPC in collaboration with athletes, can develop joint career transition programmes that include skill development workshops, leadership training and mentorship opportunities, equipping them with the necessary tools for corporate success. Creating tailored employment and internship opportunities can provide practical experience and job placements. Professional networking and support systems can be helped by establishing alumni networks. Moreover, promoting dual career paths encourages athletes to pursue academic and vocational training alongside their sporting endeavours. Highlighting retired athletes' unique experiences and qualities in corporate settings can help break stereotypes and showcase their values in the business world. By implementing these initiatives, the IOC and IOA can support athletes' transition from sports to successful careers in the corporate sector.



Enhancement of career opportunities, financial stability and personal growth can be achieved by implementing those initiatives. Athletes gain valuable skills, professional networks, and a sense of purpose beyond their athletic careers. While these benefits are gained by retired athletes, the IOC and IOA can raise their reputation to a good level as these organisations genuinely care about athlete's welfare. Further, these organisations can attract more corporate partnerships and sponsorships, leveraging the unique qualities of Olympians in the corporate world.

Question 2: How can society take advantage of the values promoted by Paralympians?

The Paralympic Movement is centered on Paralympic Values, according to the International Paralympic Committee (IPC); looking back to the history of the Paralympics, we can see how athletes have showcased Paralympic values through their incredible accomplishments, showing that obstacles can be overcome and fueled the change with dedication, bravery and determination.

Determination: Tatyana McFadden, born with spina bifida and initially without access to a wheelchair in a Russian orphanage, is a true example of determination. She became a Paralympic champion in both the Summer and Winter Games across multiple sports. Despite many setbacks, McFadden's relentless pursuit of excellence highlights the importance of perseverance and hard work in achieving one's goals.

Equality: Ellie Simmonds, a swimmer with achondroplasia, shows the value of equality. She has won many Paralympic medals and uses her platform to advocate for more inclusion and recognition of people with disabilities. Her efforts promote the idea of equal opportunities and respect for all.

Inspiration: Jonnie Peacock, a sprinter who lost his leg after contracting meningitis, shows the value of inspiration. His success on the track and his efforts to change how people view disability through media appearances inspire others to look beyond physical limitations and see the potential in every person.

Courage: Jessica Long, who had both of her legs amputated below the knees because of a congenital condition called fibular hemimelia, is an excellent example of courage. She has won multiple Paralympic gold medals in swimming.

Her strength in overcoming social and physical barriers shows the bravery needed to face and conquer adversity.

Our recommendation is to translate the values exemplified in these stories into practical actions for everyone:

- Educational Institutes and organisations should integrate the paralympic values into their academic curricula. Paralympians' stories can help dispel the myths regarding disabilities present in society.
- The media should promote the Paralympic values by presenting the Paralympians' performances and stories at the same level as the Olympians.
- The Policy Developers can refer to the paralympic values to create and enforce laws that promote accessibility and equality. This can lead to a more equitable society.

English-Speaking Working Group 3

Question 1: What criteria should be mandatory for athletes to possess in order to be elected to the National Olympic Committee's Athletes' Commission?

Electing the right athlete to represent a National Olympic Committee (NOC) Athletes' Commission can significantly influence the effectiveness and integrity of the commission. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has already suggested some key considerations such as the demonstration of Olympic values, achievements, awareness, experience, leadership, advocacy, communication skills, integrity and ethical values. In this paper, we suggest that the IOC can consider concrete criteria that must be fulfilled in order for an athlete to be elected to their NOC's Athlete Commission. In modern society, more is required from the members of the NOC Athletes' Commission. The elected athlete must embody the Olympic Values of excellence, friendship, and respect, and adhere to the principles of Olympism, including being able to work collaboratively and have a broad network of colleagues in order to advance to collective goals and vision of their fellow athletes.

The process begins by defining clear criteria based on these values and principles. Excellence is not just about athletic achievement but also about the dedication to personal improvement and the pursuit of excellence. The elected athlete should have a record of success and perseverance in their sport, reflecting their commitment to these ideals. Besides excellence, friendship and respect are equally crucial. The athlete must be able to work collaboratively with others, respecting diverse viewpoints and fostering a sense of fellowship within the commission and the broader athlete community. They should demonstrate a history of positive relationships with teammates, competitors, and officials, highlighting their ability to build and maintain constructive and supportive environments.

Aside from these important values, which are aligned with the principles of Olympism, a member of the Athletes' Commission needs to not just have the understanding of their nation, but also a broader international landscape. These criteria are even more important now, given that the world we live in is greatly connected, and closely impacted by geopolitical conflicts and tensions. As such, the athlete ideally should be aware of the global surroundings.

In conclusion, the right athlete for the NOC's Athletes' Commission is one who not only exemplifies the Olympic values, and embraces the principles of Olympism, but one that also has a profound understanding and awareness of their local and global context. By maintaining certain criteria mandatory for their election, the role played by Athletes' Commission representatives from each NOC creates a sustainable future and has a bigger impact than ever. Therefore, we suggest that the IOC amend the Olympic Charter's Rule 28 (Composition of the NOC) to include these recommended criteria for the election of AC members so as to ensure equal implementation across all NOCs with regard to the election process of their Athletes' Commission.

Question 2: What makes a holistic coach, balance between performance and wellbeing of an athlete?

A holistic coach should be able to find the perfect balance between the performance and well-being of an athlete by integrating physical training, mental resilience, as well as emotional and social stability. This holistic approach will not only ensure the success in an athlete's sport but also will help to maintain a healthy and fulfilling life outside of it. The need for holistic coaching has become pertinent in contemporary society, as previously some athletes would have performed exceptionally well in their disciplines, however, their mental and emotional health may have suffered because of the way in which they were coached.

The relationship between a holistic coach and athlete not only focuses on the athlete's physical ability, but also their emotional well being and has an element of trust. It has shifted from an authoritarian to a more collaborative and empowering approach, where the bond is strong and unique. Therefore, they are striving for excellence together and for constant improvement.

A coach with a holistic approach understands that optimal performance

is a result of meticulous physical preparation. They develop tailored training programs that focus on the athlete's strengths and address their weaknesses. This includes strength and conditioning exercises, recovery protocols and such. The coach continuously monitors progress, adjusting the programme to ensure peak performance without overtraining, thus preventing injuries.

A holistic coach employs techniques such as visualisation and mindfulness to enhance mental resilience. They encourage athletes to develop a positive mindset, which may help them to cope with stress and competition anxiety. Regular mental training sessions are integrated into the athlete's routine, fostering a resilient attitude that is essential for sustained success.

A holistic coach identifies the emotional challenges athletes could face, such as fear of failure and pressure to perform. This approach helps to provide a supportive environment where athletes feel comfortable enough to express their emotions. By addressing emotional well-being, coaches help athletes maintain focus and motivation.

Moreover, coaches should be able to detect the athlete's desire and needs in training. As they get to know their athlete and invest time in understanding their goals and motivations. A road can be traced to achieve this and at the same time start building a healthy long term plan taking into account how well they can handle stress, and competition and being able to set new goals to achieve even higher places.

In conclusion, it is noted that a holistic coach is able to find balance between the performance and well-being of an athlete by integrating mental, physical, emotional, and lifestyle factors into the athlete's daily training sessions. Ultimately, their commitment to nurturing the holistic development of athletes enables them to seek both on and off the field, promoting a more sustainable and more fulfilling athletic journey. This holistic approach not only increases athletic performance but also helps to maintain the athlete's overall health and happiness, leading to a more fulfilling sports career and life.

English-Speaking Working Group 4

Question 1: How can the NOCs instruct their athletes, future Olympians, to become influential role models in modern society?

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), the supreme organisation overseeing Olympic sports, has led to a massive expansion in the sports industry. An essential component of the Olympic Movement, each nation has a National Olympic Committee (NOC), which is run by the IOC. Through their NOCs, athletes can rise to prominence in their communities. This can be accomplished with well thought out capacity-building strategies and motivational initiatives.

Firstly, the main goal of capacity building is to make sure that athletes understand the impact and authority they have as role models. The athletes must be helped to recognise themselves as significant role models in society at a young age and grassroots level through workshops led by NOCs. For instance, veteran national team players or retired athletes should mentor younger athletes by sharing case studies and firsthand knowledge. They will be held accountable for their actions as influencers through self-identification, acting out of altruism. To maintain good communication between them, this ability is expanded from the NOCs to the coaches and athletes.

To become well-known individuals, athletes require support. This can be accomplished by using social media and successful marketing techniques that showcase their noteworthy accomplishments and present them as heroic people. Stressing these accomplishments in terms of morality and sportsmanship is essential. Athletes can become significant figures in their community by participating in volunteer programs, charitable activities, and citizen gatherings. In order to link athletes with the public and encourage support, NOCs should improve media coverage of the athletes in the press, on television, and on other communication platforms. Athletes will engage with fans more personally and forge stronger bonds if they are encouraged to keep up personal social media

profiles. Putting these tactics into practice will increase athlete exposure and foster a sense of pride in our country's athletic achievements.

In summary, through organised capacity-building and support programmes, the NOCs significantly contribute to the development of athletes into prominent members of society. NOCs have the power to transform athletes into national pride-inspiring role models by including these components.

Question 2: How can athletes embody Olympic values to shape a better society and make a positive impact?

The Olympic values are based on three highly important commandments which are respect, excellence, and friendship. These specific principles do not just form the interests of the Olympic Movement, but they also resemble culture, education, and sports promotion. In order for athletes to have a better impact on their societies, the values of excellence, respect, and friendship must be put into practice.

Excellence is not just the highest level of achieving, it is more of the accepting and persistent mindset. It is the journey that the athlete endures in order to become that distinguished excellent athlete. The behaviour and response to their own challenges can inspire the ordinary people in society. For example, in the face of defeat, an athlete can show great sportsmanship by accepting that today the opponent was better and that there are lessons to learn out of any performance and make it an opportunity to grow. This is in spite of the disappointment of not winning. Ordinary people can identify themselves through this and be motivated to keep trying. This can portray the value of excellence.

Respect is an Olympic value which can be demonstrated in various ways. For instance, in taekwondo, if the opponent has an injury in a specific body part, the other opponent shows respect by not engaging in a hit on that area. Another example would be appreciating the sports structure and making the viewer and society think twice in their daily life when facing rule related situations. When viewers see athletes respecting the rules of the game they play, by looking up to their top athletes, they similarly end up doing the same as well in life. Moreover, athletes can advocate for inclusivity and fair treatment in sports, challenging discrimination and promoting equal opportunities for all athletes regardless of background.

Friendship is a value initiating mutual understanding between athletes, teams and nations. For instance when two rivals end up being the best of friends outside competition grounds. This shows how friendship allows competitors to organise events that bring communities together outside the court. Nonetheless, friendship gathers people from different backgrounds and aims in cultivating unity and allows the sharing of common stories. By nurturing friendships across boundaries and using their platform for advocacy, athletes promote unity and raise awareness of global issues, leaving a lasting impact that transcends the field of play.

In conclusion, athletes embodying Olympic values of excellence, respect, and friendship have a profound opportunity to influence society positively. Through their commitment towards these values, the outcome of this journey is bound to be successful.

English-Speaking Working Group 5

Question 1: Is 15/105 Enough? A Critique of Athlete Representation in the IOC?

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) currently includes 15 active athletes among its 105 members. While this inclusion is a step towards acknowledging the importance of athletes in decision-making processes, the number remains insufficient. Given that the Olympic Movement exists primarily for athletes, it is imperative that their representation in the IOC is substantial and diverse. In this report, we will discuss the current representation, advocate for the voices of all athletes to be heard and respected and ask the question of whether 15 members are enough.

We believe that an ideal representation in the IOC should involve approximately 30-35 athletes, accounting for about one-third of the membership. This increase would provide athletes with a stronger influence in shaping the policies that directly affect them. With more seats on the table, athletes can ensure their needs and perspectives are not only considered but prioritised. This shift would move beyond tokenism, encouraging a governance structure that genuinely reflects the interests of its primary stakeholders, the athletes.

The active athletes in the IOC should represent the appropriate level of diversity. Currently, the only requirements for the elected positions are 8 summer and 4 winter athletes. Thus, considering gender, geographical location, culture, religion, paralympians and also the level of athletes is essential to provide a well-balanced voice for all athletes.

Appointed athletes within the Committee would play a key role in enhancing this diversity. The criteria for their selection should be designed to make sure a wide range of backgrounds is represented. For instance, implementing specific quotas or guidelines for appointed athletes can improve inclusivity. By

strategically appointing athletes, the IOC can fill gaps in representation and ensure that all voices are heard.

Dick Pound, IOC member, encapsulates the essence of this issue: “The Olympic Movement exists for the athletes, not vice versa”. This statement underscores the necessity of recognising and accepting that athletes are the heart of the Olympics. Ensuring their voices are heard is not just a matter of fairness but also crucial for the sustainability of the Olympic Movement. Without adequate representation, the IOC risks alienating athletes, which could eventually threaten the integrity and future of the Games.

Question 2: How can National Olympic Committees support their retired athletes?

The transition from the life of an elite athlete to a civilian can be challenging. Issues like career planning, financial stability, and identity crisis can leave retired athletes feeling lost. The IOC supports this transition through Athlete365 Career+ programme; however, the responsibility often falls on the NOCs to provide specific support.

Athletes' support is not equitable worldwide as many NOCs struggle with inconsistent implementation of post-retirement programmes, often due to disparities in funding, resources, and organisational priorities. Some NOCs lack mandatory programs that are crucial for guiding athletes through career transitions, enhancing financial literacy and supporting mental health. Implementing such programmes would help ensure that all athletes receive equitable support as they transition to a new chapter in life.

The IOC, as the Honorary Member Richard Pound suggested, should take a more proactive approach by requiring all NOCs to implement mandatory post-retirement programs for athletes. These programs could provide guidance on their career transition, financial literacy and mental health support. Therefore, we suggest a two-pronged approach to the NOCs:

1. Career Transition Programmes

For career transition, these programmes can help athletes' transition by offering personalised career counselling, skills development workshops, and job placement services. Some good examples include the Algerian NOC's Solidarity

Department and Communication team, which organise weekly meetings with athletes to provide encouragement and guidance in choosing a new career path. These meetings often feature success stories from former Olympic champions who have successfully transitioned to new careers, offering inspiration and practical advice. The US Olympic and Paralympic Committees also provide career coaching and networking opportunities tailored to retired athletes.

2. Supporting Athlete Alumni Associations

In addition to post-retirement programmes, establishing strong alumni networks through NOCs is essential. These networks can connect retired athletes with current ones, fostering mentorship opportunities and facilitating knowledge transfer. By creating a sense of community, alumni networks allow retired athletes to share experiences and inspire future generations. The IOC can assist in implementing these networks by providing guidelines and support for NOCs, ensuring they have the resources to build and maintain these connections.

English-Speaking Working Group 6

Question 1: How can the Olympic Movement promote the importance of mental health and well-being?

Currently, there are initiatives present to support professional athletes along their sporting journey. Despite these initiatives, professional athletes still face difficulties coping with mental health issues. Thus, our findings below surface current real-time issues and possible solutions to better equip professional athletes with tools along their careers.

The Olympic Movement currently promotes the importance of mental health for professional athletes with initiatives such as the *Athlete 365* and its assessment of the *Mentally Fit Toolkit*, and more development is underway. In recent years, there has been a rise in professional athletes opening up about their mental health struggles during major competitions. These struggles include pressure and expectations from stakeholders to perform at peak levels as well as criticism and harsh unconstructive feedback. One example would be gymnast Simone Biles at the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020 or tennis player Naomi Osaka at the French Open in 2011.

Below are a few suggestions that can help combat these issues:

Raising awareness through Partnerships and Collaborations: Access to sports psychologists and mental health organisations during training and competition helps to reduce stigma and encourage open conversations. Along with training and educating coaches and support staff to identify and address concerns.

Mental Health Ambassadorship: Appoint athlete ambassadors to share their mental health experiences, struggles, and sacrifices and humanize their experiences beyond their achievements.

Research and funding: Research on mental health in sport and its benefits

would contribute to evidence-based funding initiatives. Supporting evidence would also serve as a historical reference for future generations.

Our suggestions above would help develop the interconnectedness of physical and mental well-being and promote a holistic approach towards mental health for professional athletes. Monitoring and evaluating the process (implementation, observation, and analysis) would ensure a holistic approach.

Question 2: What are the best practices for preparing athletes for life after professional sport?

We are focusing on the significant influence athletes have on enhancing sports and Olympism. Recognizing their impact, the IOC is developing strategies to promote these areas. Still, these programs have several areas that need improvement. Thus, we aim to address the thesis, “What are the best practices for preparing athletes for life after professional sports?” to find solutions.

The Athlete365 programme supports athletes throughout their careers and beyond. It offers 24/7 support, providing continuous access to psychological assistance, career counseling, and well-being resources, ensuring help is available anytime for both immediate and long-term needs. However, maintaining 24/7 support is resource-intensive and costly. Athletes might become overly reliant on remote assistance, missing out on face-to-face mentorship, and ensuring consistent quality across time zones is challenging. Online courses, while flexible, lack personal interaction and require high self-discipline, with technology access posing potential issues.

Adjusting to real life: Upon the retirement of athletes, begins a new chapter in their lives, a new exciting challenge of charting their next step. However, athletes would like to use their expertise but it is a difficult path for them after they finish their sporting career, because previously their life consisted of training, traveling & recovery. This is the time to decide their future paths which can be quite challenging as they have always been in sports routine. One of the popular pathways can be staying in the sports field but in different positions like professional coaches, managers, and officials. Education is an important tool in everyday life so another pathway for athletes is to pursue higher education. With that being said, education is the key to unlocking an athlete's future employment.

Financial literacy: is crucial for athletes to ensure long-term financial

stability and success. Professional athletes often earn high incomes, without proper management, which makes them face significant financial challenges. Through setting up a detailed programme like the one set in Singapore, athletes can better understand their income versus expenditures and plan for the future.

Olympian Internship Programme: The IOC's Olympian Internship Programme gives a long-term opportunity to Olympians to adapt to the working environment after finishing their athletic career. However, this may not be the permanent solution for all athletes because of limited slots. As a solution, the IOC can delegate the responsibility to NOCs to open a path for athletes to start contributing to the development of sports.

A comprehensive and sustainable system that includes financial management, life adjustment assistance, job placement services, and internship programs is essential for athletes' success both during and after their sports careers. These combined efforts ensure athletes can transition smoothly into new professional roles, achieve financial stability, and lead fulfilling lives beyond the realm of sports.

English-Speaking Working Group 7

Question 1: Will the Paris 2024 Olympic Games really be the first Games with true gender equality for athletes?

The IOC is presenting the Paris 2024 Olympic Games as a historic Games for gender equality in athlete participation. For the first time in the history of the Olympic Games, 50% of the athletes will be female and 50% male. This means that of the 10,500 athletes taking part, there will be 5,250 women and 5,250 men. But with the debate about inclusion in several countries, some might argue that gender equality is more than just looking at the number of women and men. So, can the IOC say that the Paris 2024 Olympic Games will be truly gender equal?

It must be acknowledged that the debate on gender is polarising and that there are many different opinions and perceptions on the subject. This paper does not seek to provide an answer to this dilemma, but rather to encourage a discussion in which all sides are heard.

The Cambridge Dictionary describes “gender” as “a group of people in a society who share certain characteristics or behaviours that the society associates with being male, female, or some other identity”. This description was updated in 2022. In November 2021, the IOC published the Framework on Fairness, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations. The terms used by the IOC for the framework show their recognition of gender fluidity and their ambition to include it.

Although both sources state that gender is more than a focus on sex, sport only accepts and promotes a binary system. Anyone who does not identify within this binary system may not feel included. Therefore, it’s questionable to claim that the Paris 2024 Olympic Games will be the first gender inclusive Games in the history of the Olympic Games without taking into account that gender is not only binary.

As mentioned above, the dilemma of gender equality, including other identities, is seen differently by many around the world. With the influence the IOC has and the framework it has published for 2021, it has a responsibility to keep the conversation going. This could be done by including all perspectives when discussing and promoting gender equality in relation to the Olympic Games, especially in Paris 2024.

Since the first Olympic Games in Athens (1896), we've come a long way in terms of gender equality. Now we're at the forefront of another major revolution. And with the whole world watching, the Olympic Games have a responsibility to make sure everyone is heard.

Question 2: How could the topic of mental health in athletes cease to be a taboo in society?

The mental health of athletes is often overlooked and perceived as taboo in society for a variety of reasons, most of which stem from cultural norms. Is the topic of mental health for athletes really a taboo?

Mental health for athletes is a taboo for a couple of reasons:

- Stereotypically, athletes are perceived as strong and stable: This can discourage athletes from speaking on mental health issues.
- Cultural norms: In many cultures, there's a pervasive reluctance to mental health and this taboo extends beyond sports, reflecting broader societal issues, where mental health struggles and vulnerability may be seen as personal failures.
- Fear of negative consequences: Athletes may worry about admitting to mental health issues, fearing this may lead to potential loss of opportunities. This fear stems from a sporting culture where collective glory is prioritised over individual well-being.
- Masculinity and mental strength: In many parts of the world, traditional masculinity is closely linked to mental resilience and stoicism. This association pressures athletes to conform to these ideals, making it harder for them to seek help or openly discuss their mental health.

So how can athletes and associations work on ending the stigma around mental health? In order to break the stigma around mental health for athletes

and work towards a positive change athletes and associations could work on the following:

- Promoting campaigns that speak more about mental health for athletes.
- Work on producing educational materials working with athletes and counsellors to promote a better understanding of mental health for athletes.
- Advocating for the granting of access to mental health resources for athletes.
- Working towards a prioritisation of providing counsellors at NOCs for athletes in need.

English-Speaking Working Group 8

Question 1: Should Olympians and support staff have a mandatory Olympic education prior to participating in the Olympics?

As the Olympic Games garner global attention, the conduct and preparation of all involved come under scrutiny. This consideration spans various dimensions, including the perception and acknowledgement of the Olympic Movement and values. There is a disconnection between what the Olympic Charter and purpose of the IOC is trying to promote, and what the actual general perception is, and the generated outcome. This disconnection highlights the opportunity of such mandatory Olympic-related education in enhancing excellence and beyond by ensuring a common unified understanding and promotion. Examining the implications of mandatory Olympic education provides insight into whether this requirement could elevate the standards and experience of the Olympic Games and its participants.

A training mechanism is needed to ensure that athletes and coaches are aware of the values and history of the Olympic Movement. By understanding the history of the Olympics, they can carry on the legacy with a sense of tradition and pride. This would make the athletes and coaches well fit to present their country in the best possible way.

Athletes require a perspective where they learn that their Olympic experience is not only about the performance, but the values they carry as human beings in the modern society as well. They can be encouraged to meet other athletes and build a holistic approach towards the Olympic Games. This will hopefully help the athletes and coaches thrive during and after their careers.

Also, athletes and coaches need to be aware of their responsibilities and roles to ensure professionalism and safety by laying the foundation standards and norms. A part of this will demand education regarding the code of conduct and anti-doping to ensure fair competition and organisational excellence.

In conclusion, a training mechanism can be put in place to recenter and embody Olympism. A mandatory education programme can be implemented to make sure the athletes and coaches are well-prepared to represent their respective sports and countries in the best possible way. A holistic approach will be stipulated to ensure the athletes and coaches carry the Olympic values and give them the necessary tools for lifelong success during and after their career as an athlete. This is essential to make sure the Olympics values stick with the athletes and coaches while upholding the integrity of the Olympic Games.

Question 2: How to address post-Olympic blues?

Post-Olympic Blues (POBs) refers to the period of depressed mood, lack of motivation, and identity crises athletes often face after the Olympics. The stark contrast between the structured progression and support leading up to the Games and the sudden absence of these elements post-Games makes POBs distinctive. This transition can feel alienating, as the superhuman experience shared with fellow competitors is lost. Despite being common, the darker side of athlete transition is often overlooked by stakeholders and spectators. Understanding POBs, we propose essential questions to bridge short- to long-term fulfillment for athletes.

Understanding the athlete experience involves normalizing POBs, improving our grasp of short- and medium-term processes post-Games, and leveraging athletes' skill development. Normalizing POBs requires an athlete-centered approach that validates their experiences through holistic evaluation and support. Improving understanding of these transitions equips stakeholders – IOC, NOCs, coaches, families, and spectators – to better support athletes. Athletes' transferable skills from Olympic success provide a blueprint for achieving success in new endeavors.

To effectively address POBs, engaging diverse stakeholders is crucial. National Olympic Committees (NOCs) should integrate mental health programmes, supported by funding and global guidelines from the International Olympic Committee (IOC). National and International Sports Federations can promote mental health awareness. Government and sports ministries should allocate resources for mental health initiatives, while health departments collaborate on public mental health campaigns. The sudden absence of post-Games support

significantly impacts athletes, necessitating continuous support by informing athletes beforehand, developing personalized post-Games plans, and conducting regular follow-ups to ensure their well-being and mental health.

Mapping athletes' career transitions involves encouraging early planning for post-sports careers, including financial planning to manage earnings and savings wisely. It promotes continuous education and skill development relevant to future interests and provides access to career counseling and mentorship from former athletes or professionals in desired fields. Athletes are encouraged to pursue internships or part-time work for practical experience. Psychological support is offered to help cope with identity shifts and emotional challenges. Additionally, establishing alumni programmes connects retired athletes with career resources and opportunities. Implementing these steps helps athletes navigate their career transitions smoothly and successfully.

We can enhance the understanding of challenges of POBs by increasing exposure and asking questions. This will inform a framework that incorporates support from all stakeholders throughout the athlete journey. Transitioning from the pinnacle of athletic excellence and global prominence requires specialised support that mirrors the resources needed to attain this level of success, leading programmes such as Athlete 365 can help athletes in this process. It is essential to develop holistic support services that scaffold continued wellbeing and excellence in athlete's future pursuits.

English-Speaking Working Group 9

Question 1: How can Olympians and Paralympians continue representing their NOCs and NPCs after their Olympics career?

After their Olympic careers, Olympians and Paralympians can continue to represent their National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and National Paralympic Committees (NPCs) by leveraging their status and visibility to become role models. These athletes embody the values and spirit of the Olympic and Paralympic Movements and can do this by promoting these ideals and serving as ambassadors of their cultural and philosophical values.

Olympians and Paralympians can continue to represent their Committees post-career by disseminating knowledge, experiences, insights and lessons they have learned through lectures, TED Talks, and similar campaigns to inspire and educate diverse audiences. By participating in these, they promote the values of dedication, resilience, and excellence inherent in the Olympic spirit. Furthermore, they can raise awareness on issues such as mental health, inclusivity, and the importance of physical activity, furthering the impact of their legacy beyond the field of competition. The Olympian Michael Phelps and the Paralympian Karolina Pelendritou are athletes who use their fame to advocate for their respective committees and support initiatives to inspire greater sports participation.

Moreover, Olympians and Paralympians can also represent their committees by getting involved in social activities, such as sharing their own experiences to promote sports values by visiting vulnerable communities that are not physically active. Paralympic athletes can encourage people with physical disabilities to practice sports to improve their quality of life. Working hand in hand with authorities, they could find a way to make their sports more sustainable and accessible to the community. Additionally, with 62.6% of the world's population being social media users, social media platforms are arguably one of the best

ways to get a message across to an audience. Social media platforms allow for an intimate connection between athletes and fans, whereas the former can easily use their social media platforms as a means to influence and inspire their audience in a positive manner, which can be done by sharing media of social campaigns, speaking engagements, or contributing to the betterment of society. Athletes should follow the official Olympics social media guidelines to ensure that they are always representing their committees respectfully and appropriately.

To conclude, by disseminating knowledge, participating in social activities and inspiring their audience through social media, Olympians and Paralympians can continue representing their NOCs and NPCs while embodying values to impact society positively. This ongoing representation highlights athletes' essential role in promoting sports and their Committees' broader cultural and educational missions, which will ensure the enduring legacy and values of the Olympic and Paralympic Movements.

Question 2: Why should the Olympic values be integrated during the Olympic Games/Paralympic Games?

The Olympic Games in Ancient Greece were built on specific values, which are still the foundation on which we stand. Olympic Values bind and strengthen society, and their integration ensures a strong foundation of sports and continuous growth through respect, friendship, and excellence. Despite this, there are Olympic and Paralympic athletes in today's society who are not aware of the values, even though these values are supposed to be the foundation on which the Movement is built.

The lack of knowledge of the Olympic values shifts focus exclusively to the competitive aspect of the Games. The Olympics are about the development of peace, celebrating friendship and the sports that unite us. We need to realise that there should be a balance between these aspects, making sure that the stakeholders in our society know that the Olympic Games are not only for the competing aspect but also a way of living. When an athlete wins medals, it showcases the tangible victory. However, when the athlete starts spreading the Olympic values in society, it will impact building the world into a better place. Athletes have a great power to influence the world and spread the true meaning of Olympism. An example of a time in Olympic History where friendship and

mutual respect led the way was when the two high jumpers, Mutaz-Essa Barshim from Qatar and Gianmarco Tamberi from Italy, shared the gold medal in Tokyo 2020 Olympics. The athletes both had high jumps at the same height, but failed to beat their scores. Instead, they decided to share the gold medal and showed a moment of sportsmanship and the true meaning of Olympism.

The athletes who compete in the Olympics and Paralympics are role models for the younger generation and the public in general. Because of this, athletes should lead by setting good examples and taking responsibility for their leadership role in society. In the Youth Olympic Games, athletes focus on competing and the educational aspect of Olympism. Young athletes learn about the Olympic values through different programmes, develop a strong sense of sportsmanship, cultivate respect for others, and strive for excellence on and off the field. But why do we stop teaching the Olympic Values to athletes when they turn 18? Shouldn't we continue to teach the meaning of Olympism throughout the ages?

Integrating Olympic values during the Olympics and Paralympics is crucial for maintaining the true spirit of the events. Emphasising friendship, excellence and respect helps athletes become role models who inspire others on and off the field. This approach enriches the Games and encourages a culture of respect and understanding. In the end, the real success is not about winning medals but in promoting these values to create a better and more connected world.

English-Speaking Working Group 10

Question 1: Why do some athletes face cultural representation disparities in the Olympic Games?

According to Coubertin, the fundamental characteristic of Olympism is that it should be a religion of athletics promoting internationalism and democracy. From this internationalism, we can infer that the modern Games aim to be inclusive, bringing together diverse cultures in one place. Therefore, because the expression of bodily movements is influenced by each culture, the competitive programme of the Olympic Games should enable the maximum representation of this human diversity.

The criteria for selecting sports present on the Olympic Programmes have varied over time. With the establishment of the “universality of practice” principle, the selection criterion for a sport was based on its popularity and practice worldwide. However, the attempt to create sports programmes that align with the idea of universalism and appeal to emerging stakeholders of sports selection, such as the media, faces the challenge of “gigantism”.

We can observe that of the 32 sports on the Programme of the Games of the Olympiad, at least 20 have European origins and 5 have American and Asian origins respectively. In an event that aims to be equitable, this seems unjustifiably euro-centric. On one hand, an athlete represents their nation. On the other hand, for example, an Asian or African athlete competing in a sport with European origins sees their ability to represent their culture as limited.

Our suggestion is aligned with the work of other Olympic scholars, where each of the five continental associations of National Olympic Committees (NOC) could see several culturally relevant sports included in the Olympic Programme, and consequently, diversity of cultures in the Olympic Games. The most popular sports in these continents may not necessarily be the best cultural representatives.

Thus, perhaps the importance of popularity should be somewhat relativised in favor of other sports that may have less visibility.

Recognising the importance of athletes as social role models and representatives of their culture, the sports on the Olympic Programme should ensure equal opportunity for participation and representation to all nations within the Olympic Movement. The current Olympic Programme demonstrates a clear Eurocentrism that limits the sporting representation of cultures from other regions. Therefore, we believe that a quota system based on the Continental Association of NOCs could contribute to ensuring better cultural representation.

Question 2: How can athletes use their many platforms to advocate social issues?

Athletes possess a unique position of influence, with their platforms offering an unparalleled reach and ability to drive societal change. This power has been exemplified through various instances where athletes have successfully advocated social issues, inspiring others and effecting significant change. In this essay, we will explore real-world examples of such advocacy, discuss the potential challenges athletes face, and propose an effective strategy for athletes to harness their platforms for education and action.

In 2019, Olympian Allyson Felix and more recently Real Madrid player Vinicius Jr, have successfully used their platforms to create change both at a cultural and legislative layer surrounding the topics of gender equality and racism respectively.

However, Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter prohibits “political, religious, or racial propaganda” at Olympic venues. This rule is intended to maintain the Olympic spirit of neutrality, ensuring the focus remains on sportsmanship and athletic competition rather than political or other external agendas.

To effectively use their platforms, athletes can adopt a comprehensive strategy that includes the following steps:

1. Research and Communication: Athletes should conduct thorough research on the issues they wish to address, ensuring they have a deep understanding and can communicate their experiences. This helps in conveying their message effectively and authentically.

2. Consulting Experts: Engaging with authorities who have extensive

knowledge about the issues, such as professors, researchers, and journalists, can provide athletes with valuable insights and strengthen their advocacy efforts. Consulting a diverse group of 6-10 experts can ensure a well-rounded perspective.

3. Crafting Holistic Campaigns: Developing comprehensive campaigns that include both virtual and real-life events can help athletes express their thoughts and reach a broader audience. Utilising social media, public appearances, and community events can create a multi-faceted approach to advocacy.

4. Targeting the Right Audience: Identifying and targeting the right audience is crucial for facilitating change. Athletes should focus on reaching individuals and groups who can influence policy, public opinion, and corporate practices, such as lawmakers, community leaders, and corporate executives.

Athletes are capable of making significant changes and can contribute to a broader movement toward justice and equality. By learning from past examples, understanding the present challenges, and adopting a strategic approach, they can be agents of social change.

CYCLE B

French-Speaking Working Group 1

Question 1: How can we maximise the effectiveness of the Olympic legacy infrastructure in a host city?

First introduced at the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, the concept of Olympic legacy did not formally appear in the Olympic Charter until 2003. The IOC's role is to "take measures to promote a positive Olympic legacy in the host city and the host country". With the Paris 2024 Games only a month away, the importance of legacy has never been greater, and it is therefore the responsibility of the organisers to ensure its success.

Previous editions of the Olympic Games have demonstrated that host cities can suffer on multiple levels when they undertake sports infrastructure and development projects that involve exorbitant costs, only to have these facilities forgotten shortly after the event. For example, a few years after the Rio Games, it remains a sad fact that "some Olympic venues that were poorly planned or disconnected from the needs of the population have now been abandoned" (Demain la ville, 2020). This issue is even more pronounced when we examine the Winter Olympics. Climate change and the difficulty of redeveloping certain areas make it challenging to create a positive legacy. In response to this problem, better management of facilities after the Games is necessary to address the sometimes legitimate criticisms faced by the organising committees of international events. The legacy of the Games means that some infrastructures are inadequate to ensure equal access for all. Optimising the effectiveness of these infrastructures should involve converting or adapting them. For example, the velodrome from the Montreal Games (1976) was converted into a biodome, improving the quality of life for local residents and generating

positive environmental benefits. Another option would be to adapt buildings to meet the needs of the modern population. In the future, sports facilities should be accessible to all, for both sporting and recreational use. They should also be designed and built to meet the specific requirements of both able-bodied and para-athletes, with shared facilities for everyone. This approach will help us move towards a lasting and inclusive legacy.

Successfully navigating this transition is fundamental to ensuring the sustainability of the Olympic model and addressing the growing criticism regarding the viability of organising major international events. Paris 2024 is part of this approach, aiming to create a legacy with a positive social and environmental impact by minimising the carbon footprint while maximising the future use of the new Olympic infrastructure for cultural and sporting activities.

For all these reasons, it is essential to place legacy at the center of an Olympic bid to guarantee a positive economic and social impact. Public participation in this process is also necessary to establish a model that is both sustained and sustainable.

Question 2: How can an Olympic Ambassador become an agent of inclusion in their environment?

Although the role of Olympians has been widely studied in the literature, we are now focusing on how an Olympic ambassador – whether an athlete or a young ambassador – can become an agent of inclusion in their environment. Olympic education, as a fundamental pillar of inclusion, can be seen as a dynamic process that addresses social, mental, cultural, ethical, and physical development. We firmly believe that sport lies at the heart of education, helping to forge a resilient youth, both mentally and physically, who are cooperative, respectful of peace, and committed to applying the principles of fair play in their daily lives.

In her work, Olympian and researcher Sofia Papadopoulou discusses the role of an Olympic Ambassador as an agent of inclusion in their environment, which can be broken down into four main pillars:

1. Community Programmes: Becoming involved in unified sports as an ambassador by organising competitions or sporting events at the local level, bringing together participants from various organisations, such as the Special Olympics, Olympic Games, or Deaflympics.

2. Cooperation for Inclusion: Establishing partnerships between athletes and Young Ambassadors, affiliating with organisations, and advocating for the construction and development of accessible and inclusive infrastructure for athletes and spectators. An example of this is Nabda, the first sports hall dedicated to adapted physical activity in Morocco, which exemplifies building an inclusive environment.

3. Awareness-Raising and Education in Schools: Developing a national action plan tailored to each country, as exemplified by the “Land of Games” label promoted by Paris 2024, and creating a system for ambassador participation in education, such as for seminars or conferences.

4. Innovation: Participating in incubation programmes to encourage, apply, or accelerate sports innovation in the local environment. For instance, the Tibu organisation in Morocco, which operates in the field of social innovation through sport, has established partnerships with embassies, such as the “Sports Orange Corners” initiative with the Netherlands.

In conclusion, there is currently limited access to information about inclusion programmes like the Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP). In our view, the International Olympic Committee, through OVEP, should be recognised as a key player in supporting and training the ambassadors of today and tomorrow. Additionally, the ambassadors themselves must take an active role in promoting inclusion programmes through their communications. Social networks are an essential tool for sharing and inspiring on a global scale. So, how can we better promote the Olympic Values Education Programme’s internet platform globally in the future?

English-Speaking Working Group 2

Question 1: How has social media changed the way people engage with Olympic events and athletes?

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has shifted its approach to social media, recognising its vital role in promoting the Olympic Games. This has recently transformed how people interact with Olympic events and athletes, promoting greater interactivity, direct communication and global participation. Below are some current points that reflect an evolution overtime.

Athlete representation: Social media has allowed athletes to promote themselves as personal brands and have autonomy to control their narrative. It offers new opportunities for marketing and sponsorship by reaching a global audience through collaborations with athletes. This gives sponsors a more direct and effective channel to promote their products, and provides a more personal and targeted approach to the audience.

Fan engagement: Fans can now communicate with athletes, gain access to behind-the-scenes content, and feel more involved in the Olympic Games. Athletes can share their daily activities and bring the Olympic Movement closer to the audience by connecting directly with their followers more personally.

Live Updates: Social media platforms offer real-time updates and live streaming of Olympic and Paralympic Games. It makes them accessible to the public.

Increased Awareness: Social media exposes the lesser-known sports and educates the public on the rules of other sports. It is also used as a platform to promote important social issues. Athletes and organisations can reach a large audience and raise awareness and initiate change in these areas.

Research: By offering live videos and online libraries to let the rest of the world know about the lectures and researchers, the IOA and the IOC keep the public informed about new research in sports.

To conclude, the London 2012 Games completely changed how sports and social media interact. With an estimated 10 million tweets in the first few days, fans all over the world engaged through various platforms like Facebook and Twitter. As we approach the Paris Olympics 2024, social media will also play various roles in society as it will help in amplifying the Olympic spirit. It is also expected that we will have an even more immersive and interactive experience because of the enhancement in the global community's connection to every victory and setback, and as well as the act of uniting people worldwide in relation to athletic excellence.

Question 2: How does cultural diversity impact coaching style and in turn, athletes' performance?

Cultural diversity in sport describes the inclusion and representation of athletes from different national social economic backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities. It enhances the sporting experience and gives equal opportunities. Cultural diversity in sports impacts coaching styles by resulting in varied techniques and perspectives. Hence, it helps to enhance athletes' performances through diverse training methods.

Iceland: Iceland has a small population of approximately 370.000 people which has made it an interconnected community, especially in sports. This interconnectedness is one of the ways that Icelandic culture has influenced sports on an international level. For example, the Icelandic men's national handball team won a silver medal at the 2008 Olympic Games. Another example is that of the Valur Handball Club who won the European Championship after defeating Olympiakos in Athens. However, a limited talent pool also has its downsides. A notable issue is that even if coaches breach a code of conduct they often continue to find employment with different sport clubs. Thus, coaches can have long careers with multiple clubs in their respective sports regardless of the appropriateness of their coaching methods.

India: The culture in India influences coaching styles because of traditional gender roles that often discourage girls and women from participating in sports. For example, females in India face a lot of restrictions from participating in sporting activities during their menstrual periods. However, Indian athletes are often taught to endure hardship and persist despite setbacks. Mhacir Singh

Phogat, a wrestling coach, instilled a sense of perseverance in his daughters in order to prepare them for their physical and social challenges, as a result, both of their careers flourished.

South Africa: South Africa is a multicultural society, divided into three socio-economic classes, namely Model A which comprises the rural communities, Model B for the suburban communities and Model C for the wealthy areas. Therefore, coaches often work in disadvantaged communities and may face challenges such as lack of funding, requiring them to be creative and resilient. Mokgadi Caster Semenya, a middle-distance runner who comes from a rural and disadvantaged area, beat all odds when she won two Olympic Golds in 2008/2016.

Pakistan & Sri Lanka: There are various religions in both countries' cultural fabric. Hence, coaches must consider religious practices, such as; respect for holidays, schedule training according to prayer times and rituals, as well as paying attention to athletes' fasting and dietary restrictions. Mickey Arthur, a South African cricket coach, drove the national teams of both countries to great success through his significant cultural and religious sensitivity.

In conclusion, as the examples show, considering cultural norms and diversity in different countries is key to enhancing athletes' performance.

English-Speaking Working Group 3

Question 1: How can social media negatively impact athletes' mental health and performance?

In the current modern digital time, social media has become a huge part of daily life for all young and middle-age people. It offers a platform for communication, self-expression, and for sharing information. Despite providing opportunities for personal branding and fan engagement, social media also presents significant challenges such as cyberbullying and performance pressure along with many other issues. This report explores the negative impact of social media on athletes' mental health and performance, and hopes to provide recommendations to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to help athletes cope with these issues.

Athletes are subject to public scrutiny, and the criticism becomes more obvious and amplified with social media. American golfer, Jordan Spieth, once said, "Just accepting that everything's in the spotlight, everything's going to be judged". Being in the spotlight increases the risk of receiving hate comments and being "canceled" as well as the possibility of being stalked by strangers. This can significantly affect an athlete's self-esteem and mental well-being. According to a study published in the Sport, Social Media, and Digital Technology athletes who face online harassment report higher levels of anxiety and depression. The constant accumulation of negative feedback can impact an athlete's confidence, leading to poor performance and reducing the enjoyment of their sport. With social media being a platform for sharing content, athletes feel the urge to constantly post their achievements as well as to maintain a positive image among their followers. This constant need can lead to increased performance pressure to meet the expectations of followers. As a result, athletes feel stressed and burn out. According to a research study published in the Journal of Sports Sciences, athletes who are too concerned with their social media presence often

experience increased performance anxiety, which can negatively affect their focus and performance during competitions.

In conclusion, this report recommends the IOC to consider organising an online seminar ahead of the Olympics and Paralympics to educate athletes on how to cope with issues arising from social media. The seminar should be held, the latest, a month before the Games, to spread awareness and provide guidelines on these issues. Along with the seminar, the IOC can develop an international helpline to allow athletes to come forward and share the challenges they face due to social media. Therefore, while social media can offer valuable opportunities for athletes to connect with people and promote themselves, it can also hold a great threat to athletes' mental health and performance. The IOC can do more to help the athletes manage the negative impacts of social media. Ultimately, this is a win-win situation for the IOC as athletes, especially those with huge social media presence, can help to promote and educate people about the Olympic values through their online platforms.

Question 2: Should the IOC create a postpartum recovery programme for female athletes?

Postpartum is a period soon after the delivery of a baby and usually lasts six to eight weeks and ends when the mother's body has nearly returned to its pre-pregnant state. It has been documented that the postpartum period can negatively affect a woman if they are not well supported or cared for. In light of this, we are inclined to propose a postpartum recovery programme that can assist in the new mothers' rehabilitation and restore them to their top performing state. Some athletes aim to return to competition but they do not have the needed support. However, there are some exceptions such as in Japan, whose NOC has introduced a programme to help women to regain their former strength and at the same time helps to manage their time taking care of their new born baby. In light of this, the programme should consist of various branches such as a psychological department, medical department, physical department and child and slumber care.

The psychological department will consist of psychologists who will conduct sessions with the women to evaluate their mental well being. Some mothers may need medication if they are battling with their mental health and therefore,

psychiatrists will also be employed to encourage the best mental health of these new mothers. Additionally, doctors will be employed to do regular check ups on the mothers to ensure their physical well being. They will be tasked to evaluate the health of the mothers, as many new mothers usually neglect their physical and mental health to ensure that their babies and families are well. The medical department may also assist in guiding the athletes on their nutrition to support breastfeeding and their recovery.

Moreover, the physical department will focus on workout plans that are tailored to assist these new mothers in regaining their pre pregnancy fitness levels, in a gradual and safe manner. A gym will be on site to ensure adequate training. Physical therapists will also be present to assist with any postpartum physical issues such as pelvic floor dysfunction or muscle weakness. A slumber room and daycare will be available to the mothers in the event that they need to catch up on their rest or for child supervision during their training times. All departments will work in tangent with each other to ensure the optimal health for the athletes. In order to implement the programme our suggestion is that the IOC delivers a list of guidelines and criteria so that it doesn't deviate from the original goal. NOCs should write a plan of initiatives to follow this programme in order to get a complete understanding of their situation and how they are going to achieve this. After the report is sent and reviewed by the IOC a decision will be taken on how much financial support the NOC's will receive and in return the IOC should receive a quarterly report to measure the progress and success of the programme.

In conclusion, we are inclined to propose a voluntary postpartum recovery programme that can assist in the new mothers' rehabilitation and help restore them to their top performing state. Some NOCs may not be able to implement this idea for several reasons. In those cases, we suggest that the IOC should allow high performance athletes to be able to attend any of the installations correlated to the programme worldwide.

English-Speaking Working Group 4

Question 1: How can athletes, emerging as the next generation of leaders, advocate for the youth in the decision-making rooms through the Olympic Movement?

Athletes, professional or not, are key pillars of the Olympic Movement, providing valuable insights from the grassroots and beyond. Representation is needed in boardrooms, especially by young people. In order to achieve this, strategic and operational processes must be put into action for partaking in federations and NOCs.

Strategically, athletes should be involved in the development of the Olympic Movement, and take board positions even at a young age. Traditionally, younger athletes are viewed as too inexperienced and unable to make decisions. The challenge of promoting democracy and representing young athletes can be described as reform priorities. As John Ellestetr once said; “A fox who doesn’t reach red grapes in a tree and dismisses them as probably sour”. The moral is that it is easy to underestimate what can’t be done. For young athletes to develop the will and confidence to influence their environment or run for the board, participation and influence must be an integral part of that strategy. Since the Movement is based on youth participation, the youth must be valued in decision-making processes. To drive behavioral attitude change, age-based representation is needed for an optimal strategic process.

Athletes’ engagement in board positions should begin when they start practicing sports. For example, athletes should participate in their training programmes and consult club councils on youth issues. NOCs should provide education for leaders, teachers, volunteers, board members, etc., incorporating youth perspectives to promote democracy, values, and development. And on other hand, the athletes should be able to educate in the democracy of the Olympic Movement and provide young athletes with the skills and confidence

to raise their voice. Additionally, conferences, forums and seminars for young athletes can educate and prepare them for important democratic events.

Sports can no doubt change the world. And that's why sport is in a continuous upgrade in order to meet the world's needs. Athletes need a dynamic strategic and operational process in order to achieve successful Olympic representation in their respective society.

Question 2: How do we create a secure environment for athletes and promote unity among stakeholders in sports and the society?

Sports has the power to bring people together, and unite people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and genders. However, it is often observed that unity is undermined due to flaws in the system.

Conflicts arise between athletes and involved parties for many reasons, such as having different moralities, cultural backgrounds, and diverging values. In instances where boundaries are blurred, this can possibly lead to different kinds of pressure. For example, a Taekwondo Olympian recounts how a foreign coach adamantly insisted on the continuation of training despite going through a knee surgery and was still recovering. This insistence by the coach led to the athlete being physically abused through getting hard hit on the leg several times. Another example is the controversy of the Indian Wrestling Federation in 2023. The Indian wrestling chief is being accused of assaulting two female wrestlers sexually. His denial of the allegations and the arrest of the assaulted wrestlers during a protest, infuriated the community and initiated mistrust between the athletes, federation, government and the society.

Being free from any form of assault gives athletes the environment to operate at an optimum level. Although the IOC cannot control all countries at the same time, it can entrust this matter to the NOCs. One solution is for NOCs to create a platform that allows athletes to voice out their grievances safely, free of social burdens or restrictions. NOCs should also strengthen the athletes' representation and participation in decision-making processes. Sports psychologists can attend training and observe the behaviors of coaches and athletes through providing regular reports. This can prevent potential disputes and escalation. More subtle measures can be implemented to promote a long-term safe environment for athletes, in order to build a culture that enables healthy athlete-coach

relationships by providing mandatory communication seminars and workshops. This would foster unity among the coaches and athletes, which, in turn, can lead to a better and unity within the sports environment.

It is clear that sports related disputes overlap in society and can lead to public outcries. The IOC currently has a campaign for safe sports, hence underlining the fact that athletes should be able to grow in a conducive environment. It is important that athletes know their rights and the different mechanisms provided in case they want to report an issue. NOCs can work on putting these in place and ensure that athletes feel comfortable by involving specialists in order to protect them from various forms of abuse. The right relationship between stakeholders in sports can impact greatly on unity in society.

English-Speaking Working Group 5

Question 1: How could the implementation of Olympic values for coaches reduce coaching bias, which is known to affect athlete motivation and performance?

In the sporting world, coaching bias is inevitable and prevalent. However, bias could be both intentional and unintentional. While it is impossible to remove bias entirely, we, having been inspired by the lectures, wondered how we could apply the Olympic Values within the framework of coaching education in hopes of reducing coaching bias. We are of the belief that this would go a long way in reducing coach biases.

Firstly, we would like to set out some examples of coaching biases:

1. Performance-based Discrimination

Athletes who are performing better (i.e. winning medals) are favoured over others, and given more attention and care, focused for better performance and achievements. This might subconsciously affect other athletes on the team. Athlete performance may therefore deprave, due to the belief that coaches are not focusing on them which leads to visible drop in performance. This creates a vicious cycle.

2. Hierarchy-based Discrimination

Senior-level athletes are given better support all-across than junior-level athletes. This provides an opportunity for uneven support even amongst elite athletes. This hierarchy-based discrimination has potential to cause tension between teammates.

We believe the solution to this matter would be the mandatory implementation of an educational training programme for coaches on the Olympic values

emphasising on the importance of respect. By educating coaches the importance of respect, coaches will understand and learn more about acceptance on diversity and equality to all athletes on the team.

We believe athletes who have been treated fairly and equally are more motivated to perform to their best. As elite athletes, they are the best and serve to motivate and inspire others. However, if they are not treated well, they won't be able to be at their best and inspire our communities. Therefore, in order for our Athletes to take their role in society as role models, we must ensure the right environment for them to maximise growth and mental wellness.

Question 2: What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of merging the NOCs and NPCs?

Pierre de Coubertin strongly believed that sport is for all and should be played by all. Therefore, the Olympic Movement is characterised by inclusion and aims to eliminate social barriers. The creation of NOCs and NPCs was done to achieve this goal and make sport accessible to everyone at a national level in all parts of the world and to give a sporting opportunity to everyone in the world eventually.

Globally, most NOCs and NPCs are separate entities, focused on developing each movement independently. Only four are integrated, namely Saudi Arabia, the United States, Norway, and South Africa.

One of the advantages of unifying the NOCs and NPCs is to reduce stigmas and promote the equal treatment of athletes. An example of this would be the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee who is committed to endorsing the Olympic and the Paralympic Movements alike. Through their projects, we have seen how they promote both their Olympic and Paralympic athletes as well as displaying inspiring stories from one united movement and creating national and international heroes.

Another positive aspect to take into account when considering the integration of both committees is the support in the resources used for their operation and support for the athletes. For example, the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee seeks to create a sustainable sports system that can guarantee excellence regardless of the discipline.

A downside of integrating the two committees is the logistical challenge, especially with the difference in the needs of Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

Paralympians and Olympians differ greatly in the way they compete. Not only do para-athletes require accessible sports facilities and venues, NPCs also have to have specialised technical officials to help para-athletes with their IPC classification, which may change from time to time. Additionally, although the disciplines can be similar between the Olympic and Paralympic sports, it is crucial to bear in mind that they often have different rules and necessities since the International Federations are different from that of able-bodied sports.

In conclusion, we do not recommend merging both entities together; however, we propose the creation of a liaison office that works to bridge the two committees with each providing staff for the liaison office, where staff of both entities can discuss issues and concerns that affect them both and reduce redundancies. With our proposed solution, both committees can work closely together for the benefit of their athletes while respecting the objectives and role of each one of them in accordance with the Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

English-Speaking Working Group 6

Question 1: What are possible collaborative opportunities between Olympic and Paralympic athletes to promote a more inclusive culture?

The Olympics and Paralympics stand out on the world stage as one of the most important sporting events. They serve as platforms for athletes to demonstrate their outstanding athletic skills and competitive spirit.

Currently, the Olympic Games are more recognised than the Paralympic Games. We believe that an inclusive environment enables everyone to participate and thrive by having equal opportunities to engage in sports – whether as players, coaches, officials, or as a sport fan. To encourage everyone to practice sports and participate in sport competitions, it is essential to reduce the gap between Olympic and Paralympic athletes. Thus, we would suggest possible strategies to bridge this gap.

Collaborative Sport Carnivals: These collaborative events would empower Paralympic and Olympic athletes to have opportunities to share a wide variety of experiences related to sports. Possible activities include physical activities (e.g. wheelchair basketball, goalball), gamification of sport values (e.g. “FIX IT”), and social events to promote unity and inclusion. One example is by the Australian Sports Commission, which is actively organising sports carnivals where the attendees have the opportunity to witness Olympic and Paralympic sports at the same event.

Holistic Coaching Model Development: We believe a healthy sporting environment is key to ensure everyone is treated equally from their early life stages, which facilitates creation of an inclusive environment.

It is often challenging for coaches to provide coaching that takes disabilities into consideration. Thus, we suggest each country’s NOCs and/or NPCs to offer both financial and educational support, such as considering comprehensive

annual training workshops that provide coaching methods, best practices and communication strategies for coaches to better serve athletes of all backgrounds. Support could also come in the form of investing in adaptive equipment and accessible facilities enabling everyone to participate fully.

Media and Marketing Campaigns: Bringing Olympic and Paralympic sponsors together to create a collaborative marketing strategy would ensure that a wider audience is reached. In Korea, there is a league that is run by Special Olympics Korea. The audience has opportunities to participate as players together alongside the athletes with disabilities in a wide range of sports. The Korean government supports this initiative by collaborating with Special Olympics Korea, which has established media channels. Collaboration events between Olympic and Paralympic athletes are possible, in a way that promotes inclusion and inspires everyone to participate in sporting activities. To achieve this, different levels of involvement should be accomplished.

Question 2: How can athletes play an active role in ensuring a positive legacy for their country after hosting the Olympic Games?

The Olympic Games have always fueled excellence in sports and athletes' success in host countries and localities. It unites those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. It also plays an important role in promoting the country's tourism and economic development in terms of infrastructure, hospitality and recognition. It significantly impacts the youth, encouraging and inspiring them to participate in sports while leading a healthy lifestyle.

Hosting the Olympic Games can be economically demanding given the aftermath in terms of maintaining and repurposing the facilities. Continuity of a certain sport seems problematic if the stadium is abandoned. It is also challenging to keep the sportsmanship and spirit of the Games alive. With this paper, we want to shed light on how athletes can play an active role for their countries to ensure a positive legacy.

Therefore, we propose the following solutions:

1. Athlete Involvement after the Olympic Games:

- Olympic athletes, NOCs and National Athlete Commissions can work

with ministries of youth and sports to organise more domestic and international tournaments in the development of athletes.

- Athletes should work together with the NOCs to organise sessions to share experiences of his / her sports journey with the younger generation.
- Athletes can set an example for the younger generation by living after the Olympic values on and off social media in daily life.
- With the continuous contribution of athletes in their sports, they can keep the venues active after the Olympic Games.

2. Social Outreach and Public Relations:

- Athletes can use their platforms to promote the cultural identity of their cities and countries. These platforms and interactions can also be used to encourage interest in the sporting community within the country.
- Local Olympic athletes can volunteer to help and organise youth and educational programmes, in collaboration with different organisations and institutions on numerous initiatives such as *OVEP*. This can help to educate and support the youth in their sporting journey. Through sports activities, meet & greets with Olympic athletes, Olympism and the Olympic values can improve society.
- Naming sports facilities after great athletes who competed at the Games and memorialising them can help to motivate current and future generations while encouraging and sustaining interest in sports and the strive for Olympic excellence.

Athletes can play a big role in ensuring a positive legacy of an Olympic host country. With Athlete involvement, a society can be helped and the Olympic spirit can be kept alive by embracing the positive outcomes. The venues are not just sporting venues, but using human imagination, people can make them multipurpose buildings. By keeping the Olympic venues active, we reduce the negative impact on the environment and support the positive effects on society.

English-Speaking Working Group 7

Question 1: How can the IOC help support worldwide standardization of Safe Sport?

The IOC is currently taking steps to strengthen sport safeguarding in the Olympic Movement and to promote athlete's sports integrity. Safe sport is defined as the role of keeping sport safe and fair for all participants at all levels of play. Safe sport includes many topical issues which are important to define here for everyone's understanding. Firstly, safeguarding means all participation in sport should be safe, supportive and friendly for all. Sport integrity includes child-safeguarding issues, racism, cultural issues or discrimination in sport. While noting child-safeguarding also includes issues regarding people working with children or vulnerable groups. Secondly, anti-doping is a part of Safe Sport with WADA, the leading organisation responsible for implementing international legislation and requirements for doping-free sport. Whistleblowing or confidential reporting means reporting serious wrongdoings which is critical if we seek to protect the integrity of sport. Lastly, education and information sharing is key to bring together all leading sport organisations and activate information sharing for news, evidence, and insights about sport and human performances. The IOC states that athletes are at the heart of the Olympic Movement, therefore we need to commit to the implementation of worldwide standardisation of Safe Sport and provide one entity for international coordination and streamlined support to all sports and stakeholders.

The following is a variety of sources as there is already a considerable amount of sport organisations that have programmes for Safe Sport and appropriate sport environments. However, many of the NOCs lack information or programmes that aim to educate athletes, coaches, and stakeholders involved.

Many international organisations share their safe sport programmes, describing how they have implemented them. These can be a great starting point for NOCs that have yet to implement Safe Sport measures for the protection of athletes, both in and out of competition and daily life. It is clear that Safe Sport is not implemented worldwide. Together as Young Olympic Ambassadors we do not have a perfect answer on how to implement the standardization of Safe Sport across all NOCs, however, it is important to protect athletes, coaches, and all stakeholders to enable an environment where everyone feels safe to participate in sport. The first step in this process is mandating that every NOC has a Safe Sport Commission that is responsible for promoting and educating members of each delegation. From here, the IOC will put together a set of rules and regulations to standardise every NOCs Safe Sport Commission. The IOC and NOCs are both responsible for enforcing these standards and policies. Education and courses on Safe Sport are readily available. An anonymous hotline should also be accessible to report wrongdoings. The third step in implementation is to require all participants, which include athletes, coaches, and stakeholders of the delegation to take Safe Sport course with annual renewal.

Question 2: How can the IOC inspire deprived communities through the inspirational character of the athletes?

IOC President, Thomas Bach, often emphasises that “sport is not just physical activity; it promotes health [...], is an educational tool which fosters cognitive development, teaches social behavior, and helps to integrate communities”. So, a better world can be built through sport. To make a social impact in those regions that are disadvantaged, the IOC has programmes in place. But are they making enough use of the inspirational stories from Olympic athletes to promote sports?

As already mentioned, there are several programmes in place. The IOC launched, for example Olympism365, Athlete365, a cooperation with the UN and the support of youth refugees. Besides these examples, there is the IOC Young Leaders programme, an initiative carried out by the IOC and Panasonic, that empowers young people to address social issues through sports. With these programmes, the IOC is using the power of sport to make an impact on society, and for implementing the Olympic values in different communities. However,

they're not making use of the inspirational character of athletes, as much as they should.

In this paper, we're not stating that all programmes should make use of the inspirational character of athletes. But, there are ways that the stories of (former) Olympians can be beneficial to the social impact of sports. We would like to highlight three possibilities for creating stories or enhancement of existing programmes or platforms.

Creating stories: The IOC can create stories by selecting and pushing some of them. This has been done in the past with the Ethiopian swimmer Robel Kiros Habte who participated in the Olympic Games in Rio 2016 through a wildcard specifically for athletes from under-represented countries. In this way he could inspire Ethiopians to realise that there are other sports than just running, as he stated. Another example is the story of Tsepo Mathibelle from Lesotho. Even though he finished last in the marathon in London 2012, Samsung chose him to become one of its faces for Rio. These stories show that winning is not essential to be inspirational.

Athletes as IOC Young Leaders: Athletes, or former athletes, should be included more in the IOC Young Leaders programme. Now, most of the current Young Leaders aren't (former) Olympic athletes, which doesn't mean that their stories aren't inspirational and can't benefit the IOC social impact goals, but by including former Olympic athletes, another inspirational level can be reached. Being an IOC Young Leader, as well as a known (former) athlete will probably have more reach than the current IOC Young Leaders.

Promotion of the Olympic Channel: With the Olympic Channel the IOC has a platform where they show inspirational stories of athletes by documentaries (original series) and podcasts. With the Olympic Channel they have the platform in place, but the lack of awareness of the existence of the platform makes that the stories don't make that much impact. We would recommend creating more awareness about the existence of the Olympic Channel, so that inspirational stories are being seen or heard.

English-Speaking Working Group 8

Question 1: What are the key elements for an athlete to become a role model?

Athletes are among the most influential people globally. Followers across demographics are captivated by everything from their fashion choices to their stances on serious issues like sexual abuse and political activism. When Neymar dyes his hair pink, many of his 222 million followers follow suit. Maggie Nichols and other gymnasts spearheaded the #MeToo movement. Clearly, athletes' influence transcends their performance, shaping public opinion and societal values. So how can we best understand the role of athletes as role models in today's society?

While athletes' influence eventually extends beyond sporting arenas, **performance** remains an initial prerequisite. Extraordinary results are what launch athletes into the spotlight. An athlete must achieve feats worthy of recognition from the media and spectators alike. Although athletes seem to appear out of nowhere to those watching from afar, the media has calculated measures of an athlete's personality and views through prior success. The media frequently gathers information about the "talent" to observe, scrutinises their activities beyond the realm of sport, and considers other attributes. We assess these qualities preemptively to draw attention to athletes, expecting them to embody Olympic and (native) country values within the sport context and beyond.

The **Olympic values** trifecta of excellence, respect, and friendship make an athlete (and person) both likable and endorsable. A role model should exemplify excellence and the pursuit of excellence through their athletic achievements and processes. In the face of adversity, athletes' relentless dedication is exemplary. A role model should also respect themselves and their opponents in order to

encourage healthy competition and elevate overall sporting levels while forming connections and friendships.

The importance of an **alignment of country values** plays a significant part in constructing a role model. Countries and cultures differ from one another, which includes the characteristics and expectations of being a role model. Athletes are elevated higher in the public eye due their alignment with country values. More often than not, it is not an expression of nationalism that produces such support but an act of silence that does not contradict it.

We can conclude that the construction of an athlete being a role model not only includes performance, but also the alignment of cultural and national values. To achieve being a role model, athletes have to exemplify the values of excellence, respect and friendship. The influence is strengthened when their behavior portrays the values of their respective home countries, which provides a sort of shared global identity, but still without being nationalistic. It is important to consider the difference between influence and role-models. Is it fair to expect role-model behavior from all athletes in the spotlight?

Question 2: What role can Social Media play in the life of an Athlete?

Nowadays, social media has revolutionised the way athletes interact with the world, giving them a powerful platform to build their personal brand and network, connect with fans, and raise awareness. However, this digital, real time exposure comes with challenges including mental health issues and pressure to maintain a positive public image.

Pros: Athletes can use social media to create a brand that will portray their values, goals and personality. This would involve them sharing contents online regularly, like achievements and their training routines.

Consequently, sponsors tend to go for athletes who have a big following and produce good engagements. This content can vary from athletes sharing their progress by posting about their training routines or diet. Positively, this can serve as a motivational tool for both the athlete and their followers.

Furthermore, athletes can also use social media to communicate; engaging with local and global sports communities can provide moral support and collaboration opportunities. Athletes can also use their social media platforms to promote and educate people on Olympism and its values.

Lastly, athletes can use their online pages to raise awareness about mental issues, and health and wellbeing issues that are common within the athletic journey.

Cons: By posting on social media, the athletes expose themselves to the world. This may lead to reactions that can affect the athletes' mental health. Unfortunately, athletes may not be direct enough or clear in their publications, which might lead to misunderstandings due to language barriers between the respective followers.

The connection between the athletes might also suffer from social media, because the spectators might set up unwanted rivalries between athletes, which can lead to an unfriendly environment. Thus, the constant pressure of maintaining a positive image and role model might lead to a discomfort in the athletes' mental health.

Cyberbullying can be a problem for athletes, since the whole world can comment or lay out the content in a negative way, giving more room for racism and homophobia. Social media may not always provide the athletes with support; when athletes post on social media platforms, they may be criticised, which can have a negative impact on their overall well-being.

In conclusion, social media is a double-edged sword for athletes' mental health. While it has improved career branding, sponsorship, and community engagement, it also puts athletes at potential risks like negative feedback and cyberbullying. Therefore, it's essential for athletes to be informed and aware of these risks, promoting safe and mindful use of social media.

Education and awareness campaigns are crucial in supporting athletes to navigate these platforms.

English-Speaking Working Group 9

Question 1: How can NOCs support women in sports and culture?

NOCs can promote gender equality by incorporating rights for women and men within organisations. Fair work balance is ideal for women to have the right to freely express their opinions, which can ultimately lead to the country's growth. These initiatives include promoting women in media and/or journalism, providing financial assistance and maternity leave, bringing sponsorship for women, and providing education toward career options. This can be initiated in athletes' participation in the younger generations, leading to the awareness of future career options in sports and culture.

Sports administrators should source more sponsorship and financial assistance for female athletes to be rewarded for their hard work and achievements. Educating athletes, coaches, and administrators about women's health regarding menstrual cycles, health screenings, and injuries that can happen during the athlete's career will help women talk freely about their concerns. NOCs should educate women about their rights in the administrative bodies. Make the organisation aware of the rights and committees formed for women's care. This, in turn, helps women know the proper steps to take towards the personal problems they face instead of remaining silent due to a lack of choices.

Female athletes who are new mothers struggle to balance motherhood and their careers. Unlike traditional jobs, female athletes do not continue to receive income when they are pregnant. Furthermore, after the birth of their child, they also struggle to get their bodies and minds back to a high-performance level. Allyson Felix, an advocate of maternal health, has exposed the main complications related to her athletic career; for example, her former sponsor, Nike, wanted to pay her 70% less after the birth of her child. All NOCs can incorporate economic, emotional, psychological, and physical support programmes for female athletes during their whole pregnancy and six months postpartum.

Despite the growing presence of women in sports, there remains a significant

gap in support from female spectators and investors towards female athletes. The audience base for women's sports is one, if not only, but the biggest contributor to the financial gap, which is also currently acting as a barrier between equal rights amongst male and female athletes. Compared to male sports, the broadcasting for female sports is substantially limited. NOCs should push their national broadcasting companies to invest in female sports to gain a larger audience, which will, in turn, generate more income for female athletes due to the increased viewership. To further address this gap, NOCs can introduce initiatives and develop programmes encouraging women to attend and invest in female athletes. This approach will foster a culture of solidarity and empowerment within the female athlete community, which can build a stronger resistance against the limited funding currently provided. NOCs can incorporate more campaigns with influential athletes to promote this initiative and highlight the importance of women supporting women. Collective efforts starting within the community can lead to sustainable progress in gender equality within sports and beyond.

Question 2: Do athletes have any power over decision-making processes?

The first modern protest at the Olympic Games was in 1906 when an Irish athlete, Peter O'Connor, won a gold medal and raised an Irish flag to protest that he had to play under Great Britain instead of Ireland. In 2016, NFL player Colin Kaepernick took a knee during the U.S. national anthem to protest against racism towards African Americans in the United States. For over 100 years, athletes have used sports as a platform to advocate for what they believe in.

As Dick Pound said in 1973, “[*the Olympic Movement*] exists for the athletes, not vice versa”. Because of this, athletes should have a voice and power over their sport. According to Grigaliunaite (2018), athletes' involvement in decision-making is necessary for the athletes and the organisations. Athletes are specialists in their sport and can provide valuable knowledge in decision-making. For this reason, the Athletes Commission was founded in 1981 to let athletes influence the IOC. This is a formal way of giving athletes a voice, as seen in unions and player associations. Athletes can also have informal power by influencing public opinion. Athletes are role models in society and can use their voices for positive change. If athletes disagree with the conditions of the sport, they should be able to take a stand. Even silence is a type of stand; like Peña (2024) said: “Even when you are not communicating, you are communicating”.



At the end of the Session's proceedings, representatives of the working groups presented the conclusions from the discussions.

Can athletes influence their sport by demanding change? At the World Cup in Qatar in 2022, pride flags were banned from the competitions. This became a wide-ranging discussion and a few football teams spoke up and wanted to play with the rainbow flag. But in the end, the teams played without the pride armbands because of threats with yellow cards (Forbes, 2022). These kinds of consequences limit the athlete's power over decision-making. According to Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter, "*No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas*" (Olympic Charter, Rule 50), failure to abide by this rule will result in disciplinary action. During the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games, China was under scrutiny for placing over 1 million Uighur Muslims in detention camps. Athletes were warned that if they protested this at the Games, they would face punishment by Chinese authorities, and after the incident with Peng Shuai, athletes would certainly be hesitant to take a stand.

To conclude, although there are obstacles and limitations for athletes, they can still exert formal and informal influence on decision-making. Their impact is quite large through public platforms and organisations, and it is crucial for athletes to stand up against injustice as role models for society and sports progress. But, because of the consequences, it is understandable that athletes fear using their voices to speak up.

English-Speaking Working Group 10

Question 1: How does the lack of anti-doping education limit its ability to be a role model?

Anti-doping education is extremely important for athletes' development nowadays. On one hand, this is done to protect their overall well-being; and on the other, is to protect them from the potential threats they might face during their sports careers, as well as preventing negative consequences to their interests. In this essay, by looking at a recent example that occurred in Tokyo 2020, we propose that NOCs must enforce efficient anti-doping educational programmes because regardless that they exist, there is evidence that shows that they are inefficient.

Anti-doping means all efforts that are initiated and undertaken to prevent the use of performance-enhancing and illegal substances. In 2021, Article 18 of the World Anti-Doping Code was expanded, and educational standards were introduced at the 2019 World Conference on Anti-Doping in Sport. Thus, the World Anti-Doping Agency has established courses and educational programmes for athletes to participate in different sports events to prevent them from doping. For example, before the Asian Games, participants undertook the PLAY TRUE & PLAY SAFE educational programmes which included, the basics to understand, anti-doping, health protection, supplements, and all the processes and procedures of testing. However, according to scholars, although these courses have been taken by athletes, they have pointed out that NOCs and institutions do not follow up with these educational programmes.

Consider, for example, the case of Kenyan sprinter Mark Otieno Odhiambo, who, moments before the 100-meter heats competition in the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020 was informed that he had tested positive for the banned anabolic steroid of methasterone. According to the athlete, he unintentionally took a substance that prevented him from achieving his Olympic dream. The

consequences that Otieno faced was immediate ban of sports participation, the loss of public legitimacy, and as a result, the loss of mental well-being and loss of sponsorships.

His case reveals the lack of continuous and proper education when it comes to anti-doping regulations is still needed. Institutions, according to scholars, do not follow up on athletes' anti-doping education properly. Athletes, indeed, must be continually informed because anti-doping policies are constantly changing because of technology.

Anti-doping education and knowledge about its essential rules and regulations is essential to prevent doping and unintentional doping. We recommend that the NOCs should enforce and put into action adequate long-term anti-doping educational programmes in their bylaws to prevent the consequences above. This will allow athletes not only to adequately participate in sports but also will protect their interests, as well as the interest and integrity of the institution.

Question 2: How is performance measurement and data analysis impacting professional athletes and society?

According to Coubertin, Olympism should promote the creation of an elite, who are superior not only by their desire to break records but also by their values. However, in the modern times, the search for the human perfection and human progression supported by the use of nanotechnologies, biotechnologies, information technologies and cognitive science (NBICs) allows the gathering of a massive amount of data that drives the sports world to an overview over sports performance and lack of caring for the humanistic values inherent to it.

This phenomenon has various pros and cons. One advantage of the data collection is allowing for more transparency and discoverability of athletes that can better fit the goals of the different Olympic stakeholders. For example, a sponsor can check an athlete's background to see if they are a good fit for the organisation and make informed predictions about their future.

Concurrently, the collection of athletes' sensitive data raises the problem of digital privacy and the pressure athletes face to behave in a more commercialised way.

Additionally, the efforts to improve athletic performance, greatly accelerated by the amount of data that coaches and athletes have around their key



Presentation of the conclusions from the discussions.

performance indicators, has significantly improved. Many athletes credit their ability to track their data for helping them to be able to recognise trends and optimise their lifestyles for greater performance. This continual improvement is visible in the consistent breaking of new records on a yearly basis.

While breaking records is great for sponsors and athlete gratification, it presents the complexity of the “superhuman” athlete. This is a scenario where athletic accomplishments begin to surpass average levels to the point where they are no longer aspirational for the average human being. This removes the human element from the athlete and discourages the average person from trying to emulate the principles of their lifestyle.

In conclusion, the net outcome of the usage of technology and data for increasing sports performance is positive as shown by the continual adoption and improvement by athletes. However, we must be mindful of the potential pitfalls such as compromised data ownership and dehumanisation of the athlete.

Closing Ceremony

ANCIENT OLYMPIA, 19 JUNE 2024



ADDRESS
on behalf of the French-Speaking Young Olympic Ambassadors
by Safia SALIH (MAR)

As a representative of the participants in this 64th edition of the Young Olympic Ambassadors programme, I stand before you today with deep gratitude and great humility. We have all shared a memorable experience here in Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games, a place imbued with history.

Over the last two weeks, thanks to the various activities (lectures, arts, sport, social, poetry), we have shared more than just moments of learning and training.

We have created strong and lasting bonds, exchanged ideas, cultures and visions for the future. Each of us, coming from the four corners of the world, has brought a wealth of unique perspectives, and together we have consolidated our alliance and strengthened our commitment to the Olympic values.

On behalf of all the Young Ambassadors, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the International Olympic Academy for this valuable opportunity. We were greatly inspired by your commitment to promoting the Olympic ideal and educating future generations of leaders in sport and society. Each of us leaves with a clear mission: to promote the Olympic values and create an impact in our respective communities.

We have learnt that sport is not just about competition, but a powerful vehicle for peace, mutual understanding and personal fulfilment. Sport also brings us together beyond disparities and teaches us the importance of fair play, perseverance and collaboration.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my fellow participants, who have enriched this experience immeasurably with their energy, enthusiasm and dedication. There's a saying that goes "competition is underrated, at the top we cooperate".

Working together, we are creating a community united by shared values and a strong desire to make a positive difference worldwide.

To conclude, I would like to quote Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games: "What counts in life is not winning, but fighting; it is not having won, but having fought well". It is important that we all pass on this message in our hearts and actions, by becoming ambassadors of peace and solidarity.

Thank you all, and see you soon on our journey through life, guided by the Olympic spirit.



ADDRESS
on behalf of the English-Speaking Young Olympic Ambassadors
by Patricia UAPUNDUKA (NAM)

“The quickest way to do something is slowly”.

One of my favorite quotes that has kept me going for some time now.

You can never achieve anything that will keep your heart racing if you are not doing it intentionally, passionately, and gently.

That is why I am here today, doing it all at 23. Doing it scared was the best awakening I have ever had.

Dear President of the IOA, dean, professors, organising team, coordinators, ambassadors, and the entirety of the IOA. Good evening and thank you, for providing this platform to us, I am sure that I speak for all, when I say that being brought into this space has been a privilege, heart racing and riveting experience for us all.

When I stepped foot into the Academy, my first thought was “wow, there are two basketball courts, I get to play on two courts”, that’s a privilege. I felt flames rising in my heart and that was not only because of the Greek sun but, because I could hear my mother’s words after I boarded that flight: “Star, thoughts are the only thing people have of you, your greatest power is yourself, which they don’t have”.

I carry that with me, it opened my heart and mind to getting comfortable enough to introduce myself to rooms I could not walk into when I was 14 and to meeting over 100 people from all walks of life.

The Academy has given me and many the chance to showcase our talents, provide our opinions, and give our insights on social matters that affect us all in the world of Olympism and the sports community.

The lectures have been eye-opening and the engagement the participants have had, made me think and believe that, we are the ones who are breaking



generational curses because we tend to pick flowers for other people more than we water our own gardens.

I ask all the participants to give themselves a round of applause. For allowing yourself to enter this space at the best of your ability and stepping out of that bubble.

I have learned more than I could ever imagine. I promised myself that after this, I will make sure to expand all that I have learned, hold it in its arms, and spread its wings.

I am not only here for myself but I am here for the women back at home who do not possess the voice, power, and aid to stand for themselves, the children who can't afford track shoes, basketballs, or tennis rackets.

Back home, there is not much of anything, but I promise to be that much of something.

Again, a round of applause to you all for making it happen, it has been an honor. Thank you for providing this space and allowing us to possess the art of Olympism!



Awarding of the participation diplomas by the IOA President, Isidoros Kouvelos.



ADDRESS
on behalf of the French-Speaking Coordinators
by Christian HAJJ (LBN)

As we conclude our 64th International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors, it is with great emotion and above all with gratitude that I address you on behalf of all the coordinators. Over the last two weeks, we have embarked on a journey of discovery, learning and collaboration that has deeply enriched each and every one of us.

My Olympic adventure began here nine years ago, and at our first Masters meeting, Professor Georgiadis asked us who was going to be volunteering at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. It was then that I discovered the culture of volunteering in sport, and my first volunteering experience was here, as a coordinator. That's why I want to emphasise one of the important virtues of coordinators: volunteering. We are all volunteers and we do it with a passion for Olympism, for its values and for the extraordinary people we are proud to call Young Olympic Ambassadors.

On behalf of the coordinators, I would first like to express my warmest thanks to the International Olympic Academy (IOA), in particular to Professor Georgiadis and Stella Tachtara, for their warm welcome to the participants. I would also like to thank the professors who shared their knowledge with us and a big thank you to the interpreters, the Hellenic Red Cross and the IOA staff.

Dear Olympic Ambassadors, dear friends, thank you for being at the heart of this magnificent adventure. Thank you for sharing with us your ideas, your knowledge, your experience, and above all, your smiles.

To our dear Olympians, thank you for sharing your remarkable stories with us. You inspire us, you show us the definition of excellence and you help us to pursue it.

To my dear coordinators, it has been a pleasure to spend the last two weeks

with you. Thank you for dedicating your time to the success of this Session, for always being present and available for everyone.

Dear Ambassadors, I hope that you will spread what you have learned and discovered here in your communities when you return to your countries, especially the Olympic values.

I wish you a safe journey and a successful future.

Thank you all and I hope to see you soon.

ADDRESS
on behalf of the English-Speaking Coordinators
by Fred QUEK (SGP)

Kalimera everyone! I am Fred, from Singapore and I have been given the honour to address the Session on behalf of the team of Coordinators.

Firstly, I wish to acknowledge and thank the President of the International Olympic Academy, President Isidoros Kouvelos, Dean of the International Olympic Academy, Professor Konstantinos Georgiadis and Director of the International Academy Dr Makis Asimakopoulos for their leadership and guidance for the Session.

Their leadership has allowed this institution to flourish and continue serving the Olympic Movement. This has led to us being able to gather here, in Ancient Olympia, to not only learn but to live the Olympic life – with respect, excellence and most importantly, friendship. Please, join me in giving them a round of applause.

The Academy is more than a place for education. It is a test bed for how people from all over the world come and share in the values of Olympism and live with respect for one another. That is the main purpose of the Academy. That is what makes it special. It serves a sanctuary, in a world divided. Here, we have a chance to show the world how things could be, if we lived by the Olympic values. Therefore, as Young Olympic Ambassadors, we must religiously guard those values, live by them ourselves and spread them far and wide.

During your stay here, you had many lectures, sporting and artistic activities, I have no doubt many of you have found something that speaks to you. But above all, the human interaction, connections and bonds forged between all of you is the one thing that will remain etched in your heart long after our footprints here have faded away.

It has been a pleasure to be able to return time and again to serve as a coordinator. All of us on the team, and I'm sure I speak for everyone, we feel honoured to have played a part in your special experience here in Olympia. We

want nothing more than to make this Session go well for all of you, and should we have had any shortcomings, we apologise and ask for your forgiveness.

While we may have reached the final day of our Session here, the journey does not end here. When you go home, I hope all of you will encourage your NOCs and NOAs to continue sending participants every year for the Session, so you can share your stories from the Academy with them and give them the chance to experience this magical place as you had. I also encourage all of you to go home and work on your plans of initiatives. Should you need any help with implementing it, don't forget you now have a new family of 160 people who stand ready to assist you on your journey. Above all, you must continue to be ambassadors of the Olympic Values and do our best to live by them and uphold them. This is what truly makes us Young Olympic Ambassadors.

To my coordinator's team, a big thank you to all of you. The works of this Session could not have been done without you. With a mix of old and new faces, we came together quickly and got to work. To Nikos, we are grateful for your wisdom and guidance and thank you for taking the time to be here to lead us. I especially want to give a shout out to my Young Olympic Ambassadors of my class, Elin, Arman, Yilmaz and Iasson, who lived this experience with me when we ourselves were Young Olympic Ambassadors. Our bond is a special one, and it has been strengthened through this Session.

Before I conclude, special thanks must go to Vangelis, the man who is responsible for the upkeep of this beautiful campus for our usage, Giannis, Antonia and last but absolutely not least, Stella. Please, join me in giving them the biggest round of applause.

Without them, none of this would be possible. We are so grateful for the IOA's staff full support and commend them for their tireless efforts in ensuring this Session's success.

Now that we have come to the end of our journey here today, I urge you to enjoy your last full day here.

Take a walk around. Sit on the grass. Enjoy the sun. Smell the fresh air. Stroll down to the village for coffee at Rodo. Take in the amazing scenery. What a wondrous place the Academy is. A temple of knowledge, a bastion of Olympism, an abode of peace. This place, new and strange to you 10 days ago, has now become a home.

For like Coubertin, we left a part of ourselves behind here, and to Olympia we shall always yearn to return.

ADDRESS
on behalf of the Lecturers
by Prof. Emilio FERNÁNDEZ PEÑA (ESP)

Dear Young Olympic Ambassadors,

We cannot live without passion, without projects, without dreams. From now on you already have a project, a task: to be Olympic ambassadors. Convey the Olympic ideals with enthusiasm. You already know that to communicate, to communicate well, we need only three things: a lot of enthusiasm, being full of passion and telling things clearly and directly. However, keep in mind that you cannot disguise the lack of interesting content by telling it only with passion.

Looking to the future, I ask you to continue training, educating, the search for knowledge, new concepts, new skills must accompany us until the end of our days. People are beings who are constantly training, not only to improve our sporting performance. That type of training has a beginning and an end. We train fundamentally to acquire new knowledge, new skills.

To talk about Olympism or Olympic Studies, to which you have been introduced in recent days at the International Olympic Academy, is to talk about a holistic, integral vision of the human being. Therefore, know that every new knowledge you acquire in the future is susceptible to being transferred, applied to what we call Olympic culture. My first recommendation is: continue your training in Olympic and other topics.

This education that I propose to you must be of two types: a training to acquire new knowledge for the pleasure of knowing more, knowing for the sake of knowing (liberal arts). Qualitative knowledge and applied knowledge (servile arts), which is quantitative. Combine both kind of knowledge and do not only focus on knowledge aimed at solving specific problems, on useful knowledge. Supposedly useless knowledge is the basis of knowledge and is, at the same time, what makes us more human, more solidary.

When I was young, a little older than you are, I acquired fundamental

knowledge here, at the International Olympic Academy: human beings have the same essence, we are equal. No matter where on earth we come from, our language or religion, we are all equal. Since that moment I have friends from all over the world. My communication and complicity with them is the same as with the people of my town in Asturias in the north of Spain. That for me was an extraordinary acquisition. Sorry, maybe I was ignorant. The International Olympic Academy is our global village. It is a place where we learn what peace is, what friendship is, what respect and excellence is. Our Olympic athlete friends and the IOA Staff: Stella, Antonia, Giannis, and Vangelis, have taught us excellence. Our coordinators also teach me excellence every day. For your part, each of you Young Olympic Ambassadors have taught me what respect is. Cultivate friendships with your friends from all over the world. Tell with passion what you have learned here at the IOA. Never stop learning, because all the knowledge you acquire can be transferred to your catalog of Olympic culture. Young Olympic Ambassadors we will always have you in the bottom of our hearts.

**CLOSING ADDRESS
of the Session Proceedings
by the President of the International Olympic Academy
Isidoros KOUVELOS**

Dear Olympic Ambassadors,

I regret that, although I would very much like to be with you all these days and share the precious moments you are creating in this unique place, important commitments kept me away. However, I truly hope that you enjoyed your stay in the birthplace of the Olympic Games and that the results of this journey were fruitful.

Your presence here has been more than just an educational visit; it has been a testament to the enduring spirit of the Olympic Games and the values they represent. And I have to admit that I could not imagine a better place for teaching of these Values to people of different backgrounds, than Ancient Olympia! The place which was described by Avery Brundage, the fifth President of the International Olympic Committee, as the “the Mecca of Olympism”.

Being Olympic Ambassadors, you embody excellence, friendship, and respect, and you may contribute to the legacy of the Olympic Games, leaving a lasting impact through your work and initiatives. This is why we take your engagement really seriously in this year’s special subject “the athlete in modern society: inspiring and fostering unity”, a discussion which has enriched our perception of the vital role athletes play in shaping society.

And it is true that in a world often fragmented by differences, athletes stand as powerful symbols of unity. When they compete, they represent not only their own aspirations but the hopes and dreams of their communities and nations. Their dedication, discipline, and pursuit of excellence remind us of all of the common values that bind humanity together. Because sport has the power to unite people, to give them hope and make them believe in themselves.

And here, next to the archaeological site where the first Olympians competed,

an enduring symbol of the Olympic Movement, with the valuable contribution of the respected lecturers who have been with us, you had the valuable opportunity to explore the significant impact that athletes have, not only on the field of play, but also as role models and change-makers in their communities.

From the role of athletes in Ancient Greek Society to their crucial role today's societies and the progressive changes in promoting inclusivity and social cohesion as well as the different approaches aroused throughout the years, their perspectives have shed light on the power of sport to unite, inspire, and drive positive social change.

I am more than certain that the lecturers have provided you with valuable knowledge and fertile ground for further enquiry and we would like to warmly thank them for it.

I would like to thank you, dear Ambassadors, for your constant efforts to engage in these, hopefully productive dialogues, for your everyday cooperation which broke down barriers and prejudices and for sharing the Olympic Values, reminding us of all of the enduring legacy the IOA may provide. Because IOA serves as an international place for free expression, offering a platform where people can come together in a spirit of unity and cooperation.

Please allow me to also thank each one of the coordinators separately for their excellent work and dedication and the lovely interpreters for their work and for their valuable support all these years to the IOA Sessions, and of course, the Red Cross volunteers.

Last but not least, I want to thank the amazing IOA collaborators and devoted staff. Their role has been instrumental in ensuring the success of this Session. I am very grateful for their meticulous planning, attention to detail, and tireless efforts which always makes a difference.

Dear friends,

I sincerely hope that your stay here has been enjoyable and that you have felt the Olympic spirit. As you continue your journeys, may you carry forward its torch, inspiring others and contributing to a better, more peaceful world. Thank you once again for your presence, your insights, and your unwavering dedication to the values of Olympism. The IOA will always be at your side, because from today you are the true ambassadors of the Olympic values, you are the future of Olympism!

Thank you.

ACTIVITIES AT THE IOA PREMISES, ANCIENT OLYMPIA – 2024

Event/Organiser	Dates	No of Participants
Eugenia Anastasiadou Smyrnaeu Foundation, “The Power of the Dream”, Ioannis Melissanidis	1/2	70
Giannouli High School	4/3	66
European Festival Ancient Olympia	9/3	170
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 1	11-13/3	126
European Festival of Ancient Greece	14/3	180
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 2	14-16/3	108
8th Masterclass, Gastrointestinal Cancer Study Group (EMKAPES)	19-24/3	55
European Festival of Ancient Greece	20/3	300
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 3	27-29/3	107
Schools of Piraeus Holy Metropolis	30-31/3	100
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 4	1-3/4	88
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 5	4-6/4	115
Children’s Olympic Games	4/4	300
EDEN in Ancient Olympia	5-9/4	100
L’Etape Greece by Tour de France	6/4	400
“Iniochos” Race Finish, Air Tactics Center	6/4	150
Lighting Ceremony of the Olympic Flame for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games	6-16/4	243
1st European School Sport Federation (ESSF) Open Educational Games	17/4	150

Event/Organiser	Dates	No of Participants
Master's Degree Programme «Olympic Studies, Olympic Education, Organisation and Management of Olympic Events»	14/4-9/6	20
5th World Cultural Heritage Youth Symposium	18-21/4	222
Ioannina Model High School of Zosimaia School	23-25/4	98
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 6	23-25/4	111
Sports University of Elbasan	26-28/4	6
Patras 49th Primary School	13/5	76
High Point University	14/5	25
17th International Session for NOAs' and NOCs' Delegates	14-19/5	110
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 7	21-23/5	112
5th Primary School of Preveza	23/5	25
Fullerton University	23-27/5	34
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 8	24-26/5	65
South Carolina University	27-30/5	34
Athens College Elementary School	28-30/5	160
“4th Olympic Week – On the road to Paris”, Hellenic Olympic Academy	31/5-2/6	190
International Annual Congress of the International Muaythai Associations (IFMA)	8/6	900
Olympism for Humanity (O4H) Champions of Change Academy	3-9/6	25
64th International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors	10-20/6	150

LIST OF ACTIVITIES

Event/Organiser	Dates	No of Participants
Deutsche Schule Athen	12/6	120
3rd World Olympic Summer School	23-30/6	20
MAiSI Summer School	23/6-7/7	65
DAiSI Programme	23/6-7/7	20
ELIAMEP Summer Academy	1-6/7	40
1st Patras Applied Microeconomics (PAM) Workshop	1-3/7	15
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 9	8-10/7	80
“Sport and Education Program: from Ancient Olympia to the Present”, Harvard University’s CHS	9-12/7	54
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 10	11-13/7	112
“Olympic Professional Development Programme”, Capital University of Physical Education and Sport (CUPES) and Beijing Institute for International Olympic Studies (BIIOS)	13-25/7	21
Tennis Europe U14 Tournaments	15-28/7	18
III International Olympic Philosophy Conference of New Acropolis	24-28/7	200
International Final of the Economics Olympiad, INEV	1-4/7	135
NOA of Thailand	7-12/9	24
MEMOS XXVI Session	8-18/9	47
MEMOS XXVII Session	11-14/9	40
31st International Seminar on Olympic Studies for Postgraduate Students	22/9-10/10	18

Event/Organiser	Dates	No of Participants
Master's Degree Programme «Olympic Studies, Olympic Education, Organisation and Management of Olympic Events»	22/9-23/11	30
6th EOA Congress and General Assembly	25-28/9	60
11th International Sports Conference, Panhellenic Sports Press Association	4-6/10	90
Annual Conference of the European Platform for Sport Innovation (EPSI)	7-10/10	75
14th Scientific Conference of the Foundation fro Research and Technology – Hellas (FORTH)	11-13/10	80
Annual Workshop of Papoutsanis S.A.	14-16/10	17
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 11	17-19/10	96
ACS Athens	21-24/10	90
Group Boortmalt	25/10	700
Group Boortmalt (Pame Volta)	24-26/10	21
Avgoulea-Linardatou School	26-27/10	42
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 12	29-31/10	44
39th Panhellenic Conference of the Greek Mathematical Society	1-3/11	55
Athenian Brewery	4/11	150
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 13	5-7/11	121
Department of Sport Management, University of Peloponnese	8-9/11	17
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 14	14-16/11	112
NOA of Albania	15-17/11	30

LIST OF ACTIVITIES

Event/Organiser	Dates	No of Participants
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 15	18-20/11	111
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 16	21-23/11	117
4th General Assembly of the International Camel Racing Federation	24-26/11	100
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 17	27-29/11	111
Educational Visit – 7th Highschool of Glyfada	12-15/12	70
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 18	12-14/12	124
“Experiencing the Olympic Values” Programme – School Visit No 19	16-18/12	123

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