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SOCIETY OF
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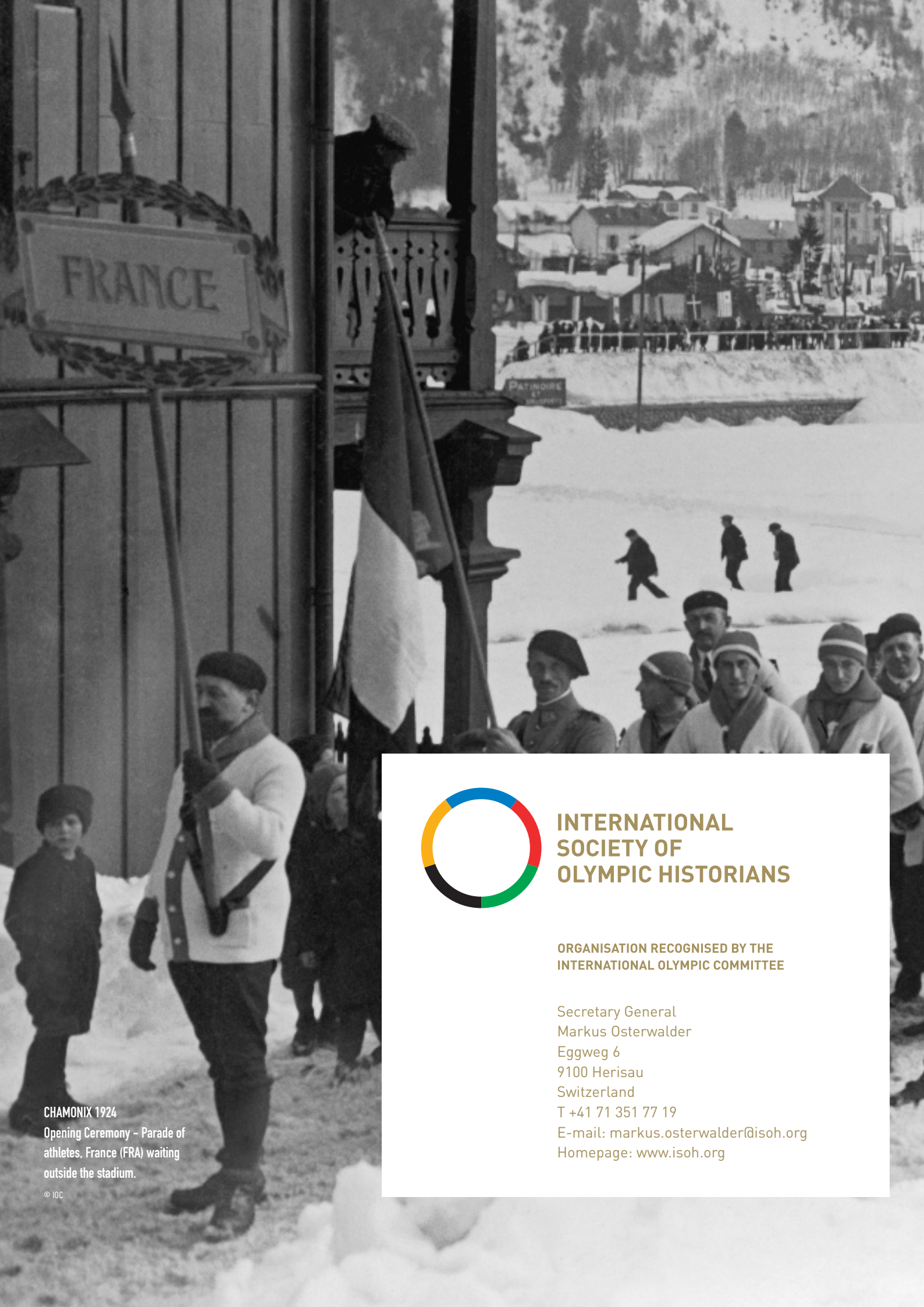
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Centennial Celebration: First Olympic Winter Games in Chamonix 1924

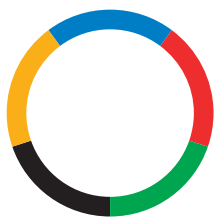
- ISOH in America – the General Assembly 2023
- When Coubertin went West
- The 1904 Olympic Marathon, an unfinished story
- It happened in Paris – A First Olympic Champion in Women's Golf
- Closing the Circle – The History of Olympic Television



CHAMONIX 1924

Opening Ceremony - Parade of athletes, France (FRA) waiting outside the stadium.

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ORGANISATION RECOGNISED BY THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

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Editorial

Chamonix – Olympic Games 100 years ago

by Christian Wacker

Anniversaries should be celebrated; people want to remember what has happened and engage in a culture of remembrance. As historians, we are particularly fond of doing this and like to note that 100 years ago, the first Winter Olympics took place in the winter sports destination of Chamonix.

Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, as Chamonix has officially been called since 1920, was by then, already a fashionable place in the French Alps, visited in summer for the fresh air and in winter for the snow. Since the first ascent of Mont Blanc in 1786, tourists have flocked to the picturesque village, the first luxury hotels were built 200 years ago and personalities such as Victor Hugo used to spend their holidays there. Hiking and mountaineering tourism blossomed.

By 1901 at the latest, the opening of the first railway line enabled winter tourists to reach Chamonix as well.

From 1906–7 The *Club Alpin Français* organised winter sports from 1906/07 on ice (figure skating, speed skating, ice hockey, curling), ski jumping on the Le Mont ski jump built in 1905 and military patrol, a precursor of biathlon. The railway line was extended to *Mer de Glace* at the foot of Mont Blanc in 1908, and Chamonix town hall was inaugurated shortly afterwards.

Almost in the spirit of sustainability, one would argue that Chamonix had brought with it the best prerequisites for the First Winter Olympics. The Olympic Games for 1924 had been awarded to Paris, which is why the French National Olympic Committee had the task of choosing the location for the Winter Games. Out of three candidates, Chamonix was chosen because of its accessibility by rail and its infrastructure for tourism. Hotels were available and in June 1922 Chamonix was officially declared a winter sports resort. As a result of objections from Nordic ski associations, the Games were not styled the First Olympic Winter Games – this only happened retrospectively at the 26th session of the IOC on 6 May 1926 – but as the *Semaine internationale du sport d'hiver à l'occasion des Jeux Olympiques de 1924*.

Athletes from 16 countries registered for the Games, which were held from 24th January to 5th February 1924. They were watched by about 15,000

spectators. 247 of the athletes were men who competed in 16 events. 11 women participated only in figure skating. Further facts and figures are well recorded. However, it is interesting to note that 90% of the athletes come from European winter sports nations, except for the United Kingdom (the second largest team with 34 athletes). This reflects the important role of the British in the development and expansion of the tourism infrastructure in the Alps at the turn of the century.

The competitions were held at three different venues, at the *Stade Olympique de Chamonix*, an open ice stadium with a one to two-storey adjacent building for the organisation. Ski jumping took place on the existing *Le Mont* hill, which was still in use until 1998 and can now be visited in the grounds as an Olympic monument, so to speak. Of the bobsleigh track, which was built with natural ice through the forest in 1924 and abandoned in 1950 after an increasing number of serious accidents, all that remains of the track is a path in the forest.

Alpine skiing competitions did not exist in 1924, there was no thought of a corresponding infrastructure at that time. However, the first cable car was inaugurated in Chamonix in the summer of 1924, which was later extended to the famous line that today leads up to the Aiguille du Midi. Of course, the first Winter Olympics were still very low key.

It might well be hard for any winter sports enthusiast who has experienced Chamonix today as one of the largest winter sports resorts in France with 69 pistes and 152 kilometres of downhill skiing with their 'Mont Blanc Unlimited' ski pass to imagine what it was like for those winter sports enthusiasts dressed in wool and felt, 100 years ago.



W. J. ...
1900

The First Olympic Winter Games – Chamonix 1924

by Markus Osterwalder



At the 20th IOC Session in Lausanne in 1921, the city of Paris prevailed over Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Los Angeles, USA and Rome, Italy as host city for the Games of the VIII Olympiad in 1924. In the same IOC Session, Amsterdam was also selected for the Games of the IX Olympiad in 1928. They decided to establish a winter sports “annex” to the Games and give its “patronage” to the sports week organised in Chamonix in connection with the VIII Olympiad, but also mentioned at the Session, that it was not an integral part of the Games. The starting signal for the “Winter Sports, Chamonix Mont-Blanc 1924, Organised by the French Olympic Committee on the Occasion of the Celebration of the VIII Olympiad”.

The name “I Olympic Winter Games” was chosen in 1926 after Amsterdam had officially been unable to organise winter sports competitions for 1928. Although skate competitions were already discussed in Paris as early as 1894, 14 years went by before four figure skating competitions were held on artificial ice in 1908. Elsewhere, Olympic winter sports did not have an easy time either: the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games in Stockholm 1912 refused to organise winter sports competitions parallel to the Nordic Games, which had taken place since 1901.

In contrast, the winter sports competitions of the Games of the VII Olympiad in Antwerp 1920 were already held in April in figure skating and ice hockey, while the following sports/ disciplines were added on the Chamonix 1924 programme: bobsleigh, curling, ice hockey, figure skating, speed skating, military patrol, Nordic combined, cross-country skiing and ski jumping.

The 1924 Olympic Games thus marked the birth of the independent Winter Games with Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Olympic oath and award ceremony in accordance with the rules of the International Olympic Committee. The official poster selected later by the IOC was designed by Auguste Matisse on which a giant eagle glides over five bobsleigh riders.



Chamonix 1924
Figure skating, individual women
Sonja HENIE (NOR)

Official poster
Designer: Auguste Matisse

All ©1924 IOC





Chamonix 1924
Opening Ceremony – Parade
of athletes, Great Britain (GBR)

Bobsleigh, four-man – The team
of Italy (ITA)
at the finish, in front of
the spectators



Opening Ceremony –
The official stand, with the
nations' flags and the
spectators

Opening Ceremony –
Parade of athletes, Sweden (SWE),
the curling team

Bobsleigh, four-man
The team of Switzerland (SUI) –
1st, on the run



Speed skating – Skaters

All ©1924 IOC





CHAMONIX AS PART OF THE VIII^E OLYMPIAD IN PARIS 1924

1924 CHAMONIX, FRANCE

Dates: From 25 January to 5 February 1924

Other candidate city: No other candidate city

Participants: 16 National Olympic Committees (NOCs),
258 athletes (11 women, 247 men), 16 events, 6 sports

Olympic oath (athletes): Camille Mandrillon (military patrol)

Officially opened by: Gaston Vidal (Under Secretary of State)



Chamonix 1924,
Opening Ceremony –
Parade of athletes, France (FRA).

© 1924 IOC

2023 ISOH General Assembly in Colorado Springs, October 6–8 2023

by Christian Wacker

Our ISOH General Assembly in Colorado Springs was held in the United States for the first time since 1996, although the gathering held during the 1996 Olympics was a much shorter affair.

In October, we were the guests of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) at its home in Colorado Springs, complete with spacious training facilities but since 2020, the United States Olympic and Paralympic Museum (USOPM) has also been telling the story of US sports.

The museum hosted our General Assembly, provided insights into its work, and organised guided tours of the displays. There were also reports on the collections held. A pleasing number of ISOH members and guests attended the GA. In all, around 35 were present in person and another 30 followed the online stream of the event. We were also pleased to welcome a number of distinguished guests from the USOPM. These included Thane Baker, a member of the US gold medal winning 4x100m squad at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics who also won individual 200m silver in 1952 and bronze in 1956. Michelle Dusserre Farrell, who won team silver in artistic gymnastics at the 1984 Los Angeles Games and Jack Elder, a competitor in luge at the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympics were also present.

The International Pierre de Coubertin Committee (IPCC) was represented by its President Stephan Wassong. His presentation on “Pierre de Coubertin’s Network in the USA and its Importance for the foundation of the Olympic Games,” will be included in the next issue of the Journal of Olympic History. Garry Rhodes of the United States IPCC also joined our meeting. Maria Bogner of the Olympic Studies Centre in Lausanne also joined us. Her tremendous support of ISOH is greatly appreciated.

Our programme began on Friday evening with a lecture on native Americans at the Olympics from 1904 to 1912 by James Ring Adams from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMIA). This was followed by the General Assembly where honours for the life-time award and Vikelas plaque were presented. The 2023 life-

time award to Ingomar Weiler of Austria who was unable to be with us in person but we hope to make the presentation in his homeland later.

Happily the 2022 recipient Bruce Kidd of Canada was able to join us and expressed his gratitude with a talk on the ‘Olympic Movement and Human Rights’.

The Vikelas Plaque was awarded to Stephan Wassong.

The programme was concluded with short contributions on Linda Fuller based on her new book about female Olympian and Paralympian athlete activists and a presentation of a documentary film project by George Hirthler.

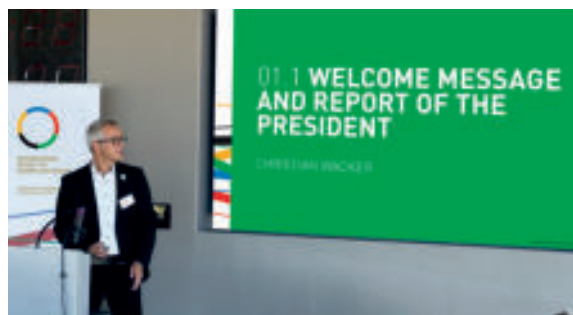


Opening speech by
ISOH President Christian Wacker

The US Olympic
& Paralympic Museum
in Colorado Springs, USA

The General Assembly '23 stage
at the US Olympic and
Paralympic Museum

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The ISOH General Assembly at a Glance

1. Statistics on members

ISOH currently has a total of 487 members. Our members come from 55 countries on all 5 continents. 229 from Europe, 190 from the Americas, 34 from Asia, 29 from Oceania 5 from Africa. Most members come from the United States of America, followed by Germany, Great Britain, Australia and Canada.

2. Digitisation projects

ISOH has successfully implemented its first digitisation projects. All issues of the JOH are freely accessible to all on the ISOH website and the Olympic World Library (OWL) and can be searched in full text. All future editions of the JOH will also be offered as open source, although those for the most recent two years are encrypted so that only ISOH members are able to view them.

ISOH sees itself not only as a mediator of Olympic history, but also as a preserver of Olympic material such as collections and archives. Many Olympic archives have been processed and are accessible, and the IOC has by far played the most important role here. Large parts of the IOC archives are accessible and can be researched online.

ISOH would like to contribute in the future by processing and making available archives that have not yet been digitised. Feasibility studies are in progress and sponsors are still being sought.

3. The Journal of Olympic History...

...now has a new administration, new distribution channels and a new look. With Philip Barker, the new Editor-in-Chief, content is being further diversified, with Harrassowitz as our new publishing house handling distribution and expanding sales. The active work of Markus Osterwalder has transformed the layout of the magazine.

4. The Olympic History Global project...

...is now taking shape. ISOH has set itself the goal of proactively reaching out to regions that have so far received little visibility in terms of their Olympic history. These include large parts of South America, Africa, but also Asia and Oceania. The ISOH will use its networks to approach protag-



Opening speech by
USOPM Chief Executive
Marisa Wigglesworth



GA' 23 participants
in front of the USOPM

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onists of Olympic history in the respective regions and use their networks as multipliers to reach qualified authors. A first edition about 'Olympic History in the Arab World' will be published in 2024. 5. ISOH, the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee (IPCC) and the Pierre de Coubertin Family Association had developed an exhibition concept called 'True Colours' about Pierre de Coubertin and the Olympic Values.

It was hoped to stage in association with the Paris Olympic Games 2024. Sadly, due to the lack of funding for this exhibition has made it impossible for this to go ahead and ISOH and IPCC have regretfully had to withdraw from the project.

Annual ISOH meetings have become central to the networking of Olympic historians and indispensable to the essence of the society.

Storytelling and writing Olympic history thrive on discourse and dialogue, which is why offering a meeting once a year (physical and online) is essential for the further development of our networks and the ISOH. In the future, it is planned that only venues that have written, are writing, or are preserving

Olympic history will be selected. ISOH is not only concerned with preserving and disseminating Olympic history, but also with promoting and advertising the collection of Olympic memories, souvenirs, and memorabilia. Olympic sites also have an important role to play here, preserving and passing on memories. They are sites of Olympic cultural heritage and must be protected and preserved.

Note for the Diary –

It is hoped that the next General Assembly will take place in Alexandria, Egypt in October 2024.

1 Christian Wacker, “Museum for All to Experience the same way,” *Journal of Olympic History* 28.3 (2020): 37.

A group of participants tour the US Olympic & Paralympic Archives in Colorado Springs

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Permanent exhibition inside the US Olympic & Paralympic Museum

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Right: Facade of the US Olympic & Paralympic Museum

© 2023 Markus Osterwalder





When Coubertin Went West

His network in the USA and its Importance for the Foundation of the Olympic Games and the Olympic Idea*

by Stephan Wassong

Introduction

From the early 1880s, Baron Pierre de Coubertin travelled to England regularly. His experiences during these study trips have been researched in detail and have created a picture of Coubertin as a strong Anglophile personality.

Three research areas have been the focus of interest. They enjoyed a renaissance and popularity in discussions, lectures and exhibitions in the run-up to, and even during, the Olympic Games London 2012.

The first concerns Coubertin's observation on how sports were used as a tool for character development among the pupils at public schools (private boarding schools) and students at the prestigious universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Coubertin desired that the same educational appreciation of sports should be applied in French schools and even universities. But he struggled to convince the leaders of the French education system about the educational use of sporting activities in daily life for pupils and students.

Following traditional research lines, Coubertin thought that only an international sports event – namely the re-establishment of the Olympic Games – could offer enough motivation for his fellow countrymen to acknowledge the value of sports in educational settings. Interlinked with this is the second main research field, which primarily analyses the influences behind Coubertin's intention to restore the Olympic Games; showing that this project was not only influenced by Philhellenism, but also by initiatives in England to set up an Olympic festival. In this context Coubertin's relationship to William Penny Brookes, who had organized the Much Wenlock Olympian Games on a regional and national level since the 1860s, has been analyzed as a significant influence on Coubertin's idea of reviving the Olympic Games as a sporting event on the international level. Brookes' influence, as well as the sporting educational *Zeitgeist* at public schools and universities, seems to have been important for Coubertin's vision that the Olympic Games should follow the principles of amateurism. Like sports at the public schools and at the Much Wenlock Olym-

pian Games, the Olympic competitions could only be viewed as a tool for character development if they were not tainted by the professionalism traditionally linked with manipulation, lack of fair play and exaggerated rivalry. The third research area has its focus on Coubertin's preparation of the *Congrès international de Paris pour le rétablissement des Jeux olympiques*. It has become well-known as the founding congress of the modern Olympic Games. It was held in Paris at the Sorbonne from June 16th to 24th 1894.

Besides Brookes, Charles Herbert, then honorary secretary general of the Amateur Athletic Association in England, has also been characterized as an influential person in Coubertin's network, supporting both the promotion and organization of the congress. One of Herbert's responsibilities was to disseminate information on the congress in England and throughout the Commonwealth and to uphold the importance of amateurism for the Olympic project. In traditional research the role played by American university professor William Milligan Sloane (Princeton and later Columbia University) at the congress is mentioned, but not as prominently as it deserves. Coubertin traveled to the USA in 1889 and 1893. Although the analysis of these study trips is no longer a research desideratum¹, it can still be somewhat profiled in comparison to the evaluation of Coubertin's experiences in England. The Olympic Games Los Angeles 2028 are certainly an interesting stimulus for highlighting the American influence on the formation of the Olympic movement and presenting it to the public.

First of all, an overview of Coubertin's travel routes in the USA is available; the 1889 and 1893 journeys are represented together below. Building on this, the travel locations are shown and the personal network, which Coubertin established in the USA, is introduced. Then, against the background of this network, the support of the key actors is analyzed as well as how they shaped Coubertin's Olympic project in its organizational realization and educational dimensions. This article is not so much on how Coubertin viewed the sports system in the USA as a model for triggering the retarded sports development in France; though, of course, this element cannot be excluded completely.





Map showing Coubertin's visits to North America

© 2023 Dr. Stephan Wassong

Visiting the USA: Some Data and Introductory Remarks

Coubertin toured the USA and Canada in 1889 and 1893; always in the last quarter of the year. In total he travelled around 12,000 miles across the country and stayed in cities in 17 states; in addition to four cities in three Canadian provinces.

During his study trips he visited 27 universities, including prominent schools such as Harvard, Princeton and Yale but also universities which were just positioning themselves in the growing university landscape of the USA following the end of the American Civil War. In the big cities such as New York, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco, Coubertin became the guest of prominent society clubs and learned about private, industrial and public sports clubs, of public sports institutions and sporting events. He participated in the Boston Conference on Physical Training in 1889, took in the atmosphere at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 and was impressed by the social work of Hull House in Chicago.

Coubertin published his experiences in two books, entitled *Universités Transatlantique* (1890) and *Souvenirs d'Amérique et de Grèce* (1897).² In addition to these two monographs he wrote numerous articles on university life and the private and public sports

settings in the USA. These were published in magazines such as *La Revue Athlétique*, *Les Sport Athlétiques*, *La Grande Revue*, *Cosmopolis*, *The Fortnightly Review*, *The Century Magazine*, *The American Monthly review of Reviews*.³

The places and institutions which Coubertin visited in the USA in 1889 and 1893 were instrumental in setting up an impressive network, including university professors, university presidents, sports administrators, sports officials, settlement workers, journalists and politicians. Even a small selection of the key actors in Coubertin's network in the USA shows the diversity of its composition, including personalities from diverse professional backgrounds.

Starting and Establishing a Network in the USA

As to research, William M. Sloane and Andrew D. White were the first two people in Coubertin's emerging American network. These contacts were established in Paris before Coubertin's first passage to the USA. At Princeton, Sloane was not only involved in the regular responsibilities of a professor, but was also president of the Athletic and Intercollegiate Committee at that prestigious university.⁴ White's career at Cornell University was strongly

Universities	Society Clubs	Sport Clubs/ Institutions	Others
Amherst College	Century Club (NY)	Boston Athletic Club	Conference on Physical Training (Boston 1889)
Boston College	New York University Club	Chicago Athletic Club	Hull House (Settlement House Chicago)
Catholic University of Washington, D.C	Olympic Club San Francisco	Manhattan Athletic Club	World`s Columbian Exposition 1893 (Chicago)
Columbia University	University Club (NY)	New York Athletic Club	
Cornell University	Union Club (Boston)	New York University Athletic Club	
Harvard University		Pullmann Athletic Club	
Johns Hopkins University		Young Men`s Christian Association (amongst others New York and Boston)	
Princeton University			
Stanford University			
Tulane University			
University of California			
University of Chicago			
Yale University			

Selection of institutions and public events Coubertin visited respectively attended in 1889 and 1893 (in alphabetical order).

linked with his reputation as a university reformer, politician and diplomat.⁵

Coubertin and Sloane had already met in Paris in 1888 at the house of the French philosopher and historian Hippolyte Taine. Interestingly, the conversation focused on the educational significance of sport for youth. They even talked about the necessity of planning an international youth sports festival to stress the relevance of sports in educational contexts.⁶ It was Sloane who then encouraged Coubertin to visit the USA to learn more about the role of sports in the university world and society.⁷ Coubertin set sail for the first trip to America on September 21st in 1889; he travelled together with Sloane.⁸ White was also at the 1889 Paris Exposition. It was probably Sloane who tried to establish contact between Coubertin and White. Correspondence between Coubertin and White suggests that it was not possible for them to meet before that a personal meeting before Coubertin's departure to the United States. However, White was informed of Coubertin's intention to visit the USA and to learn more about physical education and sports there.⁹ Like Sloane, White encouraged some of his university colleagues to welcome Coubertin on their campus. For example, White wrote the following lines to Daniel C. Gilman, president of Johns Hopkins University, on August 5th 1889:

"I shall take the liberty of giving a letter of introduction to you to a young and enthusiastic French re-

former in educational matters, who has published several things, and whose work has attracted considerable attention, Baron Pierre de Coubertin. He is especially enthusiastic in regard to physical education, has already written very readable reports upon his investigations in England and goes to America next month to continue them".¹⁰

With the support of both Sloane and White, Coubertin became familiar with the role of sports and physical education at American universities. Probably thanks to Sloane's influence, Coubertin attended the Boston Conference on Physical Education, which was held in November 1889 to discuss the value of different systems of Swedish, German and American gymnastics and to argue for the educational power of regulated sports competitions. At this conference, which became known as the *Battle of Systems*, Coubertin had the opportunity to meet the United States Commissioner of Education William T. Harris, who was a clear advocate of athletic games. At the Ivy League and State Universities Coubertin was impressed by the students' enthusiasm, how sports were integrated into their lives and by the universities' sports facilities. In conversations with university presidents and professors, including Charles W. Eliot at Harvard, White at Cornell, Gilman at Johns Hopkins, Preston Johnson at Tulane University and above all Sloane at Princeton, Coubertin's view that sports would contribute to the development of future leaders' life skills was reinforced.

Name	Professional and Institutional Responsibility	Year of Contact	Others
Addams, Jane	Founder of Hull (Settlement) House	1893	1893
Eliot, Charles W.	President, Harvard University	Since 1889	Since 1889
Gilman, Daniel, C.	President, Johns Hopkins University	Since 1889	Since 1889
Harper, William R.	President, University of Chicago	1893	1893
Harris, William T.	U.S. Commissioner of Education	Since 1889	Since 1889
Preston, Johnson	Founding President, Tulane University	1889	1889
Kirby, Gustavus	President, Columbia University	1893	1893
Pullmann, George M.	Pullmann Palace Car Company	1889 & 1893	1889 & 1893
Roosevelt, Theodore	Politician and President of the USA (1901 – 1909)	Since 1889	Since 1889
Shaw, Albert	Journalist / editor, American Monthly Review of Reviews	Since 1893	Since 1893
Sloane, William M.	Professor, Princeton University	Since 1888	Since 1888
Sullivan, James E.	Amateur Athletic Union	Since 1893	Since 1893
White, Andrew D.	Founding President, Cornell University	Since 1889	Since 1889

Selection of key actors from Coubertin's network in the USA.

It is interesting to learn that Sloane and White even introduced Coubertin to sports settings beyond the university world. Particularly during his study trip in 1889, Coubertin developed his positive views on the public sports scene in the USA. He visited and wrote not only on the elite sports clubs in New York, Boston or Chicago but also on YMCA gymnasiums, park sports activities, the Pullman Palace Car Company sports club and the playing field attached to Jane Addams' Settlement House in Chicago. Through Sloane, Coubertin became acquainted with Theodore Roosevelt, who was at that time an emerging politician for the Republican Party. In November 1889 they had a longer meeting either in the Century Club or University Club of New York City. Coubertin was fascinated by Roosevelt's opinion on the educational value of sports and his initiatives to spread sports to the masses; including in urban areas. Coubertin and Roosevelt enjoyed a long friendship evidenced by Coubertin's invitations to the White House in 1903 and 1905 and Roosevelt's short visit to Paris in 1909. Coubertin dedicated his two books *L'education publique* and *La gymnastique utilitaire* to Roosevelt¹¹ and honored him with the first Olympic Diploma in 1905.¹²

Returning from his first trip to the USA, Coubertin already viewed America as a sporting nation. He was convinced that this contributed greatly to the strong development of the USA in terms of education, democracy, well-being and economy. John J. MacAloon describes this as follows:

"In the city parks no less than in the private clubs and colleges, and in the rural towns no less than in the cities, no French visitor in 1889 could have failed to take note of the sporting character of the American nation. Coubertin, of course, was on a

special lookout for all this, and was quite taken with it. He returned to France a passionist publicist for the American way, the United States having to no small degree replaced England in his heart."¹³

In 1889 the focus was very much on the analysis of the role of sports in educational settings and in society. This was formally his mission on the part of the French Ministry of Education and Coubertin could use the official letterhead of the ministry for his correspondence. On his study trip to the USA in 1893 his agenda was heavily focused on the planning of his Olympic project. Against the background of this new priority Coubertin expanded his American network with people coming from education, sports administration and public life. The most important new key actor was Albert Shaw, who will be introduced more fully later.

The American Network: A Strong Supporter of Coubertin's Early Initiatives on Educational and Athletic Internationalism

Coubertin did not want to re-establish the modern Olympic Games without a clear educational message. Consequently, he believed Olympic competition should be based on amateurism to safeguard the role of sports as an educational tool. In 1894 Coubertin stated this clearly:

"Sporting can only produce good moral effects, can, indeed, maintain its existence, only as it is founded upon disinterestedness, loyalty, and chivalric sentiment."¹⁴

Without doubt, viewing amateurism as a 'sine qua non' for the educational framework of the Olympic Games was not something Coubertin learned

from his experiences in the USA exclusively. However, in his conversation with Sloane and Roosevelt, who were both strong advocates of the concept of amateurism, Coubertin learned more about a very pragmatic dimension of amateurism and its usefulness for the Olympic Games. According to Sloane and Roosevelt, amateurism would strengthen the uniqueness of the Olympic Games as it would easily distinguish them from an already well-established professional sports scene;¹⁵ thus the public perception of the Olympic project would be more favorable. Key actors in Coubertin's American network not only supported Coubertin in his strong advocacy for amateurism, but also in his intention to establish the Olympic Games as a platform for the promotion of transcultural understanding and respect. The first contours of this idea had been present in Coubertin's work since 1888 and can be linked to the concept of educational internationalism.

Research conducted by Dietrich Quanz, Walter Borgers, and John Hoberman¹⁶ has shown that in the late 1880s Paris was the center of the emerging peace movement which was very visible during the 1889 World's Exhibition in the French capital. It was there that Coubertin had the opportunity to meet key figures of the international peace movement, including Frenchman Frédéric Passy and England's Hodgson Pratt. Passy was co-founder of the *Société des amis de la paix* in Paris and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1901; Pratt was the founder and chairman of the International Peace and Arbitration Association.

Over the course of their conversations and above all through the recommendations of the Third Universal Peace Congress, held in Rome in 1891, Coubertin's international sporting and educational intentions crystallized. He closely followed Pratt's ideas that students in Europe and the USA should be made more sensitive to intercultural views. Pratt saw this as an important basis for building transcultural tolerance.

This objective was to be achieved by two ideas which form central considerations of the concept of an educational internationalism. The first focusses on the necessity of disseminating more substantial knowledge of academic content on the historical, political, social and economic situation of other nations. By this knowledge acquisition unjustified prejudices against other nations could be reduced. The second idea was supporting student exchange between Europe and America. A more than theoretical knowledge of living in a foreign country would lead to more authentic intercultural experiences and stimulation of tolerance.¹⁷ Coubertin implemented both ideas.

As to the first idea on the dissemination of knowledge transfer, Coubertin organized academic award competitions for students at various American universities. He started this project during his second study visit to the USA in 1893 and continued with it until 1902. In essay and discussion competitions students were tasked to deal with topics of contemporary French history, politics, society and culture. The students with the most informed contributions were awarded medals bearing the names of well-known French politicians, scientists, statesmen and poets. University professors and presidents within Coubertin's network were supportive and helped Coubertin to establish an educational-oriented medal campaign.

French medal, founded in 1893, awarded to Princeton University (New Jersey).

Sadi Carnot medal, founded in 1894, awarded to Tulane University (Louisiana).

Sadi Carnot medal, founded in 1894, awarded to Palo Alto University and Berkeley University (California).

Alexis de Tocqueville medal, founded in 1898 at Johns Hopkins University (Maryland).

Louis Pasteur medal, founded in 1898 at Harvard University (Massachusetts).

Victor Hugo medal, founded in 1898 at Cornell University (New York).

The *Union Française des Universités d'Amérique* was responsible for disseminating the medal campaign, thus lending it strength and organizing the awarding of the individual medals at the various universities. The inaugural meeting of this organization, founded by Coubertin, took place on March 8th 1897. In addition to US and French professors, members included administrative staff from the US embassy in Paris. An article reporting the inaugural meeting of the society can be found in the archives of Harvard University without reference to the newspaper and date. The headline reads: America and France: Baron de Coubertin on the national ideal of the United States.¹⁸

As to the second idea, which refers to supporting student exchange between Europe and America, Coubertin considered sports as a possibility to encourage it. Coubertin turned to sports because he thought its increasing global popularity in a university setting, and beyond, would facilitate international sports gatherings. Again, Coubertin found support for this idea in the USA. In 1892, Coubertin and Sloane already invited athletes from American universities to a sporting event in Paris. To this end, Sloane and Coubertin founded the American Com-

mittee, of which White from Cornell University was a strong supporter. Sloane, White and Coubertin agreed that the visit to Paris and the return visit to New York, Boston and Chicago, at that time still to be planned, were not just about comparing sporting performances but also about the opportunity to generate intercultural knowledge and consequently mutual respect between French and American students. On a small scale, the goal of this student sport exchange can ultimately be considered a pioneer initiative of Coubertin's broader vision of creating the Olympic Games as a platform to establish transnational tolerance as an antidote to the processes of national alienation.¹⁹

The extent to which the American community was supportive of Coubertin's idea of an educational internationalism, with its two pillars of the medal campaign and the promotion of international student mobility via sports competitions, can be stressed by introducing another key actor from Coubertin's network in the USA, Albert Shaw.

Since 1891 Shaw had been editor-in-chief of the *American Monthly Review of Reviews* and met Coubertin in 1893. Their shared interest was on strengthening transcultural tolerance by knowledge dissemination and personal acquaintances with representatives of other nations. Coubertin highly valued Shaw's publication interest on the political and governmental structures of Europe. Shaw printed numerous articles on the political situation in France, written by Coubertin, in the *American Monthly Review of Reviews*. In addition to this, he organized the translation of Coubertin's book *L'Évolution Française sous la Troisième République* into 'American-English' as well as its publication with a publishing house in New York.

In December 1894 Shaw published the article *The Re-Establishment of Olympic Games. How International Sports May Promote Peace Among the Nations in the American Monthly Review of Reviews*. Besides Coubertin's intention for the medal campaign at American universities, Shaw asserted that transnational understanding could also be achieved by Coubertin's ambition to use the popularity of global sports as a means to strengthen respect among representatives of other nations. It was a strong statement designed to inform the American public of the idea that the intention to establish the Olympic Games should be more than a mere international athletic sport competition:

"...the modern revival of international contests of sport, conducted in a manly and honorable way and in an atmosphere of moral purity, will play a very important part in the supreme task of binding to-

gether rival nations, and relegating the barbarism of war to an evil past."²⁰

The American Network: Backing Coubertin's Organizational Efforts to re-establish the Olympic Games

In late 1892, Coubertin organized the fifth anniversary of the *Union des sociétés françaises de sports athlétiques* (USFSA), which had been founded as an umbrella organization for the promotion of sports in France.

The meetings took place from November 20th to 24th 1892.

Coubertin organized the ceremony in his capacity as secretary general of the USFSA. He believed that it was important to start the jubilee with various sporting events and school sports competitions. The actual ceremony was reserved for November 25th, with the aim of raising public awareness for the growing importance of sport in and for society. The celebration was attended by representatives of sports organizations and – at least in part – by politicians from the government and city authorities. Literary and musical performances cleverly embellished the festival programme, which comprised speeches about sports in antiquity, the Middle Ages and in the late 19th century. The latter period was analyzed by Coubertin in a speech he delivered at the end of the ceremony. He concluded with the proposal to re-establish the modern Olympic Games.²¹ This was the first time that Coubertin informed the public of his idea to revive the Olympic Games. The audience was surprised by the idea and reacted moderately.

But before Coubertin made his intention to re-establish the Olympic Games public for the first time, he had exchanged thoughts about this project in private circles before November 25th. In his correspondence with White, a key member of Coubertin's American network – The earliest mention so far discovered about on Coubertin's intentions to reintroduce the Olympic Games only in private correspondence. As researched by Wassong, Coubertin wrote to White the following lines on July 21st 1892, four months before his speech on November 25th 1892:

"I have [...] good news to give you about our Union here. We have now over 62 societies & 7000 members. Next November we [...] have an eight days festival in Paris to commemorate the fifth anniversary on the foundation of the Union. If only you could happen to be in Paris from Nov. 20. to Nov. 27. I am sure the programme would suit you.

I have lately studied very carefully the question of international athletics and the way of making in-

ternational meetings as easy and useful as possible. A few days ago, we had a team from the New Zealand Athletic Association in Paris. Australia is growing very fast in the way of sports, as are also France, Holland, Belgium & Germany. I have come to the conclusion that if the Olympian Games will start anew and be held every four years as in the old times, it would be a great benefit to modern athleticism. [...] I am sure the question of the reestablishment of the Olympian Games [Brookes] has already been thought of in Athens as well as in England) would be discussed with great sympathy by both the athlete and the learned man; and I want to know if you would accept to become a member of a Comité de Patronage."²²

However, despite the passive reaction of the audience on November 25th Coubertin was not so much frustrated but as motivated to try again. This time the idea to re-introduce the Olympic Games was to be the main focus of the congress to be planned for summer 1894.

Indeed, this congress itself has been researched well in Olympic history and academic literature on Coubertin's life and work. The congress was held in Paris at the Sorbonne from June 16th to 24th 1894. It was labelled the *Congrès international de Paris pour le rétablissement des Jeux olympiques*. Among the 2,000-odd participants, there were 58 French delegates from 24 sports organizations and 20 delegates from 8 countries. Thematic focal points included consideration of the reintroduction of the Olympic Games and regulations for the admission of amateurs to the Olympic competition. A separate commission was formed for each subject area. The joint consultation of both commissions took place on the last day of the congress. It was decided to re-establish the Olympic Games, hold the first edition in Athens in 1896 and found the IOC with 15 members from 12 different nations (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bohemia, France, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Russia, Sweden and the United States of America). Other important decisions taken at the congress, which later became known as the first Olympic Congress, were related to the appointment of the Greek writer Dimitrios Vikelas as the first President of the IOC and agreements on a set of amateur rules.²³

Now, it is interesting to analyze how Coubertin managed to organize the founding congress for the Olympic Games in 1894 so successfully. Of course, between November 1892 and June 1894 Coubertin had strong support from the members of the USFSA to prepare the project. But in this time period he also went to the USA from mid-Sep-

tember until the end of December. Hence, it is interesting to analyze the extent to which this second trip was linked with the preparation of the Olympic project as well as the organization of the founding congress.

At the beginning of his second study trip Coubertin stayed almost a fortnight in Chicago to visit the University of Chicago and President Harper, he met Addams, who was the founder of Hull (Settlement) House and attended the World's Columbian Exposition. Originally, Coubertin was invited as a lecturer to the International Congress on Education which was held from July 25th – 28th in the context of the Exposition. But Coubertin declined the invitation as he could not travel to the USA at an earlier date.²⁴

From Chicago he made his way through the Southwest to California. He spent most of his time in the greater San Francisco area, visiting Palo Alto and Berkeley University. According to his travel report he also mentioned a visit to the San Francisco Olympic Club.²⁵ Obviously, Coubertin and his intentions to study the sports system in the USA and – what is more important now – his plan to organize the congress in Paris in 1894 stirred interest in San Francisco. On October 17th the *San Francisco Chronicle* published the following news:

"A French Nobleman Here to Study, and Encourage Manly Exercise.

There registered at the Palace Hotel yesterday Baron de Coubertin of Paris. The nobleman is quite a young man and comes to this country principally in the interest of amateur athletic sports. He is a commissioner of the International Congress which is to be held during the month of June of next year in the French Capital. The gentleman will visit our universities while here [...]"²⁶

From the end of October until mid-December Coubertin spent a lot of time with Sloane at Princeton University and in New York City. It is precisely the time period in which central ideas on the congress in terms of organization and content had to be finalized to be ready for sending out the first invitation circular for the congress in Paris on January 15th 1894. The circular must have been ready by the end of December 1893 as Sloane sent out the circular to some of his university colleagues on January 2nd.²⁷

Coubertin and Sloane agreed on the fact that the planned congress in Paris had to address that the Olympic Games could only be revived as a means to promote the educational value of sport if a core set of amateur rules were defined. Hence the first in-

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UNION
DES SOCIÉTÉS FRANÇAISES
DE
SPORTS ATHLÉTIQUES
Le Secrétaire Général

✓
Briisville,
Godeville / Lein Duffing
July 21st 1892

Dear Mr White

I thank you very much for having thought of sending me such interesting news about athletics. A summary of your letter was published in our weekly paper "Les Sports Athlétiques".

I have equally good news to give you about our Union here. We have now over 62 Sociétés & 7000 members. Next November we are to have an eight days festival in Paris to commemorate the fifth anniversary on the foundation of the Union. If only you could happen to be in Paris from Nov. 20 to Nov. 27 I am sure our programme would suit you.

especially the great meeting in the Amphitheatre of the Sorbonne on Nov. 27. - We shall have a conference on "L'histoire des Exercices Physiques", by M. Fissoreau, the well known writer of the *Annales des Deux Mondes*.

Then I would like to see you about two schemes of mine, the first of which has something to do with the Chicago Exhibition. I want to bring a French team over to America next year to repay the visit the American athletes paid us last year. Athletics are not the end of the voyage.

I want our young men to visit New York, Boston & Chicago & some of the leading universities & work on their road. The French Government will help us in giving free tickets across the ocean. I want to know what I ought to do in order to make the expenses as small as possible on the U.S. railways & in the hotels? Perhaps you

could give me a written consent.

My other scheme is quite different & will seem at first rather ambitious - I have lately studied very carefully the question of international athletics & the way of making international meetings as easy & useful as possible. A few days ago we had a team from the New Zealand Athletic Association in Paris. Athletics is growing very fast in the way of sports, as in also France, Holland, Belgium & Germany. I have come to the conclusion that if the Olympic games were started anew & held every four years as in the old times, it would be a great benefit to modern athletics. You know all about the gigantic work done at Olympia by the German archaeologists & the beautiful results of it. I am sure the question of the resuscitation of the Olympic games (which has already

been thought of in Athens as well as in England) would be discussed with great sympathy by both the athletes & the learned men, & I want to know if you would accept to become a member of a "Comité de Soutien". I intended asking Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Waldstein & others, of course it means nothing except that you look at it favourably. - Is it true? I saw in yesterday's paper that you had been appointed as the 1st Minister to Russia? We shall be jealous in Paris?... Why not to France.

I thank you, own news, dear Mr White, for your kind interest. Hoping to see you very soon,

I remain

Ever yours very faithfully

Pierre de Coubertin

Coubertin's letter to Andrew White, dated July 21st 1892.

itation circular addressed this prominently and it is very likely that already in Princeton the idea was developed to have two commissions at the congress in Paris. The first for discussing the relevance of amateurism and the second on considerations to revive the Olympic Games. It is not a surprise to learn that Sloane was co-chairing the commission on amateurism.²⁸

In his article *The Re-Establishment of Olympic Games. How International Sports May Promote Peace Among the Nations*, Shaw refers to a conference which was held in November in New York to appoint persons responsible for issuing the first call for the congress in Paris. It was agreed that Sloane would carry the responsibility to disseminate the information on the two American continents, Coubertin for continental Europe and Charles Herbert, then honorary secretary general of the Amateur Athletic Association in England, should spread information about the congress in England and throughout the Commonwealth.²⁹

But there was not only support for the Olympic project. At a meeting at the New York University Club on November 27th 1893 Sloane and Coubertin faced some critical voices from representatives from Harvard, Princeton, Yale and Columbia University. Criticism focused on the fact that for student athletes it would be too time-consuming and costly to travel to and compete at the planned Olympic Games which were likely to be staged in Europe. These words were echoed by James E. Sullivan, who was the president of the Amateur Athletic Union and head of the American Sports Publishing Company, belonging to Spalding Company. Coubertin met Sullivan only a few days after the meeting with the university officials on November 27th. They met at Spalding headquarters in downtown Manhattan. Coubertin and Sullivan disliked each other from the first moment they met. Sullivan saw no value in supporting Coubertin's Olympic project.³⁰

Even if the *Congrès international de Paris pour le rétablissement des Jeux olympiques* with all of its decision-making was a success, Sloane could not return back home from the Parisian congress to rest. It was still quite a project for Sloane to promote the Olympic idea, stabilize the network in the USA, which he and Coubertin established in 1893, and build a team for the inaugural edition of the Olympic Games to be held in Athens in 1896. To meet the challenges Sloane founded the American Honorary Committee for the Olympic Games in 1895.³¹ It is perhaps not overly speculative to label this Committee the early pioneer organization of the United States Olympic Committee founded in 1921; initially named American Olympic Association.

As shown in the following chart the membership composition of the Committee was quite diverse as it included university professors from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia and Johns Hopkins, journalists, members of the New York Athletic Club and New York University Club, the US-Commissioner of Education, and even the US-President Grover Cleveland. The latter accepted the invitation as chair of the Committee. Although Cleveland did not attend the meetings his willingness to put down his name for the official function should give a convincing reputation to the Committee. Of course, Sullivan was not a member of the Committee.

It is not surprising to learn that almost 90% of the members of the Committee were key actors in Coubertin's USA-American network. They were convinced of Coubertin's Olympic idea and viewed the Olympic Games as more than a mere international sporting event. The understanding of this reduced the remaining voices opposing the Olympic Games in the university environment. The majority of the Committee members were from prestigious universities which could back the argument that the Olympic Games were perceived important for educational settings. The Olympic Games were likely viewed as a stimulus to defend the value of amateur sports and hence should be portrayed as a counterpart to intercollegiate sports which were tainted by a tarnished professionalism. In addition to this, it is worthwhile arguing that – as to research – almost all of the university professors of the Committee were advocates of an educational internationalism which was a central driving force for Coubertin and Sloane to establish the Olympic Games as an educational project.

Equally, it is not surprising that Shaw was a member of the Committee. As mentioned earlier, he was also open to viewing sports as a means to further educational internationalism. As an experienced author and above all journalist he took on the responsibility to provide the public with concise information on the Olympic project; before and even shortly after the successful first edition of the Olympic Games in Athens. As examples one can refer to his article *The Re-Establishment of Olympic Games. How International Sports May Promote Peace Among the Nations* (1896) but also to those published by his colleague Ch. D. Lanier with the titles *In the Field of International Sport* (1895) and *The Worlds Sporting Impulse* (1896). Of course, the articles were published in *American Monthly Review of Reviews*.³²

In the end Sloane managed to organize the first American Olympic team with a handful of students and graduates coming mainly from Harvard and Princeton. As George Hirthler stated in his entry in the *Pierre de Coubertin Reference Document* "the

Name	Professional and Institutional Responsibility
US President Grover Cleveland	Chair
Alexander, James W.	Princeton University
Dwight, Timothy	President, Yale University
Choate, Joseph	New York University Club, Diplomat
Cleveland, Grover	President USA
Eliot, Charles W.	President, Harvard University
Gilman, Daniel, C.	President, Johns Hopkins University
Harrison, Charles C.	University of Pennsylvania
Harris, William T.	U.S. Commissioner of Education
Low, Seth	President, Columbia University
Patton, Francis L.	President, Princeton University
Shaw, Albert	Journalist / editor, American Monthly Review of Reviews
Sloane, William M.	Princeton University
Whitel, J.	President New York Athletic Club
Wilson, William S.	No information found

Members of the American Honorary Committee for the Olympic Games.

American athletes seized the opportunity and set the young nation on a path of sustained Olympic glory. From that first team of ten athletes, which won 20 medals, including 14 gold, the US was destined to become the most successful nation in modern Olympic History.”³³

Conclusion

Research on Coubertin’s study trips to the USA in 1889 and 1893 has led to more than a simple description of his travel routes or even than the analysis that Coubertin portrayed the USA as an emerging nation in educational, political and economic matters. The analysis of the American influence on Coubertin is important for a detailed picture of a fundamental part of Olympic history – namely the foundation period of the Olympic Games. To stress this, five arguments have been developed in this article.

1. Coubertin developed a strong network in the USA. Key actors were professors, university presidents, politicians, sports officials and journalists. It was above all Sloane and White who introduced Coubertin to the network and the basis for it was built in Paris in 1888. Knowledge of the network is important as its key actors influenced Coubertin’s early educational and above all Olympic thoughts.

2. In the correspondence between Coubertin and White the earliest written document to date can be analyzed in which Coubertin mentioned his intention to revive the Olympic Games. This was on July 21st and hence four months earlier than in his speech on November 25th in 1892 where Coubertin

first publicly announced his Olympic project. The relevance of this correspondence with White is that it reveals how early Coubertin was considering about the Olympic idea.

3. Research on Coubertin’s network in the USA and his exchange of ideas with Sloane, Roosevelt, White, Shaw and university presidents explains that the concept of an educational internationalism became a leading principle in Coubertin’s educational thinking. The implementation of the medal campaign in the USA, the project to organize exchanges between American and French students via athletic competitions are relevant information for analyzing that the Olympic Games was planned as a platform for intercultural exchange processes right from the beginning. Of course, this central consideration behind the Olympic idea or the concept of Olympism was developed over years, but early considerations on it were formed during Coubertin’s initiatives in the USA with the support of his American network.

4. The key players in Coubertin’s American network not only influenced the early contours of the Olympic concept of an educational internationalism, but also pragmatic aspects of Coubertin’s Olympic project. With Sloane’s support key organizational steps were realized to organize the founding congress of the Olympic Games in 1894. This is above all true for the first invitation circular which was edited during Coubertin’s stay at Princeton in November 1893.

5. The foundation of the American Honorary Committee for the Olympic Games in 1895, which can

Key personalities in Coubertin's
American network³⁶

be viewed as the forerunner of the American Olympic Association, evidences that there was support for the Olympic project in the USA. The Committee was founded on its members' understanding, from Coubertin and Sloane, that the re-establishment of the Olympic Games should be more than a mere international sports competition but a project safeguarding and promoting the educational value of sports. As the majority of the Committee members came from a university environment, they had the right experience to value Coubertin's approach. They did not want to miss out on the chance for the USA to be involved in the Olympic project from the very beginning.

Against the background of these five arguments, it becomes clear why Coubertin explicitly acknowledged the support of the USA and especially of the key actors in his American network in the organizational as well as the content formation phase of the Olympic Games. Coubertin's gratitude to and admiration of his supporters in the USA remained strong and lasted until the end of his life. On June 23rd 1934, on the occasion of celebrating the 40th anniversary of the revival of the Olympic Games, Coubertin mentioned the following in his *Message to the American Youth*:

"...I evoke the memory of Theodore Roosevelt, of William M. Sloane, of many American friends who have worked willingly with me, understood me and sustained me throughout that long period in which I have had to struggle all over the world – and particularly in France, my own country – against the lack of understanding of public opinion, ill prepared to appreciate the value of the Olympic revival."³⁴

The *Message to American Youth* was published in the *New York Times* when Coubertin passed away on September 2nd. There the quote of the above passage includes an explicit mention of White:

"...I evoke the memory of Theodore Roosevelt, of William Milligan Sloane and of Andrew D. White and of many of my American friends....."³⁵

The information presented on the early American influence on Coubertin and how educators, university presidents, politicians and journalists in the USA contributed to realizing the birth of today's Olympic Movement with a clear educational mission could well be of interest when profiling a cultural, historical and even educational dimension in the run-up to the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 2028.



Perhaps an exhibition might be considered, with a working title perhaps *Coubertin's Voices in America*. Virtual or hybrid exhibition formats could be designed to reach a broader public. This could be a great collaborative project between the International Society of Olympic Historians and the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee.

* This article is based on a lecture delivered at the US Olympic & Paralympic Museum on October 7th 2023. This lecture was presented on the occasion that ISOH Presented the author with the Vikelas Plaque.

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2 Coubertin, P. de: *Universites Transatlantique*. Paris 1890. Coubertin, P. de: *Souvenirs d'Amérique et de Grèce*. Paris 1897.

3 Wassong: Pierre de Coubertin. 2002, 82–88, 118–124, 144–149. Wassong: Pierre de Coubertin's Studies. 2009, 83–89.

4 Presbrey, F. & Moffat, J.H.: *Athletics at Princeton*. New York 1901, 57.

5 White, A.D.: *Autobiography of Andrew Dickson White*. New York 1917, 441.

6 Wassong: Pierre de Coubertin. 2002, 97. & Wassong: Pierre de Coubertin's Studies. 2009, 85.

7 But before Coubertin followed Sloane's recommendation the then 26-year-old Coubertin French co-organized an International Congress on Questions of Physical Education which was part of the World's Exhibition in Paris in 1889. In accordance with the objectives of the World's Exhibitions, Coubertin gave the congress an international character. As part of the preparations, he initiated a worldwide survey on the role of physical education. Obviously with the support of Sloane the questionnaire was designed well and responses to the survey came in from the USA, England, Canada, Australia and many other very remote colonies. Coubertin was thus able to demonstrate an impressive worldwide interest in the topic of sport and education. He received 90 replies from the USA alone, enabling him to obtain comprehensive information about sports and gymnastic activities at schools and universities in the country. Refer to: Coubertin, Pierre de. "Les exercices physiques dans les écoles d'Angleterre, d'Amérique, d'Australie et dans les Colonies anglaises." In *Exposition Universelle de 1889. Congrès des Exercices Physiques*. *Compte rendu des séances et concours*, 1–7. Paris: Publications des Annales Economiques 1889. Borgers, W. and Quanz, D. "Weltausstellung und Sport (Olympische Spiele). Vom Tempel der Industrie Zur Olympischen Arena." In: Decker, W., Dolianitis, G. and Lennartz, K. (Eds.): *100 Jahre Olympische Spiele. Der Neugriechische Ursprung*. Würzburg 199, 80–89.

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29 Shaw: "The Re-Establishment of Olympic Games". 1894, 644.

30 Reisler, J.: *Igniting the Flame. America's First Olympic Team*. Guilford, CT. 2012, 140 – 142. After the successful Olympic Games in Athens in 1896 "Sullivan became a convert to the Olympics" and probably only because "he and Spalding recognized they could exploit attention to the Games to sell more sporting goods" (Reisler: *Igniting*. 2012, 142).

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36 Pierre de Coubertin: copyright IOC; Albert Shaw: Repository Library of Congress, Number LC-USZ62 – 108005, Copyright Public Domain; Theodore Roosevelt: <http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/roosevelt/rooyoung.htm>; public domain; William M. Sloane: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Milligan_Sloane; Andrew D. White: <https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/cornell150/exhibition/white/index.html>

It happened in Paris — A first Olympic Champion: Women's golf 1900

by Linda K Fuller

“Every four years, athletes from all over the world compete in the most prestigious of international sports competitions: the Olympic Games. As this competition among nation-states evolved from a feudal structure to an international forum for showcasing political ideals and athletic feats, the role of the woman athlete changed according to the social and political decrees of the day.”

—Welch and Costa, *A century of Olympic competition* (1994: 123).

Fore! In anticipation of women's golf at 2024 Paris, the time is right for an historical and rhetorical review examining its introduction, the first time Paris hosted the Games in 1900.



The eventual champion was Margaret Ives Abbott.

Said to be extremely disorganized, the 1900 Paris Games ran from May 20 to October 28, with 1,319 athletes from 28 countries competing in 17 sports,

The sports events were held adjacent to the World's Fair and were something of a sideshow to international competition.

At least women were “allowed” to compete in an Olympiad for the first time. Those first female Olympians were permitted to compete in ‘respectable’ sports. Those chosen were Croquet, Lawn Tennis, Sailing and Golf.

The programme was announced May 27, 1899. In what was described as a “circus-like atmosphere” for Games open to both genders for the first time, there were no opening or closing ceremonies, with results so scattered that historians have had difficulty determining who won what, or when.

Womengolfersmuseum.com, published by Gillian Kirkwood, has recorded that “swimming events were held in the Seine with boats, waves, heat and garbage. Track and Field competitions were held on the grass turf of the Racing Club de France in the Bois de Boulogne.

As a result of that disorganization there were very few spectators.” The story of that first women's golf is particularly fascinating.

A Brief History of Women's Golf

Some sports scholars credit Mary Queen of Scots (1542–87) with popularising the sport for women from as early as 1552.

Said to be an avid golfer, she coined the term “caddie” and encouraged the building of St. Andrews during her reign.

After that, it was not until until 1811 that a first women's golf tournament was recorded.

It took place at East Lothian, Scotland's Musselburgh Golf Club and was for the wives of the local fishermen.

American playwright and golf writer W.G. Van Tassel Sutphen gave his opinion in *The Golfing Woman* (1899) His writing betrays the prejudices of the time but serve as an important record of contemporary thinking.

“It is only within a comparatively few years that women were supposed to play golf at all; and their position abroad is still largely a matter of sufferance. It was customary at one time in England and Scotland to set aside a small portion of the regular links to be used as a woman's course, a sort of ‘Jews’ quarter,’ as it were. The holes were necessarily of the shortest, varying from 75 yards down to 10; but the aspirations of the feminine golfer were supposed to be confined to the noble exercise of putting” (pp.249–50)

While New York's Shinnecock Hills Golf Club was said to have opened its doors to women in 1891, the first ladies golf tournament in the U.S. was held on a 7-hole course later known as the Morris (NJ) County Golf Club in 1900, the Women's Tournament Committee of the USGA founded in 1917.

By 1950, no doubt influenced by interest in Babe Didrickson-Zaharias (1911–1956), a double Olympic gold medallist and later a champion golfer, the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) was formed.

In terms of the Olympics, golf had been removed from the programme by the IOC in 1921 at its session in Lausanne.

It was finally restored to the Games programme at the IOC Session in Copenhagen in October 2009 and was to return at Rio 2016.

Imagine: 116 years after women's Olympic golf was first played, it was restored after a 63–27 vote (with

two abstentions) While some members were concerned about the various discriminations that the sport might entail, ESPN's Bob Harig reported that, "It faced tougher questioning [than rugby] from IOC members about the high cost of playing the sport, its accessibility in developing countries and the fact that some top clubs don't admit women."

At the Rio Games, Korea's Inbee Park was the winner after shooting a four round 268. Silver went to New Zealand's Lydia Ko and Bronze to China's Shanshan Feng.

At the delayed Tokyo Olympics gold again went to an American, Nelly Korda.

Japan's Mone Inami and Ko tied for second to force sudden-death playoff. Inami took silver on the second extra hole.

The gendered language of women's golf

Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840–1924) of Boston, considered the USA's foremost female patron of the arts, called it "a curious Scottish game," while others have referred to golf as "outdoor tiddlywinks." As early as 1898, F.W. Crane wrote that, "It has been truthfully said that of all games, golf is the most beneficial and enjoyable for women."

"Do you speak golf? Do you play for Barkies? Or Arnies?" golf journalist Bill Pennington asked in 2009. "Do you avail yourself of the breakfast ball and love a good game of Bingo, Bango, Bongo? Have you found yourself dormie, stymied, plugged or in the cabbage? Have you dubbed it, shrimped it, shanked it, dinked it or duck-hooked it? And do you know the difference? Have you hit a scooter? How about one in the side door? Are you a sandbagger? A pigeon? A player? A hooker? Do you know who lovingly called his putter Billy Baroo? In other words, are you conversant in the dialect of golf? Do you not only play golf but also revel in all of its idiosyncratic, peculiar lingo?"

In golf, the best score is a *hole-in-one* (an ace), from shots that might be hooked, chipped, sliced, topped, whiffed, while these are the terms *Grip*, *Shaft*, and *Wedge* are associated with the golf club itself. The 19th hole, you may know, is code for the bar. The term GOLF, it has been said, is an acronym for "Gentlemen Only, Ladies Forbidden." Writing about "The golfing woman" just prior to 1900 Paris, Van Tassel Sutphen (1899: 255) said that she, "prides herself upon her familiarity with 'dormies' and 'sclaffs' and 'gobbles' and 'foozies' and all the rest of the heartbreaking jargon in which the golfer is accustomed to express himself. And yet the vocabulary of golf probably ranks next to that of steam engineering for sheer technical profundity and uncouthness." The game quite clearly has its

own vocabulary, as evidenced in these examples from Beard and McKie (1987):

- Apron: fringe of low grass or "frog hair," surrounding the green
- Calamity Jane: Bobby Jones' nickname for his "straight-shooting" putter
- Dimples: tiny circular hollows impressed into the outer covering of golf balls
- Fluff: when the club head strikes the ground behind the ball before hitting it
- Golf widow: non-playing wife of an obsessive golfer
- Impossible lie: a ball positioned completely obstructed
- In the leather: indicates that a putt is close enough to the hole to be conceded
- Ladies' Day: time set aside exclusively for women players, barred otherwise
- Lip: perimeter of grass surround the hole
- Mixed foursome: "a quartet of golfers composed of two separate grounds for divorce"

Margaret Abbott (1876–1955)

The first woman to become Olympic golf champion was an American who just happened to be in Paris and who just happened to enjoy golf.

Her name was Margaret Ives Abbott and she shot 47 in a nine holes in a round round in which holes ranged from 68 to 230 yards.

Amazingly, though, Abbott was never told that she had participated in, never mind that she had won an award for the Olympic Games.

Born in Calcutta to an affluent family, Abbott grew up in Chicago, an athlete and socialite who was said to have a "classy backswing" from early on in the elite sport of golf.

It should be remembered that this was a time when few women were allowed memberships in country clubs and, if they actually played, they were required to have chaperones. At 5 foot 11 inches tall, she was so attractive that as Heather K Michon (2012) noted, "There were rumours that she was one of the women Charles Dana Gibson had in mind when he began sketching his iconic 'Gibson Girl.'" Abbott was a little theatrical and could often be spotted walking with her collie dog, holding the hem of her skirts to prevent them from becoming dirty on Chicago streets, and she was also artistic enough to be recognized as an illustrator.

From 1899 to 1902, Margaret Abbott lived in Paris, studying art under Edgar Degas and Auguste Rodin. It was just a whim when, on October 9th of 1900, she joined her mother, Mary Perkins Ives Abbott, at the Compiègne Club, on Royal Avenue Eight. The



Margaret Abbott

© Charles Dana Gibson, Public Domain

lark turned out to be victorious. “Margaret played a solid, if not particularly exciting game, carding 47. It was enough. She won the contest...She didn’t realize it, but she had just written herself into sports history,” Michon wrote.

Place	Winner	Score
1	Margaret Abbott (USA)	47
2	Pauline Whittier (USA)	49
3	Daria Pratt (USA)	53
4	Rose Felice Berthe Froment-Meurice (FRA)	56
5	Ellen Ridgway (USA)	57
6	Mme. Magdeleine Fournier-Starvoleze (FRA)	58
7	Mary Abbott (USA) Lucile, Baroness Fain (FRA)	65
9	Rose Gelbert (FRA)	67
10	A. Brun (FRA)	80

American women took the top three spots. Patty Whittier in second was, like Margaret Abbott, in Paris to study art.

Daria (Mrs. Huger) Pratt, who finished third, there to plan her daughter’s wedding to an Italian count. Abbott modestly told relatives that the Parisian women apparently had “misunderstood the nature of the game scheduled for the day and turned up to play in high heels and tight skirts.” Along with archers, tennis and croquet players, as well as bikers, early female Olympians wore high-necked, ankle-length outfits (Fuller, 2021), Margaret Abbott was no exception.

For her win, Abbott was “awarded an antique Saxson porcelain bowl embellished with gold” (Michon,

2008) and a round of applause; graciously, it was reported, she thanked the officials. Nevertheless, while we know that the *Chicago Tribune* sent a correspondent to the Games who reported on the match, and that Abbott wrote about it to relatives back home, neither they nor she had any idea of its significance.

There were other factors at play here. “Along with the classy backswing, Margaret was mastering the other competitive sport for young ladies of her social class: the battle for a proper suitor,” Michon (2012) has noted.

In 1902, she married political satirist Finley Peter Dunne, who is known as the creator of “Mr. Dooley,” the Irish barkeeper of Archey Road on Chicago’s South Side. The couple first lived in New York City, where Abbott played golf at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, had four children, and later moved to Greenwich, Connecticut.

Tied for seventh place was Margaret’s mother Mary Abbott (1857–1904).

She was a novelist and book reviewer for the *Chicago Tribune* and it was said that her home was something of a salon for Chicago literati.

Her diary entitled *A woman’s Paris: A handbook of every-day living in the French capital*, which was published in 1900, was aimed at ladies wishing “to do the agreeable things there are to do, and to avoid the disagreeable things there are not to do...to investigate that wonderful charm that everybody admits...(taking) their delight in just living in Paris, and letting sighs and pleasures come” (p.v) Perhaps one of the best signifiers of her wealth comes through her attitude toward French servants who, she writes, “are altogether different from those of America. There one is perpetually at war with the class, without even daring to call it a class” (p. 27). Sport in 1900 Paris, Abbott reported, “is an after-thought with French people...society contents itself with the men doing a little shooting, and a few months’ skating for the ladies; and this accounts for only a small portion of the population...There is no golf, even, for the older or more fashionable of the community. Sport, in its larger sense, is unknown to the French people” (p. 163). Interestingly, as something of a player herself, she expands on advice for would-be golfers in France:

The stranger, man or woman, or who finds exercise absolutely needful and who cannot walk or drive forever, may join the Societe de Golf de Paris...The links is a bad one, shared with cows, but it is a great deal better than nothing; and the place itself is lovely. The fee is only 60 francs (\$12) and there is not initiation. (p.164)



In 1900 Margaret Abbott became the first Olympic golf champion at the Paris Olympics

©1900 IOC

Perspective and update

Historians of the Games might want to note that, although little has been made of it, the Abbott mother-daughter golf competition at 1900 Paris marks the first and only time this ever occurred in the sport of golf. While it might be difficult for us to imagine that neither Abbott knew that they had participated in an Olympic event—never mind that one was a winner, it was thanks to the academic legwork of Paula Welch (ND), professor emerita of Exercise and Sport Sciences at the University of Florida, that we have this story (Lester, 1996). Ten years after researching its verification, Welch was surprised when she contacted Abbott’s family, finding out that none of her living relatives was aware of the 1900 Paris accomplishment. “I guess we could say that she really was a pioneer and a pathfinder,” Welch decided. “It was a great accomplishment, and certainly wasn’t for any award or publicity – but for genuine love of the game in the true era of amateur sport.”

As we anticipate women’s golf for 2024 Paris, *Atlas Obscura* (Holmes, 2016) helps us keep it in perspective: “There’s still room to grow, but also room for inspiration—from today’s greats to yesterday’s forgotten champions—Margaret Abbott among them.”

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Visit her website www.lkfullersport.com

The 1904 Olympic Marathon, an unfinished story?

Nationalism at any price: from the media construction to the practical realisation and 'cheating' in St Louis

by Clément Genty

Résumé

The 1904 Olympic marathon in St Louis is now regarded as one of the strangest by the International Olympic Committee. What is less known is that sports nationalism prompted organisers of the race to cheat in order to favour a United States national. At the time it was considered that Americans occupied the first three places in the race.



Introduction

The Marathon organized during the third Olympiad in 1904 was subject to a particularly documented case of institutional assistance. The organizers noted in their report that physical and food assistance had been given to the athlete who won. They had been keen for a home competitor to win the event, as had been the case, it was thought, in the two previous Games. Thus, during the first, 1896, and second Olympiad, 1900, three events were brought together: an Olympiad where all the national hopes were focused on the nationality of the winner of the Marathon, intensive

coverage of the event by the press and a notable presence of political authorities of the country concerned. St Louis was to repeat this triptych.

The origin of the Marathon

The revival of the ancient Olympic Games, became a reality with the first Olympiad of the modern era organized in Greece.

The marathon had been introduced as a new long distance foot race. Suggested in a letter to Couber-tin by Michel Bréal (1832–1915) on September 15, 1894, the event was based on the feat of arms of a Greek warrior during the battle of Marathon¹:

“Since you are going to Athens, see if we can’t organize a Marathon race at the Pnyx. It will have an ancient flavour. If we knew how long the Greek warrior took, we could set the record. I would claim for myself the honour of offering the ‘Marathon Cup’.”

First Olympiad – Athens

The race was organized on April 10, 1896 over a distance of 40 kilometres from the city of Marathon to the stadium of Athens.



The stadium of Athens⁴

The American press presented this race, which concluded the athletics events, as the star of all². Each runner was accompanied by mounted police³. Spyridon Louis of Greece won the race. The French press described the Greek expectations at the end:

“The Greeks had seen foreigners triumphing without envy in other competitions; but all desired ardently for a son of Greece to take the honours of the Marathon. The anguish was terrible. The race was run, and it was a Greek winemaker, the young Loys,(Louis) who appeared the first in the Stadium, supported by the princes Constantine and George until the throne of the king. One hundred and twenty thousand Greek chests acclaimed the worthy son of the motherland. Ah, patriotism was at stake!”

One of the few articles about the event to appear in the American press was headline “The Long Run from Marathon Won by a Native”. “Crown Prince Constantine and Prince Michaelovich accompanied the winner along the length of the stadium, applauding him.”

More than a century later in 1997, American author Charles Lovett suggested that victory by a Greek was vital to the success of the new Olympic movement and that it would not have been considered so had a French or American won.

Second Olympiad – Paris

Four years later, the Olympiad was run in conjunction with the Universal Exhibition of Paris which was held at the same time. The race was a tour of Paris, by its ramparts, hence the nickname of the event, the *race of the fortifications*, to which was added three kilometres on the ground of the Racing Club de France, then a well-known athletics club in Paris, so that the total distance was 40 kilometres. It was won by Michel Théato, then believed to be French. That Théato was a Frenchman was never in doubt according to the press in Paris, which even specified that he was from Paris:

“The victory went to a young Frenchman, Michel Théato, member of an athletic society of Saint-Mandé, who with his legs alone, managed to do these 40 kilometers of hard course in 2h. 39m. (...) Théato is thin; he has the pale complexion and the drawling accent of the purebred parigot; in any case, he is the only one, among our athletes, who has raised the old reputation of French strength and endurance, because he is the only French winner of the multiple athletic events which will take place on the occasion of the Exhibition.”



Thomas Hicks of the United States, winner of the 1904 Olympic marathon

©1904 IOC



Thomas Hicks with his trophy after winning the marathon at the 1904 Olympics

©1904 IOC

Later research revealed that Théato was in fact from Luxembourg.

Finally, we note the presence of Alexandre Millerand, Minister of Commerce, who chaired the sports meeting⁵.



Arrival of Michel Theato at the end of the Marathon race⁶

Third Olympiad – Saint Louis (USA)

The third modern Olympiad was held in St. Louis, Missouri. They had been moved from Chicago which had originally been awarded the Games. When St Louis threatened to organise a sporting event to rival the Olympics, Chicago agreed to their relocation.

As in 1900, the Games of 1904 were organised in conjunction with an exhibition.

The *Louisiana Purchase Exposition*, commemorated the centenary of the acquisition of Louisiana by the United States from France. In fact the anniversary was a year late as the purchase had taken place in 1803.

France was conspicuous by its absence from the Games. No Frenchman made the trip, distance, the lack of prizes and over-representation in athletic competitions. One Frenchman was present. Albert Corey (1878–1926) had settled in the United States and participated in two athletic events, including the marathon. Eight days before the event, the American press reported that he had recorded a time similar to that which was eventually to win the 1904 Marathon. The Canadian press reported that local runner Will Sherring was injured and would be unable to represent his country in the Marathon. The course consisted of five laps of the track, a course through St. Louis, before returning to the “World’s Fair Stadium”.

The American press talked about the race before-

hand, highlighting the prospects of an American victory, either because of the number of nationals taking part⁷, or because of the intense selection of runners from the different states. The regulations were strict, as shown by this extract from a local newspaper, the *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, two days before the race⁸:

“Pacing must be eliminated, and any runner seen accepting pace will be promptly disqualified. Checkers will be placed along the road, and as each runner passes he will be checked up. No one, not even the officials, will know where these checkers are located.”

In addition, red flags marked the race route⁹. It was planned that inspectors would be placed on the route to record the passage of the runners. It was also planned that each athlete be followed by an official on a bicycle “so that there can be no dispute as to the race being fairly run”¹⁰. Doctors also accompanied the runners to provide medical support if necessary¹¹.

Finally, Dr. Luther H Gulick, “honorary referee”, accompanied by Charles P Senter¹², “chairman of the Marathon race committee”, was to be on board the lead vehicle that opened the race¹³.

On the day of the race, the President David R Francis reminded participants of the rules by mentioning that no help was to be accepted and that inspectors were placed throughout the course. This point of the rules was specified in two newspapers:

- The *St. Louis Republic*¹⁴;
- The *Boston Daily Globe*¹⁵.

The departure was set for 3:03pm¹⁶.

Before the race started, Cuban Felix Carvajal had been regarded as the favourite but after only two laps of the stadium, the American Thomas Hicks, the eventual champion, was leading the race. However, his physical condition was weakening and he was described as running mechanically¹⁷. Carvajal would finish fourth but deserved the victory according to the *Courier Journal*¹⁸.

Albert Corey, who came second in the race, was in good shape and sprinted into the stadium. He was considered fresher than Hicks¹⁹. His post-race interview testified to his vitality: “The distance was too short for me. I would have preferred to run ten miles longer”. This statement was corroborated by his medical examination after the race, judging his physical condition: “perfect”²⁰.

Finally, the press drew their conclusions on the American victory through the weekly fireworks,



Sponging the Winner, 1904

©1904 IOC

planned within the framework of the adjoining world exhibition²¹:

"Long after night, had fallen other runners straggled in, amid the glare of the weekly fireworks being displayed at the stadium, a fitting finale for the American victory of the Olympic Marathon race."

Protests

Everett C Brown, a future member of the executive committee of the American Olympic Committee²², was a member of the executive committee of the Chicago Athletic Association, the club for whom Albert Corey ran.

Brown protested against Hicks' victory, arguing that he had been clocked by the officials' cars. James Sullivan, the director, refuted this protest. However, as we have seen, the argument was valid if we rely on journalistic sources. An article in the *St. Louis Republic* even mentions that there were several protests about this fact, mentioning in particular the minimum distance of 100 yards between the runners and the cars that was imposed²³.

In 1912, a column on the Marathon in the French newspaper *L'Aéro* mentioned Corey's "[...] glorious second place, despite multiple disadvantages"²⁴. The athlete was by then a journalist and it can be assumed that he narrated his race to an anonymous columnist who wrote the article, proof if any were needed that the French athlete knew that everything had not gone well.

Albert Corey's nationality

As we have seen, Corey ran for an American club, which was common at the time. However, his record was credited to the United States when the IOC decided to use the nationality of sports clubs rather than the nationalities of the athletes. A part of the popular memory considered thereafter that he was "American" and this was even evident as late as 1950 in the French-speaking *Le Petit Marocain*²⁵.

In December 2021, contact was made with the IOC to clarify the distinction between the country of the athlete and the country of the medal.

The 1905 report

The International Olympic Committee which did not have members on site, considers two reports as official: "Spalding's Official Athletic Almanac for 1905 – Special Olympic Number" from James E Sullivan and "The Olympic Games – 1904" under the editorship of Charles JP Lucas. Both were published in 1905 and the content of the second one is particularly truculent: it detailed the physical and physiological help received by the winner of the marathon, Thomas Hicks, and given by the organization team of which the author was a part²⁶:

"Hicks was far from being the best man physically in the race, for there were three men who should have defeated him. Ten miles from the finish, Hicks began to show positive signs of collapse. When he asked for a drink of water, it was refused him, and his mouth was sponged out with distilled water. He managed to keep up well, until seven miles from the

Stadium, and then the author was forced to administer one-sixtieth grain of sulphate of strychnine, by the mouth, besides the white of one egg. [...] After he had partaken of two more eggs, again bathed, and given some brandy, Hicks walked up the first of the last two hills, and then jogged down on the incline.”

A photograph accompanies the narrative of the race and the illustration is as follows:

“Sponging The Winner – Hicks at 23 miles. Referee’s auto and that of the author in the rear. H. C. McGrath and Charles J. P. Lucas with Hicks.”

This photograph, presented in poor quality, was taken by Jessie Tarbox Beals (1870–1942). We asked the Missouri Historical Society to share it with us, which they did²⁷. The image reveals a clear infringement of the rules²⁸.

Conclusion

As we have seen, many actions that did not comply with the rules have been detected and reported in the American press and in the final report where the author boasted about them. A request for rectification was communicated to the International Olympic Committee. The following response came from the IOC legal department on 16th of February, 2023:

“However, we regret to inform you that the IOC is neither competent to make or review decisions made in the competition area, nor is it empowered to review the classification of the sports event requested, not to mention that this event was held almost 120 years ago.”

If this request is one day accepted, not only would the ranking change, but the trophy for the best American club would go to the *Chicago Athletic Association*, instead of the current holder, the *New York Athletic Club*, with 61 points against 59.

What happens next? As the author is a city councillor of the athlete’s home town, he has the power to bring the case before the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Another method, more diplomatic, would be for the French Olympic Committee to play the 2024 card to request a reclassification. A petition campaign will be launched : albertcorey.fr

In the 1908 marathon, Italian Dorando Pietri was first across the line but he was later disqualified after American protests because he received assistance from officials.

It was an incident which brought into sharp relief the events of 1904 and may even have induced a wry smile from those affected by what happened in St Louis.

1 Marc Décimo and Pierre Fiala, “Michel Bréal, le marathon, l’olympisme et la paix”, *Mots. Les langages du politique* [Online], 76 | 2004, put online the 21st of april 2008, consulted the 4th of january 2023. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/mots/3743>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/mots.3743>. In French: “Puisque vous allez à Athènes, voyez donc si l’on ne peut organiser une course de Marathon au Phnyx. Cela aura une saveur antique. Si nous savions le temps qu’a mis le guerrier grec, nous pourrions établir le record. Je réclamerais pour ma part l’honneur d’offrir « la Coupe de Marathon ».”

2 DAVIS, Walter J, “THE ATHLETES AT ATHENS. – America Meets Other Nations on Classic Ground” in “Idaho Daily Statesman, 5th April 1896, pp3.

3 GRAHAM, John, “Blake’s hard run – Ran Second for 18 Miles Toward Athens. – Better Condition Might Have Given Him the Race. – Road from Marathon Rough and Hilly. – Broad Jumpers Handicapped by Judges. – Hoyt’s Great Exhibition Vault for Prince George.” In “The Boston Globe”, 27th April 1896, pp5.

4 DAVIS, Walter J, “THE ATHLETES AT ATHENS. – America Meets Other Nations on Classic Ground” in “Idaho Daily Statesman, 5th april 1896, pp3.

5 MEYLAND, G, « LA REVUE DES SPORTS – Théato gagne la course de Marathon (amateurs) » in *Le Radical* Vol. 20 n°202, 21th july 1900, p. 4.

6 BEAU, Jules, Picture #221 in “Photographie sportive – reportage photographique”, Vol. 1900 n°5 – Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, 4-KG-37 (13), 1900.

7 “FLEETEST RUNNERS OF ALL NATION START IN GREAT MARATHON RACE” in *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Vol. 57 n°7, 28th august 1904, p. 27.

8 “Marathon Race Occurs Tuesday” in *St. Louis Globe Democrat* Vol. 30 n°101, 28th august 1904, p. 14.

9 “OLYMPIC MARATHON RACE” in *Sioux City Journal*, 31st august 1904, p. 3.

10 “MARATHON RUN” in *The Boston Globe* Vol. 66 n°51, 20th august 1904, p. 4.

11 “FOR THE OLYMPIC MARATHON – COURSE FOR RACE AT ST. LOUIS SELECTED” in *Boston Evening Standard* Vol. 75, 20th august 1904, p. 12.

12 “COURSE LAID OUT FOR TWENTY-FOUR-MILE MARATHON RACE AT THE FAIR” in *The St. Louis Republic* Vol. 97, 14th august 1904, p. 12.

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OLYMPIC GAMES



THIRD OLYMPIAD

Aug. 29 to Sept. 3.

EXPOSITION STADIUM, ST. LOUIS.

DAILY OFFICIAL PROGRAM

WORLD'S FAIR, ST. LOUIS

Official Daily Program
from St. Louis 1904

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Olympic Television – Closing the Circle

by Richard W Pound



The power and reach of Olympic television have evolved dramatically since its first appearance as something of a novelty during the 1936 Games in Berlin, where spectators could experience it in special theatres in Berlin, Potsdam and Leipzig.¹ There were several influences that brought about the major changes that occurred. First, the underlying technology improved dramatically from the initial flickering and grainy productions. The equipment, first enormous, weighty, and ponderous, gradually became portable and all but omnipresent, especially when international sports federations came to understand that the televising of events would not interfere with the competitions and, indeed, would make their sports more accessible to the public.

Second, the coverage benefitted from the innovation of gifted television producers who were able to capture the images of the extraordinary performances of Olympic athletes. An important initial source of inspiration for such productions was provided through photographic techniques first developed by Leni Riefenstahl that were used for her film masterpiece, *Olympia*.²

In the years after the second world war, society was ready for peaceful international sport with vast existing and potential audiences. Colour television increased the impact of sport for all audiences and satellite technology made transmission of television signals available in real time throughout the entire world. Slow motion cameras, high definition and the digital revolution have added to the lustre of Olympic television, which has become a unique and worldwide phenomenon.

What may seem all too obvious today was far from obvious as the developments occurred in the post-Berlin era. The written press and photography remained important during the Games and were, in effect, the only ongoing coverage of Olympic sport in the intervals between Games. Radio remained essentially local for many years. Television broadcasters had refused to pay fees for access to Olympic competitions in Melbourne during the 1956 Games.³ Even in 1960, cassettes had to be shipped

from Europe to New York before programmes could be broadcast in North America.⁴ Centres of expertise emerged in Europe (hosting the 1964 Winter Games in Innsbruck), North America and Japan, the latter driven by the approaching Tokyo Games in 1964 and a national desire to showcase the new Japan. Technology had its own drivers, which in many respects were not inextricably linked to the Olympic environment, although Olympic broadcasters were more than willing to contribute to and benefit from the many improvements. Satellite broadcasts were used for television signals for the first time in Tokyo to broadcast simultaneously to more than one continent. Portions of the Games, including the Opening Ceremony and a few selected sports were broadcast live in colour for the first time. Specialized equipment and techniques were also incorporated into Olympic and regular sports programming.

Growth of Olympic Broadcasting Infrastructures

This portion of the television instalments is not intended to be a granular analysis of technical production evolution at the Olympic Games, an undertaking beyond the scope and length of this Journal



¹ The late Manuel Romero,
founder of Olympic Broadcasting
Services

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2 The bank of screens show pictures from each of the venues on offer during the Olympics

© OBS

series. Readers with a specific interest in these matters can find considerable detail in a variety of sources, including the Olympic Marketing Fact Files published by the IOC, starting with the 2020 edition (100 years of Olympic Marketing), Official Reports published by Olympic Organizing Committees, Broadcaster Handbooks prepared for various editions of the Games, especially those describing the host broadcaster, Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS) Operations Guide and reports, OBS Media Guides, OBS Broadcast Training Programme, Olympic Museum Interactive Documentary, LIVE! Broadcasting the Olympic Games. Olympics.com and the IOC website, Olympics.com/IOC.

Part of the overall challenge of broadcasting something as complex and time sensitive as the Olympic Games was to make it possible for broadcasters having an increasingly international footprint to be able to do their work. While in earlier years the Games were not as complex as they are today, with fewer sports, fewer athletes, and a shorter timeframe, one of the challenges was the cost of ensuring broadcast specific requirements were delivered properly such as camera positions, access to the competition venues, access to athletes, delivery of signals to studios, fit out of working spaces, access to power and hundreds of other elements that are essential to the production process. Olympic Organizing Committees were able to provide a certain amount of space, in media centres, but generally had almost no technical expertise in respect to television broadcasting. One result of the many challenges was that not all events were initially covered by television, nor widely distributed.

The broadcasters on the ground were only too aware

of these difficulties and, sharing the problems as they did, began to get more organized, developing cooperative links for their mutual benefit. By the time of the 1968 Games in Mexico City, the first internationalized production was organized between Telesistema Mexicano – the precursor of Televisa in Mexico, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) in the United States, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in Canada and the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), all of which sent equipment and personnel, and agreed to share in the production output, including the television images. It was, in effect, a precursor of what became the International Broadcast Centre.⁵

In Sapporo, less than four years later in early 1972, the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) provided the basic television feed for all broadcasters, in turn a precursor of the host broadcast organization. All events, except for bobsleigh and biathlon, were broadcast live and in colour. In Munich, the 1972 Organizing Committee produced (with assistance from mobile units provided by several European broadcasters) an international signal, quite distinct from the domestic broadcast, that could be used by rights-holding broadcasters in conjunction with their own unilateral coverage. The broadcast, for the first time, reached all five continents thanks to relays from satellites positioned over the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Innsbruck 1976 relied on the European model that had worked so well in Munich and, for the Montreal Games, CBC created the Olympic Radio and Television Organization (ORTO) as the host broadcaster of the Montreal Games, which was the first time all Olympic events were covered by television.

In 1980, both the Lake Placid and Moscow Games were somewhat anomalous, the former due to its size and lack of sophistication (and the unwillingness of ABC to take on a host broadcasting role) and the latter because the boycott led by the U.S. reduced the number of countries that broadcast the Games, with only 58 countries sending broadcasters. The National Broadcasting Company (NBC), the U.S. rights-holder, was prohibited by the U.S. government from making any payment for the rights to the Soviet authorities.

Sarajevo 1984, following the stressful 1980 Games and before the implosion of Yugoslavia, relied on the European model. For the Games in Los Angeles, the first host broadcast organization as we

fessional legacy to the host country.

Calgary 1988 marked the first time that the Winter Games were extended to 16 days, thus providing three weekends of Olympic programming. Artificial snow was used for the Alpine events and speed skating moved into a covered rink. CTV was appointed as the host broadcaster.

The Organizing Committee for Seoul 1988 (SLOOC) entered into an agreement with the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), which was the public broadcaster having the country's largest broadcasting infrastructure. KBS then entered into an agreement with Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and the two companies jointly formed the Seoul Olympic Radio and Television Organization (SORTO), the



3 A cameraman dressed in white films the Korean ice hockey team before a match at the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics

© Philip Barker

understand it today was established by ABC, which was also the domestic rights-holder. Actively recruiting foreign broadcasters with acknowledged skills in certain sports in its domestic programmes as well, it produced the international signal that could be supplemented by unilateral coverage created by rights-holding broadcasters to reflect the interests of the different audiences they served. By this time, the use of film was nearly obsolete, so there were no film laboratories at the IBC. The latest innovation was super slow motion, which was used for the first time. There was also a Broadcast Training Programme, (BTP) providing local university students with hands-on experience and insight into what goes into production of Olympic broadcasts. The BTP has remained a feature of successor host broadcasters and now under the management of Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS), it has become an integral part of the host broadcaster's pro-

host broadcaster for the 1988 Games. These Games also marked the first significant use of HDTV in the Olympic Stadium. Departing from past practices, the international signal was sent to the Main Press Centre (MPC), rather than the domestic feed. There had been significant international resistance to use of the highly partisan ABC domestic signal at the MPC in 1984.

The Albertville Winter Games in 1992 were the last Winter Games to be broadcast in the same year as the Summer Games. The Albertville Games were the first major sporting event that was produced and transmitted in high definition (HDTV) – in parallel with the then standard coverage in PAL and NTSC. Production of the HDTV programmes at the French venues was the responsibility of a European consortium VISION 1250. The individual events were produced by teams from France, Italy, Sweden, Spain and Portugal. OB vans were manufac-

tured to provide editing and master control capabilities for both the Albertville Games in France and the Barcelona Games in Spain.

Barcelona developed Radio Television Olimpica (RTO'92) for the 1992 Games, the first host broadcaster to be part of the OCOG itself, as opposed to the domestic rights-holders or a separate consortium. One of the features of Barcelona was a multi-tier television structure that enabled the rights-holding broadcasters to sub-license to cable and satellite broadcasters, thus expanding the amount of covered sports. All of the sports on the official programme were covered live and a Commentator Information System provided commentators with real-time data and results and for the first



time the IBC and MPC were in a single complex. Similar models, with some customization and adjustments for technological improvements and the emergence of the internet, were used by Lillehammer in 1994, Atlanta in 1996, Nagano in 1998 and Sydney in 2000.

Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS)

It is hard to describe the degree of sea-change within the IOC that was reflected in the new paradigm of OBS.⁶ Readers of prior instalments of this Journal series will recall the almost pathological reluctance of the IOC to engage in hands-on involvement with television, even Olympic television. Part was era-based and amateur-based, in which connecting sport with money was considered distasteful, even ungentlemanly. Part was unfamiliarity with the subject matter of television and how it operated. Part was the risk adverse concern of an

organization that lived from hand to mouth, having no financial capacity to absorb risk.

The success of the host broadcasters in 1992, 1996 and 2000 eventually sparked an interest within the IOC to create its own organization. Having seen the outsourcing of programme production, the IOC decided to create an IOC host broadcaster (which became Olympic Broadcasting Services – OBS) in 2001. Essentially, it was an “unpacking” of the original 1984 Los Angeles model and varying it for the new model visualized for OBS as an IOC-controlled operation.

OBS-operated host broadcaster is guided by the Olympic Charter, the Host City Contract (including operational requirements) and the various rights-holding broadcast agreements (which require constant evolution due to constant technological changes). Its work begins as soon as the host city is selected, with respect to the planning and delivery of the radio and television broadcast operations. The responsibilities include:

producing the international television and radio signals of the Games assisting the Organizing Committee (OCOG) in the design and building of infrastructure required at the venues to accommodate the needs of OBS and the RHB's design, fit-out, install, operate and then dismantle the International Broadcast Center (IBC)

design, build, install, operate and then remove the necessary facilities and equipment at the competition venues and select non-competition venues represent the needs of the RHBs to the OCOG regarding a variety of facilities and services produce various content and maintain Olympic archival service during Games-time.

The underlying objective was to perform the host broadcaster function for the Organizing Committees on a cost-recovery basis. This would be good for the OCOGs, since many (indeed most) countries that might host the Games do not have the extensive expertise needed to provide a host broadcaster capable of servicing the rights-holding broadcasters at the levels then expected, as well as future embellishments. That, in turn would be good for the IOC, not only for the crucial services it performed, but also because high-quality services in support of the rights-holders would help maintain the value of Olympic television rights.

It took some time for OBS to mature and get properly organized, since it was important to be sure that it would be fully capable of undertaking its responsibilities. In addition, Organizing Committees formed to deal with Games already awarded needed to make their own host broadcast arrangements without contemplating the existence of OBS. Salt

4 Ling Long Pagoda provided television studio facilities during the 2008 Beijing Olympics

© Philip Barker

Lake City had made its decision on the host broadcaster for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games following a tender process and selected International Sports Broadcasting (ISB). ISB was a private company that was not part of the Organizing Committee nor itself a broadcast entity. For the first time, however, all events were covered live and, in cooperation with NHK, some events were covered in HDTV.

In the meantime, Manolo Romero, with his long exposure to Olympic broadcasting and his leading operational role in RTO'92, was a natural appointment as the CEO of OBS. In 2003, its head office was registered in Madrid and a 9-person board of directors was established to provide organizational governance.

Olympic Broadcasting Organization (TOBO) to act as its host broadcaster. More access and choice for spectators was created through the internet, mobile phone systems and multiple network channels and, for the first time, television coverage of the entire Games was available through mobile phone networks.

Shared Broadcast Responsibilities in Beijing 2008

By this time Beijing was also preparing for the 2008 Games and OBS was an integral part of the formation of Beijing Olympic Broadcasting (BOB) as the on-site host broadcaster of the Games. This had required considerable foresight leading up to the IOC Session in 2001 when the 2008 Games were



5 Camera operators at the swimming wore masks during the Tokyo Olympics

© OBS

OBS was still in its organizational process at the time of the Athens Games in 2004. The Athens Organizing Committee conducted an international bidding process, leading to the selection of ISB, which partnered with the Organizing Committee to form Athens Olympic Broadcasting (AOB) as the host broadcaster.

In Athens, the AOB provided the first-ever all digital host broadcast coverage, while at the same time providing partial coverage in HDTV. In total, AOB provided more than 3,800 hours of coverage. Negotiations led by the IOC had generated almost USD 1.5 billion in rights fees. USD 724 million (49%) was provided to the Organizing Committee and the remaining 51% was split between the participating IFs, the NOCs (through Olympic Solidarity) and the IOC. With respect to the 2006 Winter Games, the Torino OCOG formed an internal division, the Torino

awarded to Beijing. The Host City Contract (HCC) was drafted for signature to ensure that OBS was inserted into the HCC, even though OBS was not in full control of all aspects of the broadcasting operations. It would have been much more problematic to negotiate such an agreement after the Games had been awarded. As IOC President (1980 – 2001) Juan Antonio Samaranch was fond of observing, candidate cities go through two distinct phases: before the Games are awarded, everything wanted by the IOC is “yes, yes, yes” and after they have been awarded, it changes to “no, no, no.”

Structurally, BOB was a Sino-foreign Cooperative Joint Venture created under the laws of the People's Republic of China, its Articles of Association and the Master Operating and Management Agreement. For the first time, the production of all 90 feeds were in High Definition. The final status was

essentially a sharing of the host broadcast function between the Beijing organizers and OBS, almost certainly not what Beijing may have preferred, given its obsessive sensitivity regarding the content of all media coverage of the Games and of Beijing itself. On the other hand, it must certainly have welcomed the technical expertise and creativity provided by OBS.

The Olympic News Channel, a 30-minute programme of sport news broadcast every half hour throughout the Games period was made available to broadcasters for the first time and in High-Definition format. BOB produced, packaged and uploaded all the content of the IOC geo-blocked YouTube channel (Beijing 2008). More than 800 video

follow certain sports. In ski jumping/Nordic combined a virtual “line to beat” was developed and in curling a virtual line to highlight the stone curve trajectory. These successful Games were followed by London in 2012, which was a milestone in the history of Olympic broadcasting with more coverage available on more platforms than ever before.⁷ Increased reach was assisted by the OBS Multi-channel Distribution Service (MDS). MDS provided broadcasters with 11 ready-to-air channels, 10 of Olympic sport, plus the Olympic News Channel. There was also parallel live coverage in 3D, from some venues and sports, and spectacular coverage of rowing, thanks to the world’s longest cable camera from start to finish (2,340 metres).



6 Drones were used to give different angles when covering rowing

© OBS

clips were created and made available by BOB.

There was continuing technological progress. Some related to high frame cameras that could produce super slow motion. There was a great deal of cutting-edge experimentation to get the output of such cameras into acceptable broadcast quality, with a high degree of collaboration between BOB and assorted manufacturers. It is the nature of the technological beast that a virtual miracle in Beijing became a routine expectation by the time of the Rio de Janeiro Games eight years later.

Following Beijing, OBS has had full operational control, beginning with Vancouver in 2010, which were also the first Winter Games to be completely broadcast in High Definition. Several intriguing production enhancements, such as the “ghost image” and “sled path” comparisons between competitors in alpine skiing and sliding helped viewers to better

Changing of the Guard

Manolo Romero retired as CEO of OBS following the London 2012 Games, which had parallel live 3D coverage, but maintained his fascination with broadcasting interest in a personal company, also headquartered in Spain. He was followed in a seamless transfer of responsibility by Yiannis Exarchos, whose Olympic connection had begun as part of the Athens broadcast operations for 2004.

The Sochi Olympic Winter Games in 2014 were broadcast in more than 200 countries. For the first time in Olympic history, the amount of available digital coverage exceeded that of traditional broadcasts. There was also a test launch of the Olympic Video Player (OVP), developed by OBS to provide live streaming and on-demand video, including integrated statistics of every Games event. This allowed Sochi coverage to be seen in territories that



7 Technicians at work with digital editing software at the Olympics

© OBS

had never experienced Winter Games. Originally envisioned for launch in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro, OBS decided to use the smaller Games in Sochi as a testing ground. In cooperation with NHK, OBS also provided Super Hi-Vision coverage (which improves the picture quality of full HD by a factor of 16) for the Opening and Closing Ceremony and the figure skating competition.⁸

Olympic Channel Services

After the Games of Sochi, and as part of IOC's Olympic Agenda 2020, Olympic Channel Services (OCS) was created as part of the IOC's new digital strategy that was inaugurated in 2015 and is the corporate entity charged with creating and operating the IOC's Olympic Channel, the "always on" platform to connect the Olympic Movement and the wider public. The Olympic Channel was successfully launched at the Closing Ceremony of the Rio 2016 Games and is currently the core hub for content creation, technology and digital development, as well as data analysis for Olympics.com and the wider Olympic digital ecosystem. It was much more relevant on an ongoing basis with the digital environment with partners, sponsors and other revenue streams, which were coordinated and managed out of Lausanne, despite a concentration of the physical creative work and production in Madrid.

Coordination on the overall strategic direction of OCS required close communication on a day-to-day basis, whereas with OBS, the focus was more on Games coverage than on targeted productions sought by revenue-driven digital features and strat-

egies, making it essentially self-funded.

Rio de Janeiro had more than its share of challenges in delivering the 2016 Games. Fortunately for the worldwide television audiences, the programming provided by OBS was superb and audiences had no idea of how close to catastrophic failure the Games organizers came every single day of the Games. All that said, Rio enjoyed the most television coverage of any previous Olympic Games and, on the digital front, the coverage available on the digital platforms nearly doubled that of traditional television, some two and a half times of what had been achieved in London. The Olympic Video Player (OVP) was made available for the first time at a Summer Games, offering 360-degree video, live streaming and on-demand coverage of every competition session, enriched with in-depth statistics and enhanced virtual graphics. OBS also embraced new technologies, introducing Virtual Reality and experimenting further with 8K technology.⁹

On the production side, in a major sustainability initiative, OBS developed a modular construction for the IBC, which could be disassembled, was transportable and could be used many times. It had a much-reduced physical footprint from previous host broadcast operations. It offered the rights-holding broadcasters six different modular structures for use in the fit-out of the IBC for offices and studios. This innovation eliminated 50,000 cubic metres of waste, some 3,000 truckloads. Services to rights-holding broadcasters were enhanced, with the inclusion of trailers before and during the Games (some 60 creative 30-second

promotional tools, delivered three months prior to the Games based on original historical storytelling and in-Games productions featuring participating athletes and the Games themselves), provision of “beauty” shots that saved money for the broadcasters and could be tailored to accommodate their special needs. Drones were provided to augment standard coverage. Cloud Services were introduced for the first time at Summer Games, which meant that the host broadcast operation was a 100% tapeless environment.

Two years later in PyeongChang, the 2018 Olympic Winter Games saw continuing use of cutting-edge technologies, while responding to an increasingly digital landscape, with coverage available on all platforms at all times and the provision of expanded digital portfolios for rights-holders. OBS worked closely with the local organizers to reduce the complexity of the Games which resulted in economic savings for the OCOG and a more effective and sustainable delivery of the Games.¹⁰ There was some unusual OBS involvement in broadcasting history when welcoming a contingent of broadcast professionals from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and providing them with the services and facilities they needed to send the Games images to their home country. The technologies used brought a richer and more immersive viewing experience to world audiences, setting an already high bar even higher.¹¹ Possibly, however, the most significant outcome of these Games was the show of unity and resultant hope for the future, when athletes from the DPRK not only participated in the Games (unlike at the earlier Games in Seoul in 1988) but also fielded a combined team with athletes from the Republic of Korea, marching together under the same flag.

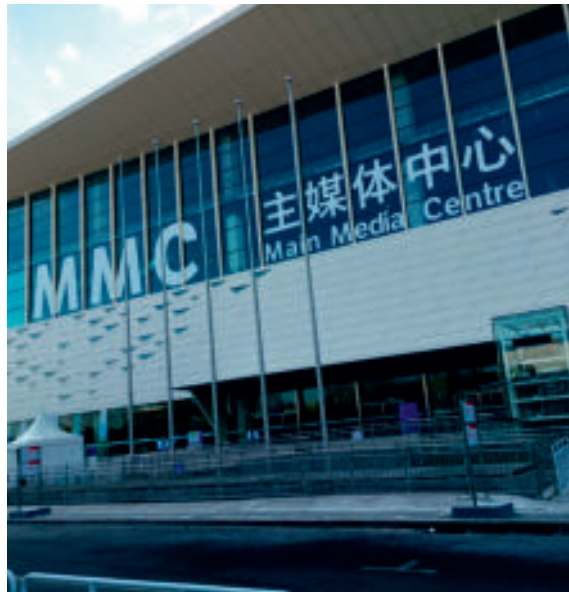
The COVID-19 Challenges

Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022 were the COVID-19 Games. The Tokyo Games were postponed by one year as Japan (and the rest of the world) wrestled with the pandemic in a period of great uncertainty, which even in 2021 could not support live spectators. OBS rose to the special circumstances and produced the usual spectacular images, but with emphasis on the differences in sounds of spectator-less competitions and the interactions between athletes. The Beijing Games proceeded on schedule and took place within a very secure “bubble” that minimized the risks of exposure to the COVID-19 virus. A particular feature of the preparation for both Games was the Cloud operations managed by the IOC’s marketing partner, Alibaba. Without the cloud, it would have been impossible to fit-out, in-

stall, operate and dismantle (Tokyo) two IBCs within the six-month period between these two Games.

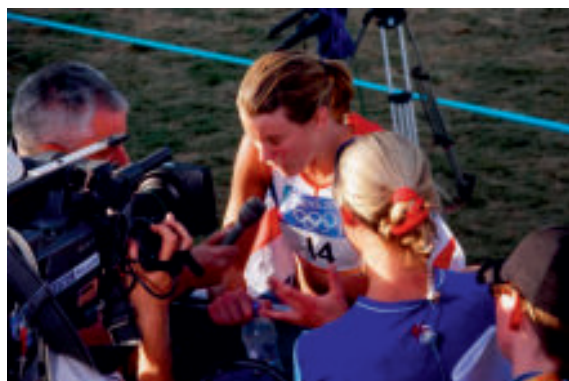
Madrid Operations

One of the early challenges for OBS was to settle on its location. Intuitively, Lausanne was not suitable. It was too small, inconveniently located and very expensive. PricewaterhouseCoopers studied possibilities and concluded that Madrid was the most convenient. Spain is part of the European Union and ease of movement of personnel was important, as was the ability to attract (and retain) talent, an essential element in the challenges of design, innovation and implementation of cutting-edge television production, not to mention the increasing digitation of the medium. Sufficient space was available for offices, workspace and storage, costs were moderate when compared with alternatives such as Holland, London, Germany, Los Angeles and others. The Spanish fiscal regime was not prohibitive and many employees were more than happy to settle there. Spain had, in addition, a well-developed expertise in sports television. It was also attractive to Manolo Romero as the organization’s CEO, whose own operation in the United States was winding



8 The giant main media centre which housed the International Broadcast Centre at Beijing 2022

© OBS



9 A broadcast interview conducted at the mixed zone after Modern Pentathlon at Athens 2004

© Philip Barker

10 The hotel building used by NBC at the Sochi 2014

© Philip Barker



down and who wanted to return to Europe but had no appetite whatsoever for living and working in Lausanne. It has been an excellent choice.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Having survived the pandemic, there is a human tendency to regard it as simply a phenomenon of the past. But it was much more than that and had an enormous impact on everyone involved, on television broadcasting, on innovations developed in real time and knitting together an integrated effort of broadcasters and OBS to bring the Olympics to a world that desperately needed some good feelings and to athletes who had endured the agonies of uncertainty and disruption of their Games preparation. The television presentations of both Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022 were remarkable on a stand-alone basis as well as the product of unprecedented international cooperation. If ever there were a demonstration of the adage that necessity is the mother of invention. Tokyo and Beijing brought it to life.

Tokyo 2020

One of the great regrets with respect to Tokyo 2020 is the impact of the pandemic, which deprived the world of the opportunity to see the outcomes of a brilliantly planned event. It is certain that had the Games proceeded as originally scheduled, the Tokyo organizers would have delivered a truly remarkable performance. On the other hand, the resilience with which the Tokyo authorities readjusted thousands of complex plans to make it possible to postpone the Games by one year may, in retrospect, have made for an even greater and important story. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, families and spectators could not be present in the venues. For Tokyo OBS created an innovative digital remote fan engagement suite, the first for a major international sports event. This solution allowed remote viewers and families around the globe to interact with live events, becoming a real part of the Games, and MRHs to connect athletes with their fans. The engagement suite inclu-

ded a 'Cheer Map' and 'Fan Video Wall' which could be accessed via participating MRHs, as well as through Olympics.com. Furthermore, OBS facilitated 'Athlete Moments', allowing athletes at select venues to connect with their family and friends directly after their event, while also providing broadcasters with a wealth of additional content opportunities. Building on the success in Tokyo, this solution was also implemented in Beijing, where restrictions were also in place, bringing spectators and families closer.

While the digital platforms are novel and exciting, Olympic television proved to be far from extinct, comprising a dominating 93% of all broadcast coverage from the Games. The Tokyo Games made more content available on more screens than ever before. It is a feature of statistics that when the absolute numbers are small, progress is measured by percentages rather than the total number of actual viewers. The digital trends however remain impressive and it is more than likely that they will continue to increase. Overall, the content in Tokyo was 44% more than for the Games in Rio in 2016. All sports were covered in Ultra High Definition (UHD) High Dynamic Range (HDR) for the first time, which provided four times more detail than standard HD, while also capturing the sounds of the Games in 5.1.4 immersive audio.

The global pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote production workflows. As an example, Tokyo 2020 saw a wider adoption of cloud technology in broadcast workflows, reshaping the way the Games are broadcast. With OBS Cloud (an intuitive suite of cloud services, developed in partnership with Alibaba and specially designed for broadcasting), OBS successfully moved several production workflows to the cloud, while offering greater flexibility and scalability to the broadcasters. These changes will undoubtedly change the way Olympic Games will be broadcast in the future.

To optimize the broadcast operation and make it more sustainable for Tokyo 2020, OBS introduced new centralized technical areas (CTAs) located strategically within the IBC. Adjacent to the Media Rights-Holding Broadcaster (MRHs, formerly referred to as rights-holding broadcasters prior to the significant increase in content distribution to digital platforms) areas, allowing for direct cabling, the CTAs centralized all technical equipment from each MRH in a dedicated, secure area with specific cooling capacity. The CTAs helped to reduce the IBC footprint by 21% from Rio, as well as the overall HVAC requirements and technical power consumption. In addition, the venue compounds also saw a 24% footprint decrease in a continuous effort to ensure the entire broadcast operation did more with less.

The postponement of the Games left a monumental question, namely how could a safe and successful Games be held during a global pandemic, under conditions that were clearly less than optimal. Ultimately it would take the IOC and its stakeholders (OBS, IFs, NOCs), the International Paralympic Committee, Tokyo 2020 and the Japanese government, all working together and in consultation with the World Health Organization and other top health authorities, to devise a comprehensive plan to hold a safe Olympic Games. That plan would be in the form of Playbooks, which were developed for each stakeholder group, and outlined the rules and recommendations that all Games participants were to follow to keep themselves, other Games participants and the people of Japan safe through the Games-time period.

Beijing 2022

While Beijing did not face the postponement challenge that affected Tokyo 2020, it still had to address the pandemic and the fact that the Games were to commence less than seven months from the end of Tokyo 2020. This created serious challenges and required innovation including the use of cloud technology to help greatly reduce the complexity of trying to complete all installations required for the IBC in such a short amount of time. Having to plan two Olympic Games and two Paralympic Games within a seven-month period, the OBS Cloud would again prove to be critical to ensuring the successful technical delivery of the Games broadcast.

The fit-out of the Beijing 2022 IBC began in July 2021, just prior to the start of the Tokyo 2020 competitions. China's zero COVID-19 policy complicated planning measures, due to the difficulties of gaining access to the country, which necessitated acceleration of OBS's remote planning, but it did eventually manage to get a few people on the ground to work alongside the Beijing 2022 OCOG and execute the pre-Games planning of the broadcast operations.

The travel restrictions made it extremely difficult for broadcasters to visit the venues (both venues under construction and existing venues), before the Games. To address this issue, OBS used, for the first time, the Venue Simulation System (VSS) which allowed broadcasters to view the broadcast facilities in each venue virtually. This solution had been developed by the Beijing Film Academy early in the planning phase with the support of the Organizing Committee, the IOC and input from OBS. It rendered a 3D copy of each venue and displayed elements ranging from the Look of the Games to the commentary positions and mixed zone. Additionally, the system provided vantage points from each



11 OBS Chief Executive
Yiannis Exarchos

© OBS

of the camera platforms, allowing the OBS team to identify the proper multilateral camera locations in the venues without actually being onsite.

Beijing was the first Olympic Winter Games to be fully produced in UHD – HDR and 5.1.4 immersive audio. Immersive production reached a new level when, partnering with Intel, OBS captured, produced and distributed the Olympic Winter Games in live 8K virtual reality for the first time. Also for the first time, OBS distributed the multilateral signals in HD and UHD via the cloud. This was the first time in Olympic broadcasting that the distribution of live signals over the cloud was of a volume equal to that of standard delivery models.

OBS also explored more flexible and modular production environments with the goal of reducing logistical and operational complexity compared to the traditional broadcast infrastructure, increasing flexibility and reducing the overall broadcast footprint at the venues and the IBC. OBS introduced a virtualized outside broadcast (OB) van for live production of curling in partnership with Alibaba and Intel. For some sports, OBS offered viewers unique live drone coverage. For the first time at a Winter Games, OBS produced drone coverage at Alpine skiing, biathlon, big air, cross country skiing, freestyle skiing, snowboardcross and snowboard parallel giant slalom, providing dynamic overhead aerial action, allowing viewers to better understand the relationship between the athlete and the field of play. All this was in addition to spectacular visual backgrounds of the facilities.

Beijing 2022 produced exactly what had been expected from China, as had been the case for the Summer Games in 2008, but with much higher visual and audio features. The OCOGs of future editions of both Summer and Winter Games will have big shoes to fill.

Looking Back

In retrospect, there were several turning points that brought the IOC to where it is today, now fully immersed in the modern developments of television generally and the many platforms and formats in which Olympic television and other coverage are delivered to the world at large. First was the recognition that broadcasters were capable of cooperating with each other to incorporate technical advances in sport and Olympic broadcasting. Second was the realization of the potential value of Olympic television rights as an important part of international sport. Third was the understanding that if the IOC owned the television rights, it would need to become directly involved in the negotiation of those rights and the distribution of whatever proceeds were derived from them, not begging for scraps unwillingly allocated by Organizing Committees. Fourth was that the IOC needed to develop its own relationships with broadcasters and to work with them to add value to the rights. That, in turn, called for a reorientation of the IOC's own financial planning. The relationships with non-governmental

supporters were no longer essentially charitable in nature but were, instead, commercial. This transmutation opened a whole new opportunity, not one dependent on the largesse of corporate charity. If there was a demonstrable return on investment, there was virtually no limit on what corporations would be willing to pay. To get value, however, the IOC would be required in turn to deliver value. The higher the value it delivered to the relationships, the greater would be the value (both financial and promotional) derived from them.

Essentially, two streams contributed to the value creation. First was the identification of what became known as the Olympic brand. What were the elements that made association with the Olympic Movement appealing to business organizations? Businesses had long experience in learning and measuring the effectiveness of their own brands, namely what attracted their customers and increased the likelihood that they would continue their commercial relationships. The IOC had never approached (nor had thought of approaching) its situation at the head of the Olympic Movement from such a perspective. But a new paradigm was in the process of creation. The IOC was put into a position of needing to identify its own brand, because commercial relationships were very much influenced by trying to link brands for mutual commercial benefit. So, what did the IOC bring to a relationship, whether with television broadcasters or other business organizations, particularly in areas of potential sponsorship?

Regarding the Olympic Games, there were many positive features. There was, by then, close to a century of modern Olympic history. There was a huge collection of photographs, Olympic films, literature focusing on Olympic heroes and latterly a huge volume of recorded radio and television broadcasts. The international aspects of the Olympic Games were undeniable. The aspirational objectives were particularly attractive. Young people from the entire world were involved, all striving to do their best. The objectives were peaceful in nature in a world longing for peace. And there was an underlying ethical element in Olympic activities that was based on fair play, respect for the governing rules and for fellow competitors. All these attributes, once creatively articulated, were extremely appealing to broadcasters and potential sponsors. The Olympic brand resonated strongly with them.

For broadcasters, now freed from the singleness of purpose that marked the previous system of negotiating with Organizing Committees concerned solely with their own slice of Olympic history, having no concern as to what might follow, the prospect of



12 Television Rights holders are given the opportunity to conduct the first interviews after competitions at the Games

© Philip Barker



13 Cameraman films Triathlon in Tokyo

© OBS

establishing working relationships with the “owner” of the Olympic Games and the related television (and radio) rights provided a new and positive context. Harnessing the spectrum of Olympic “assets” both physical and aspirational expanded the programming menu that could be offered to television audiences, thereby adding to their value.

This was a model that worked immediately with markets in which television was not controlled by governments, as in North America, Australia and others, but not easily in jurisdictions in which television was controlled by governments for propaganda purposes or those in which broadcast unions purported to control the selection and pricing of programme content, such as EBU, OIRT, Japan Pool and others. IOC President Samaranch, despite his recognition of the importance of television for the Olympic Movement, insisted throughout his entire presidency on dealing with EBU, despite its flagrant undervaluing of the Olympic television rights. Single national European broadcasters regularly offered more for Olympic television rights in their individual countries than the EBU would agree for the entire membership. Hundreds of millions of dollars were sacrificed on that anomalous altar. There has, in the post-Samaranch era, been some improvement in the EBU and other markets, due in part to the emergence of digital platforms.

In the general marketing environment, the same branding issues affect relationships with sponsors, including, for the IOC, its worldwide quadrennial marketing programme, known as TOP (originally The Olympic Programme), launched to ensure that the IOC was not an economic hostage to television. The development of TOP is its own saga and while not completely unrelated to television, is nevertheless not directly part of the concentration in this Journal series on the evolution of Olympic television.

Looking Forward

There is no indication that technical innovation in relation to Olympic television will diminish. The quality of images will continue to improve. Features such as virtual reality and 3D will engage audiences as that technology advances. The ability of audiences to become increasingly involved with athletes and their aspirations is already central to a shared Olympic experience. The visual and informational bells and whistles enhance the television and digital platforms and these will certainly become increasingly sophisticated. Few observers foresee any diminution in the ability of the industry to advance the innovation and production portfolios within the Olympic environment.

More problematic may be managing the size and

scope of the Olympic Movement and its events. All sports have Olympic-related strategic objectives directed at becoming “Olympic” sports. Once on the Olympic programme, no sport is willing to leave. Wannabee sports try to emulate Olympic-like organizations and events. Esports, which possess virtually unlimited opportunities to reach huge audiences, have begun to knock at the Olympic door, with uncertain impact on traditional sports. Even within traditional sports, the Olympic goals of universal inclusion are vulnerable to certain political realities, in which political decisions may interfere with achievement of those goals. Olympic aspirations may be compromised by political actions that even the political actors proposing them know full well that they will not resolve the perceived political problems. It will require the most careful management of the underlying relationships to ensure that international sport does not become balkanized. Political authorities have a positive duty to ensure that sport remains universal and does not become passport driven.

1 Olympic Marketing Fact File 2020 edition/ IOC 2006 Marketing Fact File, Olympic Broadcasting, p. 50.

2 Sports TV Production. A Tribute to Risk-Takers by Jim Owens.

3 IOC Website, www.olympic.org, 100 years of Olympic Marketing.

4 Interactive Documentary, LIVE! Broadcasting the Olympic Games. Olympic.org

5 Monserrat Linés and Ana Belén Moreno, Television in the Olympic Games, The New Era. The History of Radio and Television Coverage of the Olympic Games, pp. 27–28

6 The author is most grateful for the careful reading of the draft article by Yiannis Exarchos, Laura Garcia Arturo and Matt Mason of OBS and their valuable edits and suggestions to improve the clarity and accuracy of the text.

7 OBS Host Broadcast Final Report to the IOC Radio and Television Commission London 2012.

8 OBS Final Report – Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games.

9 OBS Media Fact File Rio 2016.

10 OBS Final Report, Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang.

11 OBS PyeongChang Media Guide 2018. OBS.tv.





14 A cameraman films during skateboarding in Tokyo

© OBS



NEWS Stadium Australia Honours Cathy Freeman

The Eastern Stand at Stadium Australia in Sydney has been renamed in honour of Cathy Freeman. The announcement was made on the anniversary of the night when Freeman lit the cauldron at the Sydney 2000 Olympics before winning 400m gold at the Game.



“It’s Cathy Freeman’s achievement that continues to shine a light on what young women can achieve if they have a dream and they pursue it. We owe her a great debt,” Australian Olympic Committee President Ian Chesterman said.

“This is a wonderful gesture. Australians have a deeply shared affection for one of our greatest athletes. Her victory in the 400 metres inspired future generations and united Australians in an unprecedented fashion.”

Cathy Freeman was chosen to ignite the cauldron at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games

“A proud Kuku Yalanji and Birri Gubba woman, she has motivated both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to reach for their dreams.”

Cathy Freeman’s 400 metres gold medal made her name synonymous with the 2000 Olympics in Sydney





The choice of Cathy Freeman to lighting the Olympic cauldron was viewed as highly symbolic

Outside view of the Olympic stadium in Sydney where a stand has been named in honour of Cathy Freeman

All © 2000 IOC



Happy Birthday to the Coliseum

by Christian Wacker

Dedicated 100 years ago in 1923 as a memorial to Los Angeles veterans who died in the first World War, the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum considers itself the greatest stadium in the world¹ and is set to host its third Olympic Games in 2028.



The stadium was inaugurated on 1 May 1923. It had taken nearly a year and a half to build. It was designed as a 75,000-seat multi-purpose stadium. To this day it hosts not only a wide variety of sporting events, but also concerts, appearances by notable personalities from many walks of life, trade shows and shows of various description. The stadium was built at a time when large sporting events, which we would today call 'mega-events', were becoming more and more popular. At about the same time, the Rose Bowl Stadium was built on a similar scale in neighbouring Pasadena for American football

The inauguration event at the Coliseum was a large-scale fair in the summer of 1923. This was quite common for the time with the fair designed to demonstrate the achievements of the time scenographically and in dioramas. On display were "The highlights of American history" as well as "every phase of the motion picture industry" as part of "the greatest attraction in the Southwest this year". The location was certainly well chosen with Los Angeles as the cradle of the American film industry. 300,000 people saw the spectacle. There was music and ballet along with horse races, fireworks and 'Wild West' shows. Whole cities were created around the stadium with illusions from the Arab world, indigenous societies and Europe. Some 100 actors performed, the President came and the Coliseum was celebrated as the "sight of a century".

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Olympic Games produced stars who were also appreciated worldwide as 'role' models for sport. The Coliseum provided an ideal setting to admire, for example, the long-distance star Paavo Nurmi in 1925, to marvel at the ice queen Sonja Henie in 1936 or to see Birger Ruud for whom a special ski jump was built in 1938. Sporting events that offered a spectacle which attracted

visitors continue to be held at the Coliseum today in wrestling, boxing, rodeo riding, and motocross

In 1973, the daredevil Evel Knievel, for example, set a record by jumping over 50 cars.

From the beginning, the Coliseum has been a multi-functional stadium for sports, shows and major events, but it has always been the home for American football.

The University of Southern California (USC) Trojans have played there since 1923 and the Coliseum also hosted the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Bruins from 1928 to 1981.

In professional football, the Los Angeles Rams, the Raiders, and the Chargers also used it as their home ground.

The Coliseum hosted three NFL Championships and was the setting for the inaugural Superbowl in 1967, one of two staged there.

In baseball, the Los Angeles Dodgers played there from 1958 to 1960, a period which included their victory in the 1959 World Series.

As a large, if not the largest, stadium in the world, it provided an ideal backdrop for speeches by famous personalities such as **American** Presidents Roosevelt and Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Pope John Paul II and Nelson Mandela.

Rock concerts featured illustrious names such as the Rolling Stones, The Who, U2, Bruce Stringsteen or Pink Floyd.²

It is not only Olympics enthusiasts who regard the 1932 and 1984 Games as very special events in the Coliseum's history. The 1932 Olympics could be considered the first mega-event and anticipated what would happen at future Olympics. Over 100,000 spectators attended the opening ceremony and 1.2 million fans from around the world attended the Games, as many visitors as Los Angeles had inhabitants at the time.

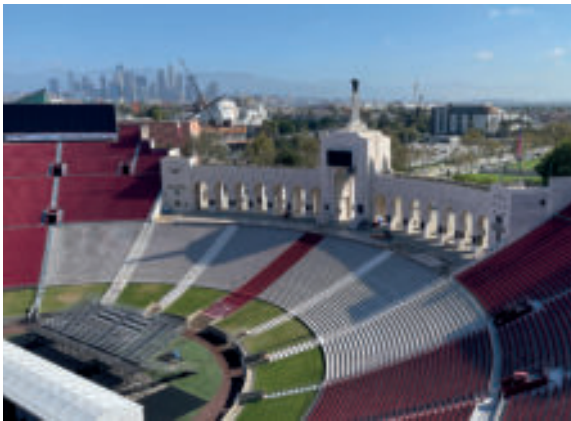
Despite the boycott, the 1984 Olympic Games went down in history as particularly successful, especially from a commercial point of view.

Rafer Johnson became the first African-American to light the Flame. The Coliseum can look forward to new superlatives in view of the 2028 Olympic Games. One seems certain already, as the stadium is set to be the first used for three Summer Olympic Games.



The two stone blocks at the main entrance

© 2023 Markus Osterwalder



Left: A view from high above peristyle in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum

© 2023 Markus Osterwalder

Right: A newsreel recorded how Jean Keteas supervised the arrangements for transporting the stone from Ancient Olympia

© 1923 LA'84 Foundation



The Los Angeles Coliseum during the Olympic Games in 1984

© 1984 IOC



How Los Angeles Times recorded the first event at the Coliseum (The Times LA, July 2nd, 1923)

© 1923 LA'84 Foundation

Right: The left stone sent from Ancient Olympia in place at the Coliseum

© 2023 Markus Osterwalder

Excursus: Built on Foundations of History

If visitors to the Coliseum enter through the main entrance beneath the Peristyle stage architecture (Latin: *scenae*), they encounter two ashlar(stones) to the left and right of the main arch, which originate from ancient Olympia and the Colosseum in Rome respectively. Both stones are approximately 125 centimetres in length, 70 cm wide and 40 centimetres high.

the left stone from Olympia with is of coarse shell limestone and the right, finely pressed limestone. The stones are respectively inscribed 'A stone from the Altis Olympic Greece', 'A stone from the Colosseum Rome'.

However two stones were not brought to the stadium for either the 1932 or the 1984 Olympic Games, It appears that at the time of the 43rd IOC Session in Rome (28 April 1949), at which Los Angeles was also a candidate for the 1956 Olympic Games, the decision to donate one stone from Olympia and a second from the Colosseum in Rome to Los Angeles was taken. The plan seems to have been hatched by IOC member John-Jewett Garland and his Greek counterpart Jean Ketseas.³ The stone from the Colosseum in Rome seems to have been identified, packed and shipped to Los Angeles shortly after the session. By 26 November 1949, the ashlar block from the Colosseum had arrived at the Port of Los Angeles.⁴

The Coliseum had to wait another four years for the stone from Greece, possibly because permission for its removal was delayed, for after all, the stone was

recovered from the most Holy Area directly adjacent to the Temple of Zeus in Olympia. It is possible that the German Archaeological Institute as excavator and the Greek Antiquities Service may not have been favourably disposed towards this, as it had already been agreed between Prussia and the Greek Government in 1874 that all finds were to remain in Greece.

With the assistance of Ketseas, it seems that a suitable stone was found in the end, which was packed and shipped in 1953. The moment was captured on film and, based on the stone's location to the southwest of the Temple of Zeus, it appears to have been taken from a foundation of an ancient building. This is matched by its size and material composition.⁵ In November 1953, King Paul II of Greece and his wife Frederika visited Los Angeles.

This provided the occasion to dedicate the stone from the Altis in Olympia.

During the half-time interval of a football match on 14 November 1953, a short ceremony was held while an 'Olympic' flame was lit in the stadium in honour of the King.

"It gives me great pleasure to dedicate this ancient stone which comes from the renowned city of Olympia. As it rests in this fine Memorial Coliseum I am sure that it will be for you, and for succeeding generations, a symbol of the spirit of good will and fair play in athletic rivalry, which had been a Greek tradition for 25 centuries and is a fine American tradition too." The King said as the stone was presented.

1 <https://www.lacoliseum.com>.

2 <https://www.lacoliseum.com/timeline/>.

3 John A. Lucas, "Almost the Last American Disciple of Pure Olympic Games Amateurism". John J. Garland's Tenure on the International Olympic Committee, 1948-1968," *Olympika* 15 (2006): 113-125.

4 Untitled photographs of the Roman Colosseum stone journey and arrival in Los Angeles: *Olympic Review* 20, March (1950): 8-10.

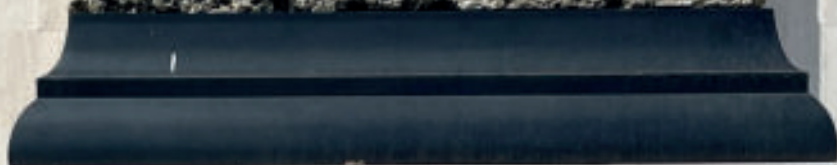
5 The video is available in the LA84 Foundation archive: GV 722 1932. G7930 1953.



JUDGE WILLIAM M. BOWEN

1862 1937

GENERALLY REFERRED TO AS



A STONE FROM THE
ALTIS OLYMPIA
GREECE

Rugby celebrates its 200th anniversary

Rugby School has celebrated 200 years since the fabled run by pupil William Webb Ellis said to have been the start of rugby union.

Both the school and the sport also have strong connections with the Olympic movement.

It is also 140 years since Baron Pierre de Coubertin found his way to a school founded in the sixteenth century in the English midlands.

What Coubertin saw whilst he was there proved pivotal in his thinking and many believe helped inspire his later efforts to revive the Olympic Games for the Modern Era.

As a boy, Coubertin had read a serialisation of Tom Brown's schooldays, a fictional account of life at Rugby School by Thomas Hughes.

Coubertin was an admirer of the work of Dr Thomas

Arnold who served as Headmaster of Rugby School in the years before he was born.

The anniversary of rugby was celebrated with a re-enactment of the origins of the game and a pageant to celebrate the history.

In two commemorative matches which followed, a Rugby School team drawn from staff and former pupils defeated teams assembled by the Wooden Spoon Society, a charity which supports children, England World Cup winner Jonny Wilkinson, a patron of the 200th anniversary celebrations was amongst those at the occasion.

In 2015 Wilkinson had taken part in a similar specially filmed re-enactment with Prince Harry for the Opening Ceremony of the Rugby World Cup.

Bicentenary commemorative caps were presented to those who had represented the school after efforts track down everyone who had played rugby for the school.



A statue of William Webb Ellis
at Rugby School



The playing field at Rugby School, little changed from when Coubertin visited



A plaque at Rugby School to commemorate the visit of Pierre de Coubertin

All © Philip Barker

Film Review: "Air"

Reviewed by Nicholas Wolaver

Amazon Studios / Warner Bros.

Directed by Ben Affleck

Written by Alex Convery

Starring: Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Viola Davis,
Jason Bateman, Chris Tucker, Barbara Sukowa

Language: English

111 minutes

2023



Cinephiles and sports fans of all shoe sizes have embraced "Air," the 2023 shoe-centric feature film which scores big as a fast-paced crowd pleaser directed by Ben Affleck.

Centred during a few autumn days of 1984, only weeks after Michael Jordan won his first Olympic basketball gold medal in Los Angeles, the film depicts how the then-emerging global sports equipment brand Nike courted and secured the rookie NBA player's endorsement deal, despite larger offers from the era's established basketball shoe suppliers Adidas and Converse.

Screenwriter Alex Convery weaves great storytelling with compelling dialogue peppered with light-hearted moments and inspiring monologues. Viola Davis as Jordan's mother is an obvious scene stealer. She one of several dealmakers including Nike's Michael Knight (Affleck), chief marketer (Jason Bateman), vice president of athlete relations (Chris Tucker) and salesman Sonny Vaccaro (Matt Damon) who must work to convince the Jordan family of the player's potential to break new bounds for professional athletes, the sports apparel industry and other areas touched by a man considered by many to be the world's greatest basketball player. Engineering for the new shoe design, just in time for Jordan's visit to Nike's home office, also creates tension and an aura of spectacular and all for an everyday product, shoes.

"Air" also includes a few five-ringed references, including an authentic looking Olympic gold medal and cauldron mosaic as set pieces of the headquarters for Adidas, where Barbara Sukowa shines in her cameo as an heiress to the German brand. The film's reaches its climax with archival footage of Jordan and other USA "Dream Team" players on



the courts at the Barcelona 1992 Games.

The soundtrack features vintage hits by The Alan Parsons Project, Big Country, Bruce Springsteen, The Clash, Tangerine Dream and Cyndi Lauper.

There are a few flaws, details ignored either for dramatic effect or missed by fact checkers.

In the film mobile phones were portrayed as standard equipment for rental cars, when in 1984 they were not yet widely available.

Similarly, the Dire Straits song "Money For Nothing" which features prominently, was not released until the following year.

Even so, "Air" is quality entertainment that makes viewers want to fly like Mike.

Medals to honour 1923 Champion Langley awarded at Much Wenlock

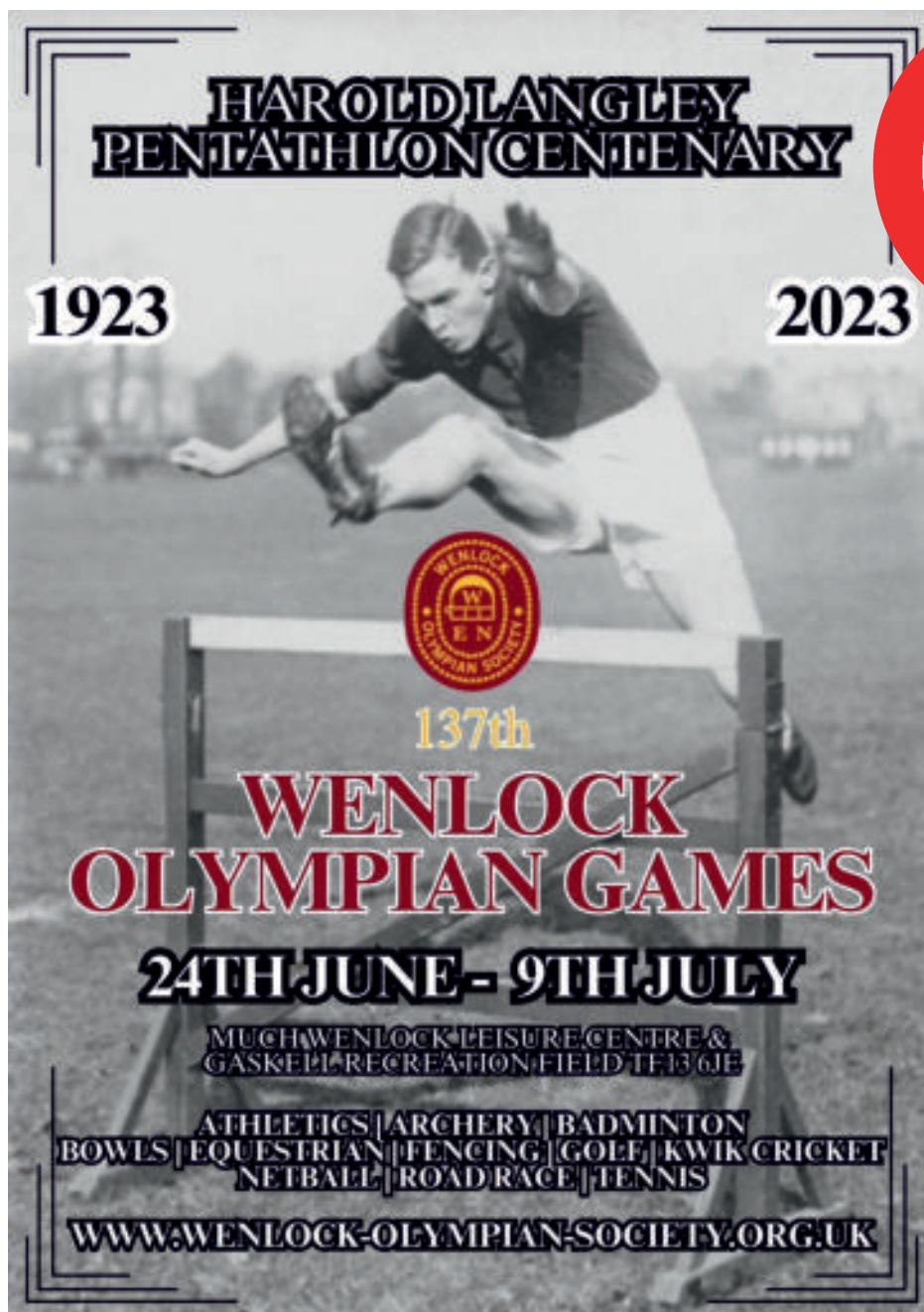
The Wenlock Olympian Society have presented special medals to mark 100 years since Olympian Harold Langley, a Sparkhill Harrier, won the Pentathlon competition and went on to represent Great Britain in Triple Jump at the 1924 Paris Olympics. Reproduction medals were awarded to winners in pentathlon events which organisers hope will raise the profile of modern multi-event athletics and pro-

mote greater participation.

Representatives of Sparkhill Harriers were present to award the first medal.

Some 300 entered the other athletics events and two weeks of competition in the area also included archery and fencing.

Golf, bowls and an equestrian display were also included on the schedule.



The poster for the 2023 Wenlock Olympian Games

© Wenlock Olympian Society

AC = Andrey Chilikin, AG = Arild Gjerde, BM = Bill Mallon, CM = Connor Mah, DT = David Tarbotton, GM = George Masin, HE = Hilary Evans, IM = Ian Morrison, JH = Jeroen Heijmans, JS = Jase Stoke, OM = OlyMADMen, PT = Paul Tchir, RL = Rudolf Laky, RR = Ralf Regnitter, RS = Ralph Schlüter, SB = Sven Buren, SO = Stein Opdahl, TK = Taavi Kalju, WR = Wolf Reinhardt

Nikolay Alyokhin (URS/BLR)

* 26 October 1954 in Minsk (BLR), † 8 July 2023.



Belorussian Nikolay Alyokhin represented the Soviet Union during his active career. He was World Champion in the sabre team competition in Melbourne in 1979 and won World Championship silver in 1981 in Clermont-Ferrand. In between, he reached the final at the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow. He was part of the Soviet team along with Mikhail Burzew, Viktor Krowopuskow, Viktor Sidjak and Vladimir Naslymow, although Alyokhin only fenced in the preliminary round match against Romania but his team mates went on to clinch gold with a 9–2 victory over Italy. (WR)

Nikki McCray (USA)

* 17 December 1971 in Collierville, Tennessee (USA), † 7 July 2023.



Nikki McCray was a point guard who played college basketball at the University of Tennessee, helping them win the 1991 NCAA title. McCray was a shut-down defender who helped the USA win gold medals at the 1996 and 2000 Olympics. She also won a World Championship gold in 1998. McCray played professionally after college, in both the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) and the American Basketball League (ABL). She played from 1996–2006 with several different teams, and was named ABL Most Valuable Player (MVP) in 1997, and played in the WNBA All-Star Game in 1999–2001. After her career she went into coaching, first as an assistant at the University of South Carolina from 2008–17. In 2017 she became the head coach at Old Dominion University, and was in that position for three season before becoming head coach at Mississippi State University. McCray was also known for her community service. In 1999 she was chosen by the Library of Congress to be the keynote speaker for the Women's History Month address and the following year was invited by She was chosen in 2000 by President Bill Clinton to be a member of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. (BM)

Dean Smith (USA)

* 15 January 1932 in Breckenridge, Texas (USA), † 24 June 2023 in Breckenridge, Texas (USA).



Dean Smith attended the University of Texas where he played college football and sprinted. He placed fourth in the 1952 Olympic 100m prior to winning a gold medal in the relay. Earlier in the season he won his only major championship when he took the AAU 100 metres. After the Olympics he served in the Army and attempted to play in the National Football League (NFL) with the Los An-

geles Rams and Pittsburgh Steelers, although he never appeared in a regular season game. Smith later worked for many years as a film stuntman, appearing in over 150 movies, with several acting roles, before retiring to his ranch in Stephens County, Texas. With his Texas background and ability to ride a horse, he appeared mainly in Westerns, including 10 movies with John Wayne. In 2006 Smith was inducted into the Texas Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame, and he is also a member of the Stuntman's Hall of Fame. Smith was named "All American Cowboy" in 1997 and in 1998 received a Golden Boot Award. In 2007 he was given the Silver Spur award for his contributions as a stuntman. His autobiography "Cowboy Stuntman: From Olympic Gold to the Silver Screen" was published in 2013. (BM)

Joey Browne (AUS)

* 22 June 1931 in Melbourne, Victoria (AUS), † 24 June 2023 in Melbourne, Victoria (AUS).

Ian Browne took up cycling at the age of four, but did not start entering competitions until his teenage years. His first major success came at the 1953 Australian Championships, where he won the 10 mile, but his most significant victory came when he was selected to represent his country, alongside Tony Marchant, in the tandem sprint, 2,000 metres event at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. The Australians were never defeated at the Games.

They beating South Africa in the quarter-finals, Italy in the semi-finals, and Czechoslovakia for the gold medal. After their victory, Marchant retired, but Browne continued cycling for many years, winning another national 10 mile championship in 1958. That same year, he also took the title at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Cardiff, also competing in the sprint. He won another national title, this time in the 2,000 metres tandem, in 1960 with a new partner, Geoff Smith. At the 1960 Rome Olympics, however, they were only finished 9th. His penultimate international stop was the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games, where he took home bronze in the sprint, and then won the national tandem title again in 1964 with Daryl Perkins. At the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, they were eliminated in the quarter-finals. Browne went on to win two further national tandem titles, in 1965 and 1968, with Gordon Johnson. The selectors, however, sent Johnson to the Mexico City Olympics with Hilton Clarke, and Browne retired shortly thereafter.

Away from cycling he worked for the State Electricity Commission, but also served as an administrator in cycling, earning the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1994. (OM)



Veniamin Soldatenko (URS/KAZ)

* 4 January 1939 in Shkurovka (KAZ), † 15 July 2023.

In 1976, Veniamin Soldatenko became the first ever World Champion in athletics without winning an Olympic gold. In 1913 the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) decided that the Olympic Games would count as defacto World Championships.



In the late 1960s the desire of many IAAF members to have their own World Championships began to grow and it culminated in the mid-70s, when the IOC dropped the 50 km walk from the Olympic Programme. The IAAF responded by setting up their own World Championship in the 50 km walk, which was held in Malmö, Sweden, which was won by Soldatenko. Soldatenko had taken up race walking in 1962 and was selected for the Soviet national team in 1967. Soldatenko won a 50 km walk silver at the 1972 Olympics.

At the European Championships he won bronze at the 1969 European Championships and gold in 1971. He also won a silver in 1978 Europeans, and was fifth in 1974.

At the 1970 IAAF World Race Walking Cup, Soldatenko won gold. He set one world record during his career, clocking 4:03:42.6 in the 50 km on the track in 1972. Soldatenko won five Soviet titles – 20 km walk in 1967; and 50 km walk in 1969–72. During and after his sports career, Soldatenko worked with the Soviet police force (militsiya) and later as a walking coach in his native Kazakhstan. (TK)



Vladimir Shmelyov (URS/RUS)

* 31 August 1946 in Magadan, Magadan (RUS), † 14 June 2023 in Khimki, Moskva Oblast (RUS). Besides his Olympic gold, Vladimir Shmelyov was a world team champion in 1973–74, while taking individual silvers at those championships. Shmelyov was also the Soviet champion in 1971 and 1972. After his sporting career, Shmelyov worked as a modern pentathlon coach. (TK)



Harvey Glance (USA)

* 28 March 1957 in Phenix City, Alabama (USA), † 12 June 2023 in Mesa Arizona. Glance, who won Olympic gold as part of the men's 4x100m relay at the 1976 Montreal Olympics, showed his potential whilst at Auburn University Alabama. Glance scored a sprint double at the 1976 NCAA and then took the 100 m at the US Olympic Trials to earn selection for the Olympics.

In the Olympic 100m final he was the first American home (in fourth place). It was the first time since 1928 that the United States had failed to win an individual medal in the short sprints.

In 1976 Glance twice tied the hand-time world record of 9.9 for 100 metres.

Glance won the NCAA 100 m again in 1977 and placed third in 1978 and 1979. In college at Auburn he won 14 Southeastern Conference (SEC) Championships. In 1976 Glance twice tied the hand-time world record of 9.9 for 100 metres.

In 1979 Glance won silver in 100 metres at the Pan American Games and in 1980 he again qualified for the Olympic team but missed out on the Games as a result of the American boycott of Moscow. Glance was a fine relay runner and, apart from his Olympic gold medal, was a member of the United States quartet which won Pan American Games 4x100 relay gold in both 1979 and 1987. He also won gold in the 4x100 at the 1987 World Championships in Rome. He was selected for the 1984 US Olympic team as a relay alternate but did not start.

He graduated from Auburn with a degree in health and human performance, and became an assistant coach at his alma mater in 1991 and then succeeded his coach, Mel Rosen, as head Auburn athletics coach from 1992–97. In 1997 he moved to the University of Alabama and coached there from 1997–2011. Internationally, Glance coached the 1994 World Junior Team and served as head coach of men's track at the World University Games. He was head coach at the 1999 Pan American Games and was an assistant coach at the 2003 World Championships. He was an assistant coach at the 2008 Beijing Olympics for sprints and hurdles and was head coach for the 2009 World Championships in Berlin. After retiring from Alabama in 2011, Glance contin-

ued as a personal coach for Kirani James, who won 400 metres gold at the 2011 World Championships and the 2012 Olympics. In 1988, Glance became liaison for the US Olympic team. He has also been vice-president of USA Track and Field, president of the Athletes Advisory Committee, and a member of the US Olympic Committee's Board of Directors. In 1996 Glance was inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame. His greatest honour came in 2008 when he received the Congressional Gold Medal of Freedom. (BM)

Vyacheslav Zaytsev (URS/RUS)

* 12 November 1952 in St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg (RUS), † 12 June 2023.

Zaytsev competed in three Olympic games and won a medal at each.

His gold medal came as part of the Soviet team in men's volleyball at the 1980 Moscow Olympics and he also won silver at the 1976 Montreal Games and 1988 in Seoul.

Vyacheslav Zaytsev made his senior volleyball debut for Avtomobilist Leningrad at the age of 16. He helped them win the Soviet Cup in 1983 and twice won the European Cup Winners' Cup. After 18 years in Leningrad, Zaytsev went abroad in 1987 and played for Italian clubs for five years (Volley Spoleto 1987–89, Volley Agrigento 1989–90, Pallavolo Città di Cstello 1990–92). His last active season was 1992–93 in Switzerland as player-coach with Pallavolo Lugano. In 1971 Zaitsev played his first international match for the Soviet Union. He was twice world champion (1978, 1982), twice vice world champion (1974, 1986) and between 1971 and 1985 he won the European Championship seven times. Zaytsev's son Ivan later became an Italian national volleyball player (WR).



Jean Wicki (SUI)

* 18 June 1933 in Sierre (SUI), † 11 June 2023.

Jean Wicki took up bobsledding in 1960 and had his first major international success two years later when he won the two-man event at the World Junior Championships. It was not until 1968, however, that he made his mark in the senior division, winning that year's European Championships alongside Hans Candrian, Walter Graf, and Willi Hofmann. This quartet went on to capture bronze at the 1968 Winter Olympics, where Wicki and Candrian also finished eighth in the two-man. Four years later at Sapporo, Wicki and Edy Hubacher earned bronze in the two-man at both the European Championships and the Winter Olympics, and then finally tasted gold in the four-man with Werner Camichel and Hans Leutenegger. Wicki retired from active competition following the Olympics, having won four Swiss national championships each in the two- (1967, 1968, 1971, 1972) and four-man (1962, 1964, 1968, 1970) events respectively. (PT)



Jim Hines (USA)

* 10 September 1946 in Dumas, Arkansas (USA), † 3 June 2023 in Hayward, California (USA).

Coached at Texas Southern by former Olympic champion, Bobby Morrow, Jim Hines made track history at the 1968 AAU when he became the first man to better 10 seconds for 100m. He clocked a windy 9.8 that day in the heats, but had a legal 9.9 in the semis before losing the final to Charlie Greene, both runners recording a windy 10.0. In Mexico City, Hines won the gold medal in 9.95 which was a world record for automatic timing. In the relay Hines took the baton in third place, but ran an outstanding anchor leg to give the U.S. a victory and another world record. In college, Hines was a three-time NAIA Champion,



winning the 100 yards in 1966 and the 100 and 220 yards in 1967. He also played football at Texas Southern. After the 1968 Olympic season, Hines turned professional and had a brief career in pro football with the Miami Dolphins after being drafted in the sixth round of the 1968 NFL Draft. He played 10 games for the Dolphins in 1969 and one game with the Kansas City Chiefs in 1970. Hines later worked with youth in Houston. He was inducted into the National Track & Field Hall of Fame in 1979. (BM)



Raisa O'Farrill (CUB)

* 17 April 1972 in San Diego del Valle (CUB), † 30 May 2023 in La Habana (Havana) (CUB).

Raisa O'Farrill was a Cuban volleyball player who represented Villa Clara and the national team. O'Farrill was part of the Cuban team that won gold at the 1993 Central American and Caribbean Games and the 1994 FIVB Volleyball Women's World Championship. She was named in Cuba's team for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics but she did not play in any matches. Four years later she did play in seven games at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics with the gold medal winning side. After her retirement, O'Farrill worked as a professor at the Manuel Fajardo University of Physical Culture and Sports Sciences. She married Cuban hurdler Emilio Valle. (OM)



Vítězslav Mácha (TCH/CZE)

* 6 April 1948 in Krmelín (CZE), † 29 May 2023. Four time Olympian wrestler Vítězslav Mácha represented Czechoslovakia from the Olympics from 1968 to 1980. Games. He won the welterweight, Greco-Roman welterweight gold at the 1972 Games and silver in 1976. In 1980, he was selected as the flagbearer at the opening ceremony of the Moscow Games. Beside his Olympic successes he won the 1974 and 1977 World Championships and 1977 European Championships. The same year he was named Sportsman of the Year. He had previously won European silver in 1973 and 1974 and bronzes in 1972 and 1975. In 2001, Mácha was voted one of the ten best Czech Republic sportsmen and women of all time. (WR)



Igor Vasilyev (EUN/RUS)

* 24 January 1966 in Volgograd, Volgograd (RUS), † 26 May 2023. Igor Vasilyev was a Russian handball player who won gold at the Olympics and the World Championships. Vasilyev played for Kaustik Volgograd in Russia as well as handball clubs in Spain, Germany, and Switzerland. He was part of the Unified Team that won gold at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. The following year, this time representing Russia, Vasilyev won gold at the World Handball Championships. At the 1994 European Handball Championships the Russian team won silver after losing to Sweden in the tournament's final. After his playing career Vasilyev went to live in Germany for 20 years where he coached at the Nieder-Olm and Wehrheim teams. When he returned to Russia he worked as the Vice-President of his former club Kaustik. (TK)

Terry McDermott (USA)

* 20 September 1940 in Essexville, Michigan (USA), † 20 May 2023.

McDermott was a three time Olympian and won 500 metres speed skating gold at the 1964 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck, the only United States gold medal at the 1964 Olympic Winter Games.

Away from the ice he was a barber and was dubbed the "Essexville barber,"

He flew home early from Innsbruck to appear on the Ed Sullivan show which attracted the biggest television audience yet seen because his fellow guests were The Beatles. "I was told they were a famous rock band from England and this was their first appearance in our country, I guess that was huge, people were going wild," Mc Dermott said. He was invited to meet the group and famously clipped a lock of Paul McCartney's hair. McDermott had been well known as a sprint skater in the United States. He had previously won the National Indoor title in 1960 and the North American indoor in 1961.

He continued to be a force in the sprint races right up to 1968. He set an American record in the 220 yards which stood for many years, and in 1968, he was again a favorite to take gold in the 500 metres at Grenoble. But on the day McDermott skated late in the field, well after the ice had started to soften in the sun, and he had little chance. He still recorded a time of 40.5 to share the silver medal only 2/10ths of second outside the gold medal time. Winner Erhard Keller of Germany graciously conceded that McDermott had had the best race of the day given the conditions under which he had skated.

McDermott also served as a speed skating official and at the 1980 Olympics spoke the Official's Oath at the Opening Ceremony of the Winter Games in Lake Placid. (BM)



Harald Jährling (GER/GDR)

* 20 June 1954 in Burg bei Magdeburg, Sachsen-Anhalt (GER), † 18 May 2023 in Klötze, Sachsen-Anhalt (GER).

Rower Harald Jährling won consecutive gold medals at the 1976 Montréal and 1980 Moscow Olympics for East Germany in coxed pairs, with Friedrich-Wilhelm Ulrich and Georg Spohr. The same crew had also taken silver at the 1977 World Championships, and in 1977 and 1979 won the East German nationals. In 1978 Jährling switched to the eights for one season and won the Worlds. In 1981, he added another World title with the coxed fours. In 1981 and 1983–84 he also won three East German national coxed fours titles. Jährling started coaching after he ended his active career, and worked with his home club SC Magdeburg until re-unification. In 1989 he moved to Australia with his wife Marina Wilke, and became sporting director of the Australian Rowing Association. His wife returned to Germany after their divorce. Their son Rob Jährling participated as a rower in the 1996–2004 Olympics representing Australia. Jährling took his own life in 2023. (WR)



Weldy Olson (USA)

* 12 November 1932 in Marquette, Michigan (USA), † 13 May 2023 in Findlay, Ohio (USA).

Weldy Olson came from a family of nine well-known hockey playing brothers, who as a group are members of 12 Halls of Fame. They were from Marquette, Michigan, but Weldy Olson was the youngest, and the best of them. He played college hockey at Michigan State, where he set the school scoring record with 125 points, being named co-captain and MVP in his senior year of 1954–55. He represented the United States internationally for five straight years, sandwiching three world championship appearances in between his two Olympic medals. Olson went on to be a long time referee, amateur coach, official, board member and league administrator. He has been inducted into the Michigan Amateur Sports Hall of Fame, the Upper Peninsula (Michigan) Sports Hall of Fame, the Michigan State University Athletic Hall of Fame, and the Hancock County Ohio Sports Hall of Fame in Findlay, Ohio. (OM)





All © Olympedia

Tadayoshi Yokota (JPN)

* 26 September 1947 in Mitoyo, Kagawa [JPN], † 9 May 2023 in ?, Hokkaido [JPN]. Tadayoshi Yokota was a Japanese volleyball player who won Olympic gold and silver and three golds at the Asian Games. Yokota, Seiji Oko, and Jungo Morita were known as the Big Three in the sport in Japan. Yokota was a student at Chuo University when he was selected to play for the national team. In 1966 he won his first of three gold medals at the Asian Games when Japan went undefeated in the tournament in Bangkok. Two years later Yokota was part of the Japanese team that won silver at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. In 1970 Yokota went to work for the Panasonic Holdings Corp where he joined the company's volleyball team. At the 1972 München Olympics Japan won gold medal with victory over East Germany in the final. Yokota also played in the tournament at the 1976 Montréal Olympics where Japan just missed out on a medal after finishing fourth. After his retirement from playing Yokota worked as a coach, including a spell with the national women's team in 1994 and 1995. [OM]

Remembering ISOH Founder Member Peter Matthews

65

by Bill Mallon

Peter Matthews, one of the founding members of ISOH, died in his sleep on 10 September 2023 at his home.

He had been present at the founding meeting of ISOH on 5 December 1991 at the Duke of Clarence pub in Knightsbridge, London.

Peter was best known as an athletics statistician to the sports world, but in his day job he worked for many years for Guinness, starting out in brewing, computing and public relations. He then moved to Guinness Publications, eventually serving as editor of the Guinness Book of World Records from 1991–95.

Born on 6 January 1945 in Fareham, Hampshire, Matthews started as the stadium public address announcer at athletics meetings in 1968 and notably did so at the 1970 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh.

He was later stadium announcer at several World Championships and Olympic Games, in addition to a great number of domestic events in the United Kingdom.

Peter also became known for his work as a radio and television commentator on athletics. He worked for BBC Radio from 1975–85, ITV from 1985–96, and Sky Sports and the IAAF, starting in 1991.

Peter was a member of the Association of Track and Field Statisticians (ATFS) from the late 1960s and edited their main publication, the Athletics Annual, from 1985 until his death.

After leaving Guinness in 1995, he and Mel Watman began the weekly Athletics International newsletter.

Watman died in 2021 but Peter carried on the publication on his own. Matthews also edited the British Athletics Annual from 1980 to 2023.

He also wrote Athletics Facts and Feats, part of a series published by Guinness which included volumes on a number of sports and The Guinness International Who's Who of Sports in 1993, along with ISOH's first President, Ian Buchanan, and a later President, Bill Mallon.

He authored many books on athletics and other

sport, including the Historical Dictionary of Track & Field and the Guinness Book of Sports Records and Results.

He was a founding member of the NUTS (National Union of Track Statisticians) in Great Britain, and later served as their chairman.

In 1967 he started compiling the UK Merit Rankings, and continued that to the end, usually publishing them in Athletics Weekly magazine or on their website.

For his services to athletics in Britain Peter Matthews was awarded the Ron Pickering Memorial Award for services to Athletics in 2009 and in 2018 he was inducted into the England Athletics Hall of Fame.

***6 January 1945, † 10 September 2023**



© Stuart Mazdon & National Union of Track Statisticians

Sir Ben Helfgott

“Judge each person as an individual”

by David Wallechinsky

On 16 June 2023, Sir Ben Helfgott, a two-time Olympic weightlifter died at the age of 93. He was born in Poland 22 November 1929 into a Jewish family.

Between 1942, when Ben was 12 years old, and 1945, Germans and Poles killed 24 of 28 members of his extended family, including both his parents and one of his two sisters. On 20

December, 1942, his mother, Sarah, and his nine year old sister, Lusia, were pulled out of a synagogue, marched into a forest and shot.

In May 1945, Germans shot his father, Moshe.

Ben survived the Holocaust, but only barely. He was sent to three concentration camps. He worked in Nazi labour camps. Small but strong, he was working in a glass factory.

One day a German soldier came in and told Ben's Polish overseer that there was room for one more Jew to be squashed into a train that was headed to the gas chambers, and he pointed at Ben. The overseer, who had treated Ben somewhat harshly until then, stepped in and told the German that Ben was not a Jew, and they left him alone.

When the war ended, Ben Helfgott was 15 years old and weighed 36 kilograms.

On May 9, 1945, he walked out of Theresienstadt concentration camp. He and a younger cousin tried to return to Poland by train. At the border, they were seized by Polish police who took their food and their possessions and told them that the Germans should have killed all the Jews. They wanted to “finish the job”.

“When my cousin, who was three years younger, and I, coming from Theresienstadt, had to change trains in Czeŝochowa, two policemen asked us who we were and what we were doing here. After we answered, they shouted at us: ‘Shut your f----- mouth you f----- Jew!’ I thought I wasn't hearing right. The Nazi cancer had been removed, but its tentacles were still widespread and deeply rooted. We were suddenly terrified again,” Helfgott recalled many years later.

“The policemen drove us to an area with dilapidated buildings. They pointed their guns at us and ordered

us to go to the nearest wall.” Ben, who spoke perfect Polish, talked them out of it.

“Desperately I talked to them, begging them not to kill us. Finally, one of them took pity and said, ‘Get lost and consider yourselves lucky. You are the first ones we let live.’”

Leonard Montefiore, a British Jewish philanthropist, persuaded the British government to allow 1,000 Jewish orphans to be transported from liberated concentration camps to group homes in England once the war ended. Surviving children were so few that only 732 could be found.

Ben arrived in England in August 1945. He flourished on every level, intellectual, spiritual and physical, and he became a champion weightlifter. “I resolved to be British champion,” he said. He became British national champion in the lightweight division in 1954. Helfgott represented Great Britain at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and again at the Rome 1960 Games. “Whenever I pulled on that GB vest I wanted to do well,” he recalled. “I so wanted to win a medal to say thank you to the country that saved me.”

The Opening Ceremony of the 1956 Olympics took place on his 27th birthday. “While one hundred thousand people cheered,” he recounted, “I marched into the stadium with tears in my eyes. I thought of my parents, how proud they would have been if they could have seen that.”

In 1958, Helfgott also won lightweight bronze at the Commonwealth Games in Cardiff representing England.

He was a strong supporter of the Olympic Movement. He explained, “When athletes come together, they don't think like their leaders.”

Ten years after the second world war, Ben was invited to compete in Poland. He accepted, and did so again in 1959. Later he took part in reconciliation events in Poland.

Some Jews criticised him for going back to the country where his family had been murdered. But Ben reminded them that, although some Poles had committed evil acts, others had helped the Jews, and one had even saved his life.

Helfgott was knighted for his services to Holocaust Remembrance and Education.

The last question I asked Sir Ben when I interviewed him for the International Olympic Committee in 2019



was, "Setting aside sport, are there any lessons in life you would like to pass on to younger generations?" His answer was, "Never judge a person by his religion. Never judge a person by his nationality. Never judge a person by his race. Never judge

a person by his ethnicity. Judge each person as an individual."

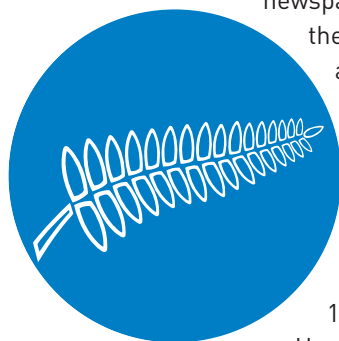
***22 November 1929, † 16 June 2023**



ISOH member and pioneering historian of New Zealand Sport Ron Palenski dies

ISOH member Ron Palenski was a highly respected chronicler of New Zealand sport.

He worked as a journalist with the Dunedin Star newspaper and subsequently worked for the New Zealand Press Association and the Dominion.



He covered the 1976 Montreal Olympics where he witnessed John Walker's victory in the 1500m and was the only New Zealand journalist at the Moscow Games in 1980.

He also covered the 1984 and 1988 Games.

He had also been present for the epic 1500m when Tanzanian Filbert Bayi defeated Walker at the 1974 Commonwealth Games in Christchurch.

He built a friendship with Walker and later helped write his autobiography.

Palenski also covered the 1978 and 1982 Commonwealth Games.

In later life he became Chief Executive for the New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame.

His passing was described as "a big loss to journalism and the sports fraternity" by the New Zealand Hall of Fame.

His collaboration with Terry Maddaford for *The Games* published in 1983 was one of the first attempts to chronicle the exploits of a national team at the Olympics and Commonwealth Games.

He also authored a biography of Joe Scott, a race walker in the 1880s who is considered New Zealand's first world champion in any sport.

Later he told the story of New Zealand's first Olympic gold medallist Malcolm Champion.

A prolific author of some 50 books, much of his output chronicled unsurprisingly recorded the exploits of the fabled All Blacks, New Zealand's Rugby Union team and individual biographies of many star players.

His passion for rugby was reflected in his service as Otago Rugby Union President from 2003 to 2010.

He also reported and wrote about general history and produced substantial works on the part played by New Zealanders in the second world war.

He was awarded the Order of New Zealand in 2003 for services to journalism and was inducted into the New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame on his own account last year.

Ron Palenski *31 March 1945, † 22 August 2022



**Ron Palenski a pioneer
in chronicling New Zealand's
sporting history**

© New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame



Ron Palenski spoke at the Centennial Olympic Congress held in Paris in 1994

©1994 IOC

International Pierre de Coubertin Committee active in three continents



An international group from three continents from the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee (IPCC) were amongst the 28 participants from 19 countries at the 14th International Session for Educators of Higher Institutes of Physical Education at the International Olympic Academy (IOA).

Professor Elba Tomassoni from Argentina and Messrs Jaideep Sarkar from India and Philipp Waeffler from Switzerland were joined by IPCC President Professor Dr Stephan Wassong at the session which ran from July 8 to 12.

The party was also to have included Dr Malik Atour Evele from Cameroon but he was unable to participate.

Dr Wassong spoke on the role of Olympism for University Sport in a session which also included a lecture on the contribution of university sport to the Olympic movement for young people from Austria's Ottmar Weiss, presentations from Colleen English on The Impact of Sport in Modern Societies (Colleen English, USA), Peace and Olympic Education by Marion Keim from South Africa, E-Sports in the Olympic Movement from Jim Parry of Great Britain and the Olympic Movement after the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games by Yoav Dubinsky of Israel,

The IOA's Senior Advisor Dionyssi Gangas spoke on Sport as a Tool for Educational Programmes. After the traditional laying of the wreath at the stele in honour of Pierre de Coubertin the group also visited the site of the ancient Games.

Prof Wassong also led a group of 11 participants up Kronos Hill to enjoy the spectacular view of the Alpheios Valley at sunrise.

Meanwhile the IPCC also supported the 10th International Cape Town Sport and Peace Conference. The conference had a strong focus on youth with the aim of working with schools, Non Governmental Organisations and federations to engage youth in sport and peace initiatives through Olympic and Paralympic values education. The conference offered an international sports training course, this time focusing on safety and anti-bullying.

This event included sessions on Olympism, Pierre

de Coubertin, the values of Education and Peace, inclusion, safeguarding, anti-bullying, youth, skills development and peace.

This special event was made possible thanks to the unique partnership of the Foundation for Sport, Development and Peace in collaboration



with the Western Cape Department of Culture and Sport, Nedbank, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Sportandev, the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee, the South African Pierre de Coubertin Committee and the Association of National Pierre de Coubertin Committees of Africa, World@Peace, Save the Dream, the Association for International Sport for All and their 10 year partners.

The Foundation for Sport, Development and Peace, in partnership with World@Peace, will provide capacity building for teachers, coaches, parents and community members to develop and/or upgrade the latest skills in safety and anti-bullying approaches.

Remembering Pierre de Coubertin 2 September 2023

At the suggestion of the Latin American Centre for Coubertinian Studies the IPCC has held an annual

The IPCC group at the International Olympic Academy
 Prof Elba Tomassoni (ARG),
 Prof Dr Stephan Wassong (GER),
 Mr Philipp Waeffler (SUI),
 Prof Marion Keim (RSA),
 Mr Jaideep Sarkar (IND)

ceremony to mark the passing of de Coubertin at Park La Grange, Geneva.

Coubertin died on 2nd September 1937.

The annual commemoration has taken place since 2020 and this year we marked the 86th anniversary of his death with words of gratitude for the legacy that Coubertin left to all future generations. Professor Daniel de la Cueva, President of the Pierre de Coubertin Committee of Argentina and Director of the Association of Latin American National Pierre de Coubertin Committees, led a virtual event with Christian Kern of the Brazilian Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul – PUCRS.

Two institutions working to promote Olympic values

were also invited: Escuela de Deportes con Corazón (School of Sports with Heart) and the New Acropolis International Organisation.

In order to build bridges between national Pierre de Coubertin Committees, our members in Africa were represented by Mr Muharam Mchume from Tanzania, who showed his work on the translation of Pierre de Coubertin's *Olympic Memoirs* into Swahili. Some 60 members attended the event including IPCC founder Jacques Guhl and his daughter Agnès, Professor Nelson Todt, President of the Brazilian Pierre de Coubertin Committee, and Professor Danilo Ponciano, President of the Pierre de Coubertin Committee of Guatemala.

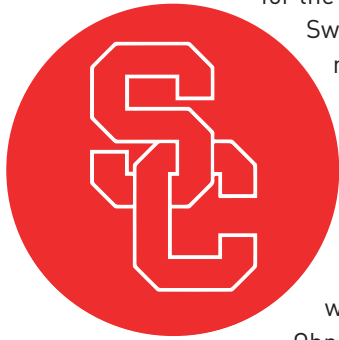


The monument to Coubertin
in Park La Grange, Geneva



University of Southern California launches course in Olympic Storytelling

The University of Southern California has held its first course in Olympic 'storytelling' in preparation for the Los Angeles 2028 Games.



Swimmer Rowdy Gaines, who won 100 metres freestyle gold in 1984, the last time the Olympics were in Los Angeles, was amongst a range of speakers lined up for the course which ran through the autumn 2023 at USC.

ISOH member Alan Abrahamson was a guest speaker alongside Apolo Ohno, 1500 metres short track champion gold at Salt Lake City 2002 in the first session of the series. Daine Blanton, men's volleyball at the Sydney

2000 Games, 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup winner Meghan Klingenberg and Maia and Alex Shibutani, bronze medallists in Ice dancing at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang also participated.

Double Paralympic swimming champion Mallory Weggeman and Ezra French who won high jump gold earlier this year at the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) World Para Athletics Championships in Paris also featured on the course.

The project was led by Emmy award winning Seth Rubinroit who leads audio strategy for the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) Universal Local's 43 NBC and Telemundo owned stations and their six regional sports networks.

He was joined as course professor by NBC digital content producer Fernando Hurtado.



Fernando Hurtado, Apolo Ohno and Seth Rubinroit (extreme right). Also pictured Ngozi Ekeledo co-host of My New Favorite Olympian for NBC.

© USC Olympic Storytelling

Olympic Day has been celebrated for the 75th year. It was in 1948 that the International Olympic Committee decided to formally adopt a “World Olympic Day” at their session in St Moritz.

It was decided that it should take place as close as possible to June 23, the day on which Baron Pierre de Coubertin proposed the revival of the Olympic Games for the Modern era at the Paris Sorbonne in 1894.

Olympic Day was introduced to “encourage the ideas and maxims of Baron de Coubertin particularly amongst the young of all countries”.

It was recommended that each National Olympic Committee should organise events each year.

“We have come here today to celebrate the Olympic Day of the World”, IOC President Sigfrid Edstrom said in a message for the first Olympic Day in 1948.

“During this month thousands of young men and women are gathered in different cities to express their interest in the Olympic Movement and the development of physical culture”.

Events took place in nine countries in that first celebration but the IOC believe that over 150 nations have taken part this year.

Their own initiative “Let’s Move” has been launched in conjunction with the “World Health Organisation” (WHO).

This has been described as “an invitation to make time every day for movement for better health”.

In India, a mass run at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium

in Delhi set in motion “Bharat in Paris”, a scheme to encourage mass participation and promote the Olympic movement in India.

The Paris 2024 Organising Committee voted an additional € 100,000 to support their swimming initiative “1,2,3 Nagez!”

Coubertin’s original circular had mentioned “the re-establishment of the Olympic Games on a basis and in the conditions in keeping with the needs of modern life”.

It suggested that this “would bring together every four years representatives of the nations of the world and one is permitted to think that these peaceful courteous contests constitute the best form of internationalism”.



Gabon celebrated Olympic Day with an event highlighting protection of the environment



Olympic Day at a table tennis table in Benin 2023

All © 2023 IOC

Paris 2024 to reduce production of Olympic Torches

by Philip Barker



Paris 2024 officials have announced that only 2000 Olympic Torches are to be produced for the Relay next year and these will not be offered to Torchbearers after the journey of the Olympic Flame next year.

The decision was made after consultation with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and is designed to ensure that the Relays are as environmentally sustainable as possible.

“It was a real discussion, a key element it took us a few months to discuss,” revealed Paris 2024 Director of Celebrations Delphine Moulin. Some 11,000 Torchbearers are expected to carry the Flame during the Olympic and Paralympic Torch Relays.

“We knew that our torch is a real aspect to propose as a legacy and to propose that as an aspirational element but at the same time our promise in Paris 2024 is try and be sustainable,” Moulin continued. Instead of a Torch, Organisers have promised a symbolic memento of the Relay to each participant as a souvenir. “The symbol we are going to offer will be great, this element will be the legacy we are going to offer,” Moulin explained.

The Torches will not be recycled but it is expected that a Torch will be presented to each town and community which hosts the Relay. “For the cities which are going to have the relay, we will offer one torch. We hope this is going to do this legacy locally,” Moulin added.

Other Torches will also be presented to sponsors and other stakeholders. Each torch is expected to be re-used approximately ten times.

It was designed by Mathieu Lehanneur, incorporates curved contours, a rippling effect and precise symmetry and even the shape is intended to convey the concept of “equality”. The two symmetrical parts of the design symbolise equality.

The extensive sea journeys and the final progress along the River Seine at the Opening Ceremony prompted the representation of water by the wave and ripple effects on the lower part of the torch.

The Torches are rendered in a light Champagne colour and have been treated by use of a coating

using a process known as Physical Vapour Deposition (PVD) to prevent stains or tarnishing and enable each to be cleaned before reuse. “This was one of our biggest concerns,” Paris 2024 Head of Design Joachim Roncin admitted. “It was important to maintain the perfect colour,” insisted Lehanneur. The Torches have been manufactured by Steel company ArcelorMittal using 100% recycled steel from scrap.

The Flame is set to be lit in Ancient Olympia according to tradition on April 16. After the traditional journey around Greece it will be taken from Piraeus to Marseille by the three masted sailing ship Belem, which had first seen service in 1896. It is a journey which is set to recall the sea voyage made by the “Amerigo Vespucci”, another tall ship to carry the Flame from Greece to Italy for the Rome Olympics of 1960. The Flame is also set to journey by sea to the French territories of the Caribbean and Tahiti, where the surfing competitions are to be held. It is expected to spend more time seaborne than any since the Flame which crossed the Atlantic by sea for the Mexico City Games of 1968.

The decision by Paris 2024 to reduce the number of torches manufactured is not unprecedented. The Official Report for the 1952 Helsinki Games records “The Organising Committee ordered only a small number of torches of special construction, with attachable fuel canisters.

“By using fuel canisters and exchanging torches every twenty minutes, the number of torches could be reduced to 22.”

This is believed to be the smallest number of Torches used, although the figures have been disputed in recent years.

Torches were also re-used on the Relay to Melbourne and some 3000 bearers were presented with medallions as a souvenir.

In 1968 for the Winter Games in Grenoble, only 33 Torches were re-used for an expansive Relay around France.

It was for the 1984 Games in Los Angeles that runners were first invited to purchase the Torch as part of a Youth Legacy Kilometre scheme.

It proved the first mass participation in a domestic Relay which featured 3,636 runners.

It was a template followed by all subsequent Games.



1 Mathieu Lehanneur holds the Torch which will be used for both the Olympic and Paralympic Relays

2 Paris 2024 President Tony Estanguet inspects the Torch with designer Mathieu Lehanneur

3 Lehanneur at work on the Torch Design in his studio



THE TORCH
Height 70 cm
Weight 1.5 kg

4 The Torch is set to arrive in Marseille on May 8th to begin a journey which will travel across France. It will also visit overseas territories in the Caribbean and Tahiti

5 The dimensions of the Torch are specifically intended to symbolise equality



All © Paris 2024 Felipe Ripon



Farewell to Ingomar Weiler, 'A Universal Scholar'

by Christian Wacker

ISOH was very saddened to learn of the passing of Ingomar Weiler.



As you will be aware we formally announced our intention to present him with the ISOH Lifetime Achievement award during our General Assembly in Colorado Springs in October.

His family have told us that the tribute spoken by our President Dr Christian Wacker at the meeting was read to him.

It seems appropriate to reproduce these words here: "The International Society of Olympic Historians was delighted to honour the scholar of classics, Olympic researcher of ancient Olympia, connoisseur of the reception of antiquity, and interpreter of the modern Olympic Games, in short a universal scholar."

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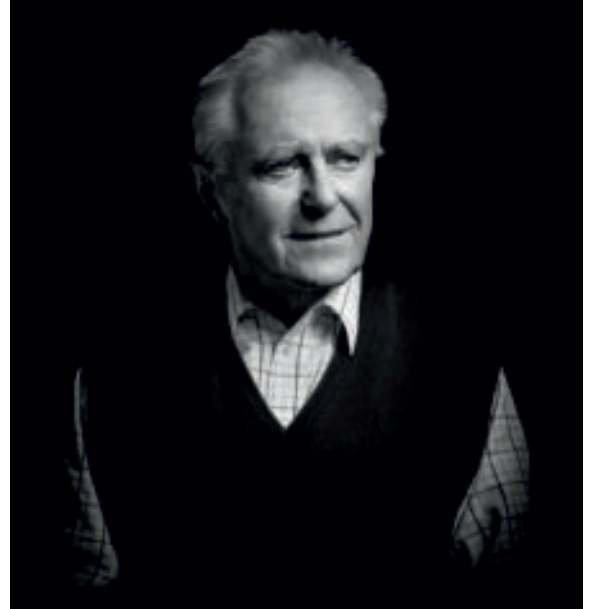
Ingomar Weiler was born in 1938.

After his studies he worked at the University of Innsbruck. Following a longer research stay at the "Centre for Hellenic Studies" at Harvard University, his habilitation, a period of qualification to teach followed in 1972.

From 1976 to 2002, he held the chair of Ancient History at the University of Graz. Professor Weiler's academic reputation was based on his research on Greek antiquity from an intercultural perspective. This resulted in six individual works, 138 articles in international journals and innumerable lectures in many countries of the world. Among his monographs, "Greek History" and the standard work "Sport bei den Völkern der Alten Welt" (Sport among the Peoples of the Ancient World) are particularly noteworthy. Among other things, he was the editor of the journal "Nikephoros" and the source books on the ancient sports disciplines. In 2007 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Mainz.

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In his research, Professor Weiler combined sport with the thematic complex of ancient history. This focus included above all the problems surrounding the origins of sport, criticism of the Olympics, spectator behaviour as well as didactic tasks. He researched and disseminated ancient sports history like no other over the last 50 years, and above all, brought it closer to a broad audience in the sports world. He



taught at the IOA for many decades and popularised ancient sports history by lecturing tirelessly and for hours at Olympia and other excavation sites on the nature of the "agon". Unlike many other colleagues in his field, Professor Weiler always sought and found interdisciplinary contact outside of ancient studies with sports science.

I had the great fortune and honour to have met him at a young age. At that time, I had been working on my doctoral thesis in Ancient Olympia with Ulrich Sinn, who was an academic and also his friend. Professor Weiler was immediately interested in my work on the Gymnasium in Olympia, just as he was always interested in new research, new ways of thinking and in academic debates. This was a trait of his character, one who tirelessly strove to gain knowledge.

Together with big names in ancient Olympic historiography such as Henry Pleket, Stephen Miller, Nigel Crowther, Wolfgang Decker and Nikolaos Yalouris, I was invited by Ingomar Weiler as a doctoral student to a symposium in Graz in 1996 and thus introduced to the guild of Olympic researchers. On such occasions, one quickly realised that he was an important pioneer of the history of sport and the history of the Olympics in antiquity – with Henry Pleket at his side. His important publications “Der Agon im Mythos” (The Agon in mythology) from 1974 and the still much-cited handbook “Der Sport bei den Völkern der Alten Welt” (Sport among the people of the ancient world) from 1988 bear witness to this. My contact with Professor Weiler was maintained and the academic exchange continued. I had the opportunity to publish several times in the journal *Nikephoros*, which he founded. It remains probably the most renowned journal on ancient Olympic history – and Ingomar Weiler gave me the great pleasure of collaborating again and again in congresses and publications that I organised.

Ingomar Weiler was undoubtedly a scholar, intellectual and researcher, but also an educator as a university professor, a motivator for teaching at his home university of Graz and especially for the International Olympic Academy. No professor taught so tirelessly and persistently at various courses of the Academy, but also at different national excursions.

“I am extremely grateful for the privilege of being able to teach in Olympia – it has been a great enrichment and a very valuable addition to my life,” is how he humbly described his passion for teaching.¹ Ingomar Weiler’s teaching and learning was well-known and irresistible, coupled with profound knowledge of sources with original Greek and Latin quotations, narrative passages, witty and humorous stories, and meticulous observation of archaeological details.

A tour of ancient Olympia with Ingomar Weiler could easily last 5–6 hours and felt like an unforgettable novel that you can’t put down. I had the privilege of teaching together with him at the IOA many times and we travelled together several times for sports teacher training with the German Olympic Committee. 100 teachers were selected, 50 in a bus with Ingomar Weiler and 50 with me. The week-long trip followed a well-known route from Athens via Nemea and Epidauros to Olympia and back via Delphi. A great contest of knowledge transfer and knowledge gain, which Ingomar Weiler was always able to win. Discussions continued into the evening and the enthusiasm for the Olympic Games in antiquity always spilled over. Ingomar Weiler was a scholar, but undoubtedly also a mediator, and he was not afraid to slip into the role of an ancient “hellanodic” in order



Professor Weiler with Kostas Georgiadis at the 1993 International Olympic Academy.

© 1993 IOA

to illustrate topics of antiquity. Scientific seriousness and academic rigour paired with tongue-in-cheek methodology of mediation, that is how his recipe for success might be described. He was constantly in search of knowledge and the Olympic idea: “Almost every postgraduate in Olympia gets to know the so-called ‘ancient immortal spirit’, as Kostas Palamas [1859–1943] described it somewhat prophetically in his lyrics for the Olympic Anthem and how it was first sung about at the Games of 1896. The ‘autopsía’, seeing with one’s own eyes, i.e., being at the place where the Olympic Games began, and the weeks of the postgraduates living together in the IOA, have all contributed to internalizing or at least understanding the main Olympic ideas.”²

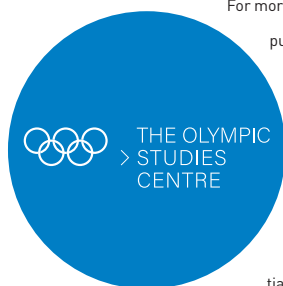
Ingomar Weiler was also a fine mind, a fine person, musical and sporty at the same time. A small anecdote may underline this. On one of our teaching missions in Olympia, Professor Weiler and his wife Getrud invited my wife Marcia and I for coffee. The occasion was a very important one in terms of etiquette and protocol in the German-speaking world, which unfortunately is increasingly being forgotten. Following German convention, people address each other as Herr Weiler or Herr Professor until the older participant in the conversation offers the younger one the “Du”. Since that meeting, I was allowed to call Mr Weiler, Ingomar, which fills me with great pride to this day”.

Ingomar Weiler * 28. April 1938 † 25. October 2023

1 Ingomar Weiler. “My experience and memories as a Supervising Professor during the years 1993 and 2017,” in 30 Years Olympic Studies for Postgraduate Students, ed. Georgiadis, Konstantinos (Athens: Printfair, 2022), 78.

2 Ibid., 76.

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