With the lighting of the Olympic flame on 12th March, the countdown to the Games of the XXXII Olympiad in Tokyo has begun. Philip Barker reports from the ceremony in Ancient Olympia.

There have been doubts over the celebration of the Games before. In 1916, 1940 and 1944, neither Summer nor Winter Games were possible because of the World Wars. In other years, the build up to the Games has been overshadowed by political and economic crises, epidemics and pandemics. In 2016, the spread of Zika was considered a threat and now it is coronavirus. The IOC, Tokyo 2020 and the World Health Organization remain optimistic that they will able to overcome this challenge.

In part four of his series on the history of the Olympic films, David Wallechinsky examines 1988 to 1996, when it was believed that the Cold War was over. Today we know that the world has not become more peaceful since then.

One of many unresolved problems has been the relationships between Israel and Palestine. San Charles Haddad’s book The File: Origins of the Munich Massacre deals with it. In this issue, he has written the first of a series of articles on the them and it is hoped that these will promote dialong within the Olympic family.

Roy Tomizawa looks at Japan’s Olympic traditions. In 1964, when Tokyo hosted the Games for the first time, the gymnasts retained the team gold medal won by Japan in Rome. But only a single gold medal was awarded to the entire team because the IOC had classified the competition as “artificial”. The team members only received diplomas. Tomizawa’s hope that the IOC might strike a medal for each individual member was disappointed. He had to accept that the regulations in force at the time were part of history too.

Austrian skiing legend Karl Schranz, enjoyed a career of over 17 years but chased Olympic gold. He too has had to come to terms with it. When the 2020 Olympic marathon and race walking competitions were moved from Tokyo to Sapporo, it brought back memories of the 1972 Winter Games, including the “Schranz case” in particular. This was because he was the only athlete to be excluded from the IOC due to a violation of Rule 26. In this edition you can read how Schranz feels 48 years later.

Nobody is concerned about the rule on amateurism. It was relaxed somewhat in 1981 and then completely abolished. At present the focus is on Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter, which prohibits the participants from demonstrations or political, religious or racial propaganda at the Olympic sites. IOC Doyen Richard W. Pound argues that by retaining it, there is no restriction of the fundamental right to freedom of expression. His article describes it as an element of mutual respect and the conviction that a better world, with a balance of rights and associated responsibilities, is possible.

Natalia Camps Y Wilant and Kamil Potrzuski provide a retrospective look at three architects of Polish modernism.  Kevin McCarthy makes a plea for the 1904 All-round Olympic champion Tom Kiely to be listed as ‘Irish’ in Olympic statistics.
In January 2020, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) issued specific guidelines relating to where and when athletes will be prohibited from expressing political views during the Games. In light of these rules, it is worth taking a look at the history of athletes making political statements at the Games, how they were treated at the time and how these protests would be treated under today’s rules.

The rules will prohibit protests and demonstrations at an Olympic venue, in the Athletes Village and during official ceremonies. Athletes will be allowed to express their political views during press conferences and interviews and in digital and traditional media. The new guidelines are a bit vague about distinguishing between “protests and demonstrations” [bad] and “expressing views” [not so bad]. Specific examples of forbidden messaging include signs, armbands, gestures such as kneeling and refusal to respect Ceremonies protocol.

The first protest took place at the 1906 Intercalated Games in Athens. Irish athletes were angry that they were listed as competing for Great Britain. When Peter O’Connor earned the silver medal in the long jump, the British Union Jack was raised in his honour. While Irish teammate Con Leahy stood guard on the ground, O’Connor climbed the flagpole and unfurled a green Irish flag. His protest went unpunished, but according to the 2020 guidelines, he would be sanctioned by the IOC.

At the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Koreans Sohn Kee-chung and Nam Seung-yong finished first and third in the marathon. Because Japanese troops were occupying Korea, Sohn and Nam were forced to compete wearing Japanese uniforms and using Japanese names. At the medal ceremony, they bowed their heads during the raising of the Japanese flag and the playing of the Japanese national anthem. It is not known if, in 2020, the fact that Sohn and Nam bowed their heads would be considered a breach of Ceremonies protocol.

At the 1968 Mexico City Games, when U.S. sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos, having placed first and third at 200 metres, staged a non-violent protest at the medal ceremony. Mounting the dais barefooted, they wore civil rights badges, as did silver-medal winner Peter Norman of Australia. When “The Star-Spangled Banner” was played, Smith and Carlos bowed their heads, and each raised one black-gloved hand in the Black Power salute. They later explained that their bare feet were a reminder of black poverty in the U.S. They bowed their heads to express their belief that the words of freedom in the U.S. national anthem only applied to Americans with white skin.

The IOC told the U.S. Olympic Committee that if Smith and Carlos were not banned and expelled, the entire USA track and field team would be barred from competition. Although Smith and Carlos’ protest would ultimately earn them worldwide praise, the IOC’s response would be exactly the same today as it was in 1968.

Also in Mexico City, when gymnasts Vera Čáslavská of Czechoslovakia and Larisa Petrik of the Soviet Union shared first place in the floor exercises event, two months after the Soviet army invaded Czechoslovakia, Čáslavská bowed her head during the playing of the Soviet national anthem.

In 1972, U.S. runners Vince Matthews and Wayne Collett earned the gold and silver medals at 400 metres. At the medal ceremony, Matthews and Collett showed little respect for the proceedings, talking and fidgeting during the playing of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” The IOC banned the two from further competition.

At the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, the silver medal winner was Feyisa Lilesa of Ethiopia. As he approached and crossed the finish line, he clenched his fists and crossed his forearms in the X shape that had become the symbol of support for the Oromo people, hundreds of whom had been killed by the Ethiopian government. Although his gesture at the finish line was against the IOC rules at the time, as it is today, IOC President Thomas Bach presented Lilesa with his award at the medal ceremony. It is doubtful that such an exception would be made again.

Finally, there is the case of German cyclist Judith Arndt, who earned the silver medal in the road race at the 2004 Athens Olympics. As she crossed the finish line, she made an obscene gesture, a protest against the German cycling federation’s treatment of her partner, Petra Rossner, who was not selected for the 2004 team. The International Cycling Union fined Arndt for her “one-fingered salute.” It is unclear whether her gesture would be considered a violation of the current rules.
The Olympic Flame Returns to Tokyo after 56 Years

By Philip Barker

For the second time, an Olympic flame has set out for Tokyo but in very different circumstances to the relay that carried it there in 1964. Daily bulletins about the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) have overshadowed much sport throughout the world, forcing widespread cancellation of many events.

The crisis forced organisers to stage the Tokyo 2020 lighting ceremony with only a small group of invited guests. Normally the ceremony in Ancient Olympia attracts thousands of spectators. “In this ceremony regretfully, we had to downsize turnout to protect public health.” said Hellenic Olympic Committee President Spyros Capralos. As a further precautionary measure, school groups did not take part in the ceremonies as they had done in the past.

On a cloudless day, the flame was kindled in the ruins of the Temple of Hera by high priestess Xanthi Georgiou. She was performing the role for the first time in Olympia. She had previously lit the flame for the Lausanne 2020 Youth Olympic Games but that ceremony took place in Athens.

On the hillside, the priestesses and heralds performed a dance sequence choreographed by Artemis Ignatiou and accompanied by music specially composed by Yannis Psimadas. The sequence, entitled “Ancient Echoes” was designed to evoke the spirit of antiquity. It was the prelude to the arrival of the flame in the ancient stadium. This was carried in an archaic bowl.

Rio 2016 shooting gold medallist Anna Korakaki then stepped forward as the first runner to receive the torch. It was the first time a woman had been chosen to carry the flame in the ancient stadium, although women did take part in the shot put at the same arena in Athens 2004.

“I ask her to make a step to light a path of hope.” said Tokyo 2020 Chief Executive Toshiro Muto. Korakaki carried the flame to the nearby monument to Baron Pierre de Coubertin. There she made the traditional salute before handing the flame to Athens 2004 women’s marathon champion Mizuki Noguchi, the first Japanese participant in the relay.

The date of the event had been carefully selected as the ninth anniversary of the tsunami that devastated many areas in Japan in 2011.

Amongst those watching was 1984 judo gold medallist Yasuhiro Yamashita, now President of the Japanese Olympic Committee and a recent recruit to the IOC membership. He said: “The Japan Olympic Committee has been working with various organisations in order to support and assist those affected by the disaster, encouraging them, and we have been conducting various activities to do this. This is the first time for me to visit Olympia. I went to the ancient stadium and I saw where the athletes competed with each other and was very moved. By being here, I recognised the importance of continuing such work beyond 2020 in order to support these affected people through the power of sport.”

IOC President Thomas Bach drew parallels between the importance of the 2020 Games and the impact of those staged in 1964. “The Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be a symbol of hope and confidence for all Japanese people, especially so in the regions affected by the devastating disaster nine years ago. We are grateful to the Japanese people who are embracing these Games with such enthusiasm. The Olympic flame returns to Tokyo for the first time in 56 years. The Olympic flame represents our hope for a better future. Back in 1964, the first Olympic Games in Asia marked a new beginning for a peaceful and dynamic Japan among the family of nations.”

The Greek portion of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic torch relay through Greece was cancelled after less than a day after “unexpectedly large crowds” when the flame visited Sparta. Many were attracted by the chance to see Hollywood actor Gerard Butler carry the flame.
According to a statement by the Hellenic Olympic Committee (HOC), “Despite strong recommendations to the public not to focus on the ceremony in the flame crossing cities, the HOC took the difficult but necessary decision to cancel the rest of the programme on Greek soil. The decision was made in consultation with the Ministry of Health and the International Olympic Committee with a deep sense of responsibility, as public health is the ultimate good and in these difficult times a reasonable attitude is imposed by all sides.”

This is the only the third time that a relay to Athens for the Summer Games has not been completed. In 1948, civil disturbances in Greece forced organisers to take the London flame to the port of Katakolo near Olympia, where it was carried by ship. In 1984, the flame was flown by helicopter to Athens and then to New York after a dispute between Los Angeles Organising Committee representatives and HOC officials over sponsorship of the relay.

A look back at 61 years ago

The Games had been awarded to Tokyo in 1959 and it was clear from the start that the organisers were determined to harness the symbolism of the Olympic Movement. Yoshinori Sakai, the young athlete who lit the final cauldron was even chosen because he had been born on the day the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima.

The journey of the Olympic flame to Tokyo 1964 had been a long time in the planning. German scholar and administrator Carl Diem had visited in 1961. His vision had contributed to the successful inauguration of a torch relay in 1936 for Berlin, and the Japanese were eager to receive his advice. Sadly, Diem died before the Games so he never did see the relay come to fruition.

Organiser Fumio Takashima set off from Tokyo on an inspection tour of the proposed stopovers for the flame. In Hong Kong, a ceremonial torch to be used in the relay was presented to Olympic Association official Arnaldo de Sales.

Back in Japan, organisers revealed the profile they sought for the final runner in the torch relay. “The runner should be a youth of good character. He should be more than 170 cm in height and weight around 65 kg.” Yoshinori Sakai, a first-year student in the education department of Waseda University, “was found to meet all qualifications.” His name was made public long before the day of the opening ceremony. Sakai had been born 55 kilometres north of Hiroshima on the fateful day the atomic bomb fell. “Happily, I know nothing of war. I have grown up free from care in the atmosphere of freedom in peace-loving Japan,” he said.

Mainland China was still in sporting limbo and was not part of the “Olympic Family”. The Chinese government made it clear that cooperation would not be forthcoming. In the Japan Times, writer Katsundo Mizuno suggested that “Even with the cooperation of communist China, the Silk Road route would involve much difficulty in carrying the torch over mountains of over 5,000 m.”

A second plan, which featured the Spice Route, was also suggested. This had “political and geographical advantages.” Eventually, a plan to fly the torch to Japan was devised. There would be stopovers in many Asian capitals en route. Even then there were still political problems to be overcome.

North Korean Radio announced that their government had lodged a protest with Tokyo organisers because they had “deliberately left Pyongyang out from the course of the sacred torch relay. Rectify such arbitrary wrongful view” (sic).

In any case, North Korea’s participation in the Games themselves was in jeopardy, partly because their athletes had participated in the 1963 Games of New Emerging Forces (GANEFO). These had been organised in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, but were not officially sanctioned by International Federations or the International Olympic Committee.

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In the meantime, the flame was kindled in a ceremony at Ancient Olympia. The ceremony was choreographed by the legendary Greek theatrical performer Maria Horss. As part of the ritual, the poem *Light of Olympia*, by Greek poet Takis Dokis, was read for the first time. It has been recited at the torch lighting at every ceremony until this year when it was missing from the schedule. High priestess Aleka Katseli kindled the flame from the rays of the sun and was escorted to the stadium by 14 priestesses from the Lyceum Club of Greek Women.

In the stadium King Constantine, a member of the International Olympic Committee, received the first torch. He handed it to the first runner, George Marcellos, a 110 m hurdler who had competed at the Rome Olympics and would do so again in Tokyo.

When the flame reached Athens, it was taken to the Panathinaiko Stadium for the traditional handover. The stadium was almost in darkness as the final bearer approached and passed the flame to King Constantine, who lit a cauldron in the centre of the stadium. The flame was taken to the airport to board the aircraft. Admiral Pyrros Lappas, General Secretary of the Hellenic Olympic Committee, was there to bid farewell to Tokyo organising chief Daigoro Yasukawa and his precious cargo.

The aircraft, named *Spirit of Tokyo*, headed first to Istanbul and from there to Lebanon. When it touched down in Beirut, it was greeted by a gendarmerie band and a fencing team with foils drawn. Nineteen runners took the flame into the city, where army corporal Elie Naasau lit a cauldron at the top of a diving tower.

In Tehran, the delegation was received by the Shah’s brother, Prince Gholam Reza, who was Iran’s National Olympic Committee President. The party was also greeted at a banquet by Tehran mayor Dr. Ziaeddin Shademan, dressed in his university tracksuit. On the morning of the ceremony, Sakai ate *sekihan* (festive red rice) with his coach before setting out for the stadium. A small group of runners brought the flame from the Imperial Palace to the stadium on the final day. The average age of the participants was 17.

Sakai carried the flame up 163 steps to reach the cauldron. “When I entered the stadium carrying the torch, I was under so much stress that I could not even take a look at the spectators in the stadium. When I ran up the stairs and stood on top of it I could relax. I am glad I fulfilled my duties.”

He had dreamed of attending the 2020 opening but he passed away at the age of 69 in 2014, though it is hoped that members of his family will be present for the opening in July.

Yet the *Japan Times* reported, “Tens of thousands of Japanese flags blossomed everywhere and the band of the United States Air Force struck up a rousing tune.”

When the relay officially reached Japanese soil at Kagoshima, 30,000 people were waiting to welcome it. Ritsuko Takahashi, an 18-year-old student, was the first bearer on its journey from the airport to the Kagoshima prefectural office. Over the next few weeks, many teenagers would be asked to carry the flame as part of the symbolic message celebrating the youth of Japan.

With a much shorter time frame than that available in 2020, the relay was split to allow it to reach every prefecture across the country and the constituent parts were reunited in Tokyo.

A few days later, there was an unusual meeting between the high priestess Aleka Katseli and designated cauldron lighter Yoshinori Sakai in Tokyo. Katseli wore the traditional Greek chiton as she greeted Sakai, dressed in his university tracksuit. On the morning of the ceremony, Sakai ate *sekihan* (festive red rice) with his coach before setting out for the stadium. A small group of runners brought the flame from the Imperial Palace to the stadium on the final day. The average age of the participants was 17.

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2 Ibid.
3 Speech at flame lighting ceremony, 12 March 2020.
5 Japan Times, 22 August 1964.
6 Japan Times, 19 September 1964.
7 Interview conducted for Tokyo 2016 promotion in 2007.
Free Speech for Olympic Athletes

By Richard W. Pound

When critics apply their denouncements with a palette knife or fling them on canvass like Jackson Pollock, intellectual rigour is often lost in the swirl and splash. Similarly, when the operational matrix is “ready – fire – aim,” insufficient attention gets paid to context. In the compulsion to shoot, accuracy is sacrificed.

Take the International Olympic Committee’s Rule 50 for example. It provides that no kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas. A subset of this rule applies to medal presentations and prohibits demonstrations on the podium. There is a perfectly simple explanation for such a rule, but in some quarters, it has been harshly criticized as an unjustifiable incursion on the rights of free speech enjoyed by Olympic athletes. Let’s set a few facts in order.

1. The Olympic Games are an international event, now involving some 206 National Olympic Committees (and, by extension, governments), approximately 40 International Sports Federations and, for summer Games, about 11,000 athletes. There are a lot of moving parts, not to mention additional factors such as media, spectators and organisational officials.
2. There are many different and complex international tensions among the 206 countries whose athletes will participate.
3. The Olympic Games are, however, a special phenomenon during which, even if the world as a whole is not working well, there is an oasis at which the youth of the world can gather for peaceful competition, free from the tensions which their elders have created and with which they will be required to cope before and after the Games. Of course, the Games “bubble” will not last, but each time the Olympic Games are celebrated, a small step is taken – if the Games can work, even if only for seventeen days, perhaps, some day, so might the world.
4. Can anyone in today’s world provide a better example of international peace and goodwill on such a scale? With a reach and emotional bonding measured in billions of people?

Now, back to Rule 50 and the misguided furore surrounding it.

First, this is not a new rule and, second, it is one wholly consistent with the underlying context of the Olympic Games, during which, politics, religion, race and sexual orientation are set aside. The guidelines causing the furore were produced by athletes themselves, after extensive consultations. It is athletes who bear the risk of losing the moment they have trained for their whole lives by a protest on the podium.

Everyone has the right to political opinion and the freedom to express such opinions. The IOC fully agrees with that principle and has made it absolutely clear that athletes remain free to express their opinions in press conference, in media interviews and on social media.

But, in a free society, rights may come with certain limitations. Rule 50 restricts the occasions and places for the exercise of such rights. It does not impinge on the rights themselves. Many other governmental and sporting organisations have similar rules restricting demonstration. Remember too that allowing protests on the podium means accepting all protests, not just those with which you may agree.

As is the case with countries, no organisation is perfect. Some, however, including the IOC, are committed to principles and a spirational goals. The IOC is committed to use sport to bring people together in peaceful circumstances, to use it as part of their overall development and to help expose them to others from around the world. The Games can demonstrate to the world that all things are, indeed, possible, if there is a will to make them happen, tempered by goodwill and mutual respect.

Rule 50 is a reminder that, at the Olympic Games, restraint is an element of that mutual respect. It is entirely appropriate for the IOC, which created the Games, to establish rules that are consistent with the fundamental underlying principles. It is not hubris, as some critics have claimed, but rather a conviction that
a better world is possible with a balance of rights and concomitant responsibilities. Those who merely thunder about past mis-steps miss the plot. What is important is the future, informed by the past, but not shackled by it. What is important is what we do next, not preoccupation with opportunities perhaps unrecognised at a particular time.

It is our lot to be living in a highly differentiated world. It is our duty to bring about change, to create consensus on living together in a manner that respects, not condemns, diversity and that accepts the right to be different, understanding that there is no perfect ideology or a one-size-fits-all paradigm. The human equation is too broad for such an ersatz solution.

The Olympic Games are, in themselves, no panacea for all of the challenges that face us. But the principles that give rise to the Games can illuminate a way forward that integrates fundamental humanistic values. Avoiding vengeance, especially misguided vengeance, is an admirable beginning.

Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter codifies that important principle. We all need to be reminded of what we have inherited and, without sacrificing any right to freedom of speech, embrace the special experience of the Olympic Games as a building block for a better future.

Still allowed or already banned? Thailand’s Olympic champion Wijan Ponlid with the image of King Bhumibol in the boxing ring at the Games in Sydney. Photo: PRESSSENS Bild, Stockholm

Rule 50 Guidelines (excerpt)

Where are protests and demonstrations not permitted during the Olympic Games?

- At all Olympic venues, including:
  - On the field of play
  - In the Olympic Village
  - During Olympic medal ceremonies
  - During the Opening, Closing and other official Ceremonies
- Any protest or demonstration outside Olympic venues must obviously comply with local legislation wherever local law forbids such actions.

During the Olympic Games, where do athletes have the opportunity to express their views?

While respecting local laws, athletes have the opportunity to express their opinions, including:

- During press conferences and interviews, i.e. in the mixed zones, in the International Broadcasting Centre (IBC) or the Main Media Centre (MMC)
- At team meetings
- On digital or traditional media, or on other platforms.

It should be noted that expressing views is different from protests and demonstrations. It should be noted, too, that these guidelines are also applicable to any other accredited person (trainers, coaches, officials, etc.).

Here are some examples of what would constitute a protest, as opposed to expressing views (non-exhaustive list):

- Displaying any political messaging, including signs or armbands
- Gestures of a political nature, like a hand gesture or kneeling
- Refusal to follow the Ceremonies protocol.

What happens if an athlete or participant fails to respect these policies?

If an athlete or participant is in breach of Rule 50 and the Olympic Charter, each incident will be evaluated by their respective National Olympic Committee, International Federation and the IOC, and disciplinary action will be taken on a case-by-case basis as necessary.

(Developed by the IOC Athletes’ Commission)
IOC President Thomas Bach has described the Lausanne 2020 Winter Youth Olympic Games as “a huge success” and even suggested they might encourage a future Swiss bid for the Olympic Winter Games. They were certainly a glittering third chapter in the history of the Winter Youth Olympic Games after a fortnight of innovation.

For the first time, the Games were co-hosted. Nordic events took place over the French border at Les Tuffes. There were also separate villages. In Lausanne the young competitors stayed at the Vortex, a new Lausanne University building, and those taking part in sliding sports and speed skating were accommodated in St. Moritz.

The opening ceremony was held at Vaudoise Arena, named after a sponsoring bank. The name was not changed as organisers took advantage of a linguistic nicety.

A horrific accident to one of the performers in rehearsals caused revisions to the programme which nonetheless delighted a capacity crowd.

Beethoven’s Ode to Joy was played on alpine horns. A children’s choir performed the Olympic anthem. The Olympic flag was by distinguished Olympians from the past and aspiring athletes.

The flame, lit in Athens back in September, had toured all the cantons of Switzerland and on the eve of the Games it reached Olympic House and then the Olympic Museum.

An aerialist delivered it to 14-year-old ice dancer Gina Zehnder, the youngest member of the Swiss team.

The main cauldron was relocated to Flon in the centre of the city. This was where local youngsters were given the chance to experience ski jump, luge, curling, and ice skating.

The new sport of ski mountaineering produced two new Swiss heroes. Twin brothers Thomas and Robin Bussard won individual honours and team gold. They were also engaging ambassadors for their sport.

A Brilliant Success that Should Make you Hungry for More

By Philip Barker

Chinese freestyler Aileen Gu Ailing (left), who won gold in the Big Air final, with second-placed Kirsty Muir of Great Britain.

A 14-year-old Tyrolean whizz kid: Daniel Bacher in Leysin Park, where he finished sixth in the Freestyle Big Air. Far right: award ceremony for the men’s figure skaters: (left to right) Andrei Mozalev (Russia/silver), Yuma Kagiyama (Japan/gold) and Danii Samsonov (Russia/bronze).
“It was a fantastic leap forward to be at the Youth Olympics. We have performed so well that the impression is very good for the sport. Maybe we will be at Milan–Cortina 2026,” said Thomas Bussard.1

Buoyed by the success of 3x3 in basketball, the same idea was tried with ice hockey, which many hope might be the prelude to future inclusion at the Winter Olympics.

As usual there were a smattering of mixed NOC team events, though in ice skating this did not really come off. It was a laudable idea aimed at integrating athletes, but it was hard to care who won.

It was a different story when Korea’s new star You Young took to the ice. Even before winning gold, she faced comparison with Yuna Kim, which seems certain to intensify before Beijing 2022.

“She was my role model when I was very young. She was always an amazing skater,” You Young said about Yuna Kim.2

After the first week, a second wave of competitors came in. It did rather detract from the “calling of the Youth of the World”3 but IOC director Christophe Dubi insisted, “I don’t think we are facing a paradox. The answer from the athletes was that they wanted to be close to the venues but we also create opportunities for them to feel the spirit of the Games there.”

There was also an environmental message when campaigner Greta Thunberg passed through the city on her way to Davos. She was welcomed by thousands of youngsters, the very target audience of the YOG.

Thomas Bach closed the Games in a simple ceremony at the Medals Plaza. Such was their success that he claimed a bid for the Olympic Winter Games might be a possibility: “People might now look at it with different eyes. Our door is open, the Swiss need to decide.”4

2 Interview in mixed zone, 13 January 2020.
Gymnast Shuji Tsurumi emerged as one of the most decorated Olympians of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, winning a gold medal for Japan in the team competition, and three silver medals in the individual all-around, the pommel horse, and the parallel bars. And yet, the two-time Olympian has in his possession only the three silver medals from 1964.

Gymnast Toshiko Shirasu-Aihara held it in her hand – the bronze medal awarded to Japan for the women’s team’s third place finish at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. But she has no medal at home. While individuals of winning volleyball, basketball, and water polo teams, for example, took home their own medals, individuals of teams that finished first, second, or third in the team category for artistic gymnastics were awarded only a “diploma,” an official document recognizing the individual’s participation in the team’s medal award.

There is actually a single medal awarded to the gymnastics team in this case, awarded to the nation. At the 100th anniversary of gymnast great, Masao Takemoto, on 29 September 2019, the medals of the gold medal winning men’s gymnastics team, and the bronze medal winning women’s gymnastics team were on display.

Shirasu-Aihara, who had won the inaugural NHK Cup Championship in women’s gymnastics in 1962, saw the team bronze medal for the Japan women’s Tokyo Olympic achievements for the first time at the Takemoto anniversary event, nearly 55 years after helping her team win it. She told me it would be wonderful if somehow the IOC could reconsider their decision and provide a medal to members of her team and the Japan men’s gymnastics team that won gold.
A few weeks later, I contacted David Wallechinsky, Olympic historian and President of the International Society of Olympic Historians. He graciously agreed to send a note to the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). A few weeks later, he got a clear and logical response from the IOC:

While we very much appreciate your thought for each team member of the 1964 Japanese gymnastics team events to be handed an Olympic medal retroactively and the symbolic gesture that such an initiative would send, we have to respect that the rules of the sport in force at the time for the team competition were: “To the team classed first: Olympic medal in silver-gilt for the nation: diploma for each team member and leader”. See Olympic Charter 1962, Rule 41 Prizes.

We also have to stay sensitive to the fact that similar rules of “one medal for the whole team and only diplomas for the team members” is not unique to the Tokyo 1964 Games, but also were applied to other sports and Games editions.

According to the Olympic Charter of 1962, in cases where individuals compete as a team with the purpose of winning a team competition, then the individuals whose teams place first, second, or third receive their own medal. Thus individuals on teams that medalled in volleyball or basketball received medals.

But victory for the team category in artistic gymnastics was determined by the total scores of performances in the individual competitions, in which medals were also awarded.

Here is how the Olympic Charter of 1962 described Rule 41, which dictated which individuals and teams are awarded medals:

In team events, except those of an “artificial” nature (one in which the score is computed from the position of the contestant in the individual competition) each member of the winning team participating in the final match shall be given a silver-gilt medal and a diploma, of the second team a silver medal and...
How Yukio Endo “Won” an 1896 Medal

With three gold and one silver, Yukio Endo of Japan became the most successful gymnast of the 1964 Games in Tokyo. After the competitions had ended, the 27-year-old received yet another silver, which was presented to him by a journalist from Hamburg.1

It was a medal that had belonged to the German gymnast Hermann Weingärtner, which the latter had won on the horizontal bar in Athens in 1896. It was the only Olympic silver from his estate – the Greek organisers could not afford gold at the time.

For the both other victories that Weingärtner had achieved together with his comrades in the two team competitions, he received only a diploma. Where this disappeared to is as much of a mystery as the whereabouts of the bronze medals he received for second places on the pommel horse and on the rings.2

Endo initially refused to accept the medal. Only when he was told that it was a present from Weingärtner’s son Erich, and that the reporter was acting on his behalf, did he acquiesce. Holding the relic carefully between his fingers, he thanked the man politely. However, conscious of tradition, and in honour of his ancestors, he let it be understood that he would never give his father’s medal to a stranger.

The former flight captain Erich Weingärtner, who transported Leni Riefenstahl’s film material of the first Olympic torch relay from Athens to Berlin in 1936, justified his generosity with the lie that he had no heir himself. In reality, he had a son named Erik, whom he had disowned. When, after the divorce, the mother sued for many years of failed alimony payments, he cleared off to Rio de Janeiro in 1937, where he worked as a private pilot.

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The team medals for gymnastics. Japan’s men won gold (left) and their women took bronze (right) at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. In each case only one medal was presented.

Hermann Weingärtner took second place on the rings in Athens in 1896. The three-time Olympic champion died in 1919 at the age of 53.

Photo: Albert Meyer/Volker Kluge Archives
After sinking into financial distress, he previously offered his father’s memorabilia to Carl Diem, because he had heard that the former chief organiser of the 1936 Olympics was planning a museum. Diem did show interest, but then went on a ten-week trip to Bulgaria. Since Weingärtner was in a hurry, he turned to the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, but he only bought the winning prize from the Italian national gymnastics festival in 1895, which was made of pure gold.

After Weingärtner Jr. was left sitting with the Olympic memorabilia, he tried in 1964 to once again draw attention to himself with his gift for Endo. But things spiralled rapidly downhill after this brief feeling of happiness. At the end of his life, he bartered the rest of his Olympic inheritance – including 28 original photos from 1896 – for food and alcohol.

Some time after his death, his legitimate son wrote a letter to Endo asking what had happened to his grandfather’s Olympic medal. He got no answer. Perhaps the letter never reached Endo, who died in 2009.

Volker Kluge
Schranz and Sapporo 1972 – the “Hurt” Still Runs Deep

By Volker Kluge

Between 1957 and 1972, Karl Schranz was one of the most successful alpine skiers. He won three World Championships and two overall World Cup titles. He also won the Hahnenkamm and Lauberhorn on four occasions, the combined event at the Arlberg-Kandahar and recorded seven wins in the downhill at the meeting. Only Olympic gold eluded him. The giant slalom silver he won at Innsbruck in 1964, remained his only medal and his quest for Olympic glory was in vain.

In 2022, Beijing was to have become the first city to host both Summer and Winter Olympics, but now that distinction will go to Sapporo, which is now to host the marathons and race walking. In the wake of the experiences at the Doha 2019 World Championships, both disciplines were relocated 800 km from the heat of Tokyo to Sapporo in the cooler Northern regions of Japan.

This decision brings back memories of 1972, when Sapporo hosted the Winter Games, which were overshadowed by the case of Karl Schranz and the dispute over the amateur rules. Pierre de Coubertin devoted an entire chapter of his memoirs to the subject which he described as the “eternal mummy”.¹

Since its inception, the IOC had spent countless hours discussing the issues involved. Whilst Coubertin was head of the IOC, he had, without inner conviction, taken part without finding a satisfactory solution. After his retirement and the inclusion of alpine skiing in the Olympic programme, his successors concentrated on discovering the “heretics” who could have blended in with the “pious”. Ski instructors were the first to be excluded in 1936.

Even after the Second World War, the dividing line between amateurs and professionals remained blurred. The Americans had their college system. Others served as negotiators of peace for army, police, or customs. The Eastern bloc countries established a state–subsidised support scheme.

The Austrians, who had nothing like that, were among those who had to find other ways of earning money. After major successes, their ski heroes often received land from their communities on favourable terms and preferential terms on bank loans for building houses. Those who had less success often earned their living in the summer as water ski instructors or in hotels and restaurants.

The interlinking of ski sport and ski industry

Karl Schranz, who grew up in simple surroundings in St. Anton am Arlberg, is one of the most prominent representatives to this day. His mother worked as a cook for Hannes Schneider, a ski pioneer who starred in 15 ski films from 1920 to 1933.² His father worked as a rail track inspector on the Arlberg tunnel. This was 10 km long and had poor ventilation. Schranz senior died of lung cancer at the age of 49.

It was not the first misfortune in young Karl’s life. In 1946, the family home burned down as a result of a catastrophe at a nearby sawmill. “Nobody helped us,” Karl Schranz recalled.³ The eight-year-old was most upset about the skis that had been burnt in the fire. At some point, he was able to get new ones. “If you were born in St. Anton in 1938 and you were poor, you were doomed to go skiing,” he said.⁴

His first role model was 1952 Olympic giant slalom bronze medallist Toni Spiss. He influenced Schranz’s style, and the young man was soon described as “Arlberg’s exceptional talent”.

In 1954, Karl Schranz was European Youth Slalom Champion, and the following year he became a three-time Austrian champion in his age group. As a reward, he was sent to the 1956 Winter Olympics in Cortina with a youth delegation. There he witnessed the victories of fellow–Austrian Toni Sailer in the downhill and slalom.
“My life changed completely after 1956,” says Schranz. By this, he means not only Cortina, but also his encounter with textile merchant Franz Kneissl. In 1947 Kneissl had rebuilt the ski and sports equipment workshops established by his father, who had died in the war. Kneissl was from the border town of Kufstein. He visited St. Anton to tell Karl’s mother, “I’ll take your boy with me right away.” It was agreed that Schranz would start a commercial apprenticeship. He would earn 2,000 shillings in the first year of apprenticeship instead of the usual 600. It was the beginning of a professional career.

Kneissl took the boy into his family, creating a father-son relationship and a sports-business relationship. Kneissl and his Arlberg competitor Anton Kästle were already paying skiers bonuses when they used their products. For example, Sailer received 5,000 shillings for his Olympic downhill victory, the equivalent of around $192. The skis had small company names but as the lettering was very small, no one was too concerned in an era before television played a major role. Cortina was televised live for the first time in 1956, but the broadcast area was limited to a total of 30,000 receivers, mostly in northern Italy.

Times were changing rapidly. The global economy had grown after the Second World War. Mass tourism developed when tour operators discovered the package tour. This made it possible for those on lower incomes to spend their holidays in remote regions. The Austrian Alps were among the preferred holiday areas, where winter tourism became an important economic factor, as can be seen by the development of St. Anton. While the population rose only slightly in the decade from 1955 to 1965, the number of beds available would double in 10 years. In 1955 there were approximately 188,000 overnight stays per year; the million mark was reached by the late 1990s.

The value chain began to take effect with winter sports tourism. Business flourished. Carpentry or wheelwright shops became large companies that entered the world market. To be successful, proof of quality was required, which could only be achieved through significant success on the piste. For this reason, the manufacturers bought racing teams.

What started as a duel between Kästle and Kneissl in Austria developed into a pentathlon in the early 1960s. People talked about a “ski war”, in which Josef Fischer (“Fischer”), Anton Arnstein (“Blizzard”), and Alois Rohrmoser (“Atomic”) also took part. Each came up with technological innovations that had been developed in secret. And everyone had their stars and worked out how to circumvent the tax regulation with a scheme of rewards. There were suspicions but it was impossible to find proof.

This greatly irritated IOC President Avery Brundage, who came from a time when top sports was predominantly a hobby for the offspring of wealthy families. Brundage was now a wealthy entrepreneur himself, but the growing relationship between skiers and skiing with the ski manufacturing industry increased his anger.

### Olympic chance gambled away at the gaming table

Kneissl had built a racing team that also included aces like Anderl Molterer, Hias Leitner, and Ernst Hinterseer. Schranz lived in Kufstein and only travelled to St. Anton to “change clothes”. He was released from work by his employer in winter. He also had enough time to train in the remaining months. His loyalty to Kneissl was something special that cannot only be explained from a financial point of view. Schranz recently reflected, “I could have earned double the amount at Fischer.”

Schranz did not qualify for the 1958 World Championships in Bad Gastein. Unofficially he was assistant coach to the US women’s team. Kneissl sent him to the United States for seven months, where he worked promoting the company at trade fairs in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, and New York. He was considered as a bright Austrian prospect for the 1960 Winter Games in Squaw Valley.

But “Operation Gold” failed before that, when Schranz suffered an abdominal injury on the slalom slope in Kitzbühel. In order not to jeopardise his selection, he hid the injury.

The latest development in the equipment “wars” came when the French presented the Allais metal ski. Adrian Duvillard’s recent victory at the Hahnenkamm meant this was now hailed a “wonder weapon”. It was more than a match for Kneissl’s new wooden “Spoxi” ski. Power struggles broke out in the Austria camp before selection for the first of the Olympic races. Coach Öthmar Schneider gave up, admitting that he was only dealing with “factory teams”. Schranz had sensed opportunities in the giant slalom despite his handicap, but only managed a disappointing seventh place. Molterer was even further back in 12th. Contractually bound to the wooden ski, it was a similar story in the downhill race. Schranz was seventh again. As expected, a Frenchman won, but it was Jean Vuarnet after Duvillard fell.

This was where the 1960 Winter Olympics ended for Schranz, who effectively gambled away his last chance of winning a medal because of an unauthorised trip to Reno with Molterer. Although Schranz won $1,000 at the gaming table, it cost them both their places in the starting line-up for the slalom. In their place, substitute Hinterseer was chosen and he went on to win an unexpected gold. Fearful of the reaction at home, Schranz decided to remain in the US. He only returned home in June 1960 when he was informed that he had been chosen as Sportsman of the Year for 1959.
This saved his career. At the 1962 World Championships in Chamonix, he won both downhill and combined with his plastic White Star ski. This had been developed by Kneissl in absolute secrecy. In addition, he won silver in the giant slalom behind fellow-Austrian Egon Zimmermann, who was growing in strength as the next Winter Olympics approached. After the 1962–63 season, the international ski journalists presented their inaugural Skieur d’Or to Zimmermann, who was also a qualified chef.

Zimmermann lived up to his role as the favourite in 1964. He won Olympic gold in the downhill while Schranz “sneaked off” the track in 11th place. He had the flu and was running a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius with a severe headache. Schranz was still hardly in top shape when the giant slalom was run three days later. Even so, he managed second place behind the Frenchman François Bonlieu. That was to be the only Olympic medal of his career.

“Total skiing” and “brutal skiing” – the World Cup

Alpine racing changed before the next Winter Games in Grenoble. It had always been a dangerous sport, but now it became all about modern high-performance with the risks of racing at speeds in excess of 100 km/h. People talked about “total skiing” and “brutal skiing”.

A new way of training was introduced, and equipment was developed with attention to the smallest detail. The skis were specially made for each athlete according to size and weight. Bindings, sticks, shoes, goggles, and clothing also changed.

When Schranz sported the “astronaut look” at the Lauberhorn race in early 1966, it was copied very quickly. The days when people still skied with loose fluttering trousers, anoraks, or pullovers were over. Helmets were worn instead of caps. New techniques of skiing emerged, to which Schranz’s contribution was the “squat position”, which was named after him and became common practice.

The 1966 World Championships were held in the Chilean resort of Portillo. They took place during the Northern Hemisphere summer and were something of a “Waterloo” for the Austrians.

That European winter came the first ski World Cup. Conceived by the French journalist Serge Lang, it was based on the format for Formula One Racing. Lang was able to convince the sports newspaper L’Equipe and FIS President Marc Hodler. The mineral water company Evian also came on board.

The first World Cup race, then known as the Trophée Evian, took place in January 1967; the FIS Congress in Beirut only confirmed this development in June. Although Schranz was initially not a fan of this stressful “ski circus”, he soon developed an appetite for the large crystal ball that was presented to the overall World Cup winner. The first winner with an ideal score of 225 was the Frenchman Jean-Claude Killy, who won 12 of the 17 World Cup races, including all five downhills. It was a performance that put him in pole position for the upcoming Olympic Winter Games in his own country.

The new era of commercialisation triggered by the World Cup was not handled with kid gloves by the ski companies. They pumped millions into racing events, and they didn’t see themselves as benefactors. Killy got to know this before Grenoble, when a bailiff at the World Cup in Kitzbühel tried to collect monies that the Frenchman had allegedly owed a hairdresser for a period of five years. When his luggage was confiscated, he left in exasperation.

The headlines brought IOC President Brundage into the picture. Brundage recalled the controversy when Olympic champion Egon Zimmermann was congratulated by Federal President Dr. Adolf Schärf in front of live TV cameras in 1964. Zimmermann’s Fischer skis were prominent and “in vision”. For Brundage, this was an “absolute no-go”. Still in Grenoble, the issue surrounding company labels on skis intensified. Brundage wanted them removed. Hodler had recently assured him that this would be done when they had met in Chicago. But the FIS Council had since reversed the decision, putting Hodler in a difficult position.

Brundage’s revenge followed. At the session a few days before the Winter Games, he informed IOC Members that he had set up a commission to analyse and discuss the future of the Winter Games. This commission was to be headed by Dutch Vice-President Herman van Kamebeek. Brundage made no secret of his aversion: he thought they were superfluous because they were too big and too expensive.
After the meeting, however, Hodler managed to negotiate a compromise. It was agreed that the athletes should hand in their skis after the race. They would then walk past the photographers and TV cameras in the finish area without their sports equipment.

The ski manufacturers were angered and demanded the return of the equipment they had given to the athletes free of charge. Some skiers threatened a boycott. There were rumours that they were to hold their own World Championships on other slopes without the IOC interfering. Brundage was not impressed by any of this. He announced that he would not attend a single alpine race, and he stuck to his word.

He was probably not missed either, because all of France was concentrating on the exploits of Killy who was aiming for triple gold. The downhill was first and it was close. Ultimately, Killy won 0.08 seconds ahead of his compatriot Guy Périllat. Schranz was fifth. In the giant slalom, the Austrian was only sixth, as Killy “mowed down” the competition. His margin of victory over the second-placed competitor was no less than 3.22 seconds.

Schranz’s last chance was the slalom on the penultimate day, but the race proved ill-starred. Despite irregular conditions and heavy fog, the competition was allowed to start. Killy won the first round, but Schranz was third on his heels, 0.32 seconds back.

Schranz had decided to fully attack in the second run. But someone appeared on the course at gate 22. Schranz was distracted at gates 18 and 19 and broke off the run. Several others witnessed the incident and the jury allowed him to repeat the run with reservations, as explained later.

Schranz was full of anger in his stomach, but he produced the race of his life, technically perfect and in record time to lead Killy by almost a second. That meant first place in the overall standings, and Killy himself offered congratulations. After that, the usual press conference with the medallists took place. Then the corks of champagne bottles were popped at the Kneissl headquarters.

Meanwhile the jury met again to consider the race. It was chaired by Karl Molitor of Switzerland. Finally the verdict came at 7:45 pm. Schranz had been disqualified by three votes to two and Killy was declared the winner. Two of the jury members were French, including race director Roger Esnault. Colonel Robert Readhead of Great Britain, had proposed two gold medals as a compromise. But nobody listened to him.

Protests by the Austrians were rejected and during its next meeting in June 1968 the FIS board confirmed the decision with 13–1 votes. To this day, Schranz still feels betrayed. Every time he meets Killy, he asks him, “How’s my gold medal?” To which the latter replies: “I cleaned it again.”

“Olympic Games in Danger”

In retrospect, Brundage was more than critical of the Grenoble Winter Games. They had cost $240 million, which seemed excessive for 10 days of winter sport. He made this point in his opening address at the 1970 IOC Session in Amsterdam, which was titled “Olympic Games in Danger”.

As for alpine skiing, he cited the Paris weekly magazine L’Express, which had described the events as a “contest between the Austrian and the French ski manufacturers for the profitable American business”. From his point of view, the FIS was to blame. Their leadership had made him promises but had not kept them. Brundage explained:
Brundage eventually “got even” with Schranz who had increased his popularity enormously in 1969 by winning the overall World Cup and a third world championship title in the 1970 giant slalom in Val Gardena. Brundage described Schranz as “a living advertisement” and pointed to Austrian newspapers which suggested that Schranz’s annual income was $40,000 to $60,000. From his office, Brundage had calculated that out of 110 medals awarded at ten Winter Olympics, 89 were won by only five countries – more than half, 62, by Austria and France. His verdict was clear:

There is no place on the Olympic programme for a sport of such limited appeal. This poisonous cancer must be eliminated without further delay; alpine skiing does not belong in the Olympic Games.18

But Brundage was in a dilemma. On the one hand, the media continuously accused the IOC of betraying Olympic ideals. On the other hand, they cried out to have the rules adapted to reality. If it had been up to the president, then it would not only have been possible to remove alpine skiing from the programme, but also ice hockey, football, and basketball, which he regarded as “victims of the materialistic times” – and without which the ancient games had lasted for 1200 years, according to Brundage.19 He was encouraged when Sports Illustrated released information on contracts with US racers Hank Kashiwa and Rick Chaffee. In addition, as ten athletes had attended the summer ski camp20 in Mammoth Mountain, California, as ski instructors, the IOC President requested that they be excluded from the next Winter Games in Sapporo, although the FIS was able to establish the existence of a 1952 agreement that allowed racers to give ski lessons to beginners. The fight escalated when another “blacklist” with 43 names was disclosed – among them 18 French and nine Austrians including Schranz. Brundage arranged for the list to be sent to the FIS and all 128 NOCs.21

“Olympic athlete” instead of “amateur”

At the 1969 Session in Dubrovnik, a joint commission consisting of IOC Members and NOC representatives chaired by Alexandru Siperco from Romania was set up to study the problem of amateurism. In their 1970 report, they suggested replacing the word “amateur” with “Olympic athlete” and rephrasing Rule 26. In parallel, the Standing Commission on Eligibility, headed by Australian traditionalist Hugh Weir, issued a report that contained a comprehensive reinterpretation of Rule 26.22

The FIS was now ready to approach the IOC. It accepted the suggestion that industry funding for advertising should no longer go to athletes but to national associations. As a result of the nature of the sport, it considered a loss of earnings of ten weeks or 150 working days to be necessary. Hodler spent several hours discussing these questions in London with the three IOC Vice-Presidents. Lord Killanin was then quoted saying that he had learned more over the course of those three days than in the preceding 18 years at the IOC.23

The result did not impress Brundage in any way. He reacted in combative fashion and despatched questionnaires to the IOC Members. First, he wanted to know if the ten athletes who took part in Mammoth Mountain should be admitted to the 1972 Winter Games. The second question was about approving skiers whose names and photos had been used to advertise sports equipment. The third involved “one athlete” – meaning Schranz – who publicly boasted of earning $50,000 to $60,000 a year. And fourth, he asked members if they would agree to the FIS’s request to have skiers not earn anything for five- and a-half months.

Brundage again proved himself to be a clever tactician. In order to avert the boycott threatened by the FIS, which would have also affected Nordic skiing, he adopted a conciliatory tone at the next IOC Executive Committee Meeting. He basically approved the newly formulated Rule 26, the wording of which had been expanded from 110 words to six times the amount. The first paragraph read:

To be eligible for participation in the Olympic Games, a competitor must observe the traditional Olympic spirit and ethic and have always participated in sport as an avocation without having received any remuneration for his participation.

His livelihood must not be derived from or be dependent upon income from sport and he must be engaged in a basic occupation to provide for his present and future. He must not be, or have been, a professional, semi-professional or so-called “non-amateur” in any sport. He must not have coached, taught or trained sports competitors for personal gain. Physical education teachers who instruct beginners are eligible.24

A footnote explained that the athlete was subject to the rules of his International Federation as well as the IOC directives:

a) He must not have directly or indirectly allowed his name, his photograph or his sports performance to be used individually for advertising purposes.
b) He may not write or sign any publication or allow any to be signed on his behalf, nor may he appear on radio or television during the Olympic Games in which he is participating without the permission of his chef de mission.

c) Advertising resulting from any equipment contracts by National Federations shall be strictly controlled by the International Federations, and copies of such contracts shall be lodged with and approved by the International Olympic Committee.

Brundage favoured postal voting in which the members should only answer with “yes” or “no”. A two-thirds majority was necessary but all 74 agreed to the rule change.

At the Luxembourg Session in September, however, Brundage’s long-time rival, Marquess of Exeter, and Bulgarian General Stoytchev asked for the issues to be discussed again. Brundage brusquely declined their request and pointed out that the matter had been under discussion for 40 years. “Although the rule may not perfect, it could not be discussed until after Munich.”

He also announced that the athletes would be closely monitored by a new Eligibility Commission, whose members came from countries where winter sports were not necessarily practised.

Brundage wanted a “victim”

At the end of May, the FIS Congress met in the Croatian town of Opatija. To appease Brundage, they decided to limit the size of lettering for company names on skis to 25 mm in height and 35 mm in length. They also adapted the eligibility rule to the IOC regulations. The national associations were instructed not to issue a licence to athletes who had taken part or participated in competitions for payment or who advertised products by their name and with an image. However, the interpretation of the decisions allowed for numerous exceptions.

Under pressure from the Organisation of Alpine Countries’ Ski Associations (OPA), which threatened to boycott Sapporo if even one ski racer was excluded, the FIS board began to look for alternative solutions. The candidates for the Alpine World Ski Championships in 1974, St. Moritz and Garmisch-Partenkirchen, agreed to step in as organisers in 1972.

The situation calmed down when Hodler described the Mammoth Mountain ski camp as “unclean”, whereupon Brundage pardoned the ten “sinners”. However, it was a mistake to interpret this gesture as an old man’s weakness. At the same time came a provocation with a decision to organise “tentative” open competitions in a parallel slalom between amateurs and professionals the next year.

In the meantime, IOC Technical Director Artur Takac had collected “incriminating” material against athletes in Lausanne, most of which were newspaper articles with limited evidence. The situation was different with a photo of the Ski World Cup in Val d’Isère, on which the first three skiers could be seen in the downhill race. In addition to the Jean Daniel Dätwyler of Switzerland, Austrians Schranz and Heini Messner displayed Kneissl’s new Super Star skis in front of the camera.

Takac contacted Austrian NOC (ÖOC) President, Dr. Heinz Pruckner, who sent explanations from the two skiers, in which they justified what had happened as being “usual procedures” at events. Schranz wrote that he had kept his skis in his hand to protect them from theft and damage. When asked about his earnings, he said that he had been paid a regular salary as an employee since 1956. He denied “pro forma employment” just as decisively as the sums mentioned in Sports Illustrated. When asked by a journalist to explain his previous
comment on earnings — “No, even more, or even double” — Schranz explained, “For everyone present it must have been clear that this was a sarcastic answer to a silly question.”

A few weeks before Sapporo, uncertainty spread. What was still allowed and what was now forbidden? As a precaution, the FIS issued an order at the beginning of December 1971 to cover up anything that looked like advertising. But it was only implemented with reluctance. At the downhill event in Kitzbühel, a telegram from Brundage arrived half an hour before the start, threatening any skier who wore the name “Evian” on their start number with exclusion from Winter Olympics. The Austrians made a stand against this because the event was officially called “Coup d’Evian”.

The West German NOC reacted cautiously. It nominated an Alpine skiing team, but “with reservations” because five skiers had appeared in a fruit juice advertisement for a TV magazine. The situation was different in France, where the dispute over the status of skiers escalated. When NOC President Jean de Beaumont was overruled, he resigned because he could not reconcile the role he had as IOC Vice-President with signing the registration forms for Sapporo.

The fronts hardened. At the first women’s World Cup race of the season held in St. Moritz, Hodler announced a ban on support personnel from wearing trademarks in the immediate vicinity of the course. In response, the ski companies said they would withdraw their equipment. At the same time, they looked for legally incontestable solutions. They formed pools and concluded contracts with the national associations, which, for a fee, gave each pool member the exclusive right to equip national teams.

At the beginning of January 1972, it was rumoured that around 40 Alpine and Nordic skiers would probably be excluded from the Games. But Hodler’s request that the names be announced as soon as possible was rejected by Brundage. He left that to the IOC Eligibility Commission, which at the earliest would only meet in Sapporo on 26 January. Brundage reacted calmly to a statement by Schranz that he would cause a greater scandal than that of the German Bundesliga affair (a match-fixing scandal in football) in the event of him being disqualified with “Let him!” Brundage made no secret of the fact that he wanted a victim.

Schranz was “the worst”

For Brundage, the issue of eligibility was the most important item on the agenda list at the IOC Session. Before that, however, the Executive Committee met. They initially refused to have France’s national hero Jean-Claude Killy to hand over the traditional flag of the Winter Games to the Mayor of Sapporo. This was usually the job of a representative of the previous host city. In Brundage’s eyes, Killy had disqualified himself from such an honour by turning professional.

Although Brundage said the number of racers suspected of violating the new eligibility rules was at least 30, the Weir Commission report only listed Schranz, whose exclusion was recommended. The reason was...
that considering the activity and influence of Karl Schranz in the field of international alpine ski competitions and the manner in which he has permitted the use of his name and picture in commercial advertising in recent years, he be declared ineligible to take part in the XI Olympic Winter Games in Sapporo, 1972.36

That is what Brundage wanted, since Schranz “was the worst and carried the most influence among the skiers”. He considered the approval of the IOC indispensable, “in order to retain its prestige throughout the world and not lead to dissipation of the authority of the IOC”.37

Before that, however, Hodler and the two Austrian representatives who signed Schranz’s registration form were summoned. At the hearing of NOC President Dr. Pruckner and Ski President Dr. Karl Heinz Klee,38 Brundage concentrated on a sentence that the ski association had included in the wording of the registration form, but which had subsequently been deleted by NOC General Secretary Edgar Fried.39 It referred to the time when an athlete made himself available for commercial advertising – before 5 April 1971, when the new rule was adopted, or “at any time”.

Vice-President Lord Killanin feared that the IOC would make Schranz a martyr by excluding him, but after the hearing, he was convinced that there was sufficient evidence to justify the sanction. The report of the Eligibility Commission was unanimously accepted, but the final decision was left to those attending the Session.

This began the same day in the Emerald Room of the Sapporo Park Hotel. Only 42 of 72 IOC Members were present, 23 of them had excused themselves, and 8 of them gave no reason for their absence. After Brundage’s opening speech, which dealt exclusively with the question of eligibility, a lengthy discussion began to the annoyance of the president, in which 15 members spoke up.

The sharpest words were uttered by the Norwegian Jan Staubo who accused Brundage of treating them like children. In a circular letter, Brundage had warned the NOCs not to lie when registering their participants. France’s former sports minister, Maurice Herzog, was of the opinion that the officials bore more responsibility than with the athletes, for whom he considered a strict expulsion in the event of a violation of rules as sufficient. Above all, Japan as the host country should not be punished by the affair.

Herzog received support from Hodler, the Lebanese Cheik Gemayel, and Tunisian Mohamed Mzali, while the Austrian industrialist Rudolf Nemetschke wondered why only Schranz was in the spotlight. The Russian Vitaly Smirnov did not find the evidence sufficient to disqualify Schranz. The Swiss Raymond Gafner feared actions of solidarity.

For the Finnish member Erick von Frenckell, the most important point to discuss was whether Rule 26 was actually correct. He received approval from General Stoytchev, who considered that the rule was to blame and not any organisations or individual athletes. Brundage received verbal backing solely from Agustin
Carlos Arroya from Ecuador as well as Weir and Cross, who not unexpectedly, stood by their report.

Afterwards, the report of the Eligibility Commission was approved by a margin of 28–14 in a secret ballot. Schranz was thus excluded from the Winter Games. Some conclusions can be drawn from the course of the discussion as to who presumably voted for and who voted against this.40

"Divine public anger" bore fruit

Schranz was told of his expulsion by journalist Heinz Prüller after his second training run for the downhill at Mount Eniwa. The 33-year-old found it hard to believe that his quest for Olympic glory was over. An hour later, he was taken care of by Kneissl and since he was obliged to leave the Olympic Village, Schranz was accommodated in Sapporo’s Grand Hotel.

From then on, matters escalated thick and fast. Austria’s Minister of Education, Fred Sinowatz, sent telegrams to the Alpine countries asking for solidarity. He requested the FIS not to simply ignore this but to do something. The Austrian NOC was asked to withdraw the entire ski team, whereupon the Presidium of the Ski Association decided to stand down after a vote of 8–0 with one abstention.

Meanwhile, in Austria, public anger was rising. Schranz received hundreds of telegrams in support. Newspapers enjoyed their largest sales since the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914. In some publications, Schranz was compared to the Tyrolean freedom fighter Andreas Hofer, executed 162 years earlier by the French.

“Divine public anger” fuelled by the media bore fruit. Each day the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) logged 400 calls by outraged citizens. Because Brundage was an American citizen, there were protests in front of the US Embassy in Vienna, where windows were smashed.

A bomb threat was received in Innsbruck and in front of Dr. Pruckner’s home, petrol was poured and lit. The NOC President was labelled the “greatest enemy of the people”, followed by IOC Honorary Member Manfred Mautner Markhof, who sent Brundage a telegram with the words “Greatest respect and sympathy for the last pillar of the Olympic Idea”.41 Even family members were attacked.

Meanwhile, the last act of the tragedy was staged in the auditorium of the press centre in Sapporo. The “Arlberg Lion”, as Schranz was called, read out a statement to a few hundred journalists, the main message of which was to ask those responsible to refrain from deciding to withdraw the Austrian ski team. Because I, as an individual, don’t want to be responsible for my country Austria, as a skiing country, being excluded from these Games.42

There was not a word about the “previously unknown facts of international sporting events”, which he wanted to reveal if he was excluded. He described the threat alone as “hasty thinking”.43
While the curtain came down, many breathed a sigh of relief that the Games could begin! The Austrians resumed their training runs that they had interrupted. Nobody thought of joining Schranz. “There was just one competitor less”, Schranz comments on this today. And what about Bernhard Russi, who had appeared in several photos looking like a “living advertising stand”? Silence — like everyone else, many of whom were also on the “blacklist”. As expected, Russi won downhill gold on the fifth day of the Games. Messner, who was charged with Schranz, earned bronze. That same afternoon, at 5:20 pm, Schranz flew back to Vienna via Frankfurt.

It was a time for legends. To this day, some people in Austria claim that the final straw was a photo of Schranz at a celebrity football game wearing a coffee company’s jersey. This was published in the January issue of the magazine profil and provided the “dagger” that Brundage needed.44 The Austrian NOC also supported this theory in 1972 when it asked the IOC to revise the non-admission.

The magazine only played a minor part, if any. As can be seen from IOC documents, Brundage had targeted Schranz much earlier because he regarded him as a ringleader in the “ski circus”. The question to be asked is rather to what extent the undiplomatic appearance of Schranz as a lone fighter contributed to this escalation.

One story circulated that Brundage read an English newspaper in which Schranz described him as “senile old fool”.45 Whether or not this is true, there is evidence that Schranz was not always well advised. Toni Sailer confided to some journalists that “this affair had an invaluable journalistic status”.46

Even today, Schranz assumes that the “henchmen” were among his own ranks at that time. In addition to jealous competitors, he thinks primarily of Edgar Fried in this regard. “Because how else would Brundage have got his hands on this magazine?”

The “welcoming spectacle”, as Schranz mockingly calls it today, was staged by his friend Gerd Bacher,50 who had flown to Frankfurt with several journalists. Impetus was given to the idea by none other than Austria’s Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, who on the night after the IOC decision had called the ORF general director to come up with something to welcome Schranz in a dignified fashion. Next morning, Sinowatz and Bacher discussed the details.51

From the airport, Schranz was driven to Vienna’s city centre in Sinowatz’s official car to be greeted along the route by cheering crowds. Some put the figure as high as 87,000. The convoy arrived at the Ballhausplatz at 1:52 pm, where Schranz was received by Kreisky in the Federal Chancellery. Schranz made an appearance before the excited crowd from the balcony and after three calls from the crowd, Kreisky, the social democratic chancellor joined Schranz at which the crowd chanted for “Karli” and “Kreisky”. This was an unusual fraternisation of “red” and “black”. Schranz, who is rooted in conservative Catholic Tyrol but also feels at home in liberal Vienna, later observed, “You have to be flexible.”

The historical parallels were obvious, and seized equally by politics and the media. Some were reminded of when Hitler announced the Third Reich’s “annexation” of Austria from a balcony on the nearby Heldenplatz on 15 March 1938 in front of 250,000.52 Schranz was sufficiently aware of the history and refused to land there by helicopter.

Seven days later, the excitement had subsided somewhat when the Olympic team itself landed in Schwechat where it was greeted by around 300 people. The “alpinists” had four medals in their luggage. The 18-year-old Annemarie Pröll had won two silver but had also received the most threatening and abusive letters in Sapporo.53 Figure skater Trixi Schuba was the only Austrian gold medallist and she too received abuse. “We don’t care about your false gold medal,” said one hateful message.54

On the same day, Schranz announced his retirement after 17 years of racing. The last impetus was given by FIS President Hodler, who had announced separate World Championships in the event that one of the athletes in Sapporo would be excluded. The end result of the World Cup series should be considered a “World Championship”. The reason for its cancellation was due to scheduling difficulties. Only now did Schranz understand how it felt to be alone in front of the door.

Although Schranz could have made a lot of money, he had no interest in a professional career like that of Killy, whom Mark McCormack had marketed after Grenoble. If they had raced against each other, each of them would...
Business as usual.
Karl Schranz at his hotel in St. Anton, where guests received in front of a wall full of celebrity photos.
Photo: Gabriela Hage

have definitely received $70,000, according to Schranz. “But the races would have been manipulated. Killy would have won once, I the next time.”

The “lone wolf”, another nickname for him, was man enough to market himself. Before Kneissl’s star went down in 1980, Schranz switched to Pepi Fischer. He transformed his guesthouse into a luxurious four-star hotel, where visitors are greeted in the foyer by a photo gallery showing Schranz with international luminaries, from politics to show business. They include Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom he taught to ski and with whom he speaks on phone every now and then. When Sochi made its bid for the 2014 Winter Olympics in 2007, Schranz supported the Black Sea city and not Salzburg.

Schranz did not court publicity. In 1976, he became head of St. Anton’s ski school, which he led strictly and trained 300 ski instructors per season. After ten years, he was replaced and his departure was not amicable. The community’s hotel industry also began to conspire against him. The reconciliation process did not begin until 1996, when he was the figurehead of a successful bid to bring the 2001 Alpine World Ski Championships to St. Anton. This fulfilled a lifelong dream. After this successful event, he was awarded honorary citizenship.

In his skiing career, Schranz won everything with the exception of an Olympic gold medal. Though this hurts him deeply, it is not Sapporo but Grenoble that causes him the most pain: “That was the worst thing!” Like many Austrians, he still believes in a “world conspiracy” against small Austria: “They would never have done that with Germany or France ...” Critics interpret this as a “small-country complex” and as an aftermath of a “trauma after being a great power”. Some point to the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy, and the union with Nazi Germany and defeat in the Second World War as contributory factors.55 Neue Zürcher Zeitung even spoke of an “insulted nation” that does not feel it is being taken seriously by the world.56 And that it needs sports to draw attention to itself.

Karl Schranz, aged 81, is one of the few to have attended all the Winter Olympics in various positions from 1956 to 2014. He fondly recalls Calgary in 1988, where he had the opportunity to speak to IOC President Samaranch, and asked Samaranch to “requalify” him.57 Schranz’s wish to participate in the IOC was not fulfilled, but it was enough for a symbolic gesture in the form of a 1972 Olympic commemoration medal, which Samaranch presented to him at the fringe of the ACNO General Assembly in Vienna. This “consolation prize” was not what Schranz had hoped for. After almost half a century, he is still waiting for his “vindication”.

Conclusion

In 1972, it was undoubtedly right to sanction Schranz according to the strict rules at the time. But it remains unclear why the IOC punished only him. From today’s perspective, his offences seem trivial.

If anything good came from this affair, it was that after the Brundage era, there was an increasing focus on changing the Olympic rules to suit the realities of modern times. In this respect, Schranz can even take credit for having “kicked open the door” in his own way. From then on, top sport became a profession that an athlete could more or less live on for a limited time. Nevertheless, the attractiveness of the Olympic Games has grown rather than the other way around. Would Schranz otherwise mourn his unattainable gold medal?

2 Johannes “Hannes” Schneider (1891–1955) worked as a ski instructor and actor. It had its premiere in 1920 in Das Wunder des Schneeschuh, which the German Arnold Fanck directed as with most of the films made afterwards. Other well-known films were Der heilige Rausch – neuer Wunder des Schneeschuh (1926) and SOS Eisberg (1935), each with Leni Riefenstahl in the leading role. Schneider organised the first Arlberg-Kandahar race in St. Anton in 1928 together with the British ski pioneer Arnold Lunn (1888–1974), which at that time was a combined slalom and downhill event.
3 The majority of quotes are taken from an interview that the author conducted on 4 September 2019 at a meeting with Karl Schranz in St. Anton.
4 profil, no. 1, January 1972, pp. 4–52.
5 Franz Kneissl (1921–1994) volunteered in 1938 in the Munich sport-inding goods company “Sport-Scheck” and then attended a technical school in Erlangen. His father with the same name, who was a wheelwright, had made the first Austrian skis in 1918 and applied for a patent for a multi-layer ski in 1938.
6 At the exchange rate at that time: 2000 shillings (ATS) were about USD 77.
7 According to Karl Schranz. Sailer also used the Kneissl skis in slalom races after he had previously used Kästle skis in the giant slalom.
8 Minutes, IOC Session Cortina d’Ampezzo 1956, pp. 18–19, Olympic Studies Centre (OSC). The topic of television was first discussed at the Session after the International Federations asked IOC President Brundage about their share in the profit of the television business.
after the 1955 Session, which really did not exist as yet. Brundage was not sure whether he should accept offers from US television companies that offered “astronomical sums” for the acquisition of rights. He was quoted as saying, “What shall we do? We have done without TV for 60 years and will certainly manage without them for 60 more years.” See: Wolf Isberg, The IOC Session 1956–1988, Vol. II (Lausanne: IOC, 1989), p. 5.


The share of the tourism industry in Austria in 2018 was 15.4% of the gross national product (GDP), making the country 4th in the world. WITC, March 2019.

10 Othmar Schneider (1928–2012), 1952 Olympic slalom champion and Olympic silver medalist in the downhill, had also started a dispute about the nomination before the Winter Games in Cortina, in which he was out of the race as a loser. He was only in the slalom, where he finished twelfth. He then became a professional. Since the mid-1960s, he had had a second career as a pistol marksman. However, since he worked as a coach, he was not admitted to the Austrian Olympic team in Moscow in 1980.

11 That was also the title of a book by Heinz Prüller, then one of the most influential Austrian ski and motorsports journalists. See: Ski total, Die Story vom alpinen Rennsport (Wien: Forum Verlag, 1972).

12 Official Report IX Olympic Games, Innsbruck 1964, pp. 88–89. For the first time, the ski companies were given the opportunity to rent rooms in the Olympic Village. However, the organising committee instructed them to refrain from any advertising or business activities. Accredited were: Fischer, Blizzard, Kästle, Kneissl, Head Ski (Innsbruck), Rossignol (Grenoble), Miller Ski Company (Orem, Utah) and Peteranel & Sohn (Möllbrücke, Carinthia).

13 Minutes, 68th IOC Session, Grenoble 1968, pp. 21–22. The committee with Van Karnebeek as Chairman also included the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, Eckart von Frentell (FIN), Alexandra Sipero (ROU) and Jan Staubo (NOR).


15 Minutes, 70th IOC Session, Annex 1.

16 Ibid, p. 3.

17 Ibid. The same amount was given by the US magazine Sports Illustrated, which, in a six-page article cited by Brundage at the Session, vividly described the practices of the “ski circus”, which the author believes had nothing longer to do with old-style amateur sports.

18 Ibid, p. 5.


20 The camp was financed by the US company Bob Lange, which presented the first plastic ski boots in 1962.


22 Minutes, 70th IOC Session, Annex 16 (Report of Standing Commission) and Annex 20 (Joint Commission II).


25 Ibid.


27 In addition to Hugh Weir (AUS) as Chairman, the Commission included Lance Cross (NZL), Abdel Mohamed Halim (SUD), Alexandra Sipero (ROU) and Ivar Vinti (DEN).


29 Organisation des fédérations de ski des pays alpins (OFA).


31 The cases of the Danish sailor Poul Burt Elvestrom, the Swedish discus thrower Ricky Bruch and the Swedish ice hockey players were examined. But also eleven well-known US athletes, including world record holder Lee Evans (100 m) and Jay Silvester (discus) were investigated. Dr. Heinz Prücker (1911–1979), who worked as section head in the Ministry of Education, was elected as IOC President in 1969. After the “Schanz affair”, he resigned.

32 Letter Dr. Prücker to IOC, 31 December 1971, including protocol on request Mr. Karl Schranz, Innsbruck, 23 December 1971.

33 HÖR ZU, no. 2, 1972. Among the five skiers was the then later two-time Olympic championRosit Mittermaier, who was temporarily suspended from training. An FIS rule allowed the national associations to advertise, but only in groups and without mentioning names.

34 Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 19 January 1972. At his birthday party on 6 June 1971, the president of the Offenbacher Kickers football club, Horst-Gregario Canellas, made manipulations in the West German football league involving 52 players and several officials and coaches publicly known.

35 Members of the IOC Executive Board were: President Avery Brundage (USA); Vice-Presidents: Lord Killanin (IRL), Count Jean de Beaumont (FRA), Herman van Karnebeek (NED); Members: Juan Antonio Samaranch (ESP), Sylvio de Magalhães Padilha (BRA), Prince Tsuneo Takeda (JPN), Excused: Sir Adetokunbo Ademola (NGR).


37 Ibid, p. 5.

38 Dr. Karl Heinz Klee (1930–2008), a lawyer from Innsbruck, was elected President of the Austrian Ski Association in 1966. He was the founder of the Austrian Ski Pool and Secretary-General of the Innsbruck Olympic Winter Games in 1976.

39 Edgar Fried (1894–1987) was a former middle-distance runner and Austrian champion (1915–16). During the Olympic Torch Relay in 1936, he handed over the flame at the Czechoslovak border. After Germany’s “Annexation” of Austria, the baptised Jew fled to Hungary, Yugoslavia and Greece. Arrested in 1943, he survived the Auschwitz, Sachsenhausen and Dachau concentration camps. After his liberation, he became Secretary-General of the Austrian NOC in 1946. He held his position until the end of the 1970 Olympic Games in Munich.


41 Ibid, p. 51. Manfred Mautner Markhof (1903–1988), who was a member of the IOC from 1947 to 1969, came from a Jewish-Bohemian family who was ennobled in 1892. He was only allowed to bear the title “Knight of Markhof” until 1919. After the Second World War, he rebuilt the well-known brewery in Schwechat, but by the time the “Schanz affair” took place, when Austria called for a boycott of its products, he had long since given up management.

42 Prüller, p. 40.

43 Ibid.


45 Minutes, 74th IOC Session, Sapporo, 30–31 January 1972, Annex 4, pp. 49–51. The later editor-in-chief of the Boulevard newspaper Kurier, Gerl Leitgeb (1939–2001), claimed that Schranz’s annual income in 1970 was 2.2 million shillings (approx. USD 96,000).

46 Madi, p. 104.

47 Ibid., p. 190.


49 Gerhard “Gerd” Bacher (1925–2015) was Director of the public service broadcaster ORF five times between 1967 and 1994. From 1974 to 1978, he was also media advisor to the then-to-be German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

50 Madi, pp. 115–116.


52 Prüller, p. 47. Trixi Schuba also received a parcel with excrement.

53 Tantner, p. 15.

54 Ibid., p. 19.

55 NZZ, 10 February 1972.

56 Letter Schranz to IOC President Samaranch, 22 April 1988, OSC.

Part 4

By David Wallechinsky

Calgary ’88: 16 Days of Glory is the second official film to be produced and directed (and written) by Bud Greenspan and narrated by his brother, David Perry. Taking a page from Alfred Hitchcock, there is a brief shot of Greenspan passing in front of the camera during coverage of the men’s figure skating final.

Greenspan chooses to focus on nine stories. Despite the film being 3 hours and 22 minutes long, there is no coverage of ice hockey, luge, or biathlon, other than a few unnarrated action shots.

The first highlighted athlete is Canadian speed skater Gaétan Boucher. Boucher had earned a silver medal at the 1980 Lake Placid Games and two gold medals and one bronze medal at the 1984 Sarajevo Olympics. As with Keiichi Suzuki in the 1972 Sapporo film, we see a successful speed skater at the end of his career. With Boucher, much of the coverage is seen from the point-of-view of his parents.

Swedish cross-country skier Gunde Svan won four medals – two gold, one silver and one bronze – at the 1984 Sarajevo Olympics. He tells the camera that “If I don’t win, it feels lousy.” So, it’s disappointing for him when he begins his Calgary competitions by placing only 13th in the 30-kilometre race and 10th at 15 kilometres. There is a lovely juxtaposition of photographs of 13-year-old Svan posing with Bill Koch, the American skier, and then years later, towering over Koch in another photo. Koch explains that at this point in the Calgary Games, the Swedes are losing to Soviet skiers because the Soviets trained at home at the same altitude they would face at the 1988 Winter Olympics, while the Swedes followed the World Cup circuit. But the Swedes recover and defeat the Soviet team in the 4x10-kilometre relay, and Svan also wins the 50-kilometre race.

Greenspan includes a segment about Finnish star Matti Nykänen, the only ski jumper to earn five Olympic medals. He talks about Nykänen’s personal problems, but concludes with a happy ending, as Nykänen becomes a father and is given a hero’s welcome back in Finland. In the real world, Nykänen’s problems with alcohol and violence only got worse, and he eventually went to prison.

The film also shows 1980 downhill champion Leonhard Stock as he completes his run and sits in third place only to have the last medal contender, Franck Piccard, better Stock’s time and bump him off the medal podium. Greenspan calls attention to an unusual coincidence in this event. In the 1968 men’s downhill, Guy Périllat of France skied first and watched as his time held up until the 14th skier, his compatriot Jean-Claude Killy, beat his time. Twenty years later, Peter Müller of Switzerland skis first and watches his time hold up until his compatriot, Pirmin Zurbriggen, skiing 14th, better his time.

Greenspan captures three particularly interesting statements. After US figure skater Debi Thomas makes mistakes in her free skate and drops from first to third, a reporter asks her about her future. Thomas replies,
“There is no future. But I’ll survive.” She did become the first black athlete to earn a medal at the Winter Olympics.

The long section about women’s speed skating zeroes in on East German Karin Kania [née Enke], the first speed skater to earn eight career Olympic medals, and Yvonne van Gennip of the Netherlands, who would win three gold medals and set two world records. Kania is deeply disappointed to come away without a gold medal, losing to teammate Christa Rothenburger in the 1,000 metres by just five one-hundredths of a second and the 1,500 metres to van Gennip by fourteen one-hundredths of a second. But she says of van Gennip, “she is a peaceful person, quiet and modest.”

For the bobsleigh events, Greenspan focuses on East German Dietmar Schauerhammer. At the last Winter Olympics in 1984, Schauerhammer had teamed with driver Wolfgang Hoppe to win both the two-man and four-man events. During the pre–Olympic season before the 1988 Calgary Games, Hoppe was injured and had to start inside the sled while Schauerhammer pushed off for both of them. Hoppe recovers in time for the Olympics, but this extra effort causes Schauerhammer to sustain a knee injury. In Calgary, Schauerhammer tells Hoppe it would be better if someone replaces him. But when it comes time for the four-man contest, Hoppe insists that Schauerhammer join him in the sled. When they miss the gold medals by just seven one-hundredths of a second as a result of their slower push times by sixteen hundredths of a second over four runs combined, Hoppe tells Schauerhammer, “It is better to win silver with you on the team, than to win gold without you.”

The highlight of Calgary ’88: 16 Days of Glory is Greenspan’s detailed exposition of the men’s figure skating duel between Brian Boitano of the United States and Brian Orser of Canada, who were close friends. The footage of the two Brians not just performing, but also preparing themselves psychologically backstage is supplemented with post-Olympics interviews with both Orser and Boitano, as well as with their coaches. The viewer gets an intimate feel for the pre–performance tension, as both Brians have to deal with being followed everywhere by cameras as they try to concentrate. In the end, Boitano wins an unusually close vote that is decided by a tie-breaker rule.

1988—Seoul

Four different official films were produced for the 1988 Seoul Olympics, three of which are included in the IOC/ Criterion set.

Seoul 1988, directed by Lee Kwang-soo, is a straightforward documentary that tries to cover at least one winner in as many sports as possible. There are no interviews, but the narrator adds many upbeat comments about the Olympic Movement. The film begins with images of athletes of different nations and races dancing at the Opening Ceremony before shifting to the beginning of the Ceremony, which begins outside the stadium on the Han River. When the Olympic flame
is brought into the stadium by an elderly man, he is identified as Sohn Kee-chung, winner of the 1936 marathon. Not mentioned is Sohn’s story, which was well-known to Koreans. In 1936, Korea was occupied by Japan. Sohn and his Korean teammate, Nam Sung-yong, who earned the bronze medal, were forced to use Japanese names. At the medal ceremony, they bowed their heads during the playing of the Japanese national anthem. Fifty-two years later, Sohn, now 76 years old, carries the torch into the stadium, jumping up and down as he does so. One nice ceremonial touch is the appearance of the Olympic mascots from previous Olympics, including the boycotted Moscow and Los Angeles Games.

The first competition shown is the men’s 100 metres, which begins with a shot of bare-chested Ben Johnson of Canada smiling at the camera. The narrator then says that “The Olympics are based on rules and integrity.” We watch Johnson cross the finish line in first place, but then learn that he has been disqualified and we see him at the airport, leaving the country with his “reputation tarnished.”

During the segment on American sprinter Florence Griffith-Joyner, who won three gold medals, we are told that she spent four minutes running and fifteen minutes on her make-up. As a point of information, she actually spent about three minutes 21 seconds running. Her exact make-up time is not recorded.

Several more athletics events are covered, as are several swimming finals. For the men’s 400-metre individual medley, the narrator reminds us that the winner, Tamás Darnyi of Hungary, is blind in one eye, and that the silver medal winner, Dave Wharton of the United States, is deaf. East German swimmer Kristin Otto is hailed for winning six gold medals. Six years later, it was revealed that Otto’s use of prohibited substances had caused her to have a testosterone to epitestosterone ratio of 17:1. At the time, the acceptable ratio for men was 4:1.

Naturally, South Korean victories are highlighted. When the South Korean women win the handball final, we are informed that this is South Korea’s first victory in a “ball sport.”

During an interlude showing athletes from different nations interacting in the Olympic Village, the narrator notes that “One god is all anyone needs in life, but with friends, the more the better.”

For the first time, wheelchair racing is shown in an Olympic film. (It was first included as a demonstration event in 1984.) During the men’s race, Robert Figl of West Germany crashes. Yoo Hee-sang of South Korea, racing with his head down, smashes into him and also falls. They rise, hold each other by the shoulder and continue.

We are given statistics relating to the Games. There are two of particular interest. Athletes from Asia, Africa, and South America earn only 13% of the gold medals, even though they account for 83% of the world’s population. And none of the 237 medal events started more than five minutes late.

The film engages in a couple instances of historical whitewashing. For example, the narrator twice refers to the 1988 Seoul Olympics as boycott-free. Actually, four countries did boycott: North Korea, Cuba, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua.

Before returning to images of the Closing Ceremony, the film concludes with montages of medal ceremonies and athletes at the moment of victory, with some injured athletes thrown in.

The second 1988 Seoul film, *Hand in Hand*, is directed by Im Kwon-tae, a well-known filmmaker who had, coincidentally, already directed 88 films. This is a fascinating film that addresses the political background of the Games and provides some context to the sports that are included in the Olympics. It begins with images of the barbed wire fence dividing South Korea and North Korea, while the narrator reminds us that the Olympics is the world’s biggest peace festival. There is an interview with an Australian veteran who fought in the Korean War in 1950–1951 and is now a journalist covering the 1988 Olympics. This veteran/journalist is none other than Harry Gordon, the second recipient of the highest award of the International Society of Olympic Historians (ISOH), the Lifetime Achievement Award.

During the Parade of Nations at the Opening Ceremony, Im provides a running list of those nations that boycotted the 1980 and 1984 Olympics. The narrator says, “The Olympics, at times, have been tainted by the political interests of the powerful countries going against the people’s desire to overcome ideological differences by participating in games as one.” There follows a list of

The film *Hand in Hand* includes a brief interview with veteran Australian journalist Harry Gordon, who reported on the Seoul Games. More than three decades earlier, he had fought in the Korean War. In 2007, the International Society of Olympic Historians (ISOH) awarded Gordon its highest distinction, the Lifetime Achievement Award.
nations that refused to boycott the Moscow Olympics and the Los Angeles Olympics.

A colourful flyover segues into airplanes dropping bombs during the Korean War and back to parachutists descending onto the field at the Opening Ceremony.

In a section titled “From War to Peace” Im calls attention to those Olympic sports that have their origins in war: javelin throwing, archery, fencing, shooting, and taekwondo. Later in the film, he adds the high jump. He might as well have added modern pentathlon, wrestling, and boxing.

Im continues the theme of superpower hostilities by presenting the semi-final men’s basketball match between the Soviet Union and the United States, their first encounter since the controversial 1972 final. The Soviets win the match 82–76, thanks in great part to the rebounding and scoring skills of Arvidas Sabonis. Im points out that Sabonis was able to compete because of medical treatment he received in the United States for an Achilles tendon rupture. He then quotes US coach John Thompson as saying, “To treat Sabonis is to profit the enemy.”

There are some noteworthy additions to the film. There is a montage of false starts in swimming and track. The section on Ben Johnson’s doping disqualification is followed by video of three weightlifters who lost their medals for doping violations. The Kenyan domination of men’s running events from 800 metres to 5,000 metres is referred to as the “Sudden Wind”. In Lee Kwang-soo’s film he refers to the same phenomenon as “a Kenyan storm raged”.

The narrator calls cycling “a dull sport”. During the match sprint, in which the contestants slow down and even stop in order to gain a strategic advantage, Im cuts to children in the stands sleeping.

Table tennis, included in the Olympic programme for the first time, is dominated by China and South Korea to such an extent that the men’s final is contested by two South Koreans and the women’s final by two Chinese. Consequently, the coaches’ chairs remain empty as the South Korean and Chinese coaches, respectively, watch from the stands. The narrator asks if the two countries’ dominance in table tennis might be due to their tradition of using chopsticks.

In his coverage of boxing, Im incorrectly claims that boxing was not part of the ancient Olympics. He shows several knockouts and then focuses on the controversial second round match between Byun Jong-ii of South Korea and Aleksandar Khristov of Bulgaria. New Zealand referee Keith Walker repeatedly warns Byun against head butting and finally penalises him two points, which gives the victory to Khristov. South Korean boxing officials and security guards jump into the ring and physically assault Walker. Im gives this section the title “The Limits of Human Judgment”. It is unclear whether he is referring to the referee penalizing Byun or to the violent attacks by South Koreans against him. Byun then stages a sit-down strike in the ring, which, although it is not mentioned in the film, lasted 67 minutes, breaking the Olympic sit-down protest record of 51 minutes set by another South Korean boxer, Choh Dong-kih, in 1964.

Im also calls attention to Sheila Wager of the United States, the first woman to referee an Olympic wrestling match.

Among the other section titles are “Feast for Eyes?” for rhythmic gymnastics and “Fairies Under the Moonlight” for synchronised swimming.

We are shown a montage of medal ceremonies for which the athletes from a single nation swept the medals.

Im’s coverage of the marathon includes an interview with 48-year-old Lourdes Klitzkie of Guam, who took up marathon running to counter boredom. Of the 64 women who completed the marathon course, Klitzkie placed 63rd… ahead of another runner from Guam. Im also shows us an African male runner forced to drop out and being led to an ambulance. When the doors open, he is greeted with smiles by other runners who were also unable to complete the course because of injury or heat fatigue.

The third film from Seoul 1988, Beyond All Barriers, directed by Lee Ji-won, deals with the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, with a montage of seven minutes of competition coverage thrown in. There is good reason why the film devotes 55 minutes to the Opening Ceremony: it is an exceptional display, spectacular, but with a narrative that goes beyond the history of Korea to include its spiritual traditions, especially as they relate to the best of Olympic values.
Unlike other Opening Ceremonies, the Seoul ceremony begins outside the stadium, on the Han River, with 400 boats leaving a shipyard in the direction of the stadium. Inside the stadium, 1,200 drummers enter and, with the spirits of ancestors, cleanse the area before the formal Ceremony begins. Included is a half-ton yonggo barrel drum. Drums, we are told, mimic the sounds of the human heart.

The theme of East meeting West in peace is repeated throughout both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. In the Opening, 44 Korean fairies dance with 44 Greek goddesses. In the Closing, Korean Samgo-Mu dancers join with Western rhythmic gymnasts.

The Olympic cauldron is lit by three people – a teacher, an art student, and a marathon runner – who symbolise academics, arts, and sports. Not discussed is the fact that upon its lighting, the Olympic flame incinerated several white doves.

We do learn that the 76 parachutists shown in Im Kwon-taek’s Hand in Hand as a counterpoint to bombs dropping, represent a blessing from God. Various dance and music presentations symbolise eras of conflict and discord being broken up and replaced by a harmonious future. We are told that on this very spot, less than 40 years earlier, people were killed in warfare. Now, the same spot hosts the Olympics, the symbol of peace. This message is emphasised by the singing of Hand in Hand, one of the better Olympic theme songs.

The Closing Ceremony in the stadium concludes with symbolic boats heading home, while dances and prayers wish everyone safe journeys home.

The fourth 1988 Summer Olympics film, The World to Seoul, directed by Lee Chi-wan, is a 67-minute compilation of highlights from the other three films. It is compact and efficient, with emphasis on athletics (track and field). The film is in Korean without subtitles. The Seoul official films are the first that the IOC presents in their original format without restoration.

1992 – Albertville

One Light, One World, the official film of the Albertville Winter Olympics, was directed by Americans Joe Jay Jalbert and R. Douglas Copsey. Jalbert got his start in the cinema world working as a technical director, stunt double, and cameraman for the 1969 ski drama Downhill Racer. He produced the official film for the 1984 Sarajevo Olympics.

For this film, Jalbert and Copsey use a mixture of techniques from other official films. Like Bud Greenspan, they interview various athletes. However, the questions and answers are more superficial than the ones in Greenspan’s Olympics films. Commentary about the philosophy and benefits of the Olympic Movement also come off as platitudinous. Jalbert and Copsey do give us an overview of events in different sports, with narration providing descriptions of the favourites and their pre-Olympic records, and they explain some rules and strategies for uninitiated viewers.

Jean-Claude Killy explains how he and politician Michel Barnier, while eating fondue in 1981, decided that the best way to develop infrastructure in the Savoie region would be to lure the Winter Olympics to Albertville and the surrounding ski resorts. Commentary from Killy is inserted throughout the film. Most of it consists of more platitudes, but when Killy talks about the events themselves, his spirit shows, and his insights are useful. The film is also augmented by audio of CBS-TV’s coverage of specific ski runs and other events.
Athletes who are featured in post–Olympic interviews include French Alpine skier Franck Piccard, who earns the downhill silver medal despite starting from the 23rd spot; Austrian luge sisters Doris and Angelika Neuner, who won the gold and silver medals; Italian Alpine champion Alberto Tomba; and several US athletes, including speed skater Bonnie Blair, Alpine skier Diann Roffe, mogul skier Donna Weinbrecht, and figure skaters Kristy Yamaguchi and Nancy Kerrigan.

There is also a brief section in which Italian cross–country skier Stefania Belmondo and US figure skater Paul Wylie thank God and the power of prayer.

**1992 – Barcelona**

The official film of the Barcelona Olympics, *Marathon*, was directed by Carlos Saura, a noted, prize-winning Spanish filmmaker who already had a couple dozen feature films to his credit. It is an exceptionally well–made film, highlighted by a plethora of slow–motion close–ups of athletes preparing, straining during competition, crossing the finish line in celebration, experiencing satisfaction, disappointment, and exhaustion. This is augmented by a score by Alejandro Massó that attempts to match each sport or event. There is no narration, but the athletes are often identified by the stadium scoreboard or the announcer.

For a film with such class, it actually gets off to an unfortunate start, with Freddie Mercury screeching his song *Barcelona*. During the Opening Ceremony performances, Saura emphasizes the least appealing segment, which, using sharp objects and ominous music, portrays Herakles fighting sea monsters. A rare caption claims that Herakles founded both the Olympic Games and Barcelona, although in both cases this is just one of many versions of the founding of the Games and the city.

Once the Olympic Cauldron is lit as an archer’s flaming arrow passes over it, all is well with the film. Saura concentrates completely on the running events. He frames the film with the running of the men’s marathon, beginning his competition coverage with the start of the race, checking in five times during the race, and concluding with the finish. In fact, the film is two hours and ten minutes long, just three minutes shy of the marathon’s two hours and ten minutes. Just two minutes shy of the marathon, as Koichi Morishita of Japan to win the gold medal.

When the four runners from the United States win the 4x100-metre relay, they call over their two teammates who ran in the qualifying heat, but not in the final, and pose for photos with them. When Dieter Baumann of Germany, in fifth place entering the final curve, comes from behind to win the 5,000 metres, he celebrates by doing a somersault.

Non–running events are represented by beautiful cinematography and music. For the throwing events, Saura gives us a montage of discus throwers and shot putters, both men and women, yelling and grunting as they release their implements. For weightlifting, he contrasts the victors of the lightest and heaviest weight divisions, Ivan Ivanov of Bulgaria and Belarussian Aleksandr Kurlovich. And, a rarity in Olympic official films, Saura manages to show the cross–country portion of equestrian three–day event without including a single horse falling in the water.

Finally, we arrive at the dramatic finish of the men’s marathon. Hwang Yeong-jo of South Korea pulls away from Koichi Morishita of Japan to win the gold medal. Hwang has enough energy to sprint at the end and wave to the crowd, but as soon as he crosses the finish line, he collapses face first and is carried away on a stretcher. He recovered in time for the medal ceremony. The last place, but, unlike nine of the other runners, she completes the course.

When they learn that they earned bronze medals, their joyful celebration is simply uplifting. Indeed, Ken Geiger’s iconic photo of the Nigerian women at the moment of realisation earned him a Pulitzer Prize.

Christine Bakombo of Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) limps across the finish line of the marathon in last place, but, unlike nine of the other runners, she is not the only one in need of a stretcher. We follow the Nigerian team members wait anxiously for the results to be announced on the scoreboard. When they learn that they earned bronze medals, their joyful celebration is simply uplifting. Indeed, Ken Geiger’s iconic photo of the Nigerian women at the moment of realisation earned him a Pulitzer Prize.

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travails of defending bronze medal winner Ahmed Saleh of Djibouti, who incurs some sort of injury to his left arm early in the race, but struggles on to the finish to be met by the Red Cross. We also see Benjamin Keleketu of Botswana running around the track until an official runs up to him and explains that Keleketu has already crossed the finish line.

1994 – Lillehammer

For the three-and-a-half hour *Lillehammer ’94: 16 Days of Glory*, Bud Greenspan zeroes in on nine stories, although he does briefly cover a few other events. There are two themes that run through the film. The first is an attempt to deal with the fact that Sarajevo, the host of the 1984 Winter Olympics, was currently under siege by the Serbian secessionist army. The day of the Opening Ceremony, 12 February 1994, was the first day in more than two years that no one in Sarajevo was killed. At the Opening Ceremony, IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch asks for a moment of silence for the people of Sarajevo. Figure skater Katarina Witt dedicates her free skate programme, performed to the Pete Seeger anti-war song *Where Have All the Flowers Gone?* to the citizens of Sarajevo. Norwegian speed skating champion Johann Olav Koss donates part of his prize money to Olympic Aid (now called Right to Play), which sought to help children in Eritrea, Sarajevo, and elsewhere.

The other recurring theme is the difficulties athletes face when dealing with the media. When Espen Bredesen, the Norwegian ski jump champion, while adjusting to the new V-style technique, placed last in the normal hill event at the Albertville Olympics and next-to-last on the large hill, Norwegian journalists mocked him by calling him “Espen the Eagle” after Eddie Edwards, known as Eddie the Eagle, who had finished way behind all other jumpers at the 1988 Winter Games.

US speed skater Dan Jansen first took part in the Olympics in 1984 when he was 18 years old. Hoping for a top ten finish, he was pleased with himself when he took fourth place in the 500 metres event. But when he returned to the United States, he was surprised to learn “what the press does with medals” and that what he had considered a success was not reported as such back home.

Italian Alpine star Alberto Tomba complains that his fun-filled life ceased to be so much fun when the media covered every one of his misdeeds and added some that he hadn’t committed. And then there are the repeated shots of athletes being followed by cameramen (including Greenspan’s) recording their emotions in close-up.

Greenspan begins his in-depth coverage with the three ski jump events, concentrating on Bredesen and German Jens Weiβflog, who had won the normal hill at the 1984 Olympics, but had experienced roller coaster results since then. In the large hill event, Bredesen takes the lead after the first jump, but Weiβflog comes from behind with a big second jump to outpoint Bredesen for the gold medal. The team jump event is a battle between Japan and Germany. Before the final jumps, with Japan in the lead, Weiβflog, the last German jumper, turns to Japan’s final jumper, Masahiko Harada, and congratulates him on Japan’s imminent victory. Harada then mistimes his jump and hands the victory to Germany.
The next day, Weißflog finds himself turned into a villain in the media for his unsportsmanlike comment to Harada. After their disappointment, the Japanese shrug it off and Harada explains that he and his teammates decided to mock themselves by stumbling onto the platform at the Medal Ceremony, a charming moment that Greenspan shows us. In the final ski jump event, we see a possibly rattled Weißflog finish out of the medals, while Bredesen earns the gold medal, completing a last-to-first comeback.

Despite the massive media coverage of the case of thugs attacking Nancy Kerrigan on behalf of American rival Tonya Harding, Greenspan, while not ignoring the controversy, concentrates on the story of the eventual winner of the women’s figure skating event, Ukrainian 16-year-old Oksana Baiul. The best part of the coverage comes when coach Galina Zmievskaya tells why she initially didn’t want to coach Baiul after her coach of nine years moved to Canada. Zmievskaya says that she prefers to coach a skater from the beginning. “It’s like cooking borsch,” she explains, “without outside help”.

The segment on women’s cross-country skiing highlights the friendly rivalry between Lyubov Yegorova of Russia and Manuela Di Centa of Italy, who, between them, won all five gold medals out of the medals at the Lillehammer Games. Di Centa praises Yegorova as “my friend forever, as gracious in defeat as she is in victory”. Three years after the film was made, Yegorova was banned for two years for a doping violation, but returned to compete in the 2002 Olympics.

Dan Jansen’s story was well-known in the United States because of his Olympic frustrations, particularly when he fell twice at the 1988 Calgary Games after learning of his sister’s death three hours before his first race. He was also famous in Norway, but more for his speed skating successes. Although he had entered the 1988 and 1992 Olympics as the favourite in both the 500 and 1,000, he came to Lillehammer (actually Hamar) without ever having won an Olympic medal. A favourite again in the 500, he slips and places eighth. In an interview filmed after the 1994 Olympics, Jansen explains that he never liked the 1,000. So his sports psychologist convinced him to paste messages around his home that read, “I love the 1000.” In Hamar, he wins the 1,000 and sets a world record. This emotional chain of events is seen through the eyes of Jansen’s wife, Robin, who, when her husband skates poorly in the 500, leaves the stands to avoid the cameras showing her crying. Alas, this highlighted marriage, like those of other US Olympic champions featured in official films (Bruce Jenner and Edwin Moses), ended in divorce just a few years later.

The film also includes segments on the men’s cross-country relay, the four-man bobsleigh, Bonnie Blair, and Alberto’s Tomba’s surprising silver medal in the slalom after standing in only twelfth place after the first run.

One of the nicest profiles is of cross-country skier Vladimir Smirnov representing Kazakhstan. Smirnov was good friends with Norwegian stars Vegard Ulvang and Bjørn Dæhlie, and Norwegians considered him an adopted Norwegian. We watch footage of the finish of the pursuit race at the 1993 World Championships, where Ulvang’s body crosses the finish line just ahead of Dæhlie. However, the victory was given to Dæhlie because his foot crossed the electronic beam ahead of Smirnov. In an interview, Smirnov explains that Norwegians flooded him with letters, and several Norwegian children sent him homemade gold medals. So when Smirnov, competing in the twelfth race of his Olympic career, wins the 50-kilometre race, the final event of the Lillehammer Olympics, the Norwegian fans hail his victory with pleasure.
Another of Bud Greenspan’s three-and-a-half-hour made-for-TV films, Atlanta’s Olympic Glory focuses on 12 stories and 15 athletes.

The highlight of the film is the superb 23-minute portrayal of the friendly rivalry in the weightlifting featherweight division between Naim Süleymanoğlu of Turkey, who had defected from Bulgaria in 1986, and Valerios Leonidis, who had left Russia for Greece in 1991. Süleymanoğlu is attempting to become the first weightlifter to win three gold medals. Leonidis had been gradually catching up with Süleymanoğlu’s lift total, but lost anyway because he weighed more than his rival (by 200 grams). In Atlanta, however, it was Leonidis who had the lower bodyweight, so that if there was another tie, it would be Leonidas who would win. Greenspan shows us this epic battle from several perspectives, while narrator Will Lyman explains the strategy behind each lift. Both lifters are shown not just performing, but also waiting to perform. We see the excitement and emotions of their respective trainers, not just performing, but also waiting to perform. We see the strategy behind each lift. Both lifters are shown not just performing, but also waiting to perform.

Another noteworthy segment is the sprint swimming rivalry between Alexander Popov of Russia and Gary Hall Jr. of the United States, which Popov describes as a “cold war.” Hall, for his part, refers to Popov as “arrogant” and “a necessary evil”. Popov defeats Hall in both individual events, while Hall takes home two gold medals in the relays. They both vow to return for the 2000 Olympics. In fact, they both did, and then took part again in the 2004 Games.

Similarly, British rower Steven Redgrave, after earning a gold medal in his fourth consecutive Olympics, returned in 2000 despite having told reporters after his 1996 victory, “If you ever see me anywhere near a boat, shoot me.” He won again at the Sydney Olympics.

Other featured athletes include Carl Lewis, Michael Johnson, Justin Huish, Jeannie Longo, Jackie Joyner-Kersee, Ghada Shouaa, and Josia Thugmane. As usual, Greenspan introduces us to the families of some of the athletes. Two of these family stories stand out.

Chinese gymnast Donghua Li was injured while training for the 1988 Olympics and was unable to compete. That year, he met a Swiss woman, Esperanza Friedli, married her, moved to Switzerland and applied for Swiss citizenship. This took five years, so he also missed the 1992 Olympics. At 29, the oldest gymnast at the Atlanta Games, Li wins the gold medal on the pommel horse while Esperanza watches. Li says of his wife, “Half of my Olympic gold medal belongs to her.” In a familiar story, eight years after his victory and the release of the film, the couple divorced.

US sprinter Inger Miller’s story is memorable simply because her support team seem like nice people. She is trained by her father, Lennox Miller, who earned medals at 100 metres in both 1968 and 1972, and by her godfather, Donald Quarrie, who competed at four Olympics, was Olympic champion at 200 metres in 1976 and added more medals in 1980 and 1984. When Inger places fourth in the 200 metres in Atlanta, her parents and Quarrie are there to praise her. We see her earn a gold medal in the relay.

The most unsettling of Greenspan’s profiles is that of Irish swimmer Michelle Smith, who won three gold medals and one bronze medal. Greenspan does not hesitate to call attention to the controversies involving Smith, most notably the suspicions of doping as a result of the huge improvement in her times late in her career, after she married and came under the tutelage of Dutch discus thrower and shot putter Erik de Bruin, who had been banned from competition after failing a doping test. Greenspan does not pass judgment and shows her receiving a hero’s welcome back in Ireland. One month after the film’s release, drug testers showed up at the home of Michelle and Erik de Bruin. After much haggling, Smith produced a urine sample that contained a level of alcohol that would be fatal if consumed by a human, much less left over in her urine. She was banned for four years for tampering with her urine sample and never competed again.

Outside of the athletic competitions, the Atlanta Games are best known for the fatal bombing carried out by an anti-abortion, anti-homosexual Christian terrorist. The incident is alluded to in the coverage of Steven Redgrave and his partner, Matthew Pinsent, because their event, the coxless pairs, was the first final to be held after the bombing.
Maccabi Soldiers:
Yosef Yekutieli, Frederick Kisch, and Mandate Palestine’s Connections to the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games

By San Charles Haddad, Grand Valley State University, Seidman College of Business

NB: For a more complete disclosure of challenges and limitations of the research see the Preface (pp. 21–22) and Postscript and Acknowledgements (pp. 238–245) of Haddad, San Charles. The File: Origins of the Munich Massacre. New York, NY; Nashville, TN: Post Hill Press, 2020. Readers may send their reactions to this article to TheFile1936@outlook.com, an account established to receive reactions to the book’s narratives. No replies will be sent from this email address.

The opinions that I express in this article are my own and do not represent the opinions of any Olympic or other organization, including the archives or individuals that provided textual or photographic material for it. The views or opinions expressed in this article, and the context in which the textual sources and images used, do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of, nor imply approval or endorsement by, any of the organizations from which they were sourced.

My father grew up in a Lutheran Palestinian home in the German Colony in Jerusalem. This colony (one of several German colonies in Ottoman and Mandate Palestine) was the heart of Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP/Nazi) activity in the Holy City. Many of the characters in my upcoming book were household names from my childhood. I never knew nor suspected that some had joined the NSDAP. So, you can imagine my surprise and dismay to find myself the author of a narrative that documents the efforts of Palestinian Nazis to derail cooperation in sport between Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the lead-up to the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The rapidity and effectiveness of this Nazi maneuvering is startling. The opacity of some of the archival records is deeply troubling yet highly motivating, but also capable of generating great discomfort. The Games of the XI Olympiad in Berlin are some of the most studied ever yet seem to retain some of the last century’s most closely guarded sport secrets.

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Foreword

The Israel–Palestine Olympic file is one of the most polemical in the history of the Olympic Movement. It has also been one of the most dangerous, as evidenced by the Munich Massacre. In 1972, the Palestinian militant faction Black September took eleven members of the Israeli Olympic delegation hostage in the Olympic Village, murdering two in the struggle that ensued during the break-in. During the hostage crisis, nine other Israelis, a West German policeman, and several of the Palestinian attackers died at Fürstenfeldbruck Air Base, where the final standoff with Black September took place.

I began my involvement with the Palestinian Olympic file in 1998. I was a young hopeful and (somewhat) promising oarsman who decided to train for the Sydney Olympics as a representative of Palestine. The signing of the Declaration of Principles (the Oslo I Accord) between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had set the stage for such an opportunity, even though Palestine had only been admitted to the Olympic family five years earlier. The International Rowing Federation (FISA) informed me that no Palestinian federation existed, so it fell upon me to form one. I founded and presided over (for the next eleven years) the Palestinian Rowing Federation (PRF).

My tenure as president of the PRF required a period of service in the Gaza Strip between 2002 and 2004. At the Palestinian Olympic Committee (POC), I became close with the secretary general, Omar Shuweikeh (Abu Hussein), who seemed to me a proponent of the reform-minded camp trying to meet stakeholders’ concerns. On several occasions, POC staff mentioned to me both the Munich attack and the existence of a Palestine Olympic Committee in the 1930s. Their remarks seemed to correlate these two issues, despite their being divided in history by decades. (Munich had become a point of conversation because ABC Sports had reached out to the POC through me for interviews during the making of its 2002 Emmy Award–winning documentary Our Greatest Hopes, Our Worst Fears.)

On the one hand, I observed in remarks about Munich a strong desire to forget the whole affair. Some colleagues argued that it made Palestinians look bad. However, in tandem I would hear repeated justifications for the
“Munich Operation,” because “the Jews” had stolen the Olympic file from Palestine. I was even told that the intended target of the attack was two-fold: strike the Israelis and the IOC for decisions they made during the Mandate. Such remarks about a root cause for the attack seem, to this day, almost sensational.3

Over the two years that I came to know him, Abu Hussein cautioned me not to believe arguments that Munich was a success. He also told me that the history of the POC repeated around the office was not accurate. I asked him to be more specific about the history. He breathed in deeply and just replied that it was, “very difficult.” But regarding Munich he was clear: it was an act that had a lot of unintended consequences, for which everyone involved paid a big price—the IOC, Israel, and the Palestinians. It seemed to me that Abu Hussein felt sincerely that the attack had done a lot of harm.

Before I left Gaza, Abu Hussein encouraged me to research the history of the Olympic file during the Mandate. A close friend pointed me in the direction of several prominent archives in Israel. A grant from the Palestinian American Research Center funded the initial phase of work in the late summer and autumn of 2004 under the title, The Zionist Co-Option of Sport in Palestine: Constructing the Palestinian Sport Narrative. This proposal was built on my review of limited IOC archival records. My research orientation was heavily influenced by the narratives I had heard in Gaza and an anonymous enthusiast Yosef Yekutieli and Jerusalem’s YMCA director Waldo Heinrichs. Their stories are told with loving detail—against the dark backdrop of Palestinian Nazis determined to prevent any kind of cooperation between Jews and Arabs, on or off the fields of play.”4

4 Haddad stages a historical drama of the formation of the Palestine Olympic Committee, in 1934, on the eve of Berlin’s ‘Nazi Olympics,’ to which the POC was destined to send no team...Among the most important of the many dramatic personae are the Zionist sports enthusiast Yosef Yekutieli and Jerusalem’s YMCA director Waldo Heinrichs. Their stories are told with loving detail—against the dark backdrop of Palestinian Nazis determined to prevent any kind of cooperation between Jews and Arabs, on or off the fields of play.”
Numerous scholars and enthusiasts of Olympic history have documented the fortuitous yet unfortunate convergence between the successful Berlin Olympic bid, won by Germany in the waning days of the Weimar Republic, and the rise of the NSDAP and its Third Reich. Ample attention has been paid to how the Games of the XI Olympiad—under Nazi Germany—forever changed the course of Olympic and world history, including the indelible polemic about whether a boycott would have made a difference to history’s trajectories. Yet, as I note in the Preface of my book, “there was one small country that actually took the final public stand against Berlin: Palestine.”

This stand was much more public than we might assume it (today) to have been. The international press of the time, including the New York Times, widely reported the decision by Palestine not to participate.1 How did this boycott become such a distant memory, barely discernible in today’s scholarship? The reasons lie scattered between the bitter memories of Nazi interference in the Palestine Olympic file during the Mandate and the mutilated and charred bodies of members of the Israeli Olympic delegation to Munich in 1972. This is truly one of the darkest chapters in Olympic history, and in the words of Abu Hussein, it is “very difficult.”

The central role of Joseph Goebbels, Adolf Hitler’s Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, in the Berlin Games, and his use of the Games as a magnificent opportunity for Nazi propaganda, is well established.12 But what were the circumstances surrounding Mandate Palestine’s relationship to these Games and the recognition of a Palestine Olympic Committee by the IOC on May 16, 1934?13 Why did this novel Olympic committee boycott the Berlin Games?14 Abstention from participation was a big stand for small Palestine to take. The File gives us the clearest picture yet of these circumstances—and it is not a pretty picture: by 1932, even though “Hitler was still one year away from seizing control of Germany...the long shadow of the swastika had already reached Palestine.”15

There are three main characters in The File: Yosef Yekutieli, Frederick Kisch, and Waldo Heinrichs. My interpretations of their interactions present a cautionary tale that holds implications for today.

“Exactly forty years before the Munich Massacre, three men would begin cooperating on the formation of a representative national sport governing body for Palestine. Two were ardent Zionists, the third a Christian who was deeply religious by nature yet equally radical on social progress. All three had served in the First World War, formidable heroes and personalities in their own right. All three loved sports, each dedicated to its practice irrespective of race, creed, or nationality. “Their conversations appear to have caught the attention of the darker emerging forces of the 1930s. In the ongoing efforts to defeat the boycott campaign against the 1936 Berlin Games and admit Palestine to the International Olympic Committee, a veritable cesspool of charges, collusion, and intrigue emerged from a Nazi cell that became active in Jerusalem in the lead-up to the Games. Although defeated in war, the legacy of the Nazis’ actions seems to have affected Olympic history for decades. So deeply rooted was the Arab refusal of cooperation with Jews on joint sport governance (Olympic or otherwise) that it altered the course of sport history.

“This is a cautionary tale about what could have been in sport, told for the benefit of all those who seek to learn from the past and yearn for a more positive future on the field of play. Everyone is an ideologue; what counts is how we control and share our ideologies. Time is a valuable lens through which we can better understand our past and try to change course for the future. The time has arrived for an Olympic Truce in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.”16

This article is the first in a series that I have agreed to write for the Journal of Olympic History. It focuses on some of the main maneuvers of the Zionist camp. The account herein is not comprehensive: to avoid misunderstandings, I encourage readers to follow the series in full and consult the more comprehensive treatment of the archival material revealed in the book. Nonetheless, within this article I emphasize the role of Yekutieli, the Honorary Secretary of the Palestine Olympic Committee, in establishing several national sport governing bodies during the British Mandate for Palestine. I also touch on how he organized the First Maccabiad in 1932, co-founded the Western Asiatic Games Confederation, and sent a delegation from Palestine to the First Western Asiatic Games in New Delhi, India. Yekutieli’s actions occur in the shadow of the rising NSDAP in Germany and Mandate Palestine, thereby taking on a special urgency after 1933.

**Yekutieli and Kisch: Maccabi Soldiers** 17

Yosef Yekutieli was born in 1897 to a Zionist family living in the Russian Empire.18 In 1908, his family emigrated to Ottoman Palestine because of Zionism.19 By 1912, when he was just fifteen years old, the Stockholm Olympics would inspire Yekutieli’s conception of a great Jewish Olympiad, the Maccabiad.20 As Allen Guttmann has pointed out in his book The Games Must Go On, four of the people who would lead the Olympic Movement over the next sixty years were present at Stockholm,21 and each would interact with Yekutieli and Maccabi Palestine’s emissaries in their quest to affiliate a Palestine Olympic Committee to the IOC: “Baron Pierre de Coubertin (P. 1896–1925), Count Henri de Bailleul-Latour (P. 1925–1942), Sigfrid Edström (P. 1942–1952), and Avery Brundage (P. 1952–1972).”22
Five years after Stockholm, on November 2, 1917, the Balfour Declaration laid the structural foundations (within a British-driven international framework) for the realization of the Jewish national home. A mere forty-one days later, Jerusalem fell to British forces commanded by General Edmund Allenby. In 1920, Britain received a Mandate to administer the territory and replaced its military administration with a British civilian administration.

It was during this time that Yekutieli moved to Jerusalem to work for HaMisrad HaEretz Israeli, what is known today (since the creation of the State of Israel) as the Jewish Agency for Israel. There he would have come to know Frederick Kisch, who had been tapped by Chaim Weizmann (president of the World Zionist Organization), to head the Palestine Zionist Executive (PZE), this being the English name of the same organization for which Yekutieli worked. The PZE was the supreme organ of Zionism in the territory. Both Yekutieli and Kisch were active in Maccabi Palestine: Yekutieli was a member of Maccabi Tel Aviv and Kisch had assumed the role of Honorary President of the sport union during his early days in the territory. The two would go on to become the secretary general and president, respectively, of a nascent Palestine Olympic committee in the early 1930s.

Kisch was a recipient of the Croix de Guerre with Palm in the First World War and had served in the British army from 1909 to 1919. He was born in Darjeeling, India in 1888 to the Postmaster General of Bengal, Hermann Kisch. Frederick Kisch’s father was an early Zionist who advocated for a national home for Jews in Africa. Although Kisch was born into a Zionist home, he had never officially been a Zionist and was free of the political entanglements that such affiliation entailed: this was a critical factor in Weizmann’s selection of him for the chairmanship of the PZE. Between 1922 and 1931, Kisch was effectively the most senior Zionist official in Mandate Palestine. Toward the end of his tenure with the PZE, Kisch entered a period of his life characterized by well-documented civic engagement, including his assumption of a very important role—that of president of a Palestine Olympic Committee. Yet curiously this was “not referenced in either his biography, in his published Palestine Diary, the Encyclopedia of Zionism, or any other mainstream publication about him.”

The 1920s: Initial Olympic Contacts

During the 1920s, Zionist sport in Mandate Palestine was young but firmly established. Harif (2007) documented that “[i]n the years preceding the First World War, the network of sport organizations in the Yishuv [the Jewish community in Palestine] branched out, counting several hundred members among its ranks.” Maccabi Tel Aviv was founded in 1906 (first as Jaffa Rishon Letzion), and Maccabi Jerusalem was established in 1911. In 1913, Maccabi Palestine’s sport journal, Hamaccabi, first appeared. There is a vague reference made to Olympic affiliation efforts starting in 1919, but this reference is made in 1934, fifteen years after the fact, and there are no other documents clarifying this claim. Kaufman et al. (2008) state that Hamaccabi “reported that on 28 November 1924 the Association of Football Teams was founded and representatives of the regional associations were chosen.” This can be considered the nascency of the Palestine Football Association (PFA), which has been so recently politicized within FIFA. “Sport sections started to appear in [Hebrew language] newspapers in the middle part of the 1920s.” By 1927, Yekutieli formally proposed his concept for a Maccabiad, which “was approved in June 1929 at the International Maccabi Congress in Maharish-Austreo, Czechoslovakia.” In terms of the Olympic file, the 1920s are a quiet decade in Palestine. “The sport and political developments of the latter half of the decade laid the foundation for an important cooperative effort in sport
between Jews, Muslims, and Christians between 1930 and 1933. The Jerusalem YMCA spearheaded this effort with Maccabi Palestine, with the consent and active participation of the Arab sport leadership.”

Frederick Kisch documented his experiences during the 1920s in his administrative diary, which he eventually published under the title *Palestine Diary* in 1938. “Kisch did his last review of the postscript...for *Palestine Diary* just after...he returned from a meeting with IOC president Count Henri Baillet-Latour...in which they most probably discussed Kisch’s ascension as an IOC member.”

Kisch was involved in Maccabi sport activity from the outset of his arrival in Palestine. Maccabi did not have its own football pitch in Jerusalem and Kisch was involved in the negotiations to acquire land for such a purpose.32 Kisch wrote, “I attach much importance to sport here because: first, it teaches discipline which we need so much; secondly, both for the players and spectators it creates a reaction against the excessive strain of Palestinian life, (sic) and thirdly it tends to keep our youth away from politics.”

His British sensibilities discouraged the overt politicization of social institutions, as demonstrated in his instructions to Yekutieli in 1923 that no politics enter into a Sukkoth sports meet.45 He expressed similar expectations to the Menorah Club to sport here because: first, it teaches discipline which we need so much; secondly, both for the players and spectators it creates a reaction against the excessive strain of Palestinian life, (sic) and thirdly it tends to keep our youth away from politics.”

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Nevertheless, Arab Palestinian sport was about to get a huge boost. Whereas in 1927, Maccabi Palestine still did not own its own football field in Jerusalem,40 the same year the weak finances of the Greek Orthodox Church resulted in the YMCA Movement in North America buying church land on the hilltop just west of the Old City, known as the West Nikiforieh district.55 The YMCA Movement envisioned a hugely ambitious project that would become one of the largest Association and global sport projects in the world—the construction of the new Jerusalem International YMCA along Julian’s Way, an architectural masterpiece designed by the same firm hired for the Empire State Building in New York City. We do not know to what extent the laying of its foundation stone in July 1928 (by the High Commissioner for Palestine, Herbert Plumer)56 influenced Yekutieli and Maccabi Palestine’s Olympic intentions. But we do know that Yekutieli had already, by April 1928, attempted to procure press passes for the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam.59

Up until August 1929, things were looking bright for the Zionist Movement and Maccabi sport, despite rising opposition to Zionism’s aims from the local Arab population and its leadership. Kaufman et al. (2008) even document how, “[o]n 29 March 1928 representative Jewish, Arab and British teams assembled, and it was decided to make a ‘complete change’ by managing ‘competitions according to the appropriate rules and regulations followed by all other countries.’ In the new cup games, 12 teams participated.”

And of course, shortly thereafter, Yekutieli began his affiliation process for the Palestine Football Association (PFA) to FIFA.60 Kaufman et al. accurately state in regard to this effort: “Thus, the establishment of the football association in 1928 did not mark the beginning of football in Eretz Israel [Mandate Palestine], but rather marked...
the climax of a process begun early during the British Mandate.”

Unfortunately, in August 1929 a series of violent riots erupted in Jerusalem, spreading across the territory and resulting in the vicious killing and extreme mutilation of many of the unprotected Jewish residents of Hebron. The butchery in Hebron left a permanent scar in the Jewish and Zionist frame of mind. The Hebron riots were a crucible moment for the Yishuv, but also for sport in Mandate Palestine. They set in motion the concerted effort to bring the three great faith communities together through sport, not just from within Palestine, but from outside, too. The YMCA Movement in America would take a leading role.

Kaufman et al. (2008) identify a “lack of sport relations...between Arabs and Jews in Eretz Israel, mostly from the 1930s and onwards.” In my book I identify a number of important caveats to their observation: (1) relations in sport endured between Jews and Arabs at the level of local (i.e. national) competition—especially in Jerusalem at its YMCA—all the way to the outbreak of hostilities in 1948, (2) the lack of relations observed was specific to questions of national sport governance and international sport representation, (3) this lack of cooperation was, in fact, a strategic trade off resulting from concerted NSDAP agitation against the Jerusalem YMCA precisely because of its ability to influence questions of governance and representation in the lead up to the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, (4) that Joseph Goebbels was involved in the NSDAP agitation in Palestine, and (5) that Goebbels was successful. NSDAP efforts to break the sport relations between Jews and Arabs were realized in the period between September 11, 1933 and March 9, 1934. The former date is the day on which the Jerusalem YMCA’s Physical Department Committee decided not to participate in co-governing sport with the Jews. The latter date is the day that Heinrichs, its secretary general, was forced to flee Jerusalem by the Nazis. A future article will present the analysis of this consequential NSDAP agitation.

1930–1932: Concerted Olympic Efforts

Because of the 1929 riots, in 1930 Maccabi efforts were kicked into high gear. Having served in a sport governance role myself, it is simply remarkable for me to study the intensiveness of Yekutieli’s voluntary efforts. Between January 2, 1930, when “Yekutieli hammered out the first of Palestine’s official Olympic correspondences that would lead to its affiliation to the Olympic Movement”66 and May 16, 1934, when the Palestine Olympic Committee was finally recognized at the 32nd IOC Session in Athens,67 Yekutieli was so active that I liken the up-and-down motion of his typewriter’s ribbon vibrator to “a Zionist worker building the Jewish national home.”68

The successful affiliation of the PFA to FIFA occurred before the riots. After them, Yekutieli set his sights on expanding affiliations with international federations, seeking a pathway to the coveted Olympic recognition. He began with Alice Milliat’s Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale (FSFI).4 He had every intention of sending a women’s team to the 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Games but was probably disappointed to learn from the IOC’s secretary, Major A. C. Berdez, that FSFI was not invited to the Los Angeles Games.4 However, at least through this process he had received from the IOC the information that he needed to begin forming a Palestine Olympic Committee.74-73 “Yekutieli was getting very busy. As a volunteer, he was now executing the administrative workflow for Maccabi Palestine, Palestine Football Association, Palestine women’s sport, and the Palestine Olympic effort, as well as organizing the Maccabiad.”75

During Yekutieli’s early communication with Berdez,75 his work was stymied by Britain’s publication of the Passfield White Paper on October 20, 1930. Although we do not have direct evidence that the IOC discussed the paper, the paper’s anti-Zionist tone probably influenced how the IOC began treating its interactions with its Palestine file: Berdez “warned Yekutieli that the eventual participation of Palestine could not be envisaged by the IOC until it could examine whether the Palestine Olympic Committee was constituted to its satisfaction. The IOC wanted to study the conditions of the country.”76 Indeed, the IOC approached the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to understand more about the situation in Palestine. France had a mandate in Syria (and Lebanon) to the north. The French ministry, seemingly concerned about what an invitation to a Palestine government might mean to the national-ist movements operating under its own sphere of influence, requested that the IOC send any invitation for the Los Angeles Games only to a Palestine Olympic Committee.77

By early 1931, Yekutieli was focused on promoting the First Maccabiad, his Jewish Olympics. He organized a daring cross-continent motorcycle tour from Tel Aviv to London to raise awareness of and funds for the great multi-sport event.
“When Yekutieli and his team of motorcyclists were in England, their British hosts organized an all-Jewish propaganda event in athletics at West Ham Stadium to reinforce the message that the Maccabi riders had brought forth from Tel Aviv...The program commenced at three o’clock with the grand entry of Yekutieli and his Maccabi motorcyclists, commemorating the occasion of the conclusion of Maccabi Palestine’s historic journey from Tel Aviv to London. Then, ten athletics events comprising seventy-eight entrants ran until 5:20 in the evening. The chairman of the British section of the Jewish Agency, Mr. Goldsmid, had previously noted how the team’s crossing of the Sinai desert in just sixteen hours was evidence enough that centuries of persecution and the ghetto life had not diminished the full physical development of the Jewish people...Upon his return to Tel Aviv, Yekutieli wrote to the Mayor of Stepney, Morris Davis, and invited him to lay the foundation stone for the stadium during the Maccabiad...

“The motorcycle ride put Maccabi Palestine on the sport map. But in Europe, the Maccabi Movement was about to enter a much more difficult period. With Hitler’s takeover of Germany, things would become dangerous. The Romanian government would eventually cancel the European Maccabiad in Czernowitz when it uncovered a plot to assassinate Lord Melchett [who by this time was the honorary president of the World Maccabi Union]...The Maccabi Movement would need to find a new home, perhaps in Palestine: its traditional heartland in central and eastern Europe was becoming increasingly unstable politically and dangerous for Jews. So, Yekutieli set about establishing the Federation of the Amateur Sports Clubs of Palestine (FASCP), anticipating the in-gathering of the Jews to their Promised Land.”

A wide range of scholars have studied the First Maccabiad. Galily (2009) points out how the Games coincided with Palestine’s efforts to establish a position for itself in international sport.79 He also documents how the event served as a byway for Jews to leave an increasingly hostile Europe, as he points out with the example of the full Bulgarian delegation of 350 Jewish representatives staying on in Palestine.80 But probably more than anything else—at least as far as the Olympic file is concerned—the Maccabiad proved Maccabi Palestine’s organizational prowess and demonstrated to the IOC its potential to grow the Olympic Movement in a meaningful way. In addition, it secured Yekutieli and Jewish sport’s coveted affiliation to the IAAF, which was required in order to host the athletic competitions of the Maccabiad.81

Arab Palestinian sport organizers had little in comparison to show—except for their emerging footprint of control in Jerusalem over the new YMCA building. Without the Jerusalem International YMCA, they would have been light years behind the Jewish sports movement in Mandate Palestine. In fact, the impressive scale of the nearly completed project was an emerging threat to Jewish hegemony in sport. Zionist sport officials had to take the Association seriously. Perhaps the boycott of the Maccabiad’s tennis competitions by the Jerusalem YMCA (after it had already paid its registration fees)82 was symptomatic of a growing Arab confidence in the face of Zionist sport.

On May 8, 1932, Heinrichs arrived in Palestine to assume his role as secretary general of the Jerusalem YMCA. This was not long after the First Maccabiad had concluded. His mandate in sport, among other social and religious mandates, was to close the gap between Jewish and Arab sport and enhance cooperation.83 It is quite possible that, with the new building, the Arabs felt emboldened to challenge Maccabi Palestine’s organizational prowess and walk back on their cooperation with the Rehavia Maccabi Tennis Club, with which they had co–founded the Jerusalem Tennis League.84 With the rise of the NSDAP in Germany, any sense of Arab empowerment appears to have grown stronger while also assuming a nefarious dimension.

In addition to securing the IAAF application, Yekutieli was also pursuing Fédération Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA).85 “By August 1932, Yekutieli would count among his affiliations the IAAF as well as the International Boxing Federation and International Gymnastics Federation...And at the VII Congress of FSFI, Milliat and her colleagues also passed the affiliation request of Palestine.”86 The combined effect of the First Maccabiad and all these affiliations led Yekutieli, on August 12, to publish its announcement regarding the formation of the FASCP in Palestine Bulletin.87 The announcement invited all sport clubs in Palestine to participate and provided the necessary contact information to reach out.88 (No Arab clubs had joined the new federation, but we will see shortly that Maccabi sport would still find a way to include them.)

Oddly, despite all the tension that surrounded the Maccabiad and the Jerusalem YMCA’s boycott of it, it is extremely curious to note that, four days prior to Heinrichs’ arrival in the country, the board of the Association voted to try out (presumably with Jews) for the Syrian Olympic Games. The trials would take place in Tel Aviv on the new cinder track that had been built for the Maccabiad.89 While the Arabs refused to participate with the Zionists at the Jewish Olympics, they seemed willing to do so to form a delegation to the 1932 Syrian Olympic Games.

Upon Waldo’s arrival, Yekutieli and Zionist sport wasted no time seeking out cooperation with the YMCA Movement to smooth over these issues and find a pathway forward. Kisch, the president of the Palestine Olympic Committee, met with Heinrichs within one week...
of his arrival in the country. This meeting took place on May 14, 1932 at the Jerusalem YMCA and included a public tour of the building. It was not a secret.

This meeting—and all that follows it—redefines our understanding of Mandate Palestine’s Olympic sport history.

The YMCA building project, having started in 1928, was under the final stages of construction when Heinrichs arrived. A major international dedication would take place in April 1933 with Lord Allenby: this time he would return from Jerusalem as a civilian, not a conqueror, and give a dedication address extolling the virtues of internationalism. The importance of the 14 May meeting between the Jerusalem YMCA and the Zionists cannot be understated. It was a meeting between Arab and Jewish sport—even if Heinrichs was an American secretary general. This meeting—which can be considered a mid-point in ongoing discussions about national sport governance between 1930 and September 11, 1933—is the major missing link in all historiography to date regarding Jewish and Arab sport during the Mandate administration. The reason for its absence can be attributed, in part, to the discussion of “Constructing National Identity” by Rosen et al.: The Arab position in sport has continued to live in a constructed memory rather than understanding the sport past during the Mandate “as it really was.”

After the 1929 riots (probably in late 1929, although records do not indicate the exact date), both Jews and Arabs came together at the Jerusalem YMCA to try and form a Palestine Olympic Games Association and organize a Palestine Olympic Games. The games were not a short program of events but were to take place in 1930 over a period of several months and in different locations, probably to rebuild trust and relationships after the terrible riots (although there is no historical document yet found confirming this presumed objective). “The Palestine Olympic Games Association decided on the following sport program of activities, to take place mostly in Jerusalem: a fencing championship to be held in January, a cross–country run in March, water sports (at the Sea of Galilee one hundred miles to the north) in April, track and field in May, boxing and wrestling in June, and tennis in July.”

Tennis was important in the program because it was a sport that already exhibited strong cooperation between Jews and Arabs. The Jerusalem YMCA and Rehavia Tennis Club would establish the Jerusalem Tennis League in the summer of 1930. The establishment of the Palestine Tennis Association—a joint effort between Jerusalem Sports Club, the Jerusalem YMCA Tennis Club, and the Jewish Rehavia Tennis Club—would be a focus of conversation after Heinrichs’ arrival. The Jerusalem YMCA Tennis Club had 26 Jewish members among its many active Arab members. This pre–existing basis for cooperation is probably one reason why Maccabi Palestine got so upset when the Association eventually boycotted the Maccabiad tennis tournament in 1932. An op–ed piece in Palestine Bulletin suggested that the Arabs were taking their cues from the Daniel Prenn affair in Germany.

Despite strong links in tennis in 1930, we know that the 1929 discussions to form a Palestine Olympic Games Association failed. Its failure was probably the key stimulus that provoked Yekutieli to open an independent line of communication with the IOC (on January 2, 1930). The discussions around the games are historically important because they prove that Maccabi Palestine went to the Arab camp before it went to the IOC (at least in the period during which Maccabi Palestine finally felt capable to organize a successful Olympic committee for the territory). It must be understood that the Jerusalem YMCA was the most organized representational body for Arab sport interests in the Holy City and territory, a fact accepted by everyone at the time, and that the Zionist interactions with it represented authentic engagement of the Arab camp.

The director of the Physical Department at the Jerusalem YMCA, Frederick Auburn, explained why the negotiations for a Palestine Olympic Games Association failed:

“Auburn accredited the problems in the Arab camp to the lack of union and leadership among the Arabs in the past. However, [the Arabs were] now alert to the disadvantages of this non–representation and non–organization and [were] appealing to the YMCA Physical Department to take the leadership in uniting and organizing their forces for local and nationwide development of physical education...
"Then Auburn continued and stressed that the desire of the Association was to help the Arabs organize themselves and promote nationwide interest in sports. The Jerusalem YMCA began forming the Arab Amateur Athletic Union, not to reverse the imbalance of power, but to allow for fairer representation of the Arabs and help them work with Jews cooperatively in the field of sports. Auburn documented in his report that both camps looked to the Jerusalem YMCA for council and advice. Thus, with approval from both Jewish and Arab camps, the Jerusalem YMCA in 1930 was made the mediator for the development of national sports and an international sport initiative.

"Auburn’s report...represents the crystallization of the modern Arab Palestinian sports movement. Everything up to that point had been comparatively less organized, ad hoc, or nowhere near the level required to petition the IOC for affiliation. Despite this, the Zionist camp had approached the Association to come to some type of accommodation with the Arabs in sport. It must be understood that ‘physical education’ is synonymous with ‘sport and Olympic development’ during this period in history, as evidenced by the YMCA Movement’s presentation to the IOC in Antwerp in 1920 and Heinrichs’ activities at the Lahore YMCA to establish Olympic activity in the Punjab.”

In my book’s introduction, I discuss this presentation to the IOC by Elwood Brown in Antwerp at the Games of the VII Olympiad. Brown, the Director of Physical Education for the International Committee of YMCA’s at the time, proposed YMCA–IOC cooperation on sport development in Asia and South America. The YMCA Movement—not the IOC—was the dominant player in organizing sport activity in Asia. Avery Brundage’s major contribution to the Olympic Movement in South America—the establishment of the Pan–American Games—would not transpire until after the Second World War. The same is true for Guru Dutt (G. D.) Sondhi’s contribution of the Asian Games. This is why Heinrichs was so important to the Arab position in sport in Palestine: Heinrichs had a strong Olympic profile from his tenure in Lahore during the 1920s, he had worked to develop the Punjab Olympic Association alongside Sondhi of Government College, and the Arabs desired to close a wide gap with Jewish sport counterparts in Palestine, who they acknowledged were much more organized and competent in sport affairs than themselves. Even as late as 1933, Arab Sports Club was dependent on the Jerusalem YMCA for its headquarters (which is set up in the old YMCA building) and the use of its field for practices and matches.

This context is key to interpreting Yekutieli’s approach to IOC secretary Berdez in 1930 and the sport actions of the Zionists that follow. We know from the archival record that the camps had agreed that the Arabs would get “sufficiently organized.” This implies that Yekutieli’s approach to the IOC can be considered operationally efficient and not devious: when the Arab camp was ready and willing, it could join. Upon Heinrichs’ arrival, the Zionists immediately re-engaged the Arabs through him. Therefore, the Arab alignment with Nazis, which I will discuss in my second article, becomes consequential.

By the end of June 1932, Heinrichs held his first meeting with Henrietta Szold, a leading member of the Va’ad Leumi (Jewish National Council). Kaufman (2007) documents how Szold had been one of two prominent Zionists chosen to lead a Physical Culture Council (PCC). It was the second time that Zionists were trying to coordinate sporting interests through the Va’ad Leumi. (The first PCC had been founded on January 16, 1930, two weeks after Yekutieli’s initial outreach to Berdez at the IOC. This first PCC never seems to have taken root.) During the second effort at forming a PCC, “Szold’s aim, among others, was to coordinate activities in the ‘field of sports and physical education.’” Resolving the discord between the two prominent Jewish sport systems—Maccabi and Hapoel—was a central objective of this PCC.

The second PCC was established in July 1931, about two months after Heinrichs’ first visit to the Holy Land from India. He came during the spring of 1931 to review the progress of the Jerusalem YMCA building project, meet stakeholders, and accept the position of secretary general. Presumably, the new PCC would have been aware of his presence and needed to consider the impact of an increasingly empowered Arab sport presence (in at least the Holy City), although there is no evidence of this concern from PCC records. (However, several people associated with the Jerusalem YMCA were British officials as well as Jews with close contacts to the Va’ad Leumi’s members.) Nineteen days before Waldo arrived in the spring of 1932 to begin his work, the PCC convened a meeting to address the Maccabi–Hapoel rift (on April 19, 1932). Perhaps the PCC wanted this rift in Jewish sport healed before it had to negotiate with the Arab camp. We do not know from archival records. Unfortunately, the PCC also failed this second time around, and Szold resigned from it on August 21, 1932. But she (along with the entire Va’ad Leumi) curiously maintained discussions with Heinrichs about Jewish–Arab cooperation in sport, an almost humorous footnote to history that implies that Maccabi–Hapoel discord in the territory was worse that Jewish–Arab discord in Jerusalem!

Recalling that the meeting to establish the FASCP was held on August 13 and was followed by the PCC meeting on August 19, it is interesting to note that, during the intervening five days (on August 15) Maccabi sent a delegate to the Jerusalem YMCA to see Heinrichs and invite the Association to join the new national sport governing body. Heinrichs recorded the meeting in
his diary, documenting that it was about the FASCP: he “insisted that politics be kept out of the federation. He felt that the Jerusalem YMCA had a degree of power in the discussions and that the Jews were all keen to have the YMCA in the federation.” This is a revealing diary entry because it implies that Heinrichs sensed an awareness in the Jewish camp that it really needed to arrive at an accommodation with the Arabs in sport.

The day after Szold’s resignation, the Jerusalem YMCA held its Second Annual Tennis Tournament for Palestinians on (August 22). Despite the boycott of the tournament by Rehavia (in retaliation for the Jerusalem YMCA’s boycott of the Maccabiad), Hapoel approached Heinrichs and offered to back him as the president of the Palestine Football Association against Maccabi’s candidate, Percy Speed. (The preceding year, Speed and Yekutieli had co-published an article on the history of football in Palestine in FIFA’s official bulletin.) When Heinrichs attended the PFA elections, on August 27, 1932, he was instead elected one of six members of the association’s executive with the full support of Maccabi Palestine, and Hapoel withdrew from the PFA. Auburn, the Jerusalem YMCA’s physical director, was also in attendance at the meeting.

“[T]he Maccabi Movement made good on its commitments to international sport to integrate representation for Arab clubs into the leadership structure... Maccabi’s fulfillment of its commitment to keep the door open to the Arabs is important. Heinrichs was not a representative of the government. He was not a Percy Speed or a James Pollock (the British officer who would join the Palestine Olympic Association). Heinrichs was the chief executive of the most important sport organization in the country; the Association was representing... the Arab stake in Palestinian sport.”

With Arab organizational representation achieved in football, the Jerusalem YMCA’s Physical Department took up the question of joining Yekutieli’s FASCP on September 5, 1932. This topic would continue as a matter of debate within the Association’s Physical Department for another year. The meetings were difficult, as recorded by Heinrichs in his diary: Heinrichs felt that the YMCA ideal “would be crushed between the forces of Arab and Jewish nationalism...[and]...that organizations were rendered meaningless in such circumstances.” The Association’s Physical Department would finally decide against joining the FASCP on September 11, 1933 (after Hitler’s takeover of Germany and the emergence of a well-entrenched Nazi cell at the Jerusalem Association).

1933–1934: All or Nothing

There was a spike in German Jewish immigration to Palestine after Hitler’s takeover of Germany (on January 30, 1933). Ashkenazi (2011) studied the impact that this influx had on the Yishuv’s sport. Ashkenazi examined how sport offered a pathway into the Yishuv for Jewish immigrants: “Many of the German-speaking Jews who immigrated to Palestine arrived years after the establishment of local Zionist institutions by previous, East European immigrants...[and that]...the newcomers
of the 1930s transformed sports into one of the main avenues through which the culture and views of middle-class Central European Jews could be integrated into the local discourse. Many immigrants were well equipped to find employment in sport roles in Palestine. Ashkenazi documents how, "In several memoirs, the end of the 1930s is portrayed as a 'golden era' for the Yishuv's athletes, a period that reached its peak and came to an end with the recruitment of Jewish athletes for military service: first in the British army during World War II, and later in the Israeli military in 1948."

Ashkenazi is one of the few scholars to address the fact that Jews in Palestine received from the IOC the right to compete in the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, and that this recognition came about as "a result of the Arab refusal to cooperate in a representative committee for Palestine." Ashkenazi also documented how the Olympic membership and the decision to abstain from participation at Berlin was discussed in the Hebrew press as "an opportunity to influence the international community in a way that had been denied the Yishuv until then." While the Arabs vacillated on joining the FASCP and the Nazis penetrated Palestine, it is this international influence—correctly identified by Ashkenazi—that compels Yekutieli's actions going forward.

Superb scholarship on the Berlin boycott debate is available in the extant literature. The File deepens our understanding of the boycott effort by identifying the coordinated actions emanating from the Palestine camp and integrating them with those in the international arena. The book includes a thirty-page table that merges the Palestine Olympic timeline (for example, Jewish, Arab, and Nazi actions in Mandate Palestine) with what we know already about the boycott effort from other scholars. While much information is still missing, the timeline shows clearly a coordinated Nazi agenda in Jerusalem sport that seems linked directly to Joseph Goebbels: to put it simply, Palestine seems to have had the potential to put a spoke in Goebbels' wheels.

President Baillet-Latour's reply to Lord Aberdare, declaring that he would see to it that Palestine was not invited to the Games by Hitler.

Source: IOC Historical Archives / D-RM01-PALESBRI/001.
In terms of Edström, this IOC member seems to have been a soft supporter of Palestine’s Olympic affiliation request, but from time to time he vacillated. Nonetheless, Edström had been central to Palestine’s successful affiliation to the IAAF (in the lead up to the First Maccabiad in the spring of 1932). He was the IOC member most embittered by Palestine’s boycott of Berlin, choosing to express his enduring disappointment to Yekutieli in a 1939 correspondence (as Palestine prepared to send a delegation to Tokyo). Edström would eventually also preside over the IOC and find himself in the awkward position of communicating the committee’s 1948 decision against Israeli participation in the London Olympic Games. Despite his distaste for Palestine’s 1936 boycott, it was Edström—ironically—who proposed to Israel that it be granted Olympic membership in exchange, among other things, for not participating in the 1951 Mediterranean Games. Although a bittersweet pill for Israel, this quid pro quo opened the door to Israel’s final recognition by the IOC on 31 December 1951, clearing the way to its first participation in the Games at Helsinki.

Schmidt, on the other hand, seems to have been the strongest supporter within the IOC of a Palestine affiliation. He even discussed Kisch’s becoming an IOC board member with Baillet-Latour (in 1936). It is Schmidt who would ultimately conduct a field visit to Palestine, in March 1934, to assess the situation on the ground in preparation for the national Olympic committee’s affiliation (much like Brundage travelled to Germany to assess the situation there for the IOC). Ultimately, Yekutieli accredited Schmidt as “the man responsible for the acceptance of Palestine as a member of the C.I.O. thereby enabling Palestine to partake in future in the Olympic games.”

Schmidt committed to Yekutieli to be a strong ally for Palestine within the IOC and he appears to have been the only IOC member to send Yekutieli personal holiday greetings at the new year.

“The years 1933 and 1934 are the two most pivotal years in the history of sport in Mandate Palestine. The strategic maneuvers of the competing camps reverberated for decades. It can almost be argued that the Nazi agitation at the Jerusalem YMCA and the consequent affiliation of a Zionist-led Palestine Olympic Association to the IOA in 1934 cemented the irreconcilability on the world stage of emergent Israel and fledgling Arab Palestinian states. The events of 1933 and 1934 are some of the historical antecedents of the Munich Massacre...”

Yekutieli...took three bold moves. First, he began to work with G. D. Sondhi to establish the First Western Asiatic Games Confederation and send a delegation from Palestine to participate in Sondhi’s First Western Asiatic Games...

“Second, Yekutieli and Kisch pushed forward with great intensity their attempt to affiliate a Palestine Olympic Association to the IOC. They made a sincere effort to engage the Jerusalem YMCA, which appeared to withdraw from those efforts under the growing cloud of acrimony that finds its roots in the Arabs’ anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish attitudes, as well as a growing, sinister NSDAP presence among the membership...

“Third, following Yekutieli’s success in affiliating FASCP to Alice Milliat’s FSFI, and with the subsequent affiliation of a Zionist-led Palestine Olympic Association to the IOC in May 1934, Yekutieli was able to send a fully Jewish team of female athletes to the Women’s World Games in London in August.”

Yekutieli’s collaboration with Sondhi to establish the Western Asiatic Games Confederation reinforced Maccabi Palestine’s ability to help build global sport structures. Yekutieli’s insistence that Palestine send a delegation to the First Western Asiatic Games in late February and early March 1934, did not actually have much support from within Yishuv sport: apparently only Yekutieli and one other person thought that going to India was important. A letter from the team manager, David Almagor, sent from the boat on the return journey to Palestine following the games, proved the opponents of the trip wrong: “We made tremendous propaganda for Palestine, and the Jewish nation...Also as you see for yourself, we need not be ashamed of ourselves where sport is concerned.”

“Palestine had won twelve gold, twelve silver, and eleven bronze medals, and picked up three trophies. The Magen David flag was omnipresent and newspapers covered the delegation and printed its photos. Indian Jews were particularly proud and promised to send a delegation to the Second Maccabiad in the spring of 1935. Almagor told Yekutieli that he had never been honored as he had been honored in India. He asked Yekutieli to arrange a reception for the team’s return.”

The High Commissioner’s Office in Palestine had forwarded the invitation from India to Maccabi Palestine on May 16, 1933. The Jerusalem YMCA building’s dedication had taken place one month earlier and the Palestine Olympic Association had convened its first meeting only three days before Julius Jacobs forwarded the invitation from India to Yekutieli. As Yekutieli began preparations for Palestine to attend, he kept the door open regarding the constitution of the delegation: in fact, the delegation’s viability was not clear, and nor was the trip even certain, until ten days prior to the delegation’s departure in mid-February, 1934.

In the intervening period there was a flurry of activity at the IOC regarding what to do about Palestine’s request for affiliation. As noted earlier, Aberdare was particularly vocal. Following the IOC Session in Vienna (at which
the Palestine file was discussed), Aberdare wrote a confidential note to the IOC president arguing strongly against recognizing Palestine:

“I cannot advise or support acceptance. While there is no doubt about it being a good thing if Palestine was represented at the Olympic Games as a separate country (it could not be as an “independent nation”) only embarrassment, if not awkward harm, would come of any form of participation which was not fully representative of all communities and sport organizations in Palestine. The self-styled Palestine Olympic Association is not representative in that sense. It only represents the MACCABI Organizations and the other Jewish Sports Organizations of Palestine have not joined it, and NO MOSLEM or CHRISTIAN organization is in association with it.”

Although Aberdare’s statements were, prima facie, true, his letter clearly implied that the reasons for the lack of diverse representation were the fault of Maccabi Palestine. We know this not to have been the case with Hapoel. We now also know from The File that this was not the case with the Arabs: already an emergent Nazi cell was preparing a severe agitation at the Jerusalem YMCA, and very shortly after Aberdare’s letter, the Association would terminate its efforts to come to some sort of accommodation with the FASCP and Jewish sport. But based on Aberdare’s letter, IOC president Baillet-Latour decided that Palestine could not be affiliated, and he “presumptuously concluded his [reply] correspondence by saying, “In the meantime I will see that they are not invited by Hitler to the Berlin Games!!!”

Baillet-Latour wrote a more diplomatic letter to Kisch, but only after (and likely without knowing that) the Jerusalem YMCA had broken off negotiations with the FASCP:

“While very anxious to see the Olympic Committee formed for the purpose of Palestine participating in the Olympic Games, they cannot so see the way to recommending the International Olympic Committee to grant the request now before them, as it does not seem that Palestine is completely represented in the suggested organization.”

Kisch replied to Baillet-Latour in November and referenced the trouble with the YMCA:

“It is presumed that your letter has reference to the Jerusalem Y.M.C.A. and you should know that the latter Club has refused to cooperate with any of the recognized Palestinian Sports Federations, apparently on the grounds that it could not obtain a measure of control to which neither its members nor the standard of its sports activities entitle it.

“Nevertheless, the various Palestinian Sport Federations are keeping their doors open, since like the Palestine Olympic Committee, of which the undersigned had the honor to be elected President, they entirely share your view that sports must be conducted and directed regardless of politics or religion.

“In these circumstances, my Committee trusts that the International Olympic Committee will re-consider the attitude indicated in your letter, and will communicate to us the formal recognition of our Committee.”

The overt Nazi attempt to remove Heinrichs from the Jerusalem YMCA commenced nine days after Kisch wrote this letter. The Nazi presence would consume the attention of Palestine’s Arabic language press for the next year. On March 3, 1934, Maccabi Palestine marched into the Irwin Amphitheatre in New Delhi for the closing ceremony of the First Western Asiatic Games. Heinrichs learned on the same day that he would have to leave Jerusalem. By November 1934, all pro-Heinrichs staff (perceived as anti-Nazi employees) of the Jerusalem YMCA would be fired, and another shakeup would take place in the spring of 1936, right before a mysterious Palestinian delegation was constituted and showed up at the Games in Berlin.

But there was a silver lining for the Jewish camp: “After the First Western Asiatic Games, suddenly Mandate Palestine’s sport profile was enhanced on the international stage. But now the profile was synonymous with Jewish sport and the Jewish national home.”

Edström warmed considerably on the Palestine file: Edström, Baillet-Latour, and Pierre de Coubertin had sent messages to Sondhi for inclusion in the official report of the games and for broadcast at the opening ceremonies. It is likely that all three would have interpreted Palestine’s presence in India positively: the man who organized the Western Asiatic Games, Sondhi,
was a well-known and important actor in the global Olympic Movement in Asia, having attended the Games at Paris in 1924, Amsterdam in 1928, and Los Angeles in 1932. Given Sondhi’s close relationship with Heinrichs after years of work together in Lahore, the Arab board members’ blunder in not cooperating with him at the Jerusalem YMCA can, at best, be described as shortsighted. At worst, their actions can be characterized as consonant with their own self-perceptions of superiority. Apparently, the Nazi pathway to the Olympics would prove more alluring than working with the man they had hired to get them there.

Shortly after India, Schmidt was on his way to Palestine to investigate the situation on the ground and deliver his report to the IOC. On March 17, 1934, Schmidt gave a public presentation in Tel Aviv on the Olympic Games. This was the same day that Westland leveled its charges against Kisch regarding his alleged dealings with senior Nazis. It did not seem to make too much of a stir: the acceptance of Palestine in the Olympic Movement was a near certainty for a number of reasons, including that it probably illuminated a pathway out of the debacle that the IOC faced with the Nazi takeover of the Games. (There is no official correspondence that confirms this claim.) All that was required of Maccabi Palestine and the POC was to find one Arab who would join the board in lieu of Heinrichs or another Jerusalem YMCA member, and Schmidt met with this individual while on his trip to Palestine. The man was Ali Bey Mustakim, a Muslim from Jaffa (just south of Tel Aviv). Yekutieli confirmed to the IOC that Mustakim accepted the position of vice president in the Palestine Olympic Committee and forwarded Mustakim’s letter to this effect on May 3, 1934.

As IOC delegates were preparing to go to Athens to discuss Germany’s hosting of the Games and Palestine’s affiliation to the IOC, some of the same Jerusalem YMCA board members involved in the Nazi ousting of Heinrichs co-organized the Jerusalem Inter-School Sports Programme—with Jews who were on the board of the FASCP like Shlomo Araz, a member of the Palestine Olympic Committee!

“The IOC Session convened. On May 16, the IOC finally admitted Palestine to the International Olympic Committee. The New York Times carried the news on May 18...On May 19, 1934, the IOC sent out its long-awaited confirmation letter to Kisch.”

1935 and Beyond: Concluding Remarks

In November 1934, Palestine eventually boycotted the official invitation, dated June 22, 1934. I did not locate the original invitation from the organizing committee in archival records, but we know (from Kisch’s reply) that its correspondence number was No. 2374/34 L/M. Lord Aberdare subsequently declined Yekutieli’s invitation to the Second Maccabiad in 1935, citing “engagements in England.” On the other hand, Reichsminister Goebbels was sure to allow a large German delegation to attend the Jewish Olympics in Tel Aviv. The international boycott debate continued to the end of 1935, when in December, “the IOC published in its official bulletin its official opinion on the boycott effort, along with an exchange of two letters between Maccabi World Union president Selig Brodetsky and Baillet-Latour...Baillet-Latour argued that the boycott campaign did not originate from national Olympic committees; rather, its origins were external to the Olympic Movement and purely political in its origins...Brodetsky informed Baillet-Latour of the MWU’s wish to urge all Jewish sportsmen, for their own self-respect, to refrain from competing in a country where they are discriminated against as a race...Baillet-Latour replied, thanking Brodetsky for the MWU’s decision not to question the IOC’s decision regarding Berlin as the venue for the Olympic Games. It appeared as though an entente had been reached between the parties and that for its part, the IOC would not object to the personal choice of those who chose not to attend the Games. Baillet-Latour took the position he had [already] shared privately with Brundage—that the IOC respected the individual liberty of athletes and had no intention of coercing anyone to go to Germany, although it was also against people being blocked from going.

“Clearly the respective boundaries of the two organizations had been drawn.”


3 If one is to believe the claims that were made, the IOC was apparently targeted for awarding Olympic recognition to a Zionist dominated Olympic committee during the Mandate. We’ll have to await archival confirmation of such disputable claims by other researchers. Nevertheless, the Munich attack does follow a pattern of higher-profile attacks of the time, some of which targeted other transnational systems deemed harmful to the Palestinian cause. One such example is the 1975 OPEC Siege, in which the armed faction of the PLO’s Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine hijacked the global oil cartel’s session in Vienna, killed three, and took oil ministers from several member countries hostage. So, the fact that I heard claims that the IOC itself was a key focus of the attack (because of its decision thirty-eight years earlier) points to an enduring awareness within the PLO that Zionism had achieved something very significant in 1934 with its Olympic recognition. According to this logic, because the IOC had made this achievement possible for Zionism, it deserved to be targeted, too. On the surface, it seems to make sense: kill two birds with one stone and hit them where it hurts, forcing them to roll back their decision. The irony—or perhaps tragedy—is that the Palestinian narrative was selective at best and conveniently ignored the mysterious Palestinian delegation to the Berlin Games as well as the Palestinians’ historical lack of sport cooperation.

4 Anonymous, “Report, Jewish–Arab Relations,” 0077643, CIO CNO ISR CORR OU MO 01 14 36, Historical Archives Olympic Studies Centre (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1934), 1.

5 The context and source for the creation of this document and how it got into the hands of the IOC are revealed in my book.


7 International Olympic Committee, “Correspondence, 19 May, NCG Recognition, Baillot-Latour to Kisch,” 0077594, CIO CNO ISR RECON OU MO 01 14 36, Historical Archives Olympic Studies Centre (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1934), 1.

8 Palestine Olympic Association, “Correspondence, 1936 Berlin Olympic Games; Kisch to the President of the Organizing Committee of the XI Olympiad,” 5–1–11, Joseph Yekutieli 1924–44, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1934), 1.


10 Ibid., xv.


13 International Olympic Committee, “Correspondence, 19 May, NCG Recognition, Baillot-Latour to Kisch,” 0077594, CIO CNO ISR RECON OU MO 01 14 36, Historical Archives Olympic Studies Centre (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1934), 1.

14 Palestine Olympic Association, “Correspondence, 1936 Berlin Olympic Games; Kisch to the President of the Organizing Committee of the XI Olympiad,” 5–1–11, Joseph Yekutieli 1924–1948, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1934), 1.

15 Haddad, The File, 85.

16 Ibid., 1.

17 The Zionist Record, “Correspondence, Rejection of Publication Request of the Article Title The Maccabi Soldier, Editor to Yekutieli of Orient Sport Agency,” 5–3–30, Joseph Yekutieli 1934–1948, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1934), 1.

18 Haddad, The File, 4.

19 Ibid., 5.


22 Ibid., 5.

23 Ibid., 1.

24 Ibid., 14.

25 Ibid., 14.


27 Norman Bentwich and Michael Kisch, Brigadier Frederick Kisch: Soldier and Zionist (Tonbridge, Kent: Tonbridge Printers Ltd., 1968), 124.

28 Ibid., 15–16.

29 Ibid., 74.

30 Ibid., 59.

31 Haddad, The File, 16.


33 By December 1948, when the Maccabi World Union held its tenth congress in Jerusalem at the height of Israel’s War for Independence, Maccabi alone had thirty branches and six thousand members.


37 Yosef Yekutieli, “Correspondence, an die Redaktion ‘Westland,’ to Kisch,” 5–1–16, International Olympic Committee, Olympic Games, to the Secretary of the Committee for the Olympic Movement,” 5–1–30, Joseph Yekutieli 1934–1948, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1936).

38 Ibid., 592.


42 Ibid., 28; Theodor Schmidt, “Correspondence, Kisch Representing Palestine on IOC Board, to Yekutieli,” 5–1–10, Joseph Yekutieli 1934–1948, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1936).


44 Ibid., 3.


46 Ibid., 4.

47 The Menorah Club was a social club for former Jewish soldiers in Mandatory Palestine, not a sports club.

48 Ibid., 3.

49 Ibid., 36; Z. Weizmann, “Correspondence, Palestine Football, to Egyptian Consul in Jerusalem,” 4—29–03, Maccabi Egypt 1927–72, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1926).

50 Kisch, Palestine Diary, 131.

51 Haddad, The File, 33; Frederick H. Kisch, “Correspondence, 1924 Paris Olympic Games, to the Secretary of the Committee for the Olympic Games in Paris,” 5—62–1, Colonel Kisch 1923–44, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1924).

52 The meetings that the delegation held in Paris would be recalled later at a moment of crisis between the IOC and the Palestine Olympic Association in 1948. One of the meetings that occurred in 1942 probably discussed Palestine’s attempt to join the International Amateur Athletic Federation (of which Edström was President). This attempt was rebuffed allegedly on the basis that the Maccabi Movement was not representative of all the sport organizations in Palestine (either Jewish or non–Jewish). Source: Issam Khalidi, One Hundred Years of Football in Palestine (Amman: Dar Al-Shourouk for Publishing and Distribution, 2013), 24. (Source: Quoted from endnote 36 in Haddad, The File, p. 301.)


54 Haddad, The File, 38; Issam Khalidi, One Hundred Years of Football in Palestine (Amman: Dar Al-Shourouk for Publishing and Distribution, 2013), 16.


56 Ibid., 38; Issam Khalidi, One Hundred Years of Football in Palestine (Amman: Dar Al-Shourouk for Publishing and Distribution, 2013), 16.

57 Ibid., 38; Issam Khalidi, One Hundred Years of Football in Palestine (Amman: Dar Al-Shourouk for Publishing and Distribution, 2013), 16.

59 Organizing Committee for the IX Olympiad 1928 Amsterdam, “Correspondence, 1928 Olympic Games, Secretary-General” Van Rossem to Yekutieli of the Sports and Athletics Organization ‘Maccabi’,” 5–11, 10, Joseph Yekutieli 1914–1933, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1927).


63 Ibid., 88.


67 International Olympic Committee, “IOC’s NOC Recognition.”

68 Haddad, The File, 17.

69 Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale, “Correspondence, Affiliation Request, Milliau to Yekutieli,” 1–39, Women’s Olympic London 1922–34, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1930).

70 Commission Provisoire pour la Formation du Comité Olympique Palestinien, “Correspondence, 17 October, NOC Recognition, Yekutieli and Unidentified Member to Berdez,” 0077643, CIO CNO ISR CRR OU MD 01 14 36, Historical Archives Olympic Studies Centre (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1930), 1.

71 International Olympic Committee, “Correspondence, Process for Forming a Palestine Olympic Committee, to the Provisional Committee,” 5–11, 10, Joseph Yekutieli 1914–1933, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1930).

72 International Olympic Committee, “Correspondence, 29 January, NOC Recognition, Berdez to Yekutieli,” 0077643, CIO CNO ISR CRR OU MD 01 14 36, Historical Archives Olympic Studies Centre (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1930), Corr. 1930–34.

73 It is worth noting here that the Jerusalem YMCA also commenced an effort to form a Palestine Olympic Games Association to organize a Palestine Olympic Games in 1930, but this was not done in coordination with the IOC, although it does appear to have enjoyed Maccabi Palestine’s support.

74 Haddad, The File, 49.

75 Commission Provisoire pour la Formation du Comité Olympique Palestinien, “CPEOP.”


77 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France, “Correspondence, 18 November, 1932 Olympic Games Participation of Palestine, Berthelot to Unidentified Recipient,” 0077643, CIO CNO ISR CRR OU MD 01 14 36, Historical Archives Olympic Studies Centre (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1930), 1.

78 Haddad, The File, 78–79; Bar-Cochba Association, “Souvenir Programme, All-Jewish Athletic Match, Bar-Cochba Association of London Versus Association for Jewish Youth,” 2–1–18, First Maccabiah 1922, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1931).


81 International Amateur Athletic Association, “Correspondence, IAAF Affiliation, President Edstrom to the Federation of Amateur Sport Clubs of Palestine,” 5–11–10, Joseph Yekutieli 1914–1933, Joseph Yekutieli Maccabi Sport Archives (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1932).


83 Wilbert B. Smith, “Correspondence, 27 June, Nationality of Candidates for Secretary-General, to Slack,” YUSA 9–2–2, International Work in Palestine/Israel, Kautz Family YMCA Archives (Minneapolis, MN, 1930), 1.

84 Fred W. Auburn, “Correspondence, Founding of Jerusalem Tennis League, to Frank V. Slack,” YUSA 9–2–2, International Work in Palestine/Israel, Kautz Family YMCA Archives (Minneapolis, MN, 1930).

85 Fédération Internationale de Natation Amateur, “Correspondence, Affiliation Request for Palestine, from the Honorary Secretary to Yekutieli,” ADI 29 0007, SYNSO 0001539, The Zvi Nishri Archive for Sports and Physical Education in the Wingate Institute (Netanya, Israel, 1932).


88 Ibid.

89 George Khadder, “Minutes, of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Jerusalem YMCA on May 6,” YUSA 9–2–2, International Work in Palestine/Israel, Kautz Family YMCA Archives (Minneapolis, MN, 1932), 1.

90 In fact, Heinrichs had been meeting with several Jewish leaders in the United States prior to his departure for Jerusalem to ensure a rapid cooperation with the Yishuv and its sectoral leaders that would influence the Jerusalem YMCA’s work. See chapters 3 and 4 in Haddad, The File, pp. 47–86.


92 Fred W. Ramsey, “Memorandum, Copy of Lord Allenby’s Dedication Address, to Harmon,” YUSA 9–2–2, International Work in Palestine/Israel, Kautz Family YMCA Archives (Minneapolis, MN, 1933); “Article, Allenby Pleads for Amity at y.m.c.a. Dedication,” YUSA 9–2–2, International Work in Palestine/Israel, Kautz Family YMCA Archives (Minneapolis, MN, 1933).


98 Haddad, The File, 81–82.

99 Ibid., xix–xx.

100 Guttmann, The Games Must Go On, 87–89.


105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid.


110 Ibid., 562.
Letter to the Editor

A response to Dr. Tom Hunt’s article on “Tom Kiely: Ireland’s First Track and Field Olympic Gold Medallist?”

Dear Editor,

It was wonderful to see Tom Hunt’s recent article on Tom Kiely, Ireland’s famous Olympic champion from 1904, in the last edition of the Journal of Olympic History. My congratulations both to the author, a friend of mine, and to the Journal for an excellent production. As Dr. Hunt mentioned in the article, my own biography of Kiely will be published in 2020 but, if space permits, I would like to comment on just a few points made by Tom and upon which we have had many discussions.

Firstly, on whether Tom Kiely’s 1904 All-Around victory is an “Olympic” title, I feel we must avoid ascribing modern understandings of Olympic Games to historical contexts. The Athens Games of 1896 reported on “International Athletic Competitions” at the Olympic Games. The victors there were called the “Olympionic winners” and generally if the word “champions” was used in the official report, it denoted competitors (e.g. in shooting events) rather than victors. For several reasons, the 1900 Paris Games did not refer to its athletic programme as “Olympic championships”, but rather as “concours internationaux”. Each sport there was organised by the relevant French sporting body, which could award medals, works of art, or other prizes as deemed appropriate.

St. Louis, and indeed the Chicago Olympic organisers before the switch to St. Louis, copied Paris in filling its programme with sporting and cultural events of varying standards. At St. Louis came the significant new step of awarding of gold, silver, and bronze medals for the first three placings in each event. Otherwise, the organisation of different sports was devolved to relevant American sporting bodies, if they existed. The organisers of different events chose the design of the medals themselves. As a result, the St. Louis golf medals look nothing like the basketball ones, and neither of them look anything like the athletics ones.

Tom Kiely’s All-Around championship was organised by the Amateur Athletic Union, as were the main athletic events several months later. Kiely’s event was kept separate to align with the customary date for the AAU All-Around championship, 4 July. To encourage some all-round athletes from the gymnastics events to take part, the St. Louis gymnastics programme was fixed for just a few days before the All-Around. The winner and runner-up in the Gymnastics triathlon did, in fact, compete against Kiely on 4 July but dropped out early. The All-Around was not inferior to the other “Olympic” athletics events; the opposite, in fact. It was a focal point of the early summer programme at St. Louis.

Tom Kiely Jr. points to his grandfather’s Olympic medal at the Tipperary Museum of Hidden History in Clonmel, Ireland.

Tom Kiely Jr. points to his grandfather’s Olympic medal at the Tipperary Museum of Hidden History in Clonmel, Ireland.
The head of the AAU and of the St. Louis sporting programme, James Sullivan, had been very critical of the Paris Olympic Games which, in his view, awarded medals for things as silly as “fishing in the Seine”. To ensure that the All-Around competition had as high a profile as possible, and attract the likes of Tom Kiely, it was called the “championship of the world”. The term “Olympic championship” barely existed in 1904. Competitors participated in competitions at the Olympic Games, not in “Olympic championships” as we use the term today.

Kiely’s medal says it was for a World Championship, the highest title that could be bestowed. This happened within the sporting programme of the Universal Exposition, and within the programme of the Olympic Games, so the world championship is referenced on his medal and the “umbrella” events which included that world championship are referenced on the bar attached to the medal by a ribbon. The fact that Kiely’s medal says the World Championship was awarded by the AAU is because Sullivan felt that only the AAU had the status to organise such a competition. To suggest that Kiely’s victory lacked “Olympic” status because it was awarded an AAU medal is problematic, in the extreme.

Certainly, James Sullivan complicated matters by tending to refer to everything at St. Louis as “Olympic”, and then using the term “Olympic Games” in a different way for the athletic events of late August and early September. Yet, we must remember that even years later, Sullivan used such terms interchangeably. For instance, when he telegraphed home from the London Olympic Games in 1908, he called the Games “the track and field championship of the world”. When his Spalding company used athletes like John Flanagan and Martin Sheridan to advertise its products, they were called “World champions”, not “Olympic champions”. It is true that the term “World championship” was used much more frequently than “Olympic championship” in the press, when describing Kiely’s victory in 1904. This is unsurprising: “world champion” meant something, whereas at the time “Olympic champion” meant little to most people. Even then, there were some key exceptions: The New York Sun, 8 April 1904; New York Evening World, 26 April 1904, both wrote of Sullivan predicting a “Strong Team of Irish Athletes for World’s Fair”. Most importantly, the “loving cup” presented to Kiely in October 1904, by Irish–American admirers who included men who had competed in St. Louis, was inscribed contemporaneously with “Thomas F. Kiely of Ireland – All-Around Champion of the World – won at the Olympic Games, St. Louis U.S.A.” – ignoring the World Fair!

It is not quite correct to suggest that Kiely was only viewed as an Olympic champion after his death in 1951. Bill Henry’s history of the Olympic Games (1948) included the All-Around event in its list of 1904 titles, and it was only Henry’s spelling of “Kiely” which was altered by Mezö, inconsultation with President Avery Brundage in 1953.

While Kiely’s 1904 medal differed in design and inscription from the athletic medals awarded in late August and early September, all were made by the same jewellers, Dièges&Clust of John Street, New York. The difference in design could be explained by the fact that the AAU had held its track and field championships in June, so it did not want to award the same medals for the Olympic track and field events subsequently, or to have confusion about there being two AAU championships or two “Olympiad” championships. There was no such confusion about Kiely – there was only one all-around championship, organised by the AAU and deemed a world championship in 1904, held in St. Louis so that it also formed part of the Olympic Games programme. Kiely’s gold medal, incidentally, had a diameter a full half centimetre greater than the late summer “Olympic” athletics medals, so that he was even metallurgically both a world and Olympic champion.

Dr. Hunt and I have no argument at all on the matter of Kiely’s nationality, more specifically on how it is erroneously recorded to this day in official Olympic records. There was not one athlete from the island known as Great Britain, representing Britain at the
St. Louis Games. The notion that Kiely was asked to be a representative of Britain or the English AAA is impossible. The British Olympic Association was not formally constituted until late 1905, no British members of the IOC attended the Games, the English AAA sent no team to St.Louis and has no records of inviting athletes to represent it either. In Kiely's case, there had never been, nor would there be, an all-round championship held by the AAA until 1928. If the AAA did not “select” athletes who were specialists in the events it actually fostered in 1904, it is preposterous that it would have selected an Irish athlete to represent it in an event that it did not promote at all.

As Ireland was politically part of “Great Britain and Ireland”, politically Kiely, Holloway, and Daly were “British”, but the three of them travelled as individual athletes, not even as an “Irish” team. They were all “Irish” champions in different events. Crucially, no contemporary British newspapers claimed Kiely or the other Irishmen for Britain. Most mainstream newspapers carried no news of the All-Round championship, showing the lack of British engagement with the Olympics of 1904, but on 5 July he was referred to only as “Thomas F. Kiely, Ireland”, at least in the Leeds Mercury, East Anglian Daily Times, Northern Whig, and Shields Daily Gazette.

Tom Kiely had very little interest in politics. Nor did he have any antipathy towards England or Scotland. That does not mean he wanted to be considered “British” at St. Louis. Tom Kiely had only ever represented Ireland in international contests, specifically for nine years in the annual Ireland vs. Scotland athletic matches, all before the St. Louis Olympics. Whenever he competed at the British AAA championships, he was listed in the British press as representing the Irish Athletic Association or Gaelic Athletic Association, or Carrick-on-Suir, his home club. It is impossible to imagine that someone at St. Louis declared that Tom Kiely was representing Britain. When he was interviewed after his return, Kiely stated: “I have now secured this championship for Ireland”.16

The IOC records today list early Olympic winners from Bohemia who were technically citizens of Austria-Hungary, athletes from “Finland” who were still politically under the flag of Russia, of “Greek” victors who actually came from Egypt or elsewhere. Practices in recording nationality, especially in the early Games, need to be reviewed, and most definitely so in the case of Kiely, who is recorded as “Great Britain”. He was Ireland’s first gold medal winner in Olympic track and field. Very few in Ireland or Britain could or would argue with that, and there are several of Tom Kiely’s grandchildren still living who deserve to see their grandfather recognised properly as Ireland’s Olympic champion.

Yours sincerely
Kevin McCarthy
Cappoquin, Co. Waterford, Ireland
For examples of the use of the term “Olympionic victors” see pp. 81, 89ff. For “champions” meaning “competitors”, see pp. 90, 100ff.


These images are widely available on the internet.

Bill Mallon, The 1904 Olympic Games (London: McFarland, 1999) gives details of the gymnastics–triathlon successes (p. 156) and all-around performances (pp. 64–5) of John Grieb and Max Emmerich.

James Sullivan, The Olympic Games at Athens, 1906 (New York: American Sports Publishing Company, 1906), Kindle edition, location 154. On the same page, Sullivan refers to how his St. Louis committee in 1904 “under instructions from the International Olympic Committee, had about 390 individual Olympic events contested.” This volume of events, plus similar diversity at Paris in 1900, was what prompted Bill Mallon to develop his four-criteria test for full “Olympic” status which, of course, Kiely’s event also passed with ease. See Mallon, The 1904 Olympic Games, pp. ix–x, and in more detail before that, Mallon, The 1900 Olympic Games, pp. 11–17.

The medal and bar, joined by a replacement ribbon of green, are on display courtesy of the Kiely family at the Tipperary Museum of Hidden History in Clonmel, Ireland.

Robert K. Barney, “Born from Dilemma: America Awakens to the Modern Olympic Games, 1901–1903”, in Olympika, vol. 1 (1992). “Sullivan threatened the plans for Chicago’s Games with the might of the AAU, stated that the AAU was the sole certifying agent for sport in America and that ‘it will be impossible to hold a successful [Olympic] meeting without the consent of that body [i.e. the AAU].’” That quotation comes from The [New York] Sun, 13 November 1900.


I am open to contradiction, but my research indicates a significant surge in the use of the terms “Olympic Championship” and “Official Olympic” by James Sullivan’s associates from 1914, the year of Sullivan’s death, when the IAAF congress at Lyon approved a number of Spalding products for use in future Olympic Games. See the advertisements in James S. Mitchel, How to Become a Weight Thrower (Spalding Athletic Library 1916), pp. 91–5.

This trophy, which cost $1,000 in 1904, is also displayed courtesy of the Kiely family at the Tipperary Museum of Hidden History in Clonmel, Ireland.

Letter from Dr. Mezö to IOC President Avery Brundage, 27 June 1953. This is contained in the file Mezö – Correspondance, Olympic Studies Centre, Lausanne.

Kiely’s medal was assayed by Ryan Thomas Jewellers of Clonmel, on behalf of Tipperary County Museum, today known as the Tipperary Museum of Hidden History. Its diameter was measured at 44.75 mm, whereas the Olympiad athletic medals of 1904 have a diameter of 39.3 mm.

My sincere thanks to Ian Hodge at British Athletics for his assistance with this query.

The first of these international matches, which would become the earliest known multi-annual international contest in athletics history, is described in the newspaper Scottish Referee, 22 July 1895.

Freeman’s Journal, 8 October 1904.

Two Irish heroes: Tom Kiely (left) and Martin Sheridan, discus champion in 1904, 1906 and 1908. At the London 1908 Games he won both free and Greek styles. Sheridan was only 16 when he moved to New York in 1897. He later became a police officer but died in 1918 from pneumonia.

Photo: Courtesy of Waterford County Museum
A Global Platform for New Sports and New Stars

By Philip Barker

That the inaugural World Beach Games held in Doha took place at all might be described as a minor miracle. They were originally to have been staged in San Diego. Eventually Vince Mudd, chairman of the San Diego Exploratory foundation, announced that they would not happen because of what he described as “challenges with securing the necessary sponsorship and the time sensitivity.”

Within a fortnight, Doha had agreed to host an event organised under the aegis of the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC). The logo originally planned for San Diego was slightly modified and the ANOC General Assembly was held after competition had finished.

The Games mascot was launched in September. “Dolphy personified the spirit of the Games with a playful disposition, a perpetual grin, and a dedication to keeping the ocean and environment clean.” It was not sold in merchandise stores but given only to medal winners which gave it a degree of exclusivity.

“The Games are connecting National Olympic Committees with an entirely new set of elite national athletes and providing a global platform to connect these new stars and new sports with a new generation of sports fans,” said ANOC General Secretary Gunilla Lindberg.

The main competition hub was the Katara Beach complex, which hosted the beach versions of volleyball, 3x3, soccer, tennis, karate, wrestling, open water swimming, and aquathlon.

Kite Foil racing was held on the bay, but was often hostage to light winds. Atmospheric conditions also affected wakeboarding and water-ski events.

The first gold medal of the Games necessitated an early start. Swimmers took to the water shortly after sunrise at 6 am. The early morning combination of intense humidity and heat also took its toll on competitors in the swim run triathlon.

At the Aspire complex in the shadow of the Khalifa Stadium, bouldering gave a glimpse of its Olympic future.
as part of the climbing disciplines. Intelligent sports presentation made it easy for the uninitiated to follow. Similar lively presentation at the skateboarding and sensible scheduling ensured a full house.

At beach soccer though, the interventions of the stadium announcer added nothing and almost detracted from a compelling women’s final where Spain beat Great Britain. The very last gold medal was won by the Brazilian men, who produced an exhibition of beach soccer worthy of the famous yellow shirt. Curiously, a beach taekwondo championship was taking place in Egypt at the same time but was completely separate from these games. Still, the mascot bore a remarkable similarity to that of the Doha event.

1 Announcement by San Diego Exploratory foundation, 30 May 2019.
3 Inside the Games, 9 October 2019.

**News**

**Three new Members** were elected at the 135th IOC Session on 10 January 2020: Yasuhiro Yamashita, President of the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC), David Haggerty, President of the International Tennis Federation (ITF/USA), and Gianni Infantino, President of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA/SUI). All three candidatures are linked to a function within a NOC or an International Federation. The total number of IOC Members is now 101.

The Olympic Cup 2019 was awarded by the IOC to the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. The award was presented to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, at the beginning of the IOC Session in Lausanne during the Youth Olympic Games Lausanne 2020. The Olympic Cup was founded by IOC President Pierre de Coubertin in 1906 which is awarded each year.

The fourth edition of the Youth Olympic Games will take place from 22 October to 9 November 2022 in Dakar. It will be the first Olympic event on the African continent. The IOC EB also approved the request to add baseball5 and wushu to the sports programme.

A resolution for the observance of the Olympic Truce for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games was adopted at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The resolution “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic Ideal” was supported by 186 out of 193 UN Member States.

HRH the Infanta Doña Pilar de Borbón, IOC Honorary Member, died on 9th January at the age of 83. The Infanta, who practiced equestrian sports in her youth, was President of the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) from 1994 to 2006, a role that led her to becoming an IOC Member in Spain between 1996 and 2006. (IOC/JOH)
Lot 173 of Sotheby’s “Fine Books and Manuscript auction” of 18th December 2019 packed a punch. With an estimated value of between US$700,000 and $1,000,000, the manuscript of Pierre de Coubertin’s speech of 25th November 1892 at the Sorbonne on the fifth anniversary of the founding of the Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques (USFSA) was put up for sale. In the speech’s conclusion, he had for the first time publicly expressed the idea of restoring the Olympic Games.

The artefact, entitled “The Olympic Manifesto”, is a 14-page document in French on light-brown paper, its words written close together in sepia ink on the back of blank registration forms for the 1889 “Sports Congress”, organised by Coubertin during the Paris World’s Fair. You can see that he was still editing the text: he had crossed out some formulations and highlighted others.

The bidding war lasted 12 minutes, during which time the price reached astronomical heights. When the hammer fell, the auctioneer had set a personal record.

The manuscript was sold for $8,806,500 – a price that had never been achieved in the past 30 years in this field.

While Sotheby’s kept the name of the winner anonymous, he revealed himself of his own accord on 10th February 2020. It was the Russian oligarch and President of the International Fencing Federation (FIE), Alisher Usmanov, who donated the document to the Olympic Museum in Lausanne. The Director General of a Gazprom subsidiary, one of the richest people in the world, he had previously made a name for himself as a patron of the arts. After the death of Mstislav Rostropovich, he acquired the collection of the celebrated cellist and his wife Galina Vishnevskya for $100 million in 2007, in order to leave it to the Pushkin Museum in Moscow.

In his memoirs, Coubertin described the unbelievable reactions that his 1892 speech had triggered. However, the original text was not known of until 1993. It was
first published a century later, after the French author François d’Amat tracked the document down after a long search. It had been in the private collection of a Swiss entrepreneur, who had deposited it in the vaults of a Geneva bank. The owner allowed d’Amat to photograph the pages to use them in his book.1 He was not allowed to copy the original.

The riddle of how Coubertin’s manuscript came into the possession of the collector remains unsolved for now. But it is no secret that Coubertin, who had lost the last of his fortune in 1923–24, spent the last of his days alone and destitute in Geneva. His spending money was portioned out to him by Madame de Coubertin.

In his Will, he certified to his wife that most of the furniture and objects belonged to her and that the few that came from his inheritance should be sold in her favour. He left his daughter Renée a small amount of cash, some securities, coins, silverware, all of his father’s paintings with one exception, and the family heirlooms.2

Coubertin authorised his confidante, Francis-Marius Messerli, “to decide the fate of [his] manuscripts”. His wish was to create an established collection of materials on the Olympic Movement made up of “useful documents”, to aid research and education. “However, this collection should stand on its own and should not be handed over to the International Olympic Committee.”3

The Will does not go into any details about the make-up of the collection. However, it is known that Coubertin’s library was auctioned in 1944, and possibly also some documents.

One should also know that the IOC office in Villa Mon Repos led a humble existence for quite some time. Mrs. Lydie Zanchi was for many years the only employee, which means that she took care of secretarial work by the hour from 1929 onwards. For 40 years, she was the guardian spirit of the establishment, but an archivist she surely was not.

The Swiss jeweller Otto Mayer, volunteer Chancellor of the IOC from 1946 to 1964, also had a rather cavalier approach to filing, as Helmut Behrendt, the Secretary-General of the East German NOC, told me. When he and NOC President Heinz Schöbel presented the IOC with a Coubertin bust by Wieland Förster in 1963, Mayer reached “indiscriminately” into a cardboard box of Coubertin manuscripts that was standing around in order to offer his thanks with one of these originals. If I remember correctly, it was a treatise on the German Imperial Chancellor Bismarck, which passed into the possession of the archive of the joint NOC after the reunification.4

2 Pierre de Coubertin, Will (copy), 7 November 1937, Olympic Studies Centre (OSC), Lausanne.
3 Ibid., p. 2.


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“Let us export rowers, runners and fencers ...”

So much for the past; what about the future?

I shall not tell you, because the role of prophet is one full of danger, and also because it is high time I concluded this brief survey of universal history that has been presented to you tonight. The Union has great duties to perform towards both, the University and its own members; it will not fail in these.

As for the athletics in general, I do not know what its fate will be, but I wish to draw your attention to the important fact that it presents two new features, this time in the series of these secular transformations. It is democratic and international. The first of these characteristics will guarantee its future: anything that is not democratic is no longer viable today. As for second, it opens unexpected prospects to us. There are people whom you call utopians when they talk to you about the disappearance of war, and you are not altogether wrong; but there are others who believe in the progressive reduction in the chances of war, and I see no utopia in this. It is clear that the telegraph, railways, the telephone, the passionate research in science, congresses and exhibitions have done more for peace than any treaty or diplomatic convention. Well, I hope that athletics will do even more. Those who have seen 30,000 people running through the rain to attend a football match will not think that I am exaggerating. Let us export rowers, runners and fencers; there is the free trade of the future, and on the day when it is introduced within the walls of old Europe the cause of peace will have received a new and mighty stay.

This is enough to encourage your servant to dream now about the second part of this programme; he hopes that you will help him as you help him hitherto, and that with you he will able to continue and complete, on a basis suited to the conditions of modern life, this grandiose and salutary task, the restoration of the Olympic Games. »
In Search of the Forgotten “Artistic” Olympians – Three Polish Architects in the Olympic Art Competitions

By Natalia Camps Y Wilant and Kamil Potrzuski

During the first part of the 20th century, the Olympic Art Competitions formed part of the Olympic programme and almost 1,800 artists competed in the disciplines of painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, and music. Olympic medals were awarded to the winners and can therefore be regarded as “artistic” Olympians. Considering the high number of participants it is surprising that not much is known about the life and œuvres of these participants. Only in the last 20 years has Olympic history research started to look more closely at their backgrounds.1

Concerning the lack of interest in the “artistic” Olympians among sports historians, only assumptions can be made. Central reasons may be that their published biographies omit information on the Olympic Art Competition and that the artists’ biographies are not published internationally. The latter was the case for the “artistic” Olympians with Polish backgrounds. This article takes a look at the interesting history of three such architects – or to be precise, two architects and a sewage systems engineer.

The photograph

The photograph of a decaying swimming pool, taken in June of 2017, took the authors on an informative journey back in time and is also related to Olympic history. Preliminary background information unveiled that it was part of a health resort in the spa town of Ciechocinek in Poland. Designed and built by the architect Romuald Gutt (1888–1974) and the sewage engineer Aleksander Szniolis (1891–1963) in 1931, the complex consisted of both a thermal and a saline swimming pool, surrounded by sports and other supporting infrastructure. The well-composed functional distribution of the different areas and buildings served patients’ needs as well as recreational purposes. For example, the dimensions of the swimming pool, 100 m long and 40 m wide, made it suitable for competitive sport and, consequently, the 1936 Polish swimming championships took place there. The resort was inaugurated in 1931 with a grand opening ceremony attended by Poland’s president Ignacy Mościcki. The Polish art historian Michał Duda described the reasons for the fascinating impression the complex building had on visitors: “all its elevations are simple, but not boring […] they look equally interesting from all possible perspectives and no one dominates the others.”2

For decades, the swimming pool was appreciated by patients as well as by spa tourists. Since it was shut down in 2002, however, it has been in a state of rapid decay. Nevertheless, it is considered as one of the most significant examples of modern architecture built for public services in Poland during the interwar period.

The competition-ready dimensions of the swimming pool was the reason why the authors suspected a link between its architects and Olympic history, more precisely the list of the Olympic Art Competitions participants – and were proved to be correct. Gutt and Szniolis indeed participated in the 1936 artistic competitions held in Berlin as did their colleague, Edgar Norwerth (1884–1950), four years earlier.

A short overview of the Polish participants in the Olympic Art Competitions follows, before we turn to the lives and projects of these successful architects.

The Polish artists in the Olympic Art Competitions

Pierre de Coubertin’s vision to combine sport and art became a reality when the Consultative Conference on Art, Letters and Sport in 1906 resolved to include artistic competitions in the Olympic programme. But it was not until 1912 that the first Olympic Art Competitions took place “on the same footing as the sport competitions”.3 Though they were initially planned to take place in 1908, the first
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Artistic competitions were cancelled due to organisational time constraints. Nevertheless, Coubertin pushed on with the idea of integrating an artistic element into the Olympic Games and came up with an architectural contest, which was realised in 1911. According to Richard Stanton, 21 architects submitted 200 works. About the winners, Eugène Monod and Alphonse Laverrière, the founder of the École Libre d’Architecture Gaston Trèlat wrote: “Their plan was designed for a lakeshore area near Morges. The 200 hectares area was divided into a nautical sports part with a yacht port, course for rowing competitions, spectator galleries, and a swimming pool. The other part comprised a football field, tennis courts, a stadium, and administration buildings. All elements were connected by an avenue.” The authors have not been able to verify any Polish participants for this competition.

Concerning the Polish participants in the Olympic Art Competitions that followed, Stanton’s list of participants enabled the authors to uncover some information as well as statistical facts. While Poland did not participate in the artistic competitions before the 1920s, 98 Polish artists competed in all five disciplines between 1928 and 1948. With 71 submissions the discipline of painting was the most popular, followed by sculpture with 18 submissions; literature and music had three participants each. The discipline of architecture had only two submissions: one in 1932 and the second one, a collaborative project, in 1936. Unfortunately, none of the submissions in architecture won any awards. Nevertheless, three gold, two silver, and three bronze medals as well as ten honourable mentions prove that Polish artists participated in the Olympic Art Competitions successfully.

Romuald Gutt (1888–1974)

Romuald Gutt was born on 6 February 1888 in Warsaw, but spent his childhood in Switzerland. After school, he started his academic career studying architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zurich and the School of Technology in Winterthur.

Gutt spent almost all of his professional life in Warsaw. His first projects as an architect comprised mostly private houses, cottages, and cosy school buildings in the so-called manorstyle, popular in Poland in the first years of its independence. At only 22 years of age, he made his first international appearance with a pavilion design for the International Art Exhibition in Rome in 1911. Starting in 1926, Gutt’s designs changed to functional forms and he started to use grey silicate bricks on the elevations of buildings, which became a characteristic decoration.

Among Gutt’s famous projects during the 1920s and 1930s are a hotel for military officers in Plac Inwalidów (1925), Warsaw’s Nursery School (1928) and the School of Political Sciences at the Wawelska Street (1928–1933), as well as his collaboration on a health resort in Ciechocinek (1931).

In parallel to his architectural projects, Gutt taught in Warsaw at the Academy of Fine Arts and the University of Technology, and later became the dean of its Faculty of Architecture. He continued to teach during the Second World War. Although the School for Construction where he taught was an institution accepted by the Nazi occupiers, the Academy of Fine Arts was not, so he had to teach in secret there. The war years were also a time of suffering for Gutt, including the loss of two of his children and poor living conditions for the once wealthy family.

These might be reasons why, after the war, Gutt participated in restoration projects and became a member of the Principal Council of Warsaw’s restoration in 1947. Examples of his contributions include the war cemetery in Warsaw’s Wola district and at the Pawiak, a former Nazi prison and execution site, as well as the cemeteries at Palmiry (30 kilometres from the city centre), Majdanek, and Auschwitz (Oświęcim). His best-known building of the post-war period, besides those related to war commemoration, was Warsaw’s Central Statistical Office (1948–51).

For his achievements, Gutt was awarded the Honourable Award of the Society of Polish Architects in 1966, which is today considered the most prestigious architectural award in Poland. He died in Warsaw on 3 September 1974.
Gutt’s partner in the spa project was Aleksander Szniolis. He was born on 13 September 1891 in Vilnius (Wilno) in present-day Lithuania. Not much is known about his childhood and youth. The only information available on this time states that he finished high school (gimnazjum) in 1911 and began to study at the Institute of Technology in St. Petersburg, where he graduated in 1917. He returned to Wilno where he worked at the Polish State Railways (DOKP) as a manager for its water department. In 1924, he changed to the field of public sanitary engineering, working at the National Hygiene Unit (PZH). In the same year, he received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and studied at Harvard’s Graduate School of Engineering until 1926. On his return to Warsaw in the same year, he worked at the Polish National School of Hygiene, where he founded the Department of Sanitary Engineering two years later. From 1936 to 1944, Szniolis served as director of the School of Hygiene – one of the institutes of higher education allowed to continue their work under German occupation. Although the documentation is scarce in this respect, it can be assumed that it took Szniolis great effort to overcome administrative, bureaucratic, and personal obstacles while leading Poland’s first research and teaching centre.

When the Warsaw Uprising was crushed, Szniolis was imprisoned in a labour camp in Breslau (after 1945 called Wrocław in Polish). Freed after the city’s liberation, he went on to establish the National Hygiene Unit as a branch of the National Institute of Hygiene. While working at Breslau’s University of Technology, he built the Faculty of Sanitary Engineering in 1950 and became its dean a year later. This job was followed by a position as chairman of the Water and Sewage Department, where he designed more than a dozen urban and industrial sewage farms.

As an academic, Szniolis wrote an impressive amount of 66 articles on sanitary engineering, such as “Germicidal properties of silver in water” (1936), “Control of typhoid fever in Poland” (1942), and “The fixed oxygen balance as basis for scientific planning to protect rivers against pollution” (1960). He was also editor-in-chief of the Polish journal *Gas, Water, and Sanitary Engineering*. Less known is that he was involved with pro bono activities for the Lower Silesian Division of Polish Gas, Sewage and the Sanitary Technicians Association (PZITS), among others.

For his achievements in sanitary engineering, Szniolis received numerous awards, such as the Polonia Restituta Knight’s Cross. The main auditorium of the Sanitary Engineering Building of the University of Technology as well as one of Breslau’s streets carries his name. As Szniolis enjoyed a good reputation abroad, he was offered a consultant position at the World Health Organisation (WHO). The reasons for his refusal are unknown, but it can be assumed that negative reactions by the communist authorities influenced his final decision. Nevertheless, Szniolis’s reputation in the field of sanitary engineering is uncontested. His achievements influenced younger generations, and his work was continued by researchers and specialists on water and sewage technologies, such as Apolinary Kowal (1925–2013), Henryk Mariczak (1921–1983), Edward Kempa (1927–2006), and Jerzy Kurbiel (1933–2002).

Aleksander Szniolis died on 13 May 1963 in Wrocław, where he is buried at St. Laurent cemetery (cmentarz św. Wawrzyńca).

Neither the publications about Szniolis nor the ones about Gutt mention their participation in the Olympic Art Competitions. A look at the list of participants of the Olympic Art Competitions reveals that four years earlier, another Polish architect had taken part in the 1932 Olympic Art Competitions held in Los Angeles.

**Edgar Norwerth (1884–1950)**

Edgar Aleksander Norwerth was born on 7 April 1884 in Versoix, Switzerland, as the only son of the Polish couple Jan and Joanna (née Niedzielska). According to Tomasz Śleboda, in 1887, the Norwerths went back to Krywe Ozero, the town in which the parents had married. Six years later, the family moved to Moscow. Norwerth’s academic career took him from Moscow’s College of Technology (graduation in 1901) and the Institute of Transport Engineering to the Institute of Civil Engineering in St. Petersburg. From 1917 to 1924 he worked as an academic in Moscow, was apparently never involved in political issues, and did not join the communist party until leaving Soviet Russia.

While completing his academic career, Norwerth developed an interest in architecture. Although it is currently unknown what educational path he took in this discipline, he left behind a number of achievements in this field. In 1919, Norwerth participated in a monument project for the Lev Tolstoy Basic Vocational School in Iasna Polana organised by the Soviet People’s Commissariat for Enlightenment (NARKOMPROS) and won...
It can be assumed that Norwerth participated in other NARKOMPROS competitions, i.e. for rural schools, small houses, and worker settlements. A year later he was teaching at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops in Moscow (VChUTEMAS). His models for the National Bank in Moscow and the Bacteriology Institute in Smolensk were contributions to Moscow’s First Architectural Workshop, whose purpose was to reconstruct the city and other urban areas.

In the summer of 1924, Norwerth attended the First International Congress for Architectural Education in London, leaving the USSR and applying for British citizenship. Unfortunately, there are no sources that help to understand his motivations for such a risky decision of leaving the country illegally. When his application was rejected, Norwerth and his wife moved to Poland, where his younger sister lived, and where he soon found employment. Between 1925 and 1939 he was commissioned by the Polish Army and the Ministry of Military Affairs for buildings such as the railway station in Bezdzin (Upper Silesia, 1927–1931), a casino for a military recreational area in Cetniewo (Pomerania, 1931–33), a resort hotel in Truskawiec (Eastern Lesser Poland, now Ukraine, 1933), a military sanatorium in Otwock (Mazovia, 1935), and a culture and community centre in Kielce (Swietokrzyskie).

Norwerth joined the Society of Polish Architects (SAP) in 1927. Two years later, he participated in the Common State Exhibition (Powszechna Wystawa Krajowa) in Poznan. The event is considered to be Norwerth’s opus magnum and one of the most significant examples of modern public service architecture during Poland’s interwar period. In 1932 he participated in the Olympic Art Competitions in Los Angeles, but, unfortunately, the submitted project remains unknown. As in the biographies of Gutt and Szolis, there is no mention of Norwerth’s participation in the Olympic Art Competitions.

Besides architecture, Norwerth had two additional passions. First, he was also interested in book illustrations (ex-libris). According to Ettinger, he participated in his first book illustration exhibition in 1927. Two years later, he participated in the Common State Exhibition (Powszechna Wystawa Krajowa) (PeWuKa) in Poznań. The event is considered to be the most important exhibition of applied and commercial art in interwar Poland and was held to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Poland’s independence. During this time, Norwerth lectured at the Warsaw University of Technology and designed his most outstanding project: the Central Institute of Physical Education (CIWF) in Warsaw. Today known as Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education, the complex was built in 1929 but followed only 60–70% of the original plan as the stadium for international sporting events was not realised.

Among Polish art critics and historians, the CIWF is considered to be Norwerth’s opus magnum and one of the most significant examples of modern public service architecture during Poland’s interwar period. In 1932 he participated in the Olympic Art Competitions in Los Angeles, but, unfortunately, the submitted project remains unknown. As in the biographies of Gutt and Szolis, there is no mention of Norwerth’s participation in the Olympic Art Competitions.
Kazan in 1922. Three years later, the public library in Leningrad exhibited some of his works in the show *Russian Ex-libris and Figures*, although he was no longer living in the USSR. In 1929, Zagreb’s National Museum presented the *First Exhibition of Slavic Ex-libri*, with 400 exhibits that included works by Norwerth. Further, the Zacheta art gallery in Warsaw and the Industrial Museums in Kraków, Lublin, and Lwów exhibited his works. His second passion was photography, which might have been influenced by his work as a journalist. From 1918 until 1933, he wrote for magazines, such as *Architectura i Budownictwo* (Architecture and Construction) and *Arkady*, illustrating his later articles with his photographs. In 1930 he also became a member of the Institute of Fine Arts Promotion (Instytut Propagandy Sztuki).

When the Second World War started in September 1939, Norwerth was evacuated from Warsaw together with the employees of the Ministry of Military affairs and lived in Tarnopol (now Ukraine), leaving his sister in Warsaw. Although his sister died during the siege of the city, Norwerth worked for the German occupants in the Department for Construction Engineering from 1940 to 1943. Because of the tragic personal experiences, such as his sister’s death, poor living conditions, and his fragile health, Norwerth and his wife moved to Czarny Dunajec, a mountain area, where he hoped to recover.

Upon their return to Warsaw on 18 April 1945, Norwerth worked at the Department of Urbanism in Warsaw’s Restauration Office (BOS). Until his death on 19 September 1950, his main responsibilities were to accompany the city’s restoration process as well as the development of the Central Institute of Physical Education.

**Conclusion**

The background information uncovered by the authors about these three men illustrates the impressive amount of projects they undertook and how their ideas influenced the development of the discipline of architecture in Poland. Furthermore, the authors discovered that the three all took a multidisciplinary approach in their projects, bringing together ideas from architecture, engineering, urban planning, and other creative fields. The list of their projects and the accompanying photographs demonstrate their familiarity with large-scale projects and their understanding and skill in combining considerations of design, site-specific conditions, and the intended functions.

The art historian Andrzej Kazimierz Olszewski confirms this assessment with his description of Norwerth’s architectural heritage as follows: “[Norwerth’s] concern was for the quality of the whole urban space, for its realisation and its surroundings, aspirations to integrate it with the landscape, and to use existing terrain and green spaces as extensively as possible.” This commitment to high quality applies equally to Gutt and Szioliś.
This information on the architects Gutt, Sznilios, and Norwerth enhances the existing information on the participants of the Olympic Art Competitions. Although the authors have not yet been able to uncover details about the works they submitted to these competitions, the fact that Norwerth, Gutt, and Sznilios made important contributions to their respective fields of architecture and sewage engineering in Poland challenges the notion that the Olympic Art Competitions were discontinued due to the poor quality of the works submitted by the participants.

In sum, the findings of this article shows that further research into the backgrounds of other “artistic” Olympians is worth while, adding valuable information and deepening our understanding of the Olympic Art Competitions.

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4 Stanton, *The Forgotten*, p. 28.

5 Ibid., pp. 371–372.

6 For Gutt’s biographical data, see Tadeusz Zielinski, Grazyna Jonkajtys-Luba et al., *Romuald Gutt (Warsaw: Arcady, 1968)*, p. 11; as well as the National Digital Archive, signature 20–43.

7 The exhibition was also the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Italy’s unification. The pavilion was considered to be Polish unofficially, because at that time Poland was still divided between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Russian Empire.

8 The exhibition also exhibited the collection of the 50th anniversary of Italy’s unification. The pavilion was considered to be Polish officially, because at that time Poland was still divided between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Russian Empire.


11 As no date is given in Sznilios’s biographies, it cannot be stated when the award was given to him. The Polonia Restituta, awarded since 1921, is, like the White Eagle’s Award and the Virtuti Militari, an important award in Poland. It was established by the Parliament’s Bill from February 4, 1919. There are five classes of Polonia Restituta: the Knight’s Cross, the Officer’s Cross, the Commander’s Cross, the Commander’s Cross with the Star, and the Great Cross. For more information, see Zbigniew Puchalski, *Dzieje polskich znaków zaszczytnych* [The history of Polish Prestigious Distinctions] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmorew, 2000).

12 The PeWuKa was organized by Poznań’s government in cooperation with the State authorities and took place between 16 May and 30 September 1929. It had around 4.5 million visitors of which 200,000 were from foreign countries (mostly from Germany and Czechoslovakia). See: Zbignew Kopel, Poznani między wojnami. Opowieść o życiu miasta 1918–1939 [Poznań Between the Wars. A Story of the City] (Łódź: Księga, 2013); Maciej Roman Bombicki, PWK – Powszechna Wystawa Krajobrazu [PWK – Common State Exhibition] (Poznań: Ławica, 1992).


14 The Polish name is Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego Józefa Piłsudskiego (AWF), which was given to the institution in 1938.

15 The Polish name is Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego Józefa Piłsudskiego (AWF), which was given to the institution in 1938.


Raja Randhir Singh comes from one of the most influential Indian families. His father was Raja Bhalindra Singh, who was IOC Member from 1947 to 1992 (see JOH, vol. 20, no. 1/2012, p. 63). His grandfather was Bhupinder Singh, Maharaja of Patiala, who, like his uncle Yadavindra Singh, was one of the most famous Indian test cricketers.

Randhir Singh primarily dedicated himself to clay pigeon shooting. As an 18-year-old, he won the Indian National Championships with his team in 1964. After he gained his first national individual title in 1967, further titles followed at national level in both trap and skeet shooting. He took part in the Olympic Games five times between 1968 and 1984 as a trap shooter. His best placement was 17th in Mexico City in 1968. Randhir Singh also enjoyed success at the Asian Games, winning gold in 1978 in Bangkok and bronze in Delhi in 1982.


Randhir Singh served as Honorary Secretary-General from 1987 to 2014. He also played an important role as Secretary-General of the Olympic Council of Asia (1991–2015), Founder Secretary-General of the Afro-Asian Games Council (1998–2007) and Member of the ANOC Executive Council (2002–present). In 2010, he was Vice-Chairman of the Organising Committee of the 19th Commonwealth Games in Delhi.

John Coates, who grew up in the Sydney suburbs, played cricket as a teenager. As a 17-year-old, he switched to rowing, where he was deployed as cox. After graduating from secondary school, Coates studied law at the University of Sydney. He earned a Bachelor of Law and, like his father, qualified as a lawyer. He became a partner in a law firm and the director and chairman of various companies.

Coates began his career as a sports administrator at the Sydney Rowing Club. In 1978, he was elected Honorary Secretary of the Australian Rowing Council (now Rowing Australia). In 1983, he became President and, a year later, Chairman (up until 1988). He was a member of the Council of the International Rowing Federation (FISA) from 1992 to 2014.

He played an important role in 1980, when the Australian government tried to prevent an Olympic team from participating in the Moscow Games. Coates refused to bow to the political pressure and insisted on letting the sports associations make their own decisions. From then on, he was a permanent fixture in Australian sport. He served as Administration Director for the
Summer Games in 1980, was Deputy Chef de Mission in 1984, and then Chef de Mission of the “Aussie” team from 1988 to 2008.

After Coates became a member of the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) in 1981, he was elected Vice-President in 1985. He has been AOC President for 30 years. In 1985, Coates became Director and then Deputy Chairman (1986–1989) of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS). He held the same position in the Australian Sport Commission from 1989 to 1998.

Coates has been involved in three Olympic bid campaigns. After Brisbane, which had unsuccessfully applied for the 1992 Games, Melbourne’s candidacy then also failed in 1996. The third attempt was successful, and Coates played a key role as Vice-President of the Sydney Olympic Bid Committee. He then became Senior Vice-President of the Organising Committee of the Sydney Olympic Games (SOCOG), Chairman of the SOCOG Sports Commission (1996–2000) and Chairman of the Australian Olympic Foundation (1996–present). As Chair of the Tokyo 2020 Coordination and Legal Affairs Commission, Coates is one of the busiest members of the IOC.

In 1994, he became a member of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), in 1995, Vice-President, and in 2011, President. In the same year, he became President of the International Council of Arbitration for Sport (ICAS). In 2006, he was awarded the highest honour in his country – Companion of the Order of Australia (AC).

Issa Hayatou comes from an influential Cameroonian family. His father was the ruling Sultan, his brother Sadou, Prime Minister. He was a member of the national basketball team and a successful runner, holding the national records for the 400 m and 800 m.

After studying sports at Yaoundé University, Hayatou became Secretary-General of the Cameroonian Football Association in 1974. In 1984, he served as Vice-President, and from 1986 to 1988, as President. From 1982 to 1986, he was Director of Sports of Cameroon (Ministry of Youth and Sports).

As successor to the Ethiopian Ydnekatchew Tessema, Hayatou became President of the African Football Confederation (CAF) in 1988, which he led for 29 years. After seven re–elections, he ran again in 2017 as a 70–year–old, but was defeated by challenger Ahmad Ahmad from Madagascar.

For over two decades, Hayatou played an important role in the International Association Football Federation (FIFA). After becoming a member of the Executive Committee in 1990, he was elected Vice–President in 1992. Hayatou was Chairman of the Organising Committees for the FIFA World Cup in South Africa 2010 and for the FIFA Confederation Cup. From 1992 to 2006, he presided over the Organising Committee for the Olympic Football Tournaments.

Hayatou faced multiple allegations of corruption during his tenure, which the IOC Ethics Commission also dealt with. Nevertheless, after the suspension of FIFA President Sepp Blatter in October 2015, as Senior Vice–President, he took over the leadership of the federation until the election of Gianni Infantino on 26 February 2016.

Two years later, the Egyptian Competition Authority (ECA) fined him for violating anti–monopoly laws in connection with the awarding of the TV rights to the Africa Cup of Nations.
The son of IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch (1920–2010/see J0H, vol. 21, no. 2, p. 59) holds a Master of Business Administration from New York University and a degree in industrial engineering from Barcelona University. After completing his studies, the Catalan worked in finance. He started in New York as Account Director at International Flavors & Fragrances, Inc. (1982–1986) and Financial Analyst at the First Boston Corporation (1986–1989). From 1989 to 1991, he was Vice-President and Partner of the British investment bank SG Warburg & Co. Since 1991, he has been the founding partner and CEO of GBS Finance SA.

Samaranch was involved as a member of the board of the Spanish Modern Pentathlon Federation from 1980 onwards. From 1984 to 1996, he was a member of the Executive Committee of the International Modern Pentathlon Union (UIPM), of which he has been Vice-President since 1996. In 1989, he became a member of the Spanish NOC. He has headed the Finance Committee since 1998.

At the 112th session, at which his father resigned from his post as IOC President after 21 years, Samaranch Jr. was elected to the IOC. In 2007, he ran for the Executive Committee for the first time, but was not elected, attaining the second-highest number of votes behind Gerhard Heiberg (NOR). He was an EB member from 2012 to 2016, and has been Vice-President since 2016.

Samaranch Jr. was a member of the IOC Coordination Commissions for the Winter Olympics in Turin in 2006 and in Sochi in 2014. After one year as Interim Chair (2017), he has since 2018 presided over the IOC Coordination Commission for the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing. Since 2015, he has been a member of the Board of Directors of Olympic Channel Services SA, Switzerland and Spain, as well as the Delegate Member for Broadcast Rights, Europe.

Els van Breda Vriesman, née Commandeur, played hockey as a youth in the PW club in her home town of Enschede. After studying law at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, she worked as a lawyer for three years. She married the notary, and later investment manager, Eric van Breda Vriesman and became the mother of three children.

From 1980 onwards, she worked in sports administration and has held a variety of roles since then. She was a member of the Executive Committee of the Netherlands Olympic Committee (1988–1992) and a member of the Topsport Committee (1992–1996). From 1982 to 1994, she was Vice-President of the Dutch Hockey Association (KNHB). Also in 1982, she was elected to the Council of the International Hockey Federation (FIH). She served as Vice-President (1992–1996) and Honorary Secretary (1994–2001). She was also member of the Executive Committee (1985–1993) and Vice-President (1989–1993) of the European Hockey Federation. At the Olympic Games in 1988 and 1992, she acted as a technical delegate.

In 2001, she ran for the FIH presidency in Brussels. After a 40–40 draw in the first round of voting, she won in the second round against the Frenchman Alain Danet (1931–2006). This made her the first female FIH president. Due to her role, she was co-opted into the IOC in the same year, and remained a member until the end of her term in 2008. She was a member of the Evaluation Commissions for the Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 and London 2012 Olympics, and also of the 2004 Coordination Commission.

Els van Breda Vriesman, who lives in Vught, was awarded the Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau, one of the six orders of knighthood in the Netherlands, in 2010.
Born: 1 April 1978, Riyadh
Elected: 6 February 2002
Resigned: 11 July 2014
Honorary Member since 2014
Attendance at Sessions:
Present 10, Absent 5

Prince Nawaf is a member of the Al Saud dynasty that has ruled since 1932 and a grandson of King Fahd, who led the Saudi Arabian government from 1982 to 2005. The Prince’s father, Faisal bin Fahd (1946–1999), was a member of the IOC from 1983 until his death, after his return from the Pan Arab Games in Jordan (see JOH, vol., 23, no. 2/2015, p. 67). His mother, Munirabint Sultan, was the daughter of Sultan bin Abdulaziz. Prince Nawaf received a Bachelor of Law from the Faculty of Administration Sciences at King Saud University in 1998.

After Faisal’s brother Sultan bin Fahd took over the presidencies of Youth Welfare (Ministry of Youth and Sport), the Saudi Youth Hostels Society and the Saudi Arabian Olympic Committee (SAOC) in 1999, his nephew became Vice-President. In 2011, after Faisal’s resignation, Prince Nawaf took over his uncle’s office.

He also led the Saudi Equestrian Federation and the Sport Leaders Institute (NOA) and was Chairman of the Saudi Professional Football League and President of the Union of the Arab Football Associations and the Union of Arab NOCs.

In 2002, Prince Nawaf was elected as a representative of a National Olympic Committee to the IOC, where he has been active in the International Relation Commission since 2006. He rendered outstanding services to the Olympic Movement in 2012 when he campaigned against opposition from the royal family to nominate two female participants (athletics and judo) for the Saudi Olympic team for the London Games. Upon his resignation as NOC President in 2014, he lost his IOC Membership.

Before this, in 2012, Prince Nawaf had already resigned as President of the Saudi Arabian Football Federation after the national team, coached by Dutchman Frank Rijkaard, failed to qualify for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Born: 15 March 1935, Larnaca
Elected: 6 February 2002
Resigned: 31 December 2005
Attendance at Sessions:
Present 4, Absent 0


Lazarides started in sports administration in 1969 as Secretary-General of the APOEL Football Club, Nicosia, and was subsequently President (1974–1975). He was Chairman of the Cyprus Sports Organisation (1975–1983) and President of the Cyprus NOC (1984–2008). He also headed the Cyprus Commonwealth Games Association from 1980 onwards.

As Treasurer, Lazarides has been a member of the Executive Boards of the European Olympic Committees (EOC) and the International Committee of the Mediterranean Games since 1993. In 2002, he was elected to the IOC as NOC President, where he was a member of the Finance Commission until his departure.
An Olympian in the Pantheon of the World’s Great Olympic Scholars

By Robert K. Barney

On Saturday, 28 December 2019, Maynard Jay Brichford, distinguished servant of Olympic scholarship and the key individual in unfolding the archival life record of former IOC President Avery Brundage, passed away peacefully at the Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana, Illinois, USA, at age 93. His life and career are honoured by the scores of established Olympic historians and the literally thousands of graduate and undergraduate students in universities the world over who have had the privilege of an archival journey through the Avery Brundage Collection, the original documents of which reside at the University of Illinois. As well, microfilm copies of the Collection are held at many universities and several public libraries and research institutions worldwide.

Maynard Brichford was born on 6 August 1926 in Madison, Ohio. After graduation from high school he entered Hiram College as a freshman in the fall of 1944, leaving after one semester to enlist in the United States Navy as Second World War reached its climax in the Pacific. The war left Brichford with an indelible impression: “There are better ways than war to resolve disputes.” Following the end of the war in the late summer of 1945, he was discharged from service to his country in 1946, whereupon he spent a year at the University of Michigan studying law. Following his University of Michigan stint, he returned to Hiram College to complete his undergraduate degree, which he accomplished in the spring of 1950. In late 1951 Brichford completed a Master of Science degree at the University of Wisconsin. It was at that point that he entered the career realm of history, beginning with a position at the Wisconsin State Historical Society in 1952.

Over the next ten years he worked in Records Management for the States of Wisconsin and Illinois. During his stay at the University of Wisconsin, he met and married Jane Hamilton, an Indiana farm girl. They were married for 63 years, during which the couple raised a family of two daughters and two sons, and together immersed themselves in an abundance of community and Methodist church–related charitable initiatives.

In 1963 Brichford commenced a 32-year career at the University of Illinois as its first full-time archivist. Under his leadership the University’s archives grew to national and international prominence. Combining wit and dry humour, a sharp intellect, and humble demeanour, he proved himself to be an outstanding teacher of a course focused on Archival Records Management. In 2017 a grateful University of Illinois awarded him the Chancellor’s Medal, one of the most honoured recognitions bestowed by the institution. In his career Brichford rose to Fellow status in the Society of American Archivists, serving as the organisation’s President from 1979 to 1980. He was an inveterate internationalist, often lecturing in North America and abroad. One of his last scholarly endeavours was his landmark biography of Bob Zuppke, the long–time storied football coach of the “Illini”.

In his youth Maynard Brichford was an enthusiastic athlete in several of the traditional American sports. He became a life–long enthusiast of the fortunes of American League Cleveland Indians baseball team. As well, many of his senior years were steadfastly dedicated in playing a variety of positions for the slow–pitch softball team of the Owens Funeral Home in Urbana’s municipal league competitions.

In the eyes of Olympic historians, however, Maynard Brichford’s crowning life achievement undoubtedly lies in his relationship with the Avery Brundage Papers, willed to posterity by the noted American Olympian/sports administrator/history’s only IOC President other than a European. Without Brichford’s personal sojourn in developing and presenting to scholars a method to penetrate the collection’s vast 4,058 cubic metre of material, we would be reduced to looking for veritable a needle in a haystack. Beyond that consideration is the fact that in his career Brichford researched, wrote, and presented lectures on many facets of Brundage’s career in sport, including the storied IOC President’s positions on race, business, women, geopolitics, amateurism, nationalism, and performance enhancement, to name but a few of the controversial issues faced during the Cold War era that dominated the affairs of the Olympic Movement.

Shortly before his death in 1975, Avery Brundage willed his gigantic personal archive to his alma mater, the University of Illinois. It arrived on the Champaign–Urbana
campus in two instalments, the first on 2 January 1975, the second on 13 October 1976. Brichford set to work on the collection’s contents. With a corps of associates and student assistants, this huge store of documents progressed through a process of sorting, inventory, classification, and indexing. The project was completed in early 1977.

It did not take long for Brichford to find a publisher for the Index, one of Olympic history’s most important publications. Compiled and edited by Maynard Brichford for the University of Illinois and the Federal Institute of Sport Science in Cologne, the Index was published by Karl Hofmann Verlag in Schorndorf in late 1977 under the title: "Avery Brundage Collection, 1908–1975." The first three microform copies of the collection’s materials were produced in the early 1980s for the University libraries of Göttingen and Western Ontario (now Western University).

The collection subsequently became an important dimension of two Olympic-oriented institutions in Canada and Germany: the International Centre for Olympic Studies at the University of Western Ontario and the Carl Diem Archives at the Deutsche Sporthochschule in Cologne. A short time later it was integrated into the archival collections of the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne, joining the Pierre de Coubertin Papers as the world’s two flagship private collections pertinent to the world of Olympic scholarship.

And so, we mourn the passing, but celebrate the life and contributions of a humble and gracious man, an inspirational Olympic scholar, whose work has motivated three generations of Olympic historians to “get on” with the task of serious scholarship on an international sporting phenomenon now embracing a century and a quarter of historical longevity. Honour to Maynard Brichford’s name. May we not soon forget it!

Roland Matthes (GDR), *17 November 1950 in Pößneck; †20 December 2019 in Wertheim. Born in Thuringia, this man who first encountered swimming in Erfurt, via swimming at school, was initially a “hidden” talent. Lanky and thin, he started at the bottom of his training group – even behind all the girls, which had not overawed him. He owed his unparalleled development to coach Marlis Grohe, the 1955 GDR champion for 200 m breaststroke. Still a learner herself even as a coach, she understood how to arouse his ambition and find the right balance between talent and work.

Matthes, whom Grohe always referred to as the “world champion in hot showers”, set 19 individual world records in breaststroke between 1967 and 1973 (to this day, he is the world-record holder for 110 yards, coming in at 1:00:1 min, because FINA did not recognise any further records in yard distances after 1967). He also holds two world records for the 4x100 m medley, as well as 29 European and 39 East German records.

Over three Olympic Games, from 1968 to 1976, Matthes won four gold (he is the only person to have repeat Olympic victories in the 100 m and 200 m backstroke), two silver and one bronze. He became world champion three times (1973 and 1975) and European champion five times (1970 and 1974). He also won 38 East German championships. He was unbeaten in backstroke for seven years. It was the American John Naber who was to end this streak in 1974 at the USA–GDR dual meet in Concord.

Matthes was a idol for a whole generation of East Germans youths. He was voted Athlete of the Year seven times – mostly by a bit margin. In 1981, he was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame and, in 2006, into Germany’s Sports Hall of Fame. His achievements were thought of in many superlative terms. US head coach and ISOH member Peter Daland (1921–2014) called him an “ingenious swimmer”. British journalist Pat Besford described him as the “Rolls Royce of Swimming” in Encyclopaedia of Swimming.

After finishing secondary school, Matthes attended Leipzig’s University of Physical Education from 1970 to 1977. He then studied medicine from 1978 to 1984 and graduated as a specialist in orthopaedics. In 1978, he married Kornelia Ender, four-time Olympic swimming champion from Montreal 1976, but the marriage
Peter Snell (NZL), *17 December 1938 in Opunake; †12 December 2019 in Dallas, Texas. Three-time Olympic champion and world record holder, Peter Snell is one of New Zealand’s greatest athletes, and some argue the greatest. He was little known outside of Auckland when he went to the Rome Olympics in 1960, but became an instant national celebrity by capturing the 800 metres. An hour earlier his training partner Murray Halberg won Olympic gold in the 5,000 metres. Both were coached by Arthur Lydiard.

Two years later, in 1962, Snell set a world mile record in Wanganui and a week later set new world marks in Christchurch for the 800 metres and 880 yards. Later the same year, he won the mile and 880 yards at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Perth, but his team was eliminated in the heat of the 4×440 yards relay. In 1964, he successfully defended his Olympic 800-metres title and won the 1500 metres as well. He was twice named NBA Finals MVP (2009, 2010) and was once named the NBA’s MVP (2008).

He holds the NBA record for the most seasons playing for one franchise during an entire career. The NBA’s number three all-time scorer (as of 2019), Bryant was twice the NBA scoring champion (2006, 2007). When he entered the league in 1997 as the rookie he won the NBA Slam Dunk Contest and thus became a fast fan favourite. He was an 18-time All-Star and a 15-time member of the All-NBA Team.

Bryant’s life was not without controversy. Most notably, in 2003, Bryant was scheduled to have surgery in Vail, Colorado at the Steadman–Hawkins Clinic. The night before his surgery he had a sexual encounter with a hotel employee, who later accused him of sexual assault. Bryant admitted to the sexual encounter, but denied the allegations of sexual assault and the criminal charge was eventually dropped. The woman, however, filed a civil suit against Bryant, which was settled privately. A few years after his retirement from the NBA, Bryant’s name was in the headlines again when LeBron James surpassed him for career points scored in the NBA.

Sadly, Bryant’s death came in a fiery helicopter crash that also killed his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna, and seven other passengers. (BM/WR)
Zoltán Dömötör (HUN), *21 August 1935 in Budapest; †20 November 2019 in Budapest. Dömötör started his career as a swimmer in 1948. He won five national freestyle titles, and at the 1954 European Championships was a member of the Hungarian 4x200 metres relay that won the gold medal. Two years earlier, he had been considered as a reserve for the same relay squad at the Olympics, but did not get selected to go to Helsinki.

He also failed to make it to the 1956 Olympics, but had switched to water polo the previous year and became a regular member of the ÚTE water polo team in 1957, and soon became a member of the national squad. He played 116 times for the national team.

In addition to a degree in economics, Dömötör obtained a professional coaching qualification in 1981. He worked as a head coach of the Bulgarian national team, and later that of Algeria and South Korea. His most outstanding achievement was at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, when the 13-man Hungarian squad that won the gold medal was from KSI. Between 2004–12, Dömötör served as President of the Hungarian Olympic Champions Club. (RI)

Horst Meyer (FRG), *20 June 1941 in Hamburg–Harburg; †24 January 2019 in Lanzarote/ESP. Meyer was a member of the Ratzeburg Rowing Club (RRC). In 1962, coaching legend Karl Adam brought him in as stroke to the “German eight”, who became world champion in 1962 and 1966, and European champion in 1963 and 1964. At the 1964 Olympics, he won the silver medal.

The year 1968 is an unforgettable one, when the crew surprisingly lost in the regatta on Switzerland’s Rotsee. A long-running argument then ensued with Adam, from which the team emerged victorious. To make matters worse, the rower Roland Böse fell ill the night before the final, and was replaced against the will of the coach by Niko Ott, who had rowed up until with the coxed fours. It was an act of strong will, in which Meyer played a large part that saw the crew still able to then win the gold medal.

Meyer completed an apprenticeship as a shipbuilder at a shipyard. He then studied business administration and received his doctorate. For many years, he worked as a management consultant in Hamburg and Hanover. From 2002 onwards, he directed the bid campaign for the 2012 Olympic Games, which Hamburg lost, however, to Leipzig at the national level.

From 1981 onwards, Dr. Meyer campaigned in the International Peace Movement. He was one of the co-founders of the West German initiatives "Sportsmen for Peace" (1983) and "Sportsmen against Nuclear Missiles" (1985). From 1985 to 1993 and 1999 to 2006, he was a personal member of the NOC for Germany. (IK)

Harrison Dillard (USA), *8 July 1923 in Cleveland, Ohio; †15 November 2019 in Cleveland, Ohio. Harrison “Bones” Dillard, a four–time gold medalist, caused a major Olympic upset in 1948 when he won the 100 m. He had made the Olympic team by placing third in the 100 m during the US trials and was not expected to be a factor in the race. During those trials, he failed to make his country’s team in his specialty — the 110 m hurdles. However, four years later he made no mistakes in the hurdles, winning the event at Helsinki. He then helped the US team win the sprint relay gold, which he had done four years previous.

Dillard had been inspired to become Olympian during a victory parade in his native Cleveland honouring Jesse Owens after the 1936 Olympics. Seeing the legendary Owens, Dillard vowed then to follow in his idol’s footsteps. He developed into one of the most consistent hurdlers the world has ever seen.

During Second World War, Dillard served as a sharpshooter with the 92nd US Infantry Division, nicknamed after the famed all–black Buffalo soldiers. The 92nd was the only African America division to see combat during the war, fighting valiantly in the Italian campaign from 1943–45.

He later was in charge of communications for the Cleveland Indians for ten years. He also had a television and radio show and was responsible for the city’s educational department spending, as the business chief of the Cleveland Board of Education. In 1955 he was given the Sullivan Award, emblematic of the top American Amateur Athlete for the Year. (BM)

Dmitri Vasilenko (RUS), *12 November 1975 in Cherkessk; †4 November 2019. At the Olympic Games in Atlanta 1996, the gymnast Vasilenko won the gold medal in the all–around final together with teammates Aleksey Nemov, Sergey Kharkov, Nikolay Kryukov, Yevgeny Podgorny, Washington State University. He was able to pay for his education with money he had made by winning the “Superstars,” a made–for-TV show in the US pitting top athletes from various sports against each other in an all–around type competition.

He became director of the Human Performance Centre at the University of Texas Southwestern in 1990. In 2000, Snell was voted New Zealand’s Sports Champion of the 20th Century. He was made a knight companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2001 and was later known as Sir Peter Snell. (OM)
Sigvard Ericsson (SWE), *17 July 1930 in Alänäset; †2 November 2019 in Östersund. In 1955, Ericsson became the first Swede to win the speed skating world title, beating the favoured Soviets in Moscow. Earlier that season, Ericsson had taken the European title, in front of a home crowd in Falun. At both tournaments, Ericsson won the 10,000m, and it was in that distance that he also won the gold medal at the 1956 Olympics in Cortina. After gaining a silver in the 5,000m, he skated close to the world record, unexpectedly beating Knut Johannessen’s leading time.

Next season, Ericsson was unable to continue his successes, and retired. In addition to two more bronze medals at the Europeans (1954, 1956), Ericsson collected 11 Swedish titles. His two titles in 1955 earned him the Svenska Dagbladet gold medal for the best Swedish sports performance of the year. (OM)

István Szívós (HUN), *24 April 1948 in Budapest; †10 November 2019 in Budapest. After playing water polo for Vasas as a youngster, Szívós joined FTC, his first major club, and stayed with them until the age of 20. After being admitted to the Budapest University of Dentistry in 1968, he moved to Orvosegyetem Sport Club (OSC).

Szívós was 18 when he first played for the Hungarian national team and played for them 308 times up to 1980. He won all titles possible: the European Championship twice, and also the World Championship and World Cup. In 1976, he was a member of the team that won the Montreal Olympics gold medal. He took part in four Olympic Games, and returned home with a medal on each occasion. From 1969 to 1971, Szívós was the three–time Hungarian water polo player of the year.

After his playing career, Szívós was appointed technical director of OSC in 1980, and in 1981 graduated from the College of Physical Education as a coach. Between 1983–90 he coached the FTC water polo team, and with them won two national championships and the Hungarian Cup twice, and led them to the semi–finals of the European Cup Winners’ Cup in 1989. In addition, in 1986, he was appointed as national junior water polo team trainer, a post he held for four years. He applied for the position as head coach to the national team in 1990, but unfortunately did not receive enough support.

From 1991–98, Szívós served as executive chairman of the FTC. In 2002, he became head of the Water Polo Department of the Central Sports School, the country’s premier recruiting club, whose many players later became Olympic or World champions. Alongside his position as a sports manager, Szívós also worked as a dentist. In 1994, he was awarded the Central Cross of the Order of the Hungarian Republic, and two years later was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame. In 2000 he was nominated a member of the Hungarian water polo team of the century.

His father, also István, was a member of the 1952 and 1956 Olympic gold medal winning teams, and his son, Márton, is a water polo world champion and two–time Olympian (2012 and 2016) finishing fifth on each occasion. (RL)

Karin Balzer (GDR), *5 June 1938 in Magdeburg; †17 December 2019 in Chemnitz. The trained chemistry expert and later a qualified sports instructor was one of the most high–profile German athletes of her day. In a career that lasted 18 years, she took part in four Olympics, winning one gold (1964) and one bronze (1972) in the 80m and 100m hurdles, respectively. In 1968, she came fifth. In 1960, competing under her maiden name Richert, she failed by a narrow margin in the semi–finals.

Balzer was three–time European champion (1966, 1969 and 1971), and one–time European runner–up in 1962. She won five times at the European Indoor Championships, or European Indoor Games, and set six world records. In 1971, she was voted GDR Sportswomen of the Year.

Her first son, Andreas, born in 1965, had a tragic accident in the summer of 1972 when his mother was preparing for the Munich Games. After lying in a coma for weeks, he died one day before the 100m hurdles final. However, at the request of her husband, who was also her coach, the message was only communicated to her after the competition.

After her sports career had ended, she worked as a coach, a vocational school teacher, and a teacher of social education. Her second son, Falk Balzer, became European vice champion in the 110m hurdles in 1998. At the Sydney Olympic in 2000, he was eliminated in the semi–finals. (VK)

Miguelina Cobián (CUB), *19 December 1944 in Santiago de Cuba; †1 December 2019 in Havana. Cobián was described as the most prominent of female athletes in Cuba in the years after the revolution. She was certainly one of the most successful Cuban athletes of all–time, winning no fewer than 20 medals at major championships. Having won silver medals in the 100, 200 and 4x100 metres relay at the 1963 Pan American Games, she then became the first
Guido Messina (ITA), *5 January 1931 in Monreale; †10 January 2020 in Caselette. With five world titles in the individual pursuit, cyclist Messina won more titles than his famed compatriot Leandro Faggin, although the latter won a total of 12 medals at the worlds, four more than Messina. He won his first two titles as an amateur (1948, 1953), before turning professional and winning three consecutive World Championships (1954–56). Earlier, Messina had also earned an Olympic gold medal in the 1952 team pursuit — the individual event was not on the programme until 1964. Messina was also active on the road, his major success coming in the first stage of the 1955 Giro d’Italia, which he won, earning him a day in the pink jersey. (BM)

Kâzım Ayvaz (TUR), *10 March 1938 in Rize; †18 January 2020 in Helsingborg/SWE. Ayvaz started wrestling in 1953 when he was 15 years old. He wrestled exclusively in the Greco–Roman style, which is a rarity in itself for Turkish wrestlers who mostly prefer the free style. When he first took part in international championships, he became world champion in Budapest in 1958, at the age of 20. His toughest rival in his own country at the time was Mithat Bayrak, the double Olympic champion from 1956 and 1960 in the welterweight division.

Since he was inferior to the welterweight in the elimination for the Olympic Games 1960 in Rome Bayrak, he had to start in Rome in the middleweight class, had to put up with a certain physical disadvantage and was only 4th.

Four years later, he made up for the Olympic victory in Tokyo. This time he started in the lightweight after a new weight class division had been made by the world wrestling association FILA in 1962. He unexpectedly became Olympic champion after losing in silence at the 1963 World Championships to outsiders Moissidis (GRE) and Skauen (NOR).

Ayvaz remained active until 1969, but could not repeat his great successes from the early 1960s. After completing his active wrestling career, he was part of the coaching staff of the Turkish national wrestling team for many years. For his services to wrestling, he was inducted into the FILA International Wrestling Hall of Fame in September 2011. (WR)

Alekssander Skvortsov (URS), *28 August 1954 in Nizhny Novgorod/RUS; †4 February 2020. Hockey star Skvortsov played most of his career with one club, Torpedo Gorky (now Nizhny Novgorod), from 1973–89, but never won a medal at the Soviet Championships. In 1989, Skvortsov played one season with Kärpät Oulu (Finland), before finishing his career with HF Karlshamn (Sweden) in 1991–94.

Internationally, besides his two Olympic medals (1980 silver, 1984 gold), Skvortsov was a three-time world champion (1979, 1981, 1983), European champion four times (1979, 1981, 1983, 1985), and he won a bronze at the 1985 World Championships. In 1979, he played on the winning team in the Challenge Cup between the Soviet Union and NHL All-Stars. In 1981 he won the Canada Cup, also winning bronzes at the 1976 and 1984 Canada Cup.

After his sporting career, Skvortsov worked as a hockey coach in Scandinavia and then as a coach with Amur Khabarovsk at Torpedo Nizhny Novgorod. (T)

Jorge Hernández (CUB), *17 November 1954 in Havana, †12 December 2019 in Havana. Hernández won the light-flyweight (−48kg) gold medal at the 1974 Central American and Caribbean Games at Santo Domingo just three months after his 19th birthday. Later that year, Cuba dominated the inaugural World Amateur Boxing Championships on home soil, winning five gold medals, with Hernández capturing his second major title in nine months when he was in some auspicious gold-medal–winning company like Wilfredo Gómez, Howard Davis, Jr., Emilio Correa, Mate Parlov and Teófilo Stevenson.

Hernández continued winning on the international stage, as well as capturing national titles, by adding the light-flyweight gold at the 1975 Pan American Games in Mexico City, and at Montreal in 1976, he won the ultimate prize, the Olympic gold medal.

Beaten in the final at the 1978 Worlds in Belgrade, Hernández failed to win a second Olympic medal in 1980 when he lost to the eventual runner-up, Viktor Miroshnychenko.
in his first bout. Hernández retired from boxing in 1980, but returned to the sport to take up coaching in 1991, until his eventual retirement in 2016, when he worked at Cuba’s National Boxing School. (IM)

Éva Székely (HUN), *3 April 1927 in Budapest; †29 February 2020 in Budapest. When Ferenc Csik became Olympic champion over 100 m freestyle in 1936, Éva Székely started to dream of winning Olympic gold herself one day. When the daughter of a Budapest wholesaler began training in 1940, her family doctor wanted to forbid her, saying that her heart was too large for it. A year later she was examined by Csik, who was now a doctor himself. He encouraged her by pointing out that he also had a large heart.

What followed was the tragic fate of a Hungarian Jew who, following the German occupation of Hungary in 1944 was confined in a ghetto outside Budapest, where she had to do forced labour.

On 28 October 1944, the then 17-year-old was driven through Budapest with thousands of other Jews to be deported to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. When the marching columns crossed a Danube bridge and a tram came towards them, a confusing situation arose that Éva Székely used to flee.

She managed to jump onto a wagon and remove the Jewish star from her clothing. She found refuge in a house run by the International Red Cross, where she reunited with her parents and sister and survived the Holocaust.

In 1946 Székely started training again. As early as 1947 she finished as runner-up in the 200 m breaststroke at the European Championships behind the Dutch swimmer Nelly van Vliet. At the 1948 Olympics in London she finished fourth, where she was the only competitor to use the butterfly style, which was still permitted at the time. Her big dream came true in 1952, with victory in the Helsinki Olympics. She then married water polo player Deszö Gyarmati, who had also won gold with his team. Their daughter, Andrea Gyarmati, was born in 1954.

After the Melbourne Olympics in 1956, at which Székely won a silver medal, the trained pharmacist emigrated to the United States with her husband. However, in 1958 they both returned to Hungary and to their daughter, who had lived with her grandmother in the intervening period. The couple divorced in June 1964.

Székely became a swimming coach and coached her daughter Andrea, who came fifth in backstroke at the 1968 Games. In 1970 Andrea won European titles in 200 m backstroke and 100 m butterfly. However, to the great disappointment of her mother, at the Munich Olympics in 1972 she lost in 100 m backstroke to Melissa Belote (USA), and she also only won bronze in 100 m butterfly. Andrea ended her sporting career demotivated in 1975.

That same year, Éva Székely started working on her autobiography. Due to severe eye problems that she developed around the same time. Five operations later, she was able to continue her work in 1980. Her biography was published in 1981 under the title Sírni csak a győztesnek szabad! (Only Winners are Allowed to Cry!). The book became a bestseller in Hungary. 120,000 copies were sold within a short period of time. (VK)

Vilhjálmur Einarsson (ISL), *5 June 1934 in Hafranes; †28 December 2019 in Reykjavík. Einarsson was a 5-time Icelandic Athlete of the Year. He was given the Knights Cross of the Icelandic Falcon for his contributions in sports and education.

His son, Einar Vilhjálmssson, was a javelin thrower who competed at three Olympics and was an NCAA Champion in 1983–84 while representing the University of Texas. (BM)

(VM = Bill Mallon, IM = Ian Morrison, OM = OlyMADMen, RL = Rudolf Laky, TK = Taavi Kalju, VK = Volker Kluge, WR = Wolf Reinhardt)

The ISOH offers the families of the deceased its sincere condolences.
BOOK REVIEWS

Margaret Molloy
Martin Sheridan: Mayo’s Famous Son
Mayobooks, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, Ireland 2018

Reviewed by Kevin McCarthy

When I first picked up Margaret Molloy’s book, Martin Sheridan: Mayo’s Famous Son, it felt a bit daunting. At close to 600 pages, it must be one of the largest books there is about an individual athlete, certainly about one from before the First World War. In many ways, the size of the book reflects Margaret Molloy’s approach to the subject too. She was determined to delve into every conceivable aspect of Sheridan’s background in Mayo, as well as his life and sporting career in the USA where he was to become one of the greatest athletes in US and Olympic Games history.

As a result of Molloy’s thorough research, and perhaps related to her professional background as a librarian, the book is an absolute treasury of Sheridan resources – it is full of images, newspaper cartoons, articles, and other primary source materials. It is not without justification that the book’s dust jacket claims that it is “a forensic account” of Sheridan’s sporting career.

For those familiar with Ireland, the title needs little explanation. Mayo was the home county, or district, of Martin Sheridan’s family, where the future great American Olympian grew up near the tiny village of Bohola. Mayo is also one of the Irish counties ravaged by emigration, particularly from the mid-19th century, and in some respects the story of Sheridan has echoes of the stories of people from many, many homes in Mayo, too.

The book is particularly insightful in its focus on Sheridan’s family background, steeped as it was in Irish nationalism, and includes quite an amount about the family’s land and property dealings and involvement in local politics and agrarian agitation. Molloy has found little about Sheridan’s sporting career prior to emigrating to the USA in 1897, aged 16-and-a-half. This reinforces a view that others have promulgated, namely that Sheridan’s athletic career was entirely the product of American training and opportunities. He was too young to have had a pre-existing athletic pedigree prior to leaving Mayo, thus differing noticeably from other great Irish athletes in the USA at that time, like John Flanagan and Paddy Ryan.

There is a huge amount of information on Sheridan’s early years in the USA, and on his developing athletic career with the Pastime club and, subsequently, with the Irish-American Athletic Club in Long Island City. Some of the chapters contain over 200 citations as Molloy has trawled newspapers and other contemporary accounts to build Sheridan’s career, almost competition by competition, also touching on his “celebrity” status from 1906 onwards in the New York Police Department and endorsing sporting goods for the Spalding company.

At times, the narrative suffers a little from the emphasis on using contemporary documents and, particularly where a general chapter on the Olympic Games is provided, with limited contextual relevance to Sheridan’s story. Overall, however, any disruptions to the narrative flow are more than compensated for by the comprehensiveness of the research. The book does not oversell some of the Sheridan legends, such as the non-dipping of the US flag at the 1908 Olympic Games, but it paints a vivid portrait of an athlete who was a huge influence on American sport, particularly in his role as athlete, journalist, and de facto team leader at those London Games.

While there is naturally a significant focus on Sheridan’s American AAU and Olympic achievements, there is also a very valuable section in the book on Sheridan’s brief return home in 1908. Again, contemporary sources abound, and there is a wealth of newspaper material, photographs and the text of various speeches made by or about Sheridan during that visit, his last time on Irish soil. I certainly cannot think of a single important source that has not been employed in showing the impact that Sheridan had in Ireland during that visit, including the memorable match with the great Tom Kiely in Dungarvan, when a five-event contest between the two was somehow declared a draw.

Molloy’s thoroughness in locating contemporary sources also provides some wonderful gems, including insights into the character of Sheridan. One can only laugh at the story of how Sheridan once challenged and beat his fellow Irishman Denis Horgan to an egg-eating contest, with Sheridan devouring 19 eggs to defeat the famed shot putter – who by then felt quite ill – by one egg! Of course, in the chapter dealing with Sheridan’s untimely death a day before his 37th birthday, the personal stories and tributes occupy several pages. Even more poignantly in some respects, the author also details the efforts of later Mayo people and admirers of Sheridan’s, to commemorate and celebrate his legacy properly. Bohola has certainly done him proud, with its memorial, its community centre named after him and, in
Geraint John / Dave Parker
A Review of Olympic Stadia: Theatres of Dreams

Reviewed by Robert K. Barney

In a “fresh off the press” January 2020 publication, Routledge in the UK has given the realm of Olympic scholarship its first single-volume text on Olympic stadia. The co-authors are Geraint John and Dave Parker, who have both forged distinguished careers in architecture and engineering, respectively. In fact, as we are told in a foreword, in 2014 the IOC awarded Geraint John the Pierre de Coubertin Medal for “outstanding services to the Olympic Movement, the only British subject to be so honoured.”

At first glance, Olympic Stadia appears to be a reference text, reminiscent of the Reference Guide to Olympic Medals compiled by Jim Greensfelder and Jim Lally, of which the first of several editions was published in 2000. Both Olympic Stadia and Olympic Medals are similar in size (some 190 pages), contain elaborate and colourful illustrations, and what Greensfelder/ Lally have done for medals, John/ Parker have done for stadia. John/ Parker have done for stadia in terms of design, construction, and material statistics. But there, the parallels between the two works cease. Olympic Stadia turns away from stark statistics and provides limited textual information on stadia “Background, Origins, and Legacy.”

The book’s first four chapters offer brief accounts of matters pertinent to understanding the early arrival of the Modern Games near the end of the 19th century and beyond: “In the Beginning” (Antiquity), “First Stirrings” (Cotswold and Much Wenlock Games), “Baron Pierre de Coubertin” (his creation), and “Sir Ludwig Guttmann/Paralympic Games” (his creation), all in a total of 77 pages (including illustrations).

Olympic Stadia then digresses to chapters (5–33) devoted to the stadiums constructed for each Olympic Games summer festival, from 1896 in Athens to the forthcoming Games of 2020 in Tokyo. In each case the tale is told of how the stadium evolved from plan to construction, its architectural design team, an anecdote or two for which the stadium might be remembered, and the legacy use of the stadium. In general, the chapter length of each case ranges from 4 to 6 pages; not particularly impressive, particularly considering that the textual type size is “a senior’s delight” (huge), added to the fact that anywhere from three to five half-page illustrations accompany each chapter.

The most interesting aspect of Olympic Stadia, and the dimension that keeps the tome from being yet another treatment of the Olympics reflected in tables, appendices, graphs, statistic tabulations, etc., is its anecdotal approach. Did you know, for instance, that Anastasios Metaxas, designer of the 1896 Athens Panathenaic Stadium, won a bronze medal in trap shooting at the 1908 Games in London? Or, that Torben Grut, architect of the 1912 Stockholm Olympic Stadium, was Swedish tennis champion in 1896, and that his son William won the modern pentathlon gold medal in London in 1948? Or, that Günther Behnisch, co-chief architect of the unique stadium in Munich for the 1972 Games, was one of Germany’s youngest U-boat captains in Second World War? Aside like these lessen the impact of “one damn stat after another.”

Anecdotes aside, the authors do pay some attention to the “Legacy” of the various structures. Despite arguments that an Olympic stadium will provide a municipality with an up-to-date civic facility for years to come – to aid the tourist industry, serve as a “home facility” for sports teams, and host major sporting extravaganzas – the fact remains that, more often than not, the revenues gained from its use, after the Games have departed, seldom come even close to being enough to cover continued maintenance and operation.

Not to end on that negative note, there are certainly good qualities to Olympic Stadia. The chapters conclude with a dedication to “The Olympic Stadium of the Future,” focusing on sustainability considerations. Two rather inexplicable appendices terminate the text: Appendix A – The Sochi Winter Games, and Appendix B – The Inter-calated Games. A helpful index is included. The perfect binding and hardcover are admirable qualities, as are the illustrations.

Whether in your hands, or on your bookshelf, Olympic Stadia is a handsome volume, but at the same time, one that is hardly more than a reference guide to a subject of limited interest to Olympic scholars. But stand they do [Olympic stadiums], in original or modified form, public...
reminders of a city's global “time in the sun,” and, as the authors' sub-title suggests: *Theatres of Dreams* in what once was a glorious moment in a city’s history.

Reviewed by Volker Kluge

You have to be Austrian to understand the hype surrounding Marcel Hirscher. When I met Karl Schranz in St. Anton on 4 September 2019 to talk to him about Sapporo 1972, our conversation was interrupted twice.

The Austrian television station ORF was on the phone, urgently asking the skiing legend to appear in a special programme in Salzburg in the evening. The reason: Marcel Hirscher had decided to inform the nation of his long-anticipated retirement from alpine racing. Some hours later, Schranz flew from Innsbruck to Salzburg. That evening, I saw him on TV, surrounded by 90 journalists from 14 countries and 16 camera teams.

There is now a fitting book on the farewell broadcast, which was written by Alex Hofstetter, sports journalist for the newspaper *Kronen Zeitung*, in collaboration with Hirscher’s personal media manager and trainer, Michael Pircher. The blurb emphasises that one is dealing with an “authorised biography” in which the reader can discover “the person behind the gigantic success”.

However, in order to really understand Hirscher’s importance, it is advisable to first take in the last 45 pages. These are comprised of extensive statistics that document the impressive successful career of the best racer of the 2010s, crowned by two Olympic victories in 2018 and seven World Championship titles won between 2013 and 2019.

In his Olympic record (two gold, one silver), the athlete, who specialises in slalom and giant slalom, narrowly missed the record of his compatriot, Toni Sailer, who won three Olympic victories in 1956. But he surpassed Sailer’s record in terms of World Championship medals (seven gold, four silver).

In the Ski World Cup, which did not exist in Sailer’s day, Hirscher climbed the podium no fewer than 138 times after 245 races, 67 of them as winners. He won the large crystal globe, traditionally awarded for first place in the overall World Cup, eight times in a row. Even the famous streak by Austrian “Luxembourger” Marc Giradelli – five overall victories in nine winters – pales against this record.

The book reads as a collection of entertaining and well-written episodes from a 30-year life that began on 2 March 1989, when Sylvia de Vlieg of the Netherlands gave birth to her son Marcel. Two months later, the mother and her baby moved to an alpine pasture at 1,500 m in the State of Salzburg, where the father, ski instructor “Ferdl” Hirscher, ran a hut for 15 summers.

The career of his son, who holds both Austrian and Dutch citizenship, was more or less predetermined. But before Marcel was allowed to become a ski professional, he had to complete a solid apprenticeship as a hotel manager after leaving school. The job gave him enough time to ski in winter.

In late 2004, at the age of 15, he took part in his first FIS race. His debut at the European Cup followed in 2006. A year later came his first World Cup giant slalom race, in which he finished 24th. From then on, Hirscher’s biography was supplemented with diary entries by “Mike” – as coach Michael Pircher is known.

The book gives readers insight into the stressful world of the ski circuit, in which an athlete lives in a bubble – surrounded by a clan and coddled by a ski company that produces 200 to 300 pairs of skis per season for their superstar alone. In return, victories, victories, and further victories are expected.

And when they do win, which is a matter of course for a racer like Hirscher, payment is more than princely. For a city event of no great sporting significance in Moscow in November 2009, each participant received an entry fee of US $15,000 just for turning up. Hirscher took an additional $30,000 for his victory. Not even Karl Schranz could dream of that.

Hirscher’s highly trained body functioned for a decade. Apart from two incidents, he was spared serious injury, meaning that out on the boulevard–style ski slopes he had no trouble living up to his reputation as a “brutal killer with nerves of steel”. A nearly flawless career with the exception of Sochi 2014, when to general disappointment, he “only” brought home silver.

Hirscher responded to raving fans and an insatiable media with even-handed friendliness, regardless of the latter’s might and power. Media consultant Stefan Illek had instilled in him the idea that he should always be more credible than the Pope.

But the more you read this biography, the better you will understand why, in PyeongChang in 2018, Hirscher “dutifully” laid his hitherto–elusive Olympic win at the feet of the press pack with the words, “So now you’ve got your gold …”

The business section of the Austrian press would later report that, in
In 1928, Hirscher was the first athlete in the alpine republic to break the 10 million euro gross advertising value threshold. Sports sponsorship set a new record in 2019, at 1.141 billion euros. Almost 38 percent went into alpine skiing alone, followed by football (20%), Formula I (11.7%) and ski jumping (11.0%). The other sports have to be satisfied with the rest.

Hirscher is now a “ski retiree” trying his hand at mountaineering and motor sports. For him, “Mission Olympia” is over and done with. The Olympic spirit, however you might conceive of it, did not visit him at all during his third Winter Games. His conclusion: “At the end of the day, as an athlete, you just feel like a product.” He never really warmed to it. The reader of this book may not feel much differently.

Andreas Lechner

Heimatgold.

Volk Verlag, Munich 2019
pp. 288, 22.00 EUR, ISBN: 978-3-86222-300-8,
in German

Reviewed by Volker Kluge

It is hardly a sensation that a grandson should discover his grandfather and, subsequently, write a book about him. There are plenty of examples of that type of dedication. But it’s something quite special if this grandpa was once the “strongest man in the world”.

We are talking about Josef Straßberger. The German weightlifter became an Olympic heavyweight champion in Amsterdam in 1928, setting a world record in clean and press with 122.5 kg. In the three–way contest, the 34–year–old managed 372.50 kg.

The grandson is a Bavarian actor, musician, and producer. He was born in 1959 – nine years after his grandfather died of a stroke. He was inspired to write the book while clearing out the Munich apartment where he had grown up, as began to delve into his late mother’s legacy.

However, Lechner did not want to write a non-fiction book; rather, he opted for a biographical novel in the manner of a double–layered novel – a literary device that was also used by writers like Thomas Mann and Stefan Zweig. On the one hand, Lechner describes his grandfather’s life in the first person. On the other hand, he traces events that enable the reader to place what is happening in a historical context.

It is well–known that Straßberger, born in 1894, grew up as the oldest of seven children on a farm in the foothills of the Bavarian Alps. Early on, he learned the meaning of hard work. In addition, he trained his muscles by secretly lifting flour sacks and homemade dumbbells in the attic of his father’s sawmill – often to the annoyance of the family patriarch, who saw it as a useless pastime.

Serving in the artillery in the First World War, Straßberger survived the mass killing due to a serious foot injury and his left middle finger being split in two by a bullet. This would later prove to be a serious handicap for the athlete, which made it difficult for him to clasp the barbell tightly when pushing with both arms for the clean and jerk.

After his demobilisation, Straßberger was brought to Munich by a brewery owner in 1919, where he joined the local 1860 Gymnastics and Sports Club and set his first world record with his bearlike strength. In 1920 he won the World Heavyweight Championship in Vienna, which was not sanctioned by the Fédération Internationale Haltérophile (FIH). FIH was founded in the same year at the Olympic Games in Antwerp. The following year he switched to the heavyweight division, which he dominated for almost a decade.

It took a great deal of patience before Straßberger was able to demonstrate his skills at the Olympic Games. Since Germany, having lost the war, was excluded in both 1920 and 1924, he had to wait until 1928. After his Olympic victory, he won a bronze medal in Los Angeles four years later.

After 13 victories in the German Championships, he had to be satisfied with his first–ever national second place award in 1934. In 1935, he lost to 22–year–old Josef Manger, who won Olympic gold in Berlin the following year. At 41 years old and 110 kg heavy, Straßberger, by then a two–time world record holder for press, was reduced to warming the bench.

The grandson has nothing left of the many medals, trophies, and diplomas that Straßberger won. The grandfather, who had run several restaurants from 1929, lost all of his memorabilia in an air raid on 10 January 1945.

He himself survived with his wife and daughter in the basement of the Münchner Hof hotel. Only one heirloom reminds his grandson of him: a Borsalino hat – which became an icon thanks to Humphrey Bogart in the Hollywood film Casablanca (1942). Straßberger had bought this elegant headgear in New York in 1932.

Cabaret artist Lechner wrote his book with skill and a lot of Bavarian humour. However, he does not make things easy for any historian who is keen on details. The reader will wonder whether the experiences and episodes related here are authentic or products of artistic licence. Both kinds of story are on display here. The real story of Josef Straßberger has yet to be written.