

My [position on NBA players](#) and the Olympics has not changed since I first wrote about it nearly 8 years ago. It was stupid then. It has not gotten any smarter.

The following is an article put together by Brett Morris that provides an additional perspective and some more details that to me, re-enforce my position.

When the Miami Heat's Dwayne Wade said he thought "guys should be compensated" for participating in this Summer's Olympics, he received a great deal of public backlash for being "un-American," and "selfish," from all walks of life — military personnel, politicians and the average sports fan.

More interesting though was a group that kept quiet on the issue — other "Olympic sport" athletes.

I waited all week for a groundswell of support for Wade's comments from the likes of swimmers, gymnasts, pole vaulters, etc. Not because they think Wade could use the money, but they themselves could.

Not a whimper.

Unlike Wade, maybe other Olympic sport athletes just don't understand one fact: The Olympics are a business, plain and simple. A tax-free juggernaut called the International Olympic Committee that generates revenues, on average, of over \$1.4 billion a year. In fact, the IOC's 2010 tax return shows a \$1.4 billion net balance — as in cash in the bank.

And if Wade, and other Olympians don't ask for and get a share, then who does? Answer: A handful of unaccountable, Switzerland-based bureaucrats hiding behind the veil of so-called "Olympism."

When Wade recanted his comments the next day, you could almost hear the sigh of relief halfway around the world from Jacques Rogge, the head of the IOC and his secret-ballot-elected, 15-member Executive Board. (Actually, it probably wasn't a sigh of relief, but a toast to "fooling them again" with ridiculously expensive champagne in a five-star hotel suite overlooking a soon-to-be-bankrupt future host city).

Drawing attention to paying/supporting athletes is the last thing the IOC wants in an Olympic year.

Why? Because most Olympic sport athletes are severely underpaid — if at all. For every Usain Bolt who makes millions in endorsements and appearance fees (none from the IOC, however), there's hundreds of elite athletes making ends meet just so they can train.

Yes, the United States Olympic Committee will pay \$25 thousand for a gold medal and some sports national governing bodies will add more (US Swimming gives \$75 thousand per gold medal). And select U.S. athletes receive training stipends (usually based on need) and Elite Athlete Health Insurance to cover medical costs.

But those amounts pale in comparison to the revenues earned from their talents — especially if you're a U.S. athlete. For the 2005-08 Quadrennium, revenue from U.S. only broadcast rights netted the IOC over \$625 million, annually. And U.S. based corporate sponsors contributed over \$120 million, annually, to the IOC.

But the greater issue is that there's not much they can do about it. The IOC is a monopoly.

Athletes in "non-pro league sports," swimming, figure skating, track and field, etc., have only one option to be truly considered the best in the world — win an Olympic medal.

And unfortunately, that option requires athletes to be the integral part in the most inefficient, dysfunctional, dated and corrupt system in sports — the IOC and their shady web of federations, committees and governing bodies.

In fact, in the United States, the Ted Stevens Amateur Sports Act grants legal monopoly status to the USOC. Any international sports event in the U.S. that has an Olympic affiliation must receive the blessing of the USOC and will also be required to pay a substantial sanctioning fee.

And with a monopoly always comes corruption. Since the most public Olympic scandal in Salt Lake City in 2002, other Olympic corruption cases have been well-documented and seem to have gotten worse. In March, the so-called "most powerful Olympic leader in the Western World," Mario Vazquez Rana, resigned from the IOC's executive board citing fellow IOC members as having "shady alliances," "questionable procedures," and a "lack of ethics and principles."

Most national governing bodies have athletes sign a "code of conduct" where they commit to being an "ambassador ... for the Olympic Movement." So when someone like Wade, who could probably care less about a code of conduct and would never be disciplined for violating it, speaks out, you'd think others would jump to support him.

I don't want to sound un-American as I have just as much fun and pride as most when we get the opportunity to chant U-S-A! U-S-A! But I also know that feel of nationalism wouldn't change a bit if the athletes were getting paid a decent amount of money.

In fact, what could be more American than getting paid a fair share for hard work