

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY

3rd INTERNATIONAL SESSION FOR OLYMPIC MEDALLISTS

21 - 27 JUNE 2011

PROCEEDINGS



ANCIENT OLYMPIA



*Commemorative seal of the Session*

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3rd INTERNATIONAL SESSION  
FOR OLYMPIC MEDALLISTS

SPECIAL SUBJECT:  
*COMMUNICATION METHODS OF OLYMPIC VALUES  
BY OLYMPIAN ROLE MODELS*

ANCIENT OLYMPIA



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**OF THE 3rd INTERNATIONAL SESSION FOR OLYMPIC MEDALLISTS**  
**ANCIENT OLYMPIA, 25th JUNE 2011**

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## FOREWORD

The 3rd International Session for Olympic Medallists confirmed our expectations that it would function as a workshop that will prepare Olympic medallists to become role models for youth.

The theme of the Session “Communication methods of Olympic values by Olympian role models” was explored by 4 professors who presented in their lectures the educational ideas of the first “Olympian”, Pierre de Coubertin, the role of Olympic athletes in promoting social values, educational methods and procedures for the preparation of athletes, as well as the importance of Olympism in modern society.

The distinguished speakers who developed this theme were: Jean Durry (France), the founder of the National Sports Museum of France, Duff Gibson (Canada), skeleton Olympic medallist and world champion, Georgios Mavrotas (Greece), Associate Professor of the Technical University with five participations in the Olympic Games and Dr Paraskevi Lioumpi (Greece). The lecturers’ presentation led to interesting and fertile discussions between lecturers and Olympic medallists (14 men and 7 women).

In the three working groups Olympic medallists were given the opportunity to work together and exchange views with other fellow medallists from other sports and events. The discussions’ level was impressive and the spirit of cooperation outstanding. A small *Olympic village* was created in the IOA premises with Olympic medallists willing to develop friendly relationships and cooperation between different generations. Their common objective was to provide answers to questions that preoccupy many participants in the Olympic Games.

Olympic medallists discussed and presented their views on their responsibil-

ity toward themselves, the community, the Olympic Movement and mankind as inspiration models for youth, as international ambassadors and a source of inspiration in every life activity. Furthermore, they developed their viewpoint on the objects and methods of communicating with the community.

Olympic Medallists took part in sports activities and workshops and enjoyed working hours and all their other activities.

The Session is extremely important for the education of Olympic Medallists. This was just the beginning and we expect that the process of providing further education to Olympic Medallists as role models will grow even more through their own contribution.

We wish to warmly thank the Ephoria of the IOA, the Hellenic Olympic Committee, the International Olympic Committee and all the members of the staff who support the Olympic Medalists' further education.

Prof. Konstantinos GEORGIADIS

*IOA Honorary Dean*

**Opening Ceremony  
of the 3rd International Session  
for Olympic Medallists**

**ANCIENT OLYMPIA, 22nd June 2011**



*Commemorative photo at the marble stairs*

**ADDRESS AND OPENING**  
**of the works of the Session**  
**by the President of the International Olympic Academy,**  
**Isidoros KOUVELOU**

Dear friends and participants of the International Session for Olympic Medallists,

I am very happy to welcome you to Olympia and to the International Olympic Academy and extremely pleased to have the honor of welcoming great Greek and foreign Olympic Medallists whose performances have added golden pages to the history of the modern Olympic Movement. This Session is very special for the Academy as it gives the opportunity to athletes who have won an Olympic medal from all over the world to meet not in the competition venue but in the Academy's serene and peaceful environment in order to reflect on philosophical issues in a setting where memories and history revive our senses. Moreover, the IOA's role is further strengthened by your presence and cooperation and acquires a new form of expression through your own active contribution as Olympic Medallists.

I believe that the subject of this Session is particularly important and the scientific papers and discussions of the following days will highlight significant issues that preoccupy the world sports community regarding the elite athletes' professional and social life during and after the ending of their sporting career. The Olympic Medallist is the beloved protagonist of the Olympic Games, the oldest and most popular sports event of the ancient and modern world. He generates enthusiasm and excitement among spectators through his never-ending efforts to be first. He becomes an idol, a hero in the eyes of the spectators and children



*Address by the IOA President, Isidoros Kouvelos.*



*At the stele of Pierre de Coubertin.*



*Sarah Winckless (GBR), bronze Olympic Medallist in rowing, is reading extracts from the writings of Pierre de Coubertin.*

of the whole world and as a result of his success he also becomes the cherished athlete of sponsors and a supranational object of adulation.

One wonders how society and the athletes themselves see such a difficult and special role. What is the life of an elite athlete? What does he bring to society and how do people react to the fact that he is a professional athlete? What was the price he had to pay in order to be on the podium? What will be the price when spectators bring him down and marginalize him because he was caught cheating? What will be his future professional and social life when he is no longer in the limelight and no longer present in the stadiums? The answer to all these questions is by no means easy, maybe because, according to top scientists, “professional athletes are beyond good or evil”.

I am fully aware that an athlete’s journey from the training grounds to the Olympic podium is filled with anxiety, hard training, disappointments, as well as great moral satisfaction, which comes as the atonement, a catharsis after all



*Laying of wreath at the Coubertin stele by the Olympic Medallists  
(from left to right): Soon Kit Cheah (MAS), Nyambui Suleiman Mujaya (TAN),  
Steven Mesler (USA), Mikhail Nestruev (RUS) and Sylvia Poll (CRC).*



*Laying of wreath at the Ioannis Ketseas and Carl Diem monument by the Olympic  
Medallists (from left to right): Kósz Zoltán (HUN), Luiza Złotkowska (POL),  
Khaled Mahmoud Fawzy (EGY) and Szu-Yuan Chen (TPE).*



*Commemorative photo at the stele of Pierre de Coubertin.*



*The IOA Honorary Dean is giving information about the Diagoras statue.*

the tribulations of the journey. However, the athlete's progress at the end of his sporting career will be just as difficult. His professional and social integration will not always be easy because society will always have high expectations of him. The visible and invisible facets of such an important person who is a social, national, as well as international idol and a model of Olympic values for youth, require a particular scientific and sociological approach in order to be enhanced. And this is what we shall try to achieve during this Session.

Dear friends, I wish the best of success to the proceedings of this Session and I am convinced that you will all be given the opportunity to express your views and analyze a number of subjects related to the social and professional life of Olympic Medallists during and after the end of their sporting career. No longer on the track or on the podium, without uniforms and medals, let us share some joint concerns in this wonderful setting of ancient Olympia and the Academy.

Thank you very much.



*From the guided tour at the archaeological site of Ancient Olympia.*



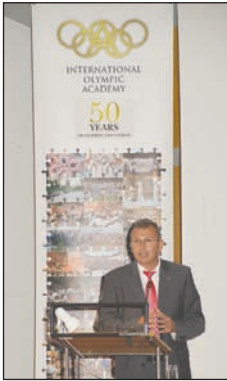
**Works  
of the 3rd International Session  
for Olympic Medallists**

*Lectures*

- The opinions of the lecturers do not necessarily reflect those of the International Olympic Academy.
- Out of respect for multiculturalism and diversity of scientific research, we do not intervene in every lecturer's personal way of presenting his/her bibliography and footnotes.



**THE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME ON OLYMPIC STUDIES  
"OLYMPIC STUDIES, OLYMPIC EDUCATION,  
ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF OLYMPIC EVENTS"**



**Prof. Konstantinos GEORGIADIS (GRE)**

*Honorary Dean of the IOA*

*Vice-Rector of the University of Peloponnese*

The Department of Sports Organisation and Management of the Faculty of Human Movement and Quality of Life Sciences of the University of Peloponnese in collaboration with the International Olympic Academy organised for the first time during the Academic year of 2009-2010 a Programme of Postgraduate Studies with the title "*Olympic Studies, Olympic Education, Organisation and Management of Olympic Events*". The Master's Degree Programme for the Olympic Studies constitutes an innovation in the Olympic Movement at an international level.

The *International Olympic Academy* functions as a multicultural interdisciplinary centre that aims at studying, enriching and promoting Olympism. The foundation of such an institution was inspired by the ancient Gymnasium, which shaped the Olympic Ideal by harmoniously cultivating body, will and mind. The IOA is an internationally recognized center for Olympic studies and has been operating for 49 years now under the auspices of the HOC and the IOC as a neutral and free dialogue forum. Constant search for and attainment of new objectives

–in the field of education and research– is essential for the promotion of the Olympic Movement and its enhanced visibility and role at international level.

The mission of the IOA is:

- To further explore and enhance the contribution of Olympism to humanity.
- To act as an International Forum for free expression and exchange of ideas among the Olympic family, intellectuals, scientists, athletes, sport administrators, educators, artists and the youth of the world.
- To bring together people from all over the world, in a spirit of friendship and cooperation.
- To motivate people to use the experiences and knowledge gained in the IOA productively, in promoting the Olympic ideals in their respective countries.
- To serve and promote the Ideals and principles of the Olympic Movement.
- To cooperate with and assist the National Olympic Academies and any other institutions devoted to Olympic education.

The *University of Peloponnese* has its seat in Tripolis and is being developed at the level of complete Faculties in the five capitals of the Prefectures of the Region of Peloponnese (Tripolis, Kalamata, Corinth, Nafplio, Sparta). It includes six (6) Faculties with ten (10) Departments that cover an ample variety of subjects and disciplines: science and technology, humanitarian sciences and cultural studies, social and economic sciences, fine arts and human movement and quality of life sciences. Additionally, ten (10) master's degree programmes are offered in the cities of the University. Furthermore, the operation of the Research Institute of Byzantine Culture in Mystras, at the Laconia Prefecture, is very important.

The purpose of the establishment and operation of the University of Peloponnese is its creative contribution to the development of the tertiary education in Greece, with high quality standards in the curriculum, research and teaching, which will meet the demands of a modern University of national, European and international impact.

The philosophy underlying the Master's Degree Programme in Olympic studies represents an innovation for the Olympic Movement at an international level. The educational programme rests on the three pillars of the Olympic Movement: Education, Sports and Culture, which are the foundation of Olympism and Olympic pedagogy. As they broaden their academic knowledge participants will experience the deeper meaning of Olympism through sporting, cultural and social activities.

The programme's philosophy is fully compatible with the core principles underpinning the Olympic Movement's creation. An idealistic approach to Olympism is followed for the propagation of the Olympic ideal worldwide, which is essential for the promotion and dissemination of the Olympic Movement's humanitarian values. Learning and research on Olympic issues is encouraged by focusing, in particular, on Olympic philosophy, Olympic pedagogy, Olympic education, the organisation and management of Olympic events. The Olympic Movement is a social and educational movement aimed at all people, races, religious groups, men and women without distinction, so that sport can contribute to the development of men's virtues and their individual and social fulfillment.

The course seeks to achieve a number of very important objectives. For the first time an international master's degree for the Olympic studies will be granted in the birthplace of the Olympic Games, in Ancient Olympia and in Sparta. A Greek university is also given the opportunity to cooperate directly with the IOA, a cooperation that will contribute to the development of both institutions. Moreover, the course aims at providing high level specialization in all these subjects to students and Olympic Movement officials and playing a leading role in the areas of Olympic research and Olympic education.

Today, there are Olympic Education Programmes in more than 80 countries around the world. The challenge for the International Olympic Academy and for the University of Peloponnese is therefore to support these efforts by laying down the constant principles and values that will guide the development of curricula. Greece expresses the sentimental side of the Olympic Movement –the myth– that has its own special role to play in educational matters. With the academic support of the University of Peloponnese, the Master's Degree Programme for the



*Lecture by Professor Konstantinos Georgiadis.*

Olympic studies could become a source for the production of ideas for Olympic education issues at a world level.

Foreign and Greek University professors specialized in Olympic issues are teaching in the course. There is a large pool of professors from all over the world who are already working with the IOA in the context of its Postgraduate Seminar that has been running since 1993 and who together with the professors of the University of Peloponnese will constitute the faculty and research staff.

The Olympic Movement needs people who know its history and philosophy to guide its future course. This particular programme can provide people with the appropriate training to carry through this mission. The programme is open to graduates of Greek and foreign higher education institutions, officials of National Olympic Academies, National Olympic Committees, the International Olympic Committee and European Union Committees, graduates of university departments for Education, Culture and Sports, as well as graduates of physical

education, media and economics departments and other institutions dealing with relevant subjects.

The programme's duration is 3 semesters, each corresponding to 30 credits. Courses are given in English. The number of enrolled students has been set at 30 each year. The curriculum includes 8 mandatory and 2 selection courses on the following subjects:

### ***1st Semester***

1. The birth of sports. The history and philosophy of sports in antiquity.
2. Modern Olympic Games (revival, historical evolution of Summer and Winter Olympic Games, social and political aspects of the Olympic Games, Olympic Institutions. Olympic Law).
3. Sport and Ethics – Olympic Philosophy.
4. Olympic Pedagogy: Development and implementation of Olympic education school programmes.

#### *Selection courses (1 of the following)*

1. The role, organisation and operation of Olympic museums and libraries.
2. Financial management of sports organisations.
3. International relations – Humanitarian law.

### ***2nd Semester***

1. Olympic Pedagogy: Development and implementation of Olympic education school programmes.
2. Evaluation of Olympic Education Programmes; research methodology.
3. Organisation and management of the Olympic Games (technology, media, financial management, communication, etc.)
4. Olympic sponsoring and marketing.

#### *Selection courses (1 of the following)*

1. Specialized issues of the Olympic Movement: Media – Technology and

the Olympic Games, Doping, Fair play, racism and sports, intercultural education, volunteering, etc.

2. Strategic and operational planning of major sports events.

### ***3rd Semester***

1. Preparation and presentation of a Master's thesis.

### **The first year of the Master's Degree Programme's Operation**

31 students from 25 different countries attended the Programme for the academic year 2009-2010. All the courses of the 1st Semester took place in Ancient Olympia from the 2nd of October to the 5th of December 2009 while during the 2nd Semester that lasted from the 17th of April to the 17th of June 2010 some of the courses took place in Sparta.

Although the duration of the courses in each semester was two months with a daily intensive schedule, the evaluation of the programme showed that the participants were satisfied in almost all the aspects of the programme.

Some of the positive elements that the participants identified were the good organisation, the innovations and the quality of the lectures, the contemporary issues that were examined and analyzed, the scientific grounding of the professors, the excellent accommodation, the service of the staff, the knowledge and the experiences that the participants got and generally the positive multicultural atmosphere that prevailed during the whole duration of the Master's Degree programme.

The organisation of the programme works in combination with the visits to archeological sites and the cultural – sporting activities contributed largely to the success of the organisation of the Master's Degree programme works.

The cohabitation in Ancient Olympia with people from different geographical and cultural background gave the participants the possibility to meet new people and to exchange views and experiences in common interests. Additionally, the innovative and interesting subjects that were examined or discussed contributed

to the accomplishment of the goals of the Master's Degree Programme. Thus, the participants acquired a more ample knowledge, gained a more clear view of Olympism and the Olympic Movement, won new educational experiences and obtained more self-confidence after the completion of the courses.

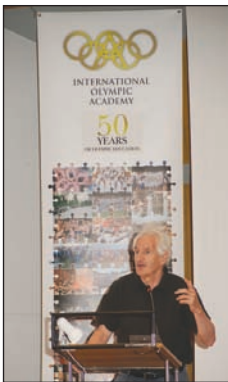
The advantages that the participants gained from their participation to the programme will help them extend their career and use this knowledge in their country aiming to promote the Olympic Ideal and the Olympic Education.

In the current academic year of 2010-2011, 28 students from 20 different countries are attending the Master's degree Programme in the facilities of the International Olympic Academy in Ancient Olympia. At the same time the students that completed successfully the first two semesters, are in the process of writing their master's thesis. By the end of the third semester they will be the first to receive the Master's Degree Graduation Diploma.

The Master's Degree Programme is privately financed by the John S. Latsis Foundation therefore no costs are incurred by the students regarding course fees and accommodation.

I wish to point out that the University of Peloponnese has chosen for its logo the chariot race from the legend of Pelops who is considered to be the legendary founder of the Olympic Games in antiquity. This might be symbolic for the cooperation between the two institutions with the generous sponsorship of the Latsis Foundation. This cooperation for the Master's Degree programme in Olympic studies will revive the ancient gymnasium of "arete" (virtue) in Ancient Olympia and Sparta, two places closely connected with education, feats and wisdom. At this gymnasium of virtue young people from all over the world are trained in Olympic education in order to bring the timeless message of the Olympic idea to their countries.

## PIERRE DE COUBERTIN, THE FIRST “OLYMPIAN”?



### **Jean DURRY (FRA)**

*Writer, Historian on Sport and Olympism,  
Member of the IOC Commission for Culture and Olympic  
Education, Founder of the National Sports Museum  
of France*

On Monday April 6, 1896 –or if you prefer, on March 25, according to the Greek calendar at the time– in the early afternoon, the royal family entered the Panathenaic Stadium. It was the Monday after Orthodox Easter Sunday, the date had not been selected at random; it was the date of the national holiday that commemorated the beginning of the War of Independence against Turkey, in 1821. Crown Prince Constantine turned to King George the 1st who proclaimed: “*the opening of the first international Olympic Games in Athens*”. Choirs sang the beautiful cantata of Greek composer and director Spyros Samaras on the verses of poet Costis Palamas, so successfully that they had to repeat it a second time. Pigeons were released above the Stadium.

The trumpet sounded, marking the start of the first 100 m. series that was won by the American athlete Francis Lane in 12"1/5 in front of the Hungarian Szokolji (12"3/4), followed by his compatriots Thomas Curtis (same time) and Thomas Burke (12" who won the other two. A few minutes later, a 27 year old Harvard student, James Brendan Connolly, would become the first Olympic champion of modern times by winning the triple jump (13 m. 71) in front of a

Frenchman, Alexandre Tuffère, who was living in Athens (12 m. 70). After two 800 m. series, won by the Australian Edwin Flack (2'10") and Frenchman Albin Lermusiaux (2'16"3/5), the discus throw to the public's huge disappointment was not won by Greek athletes Paraskevopoulos and Vestris, but by a 20-year old Princeton student, Robert Garrett who, the day before did not even know the precise dimensions of the implement and still achieved a remarkable result in his trial throw by projecting the discus at 29 m. 15 versus 28.95 and 28.78 for his two other throws.

Francis Lane, Connolly, Garrett. When there are all these very first winners who are unquestionably recorded on the winners list of the modern Olympic Games, how can we support the thesis according to which Pierre de Coubertin was the first Olympian?

But still...

### **I. Was Pierre de Coubertin an "Olympian"?**

You are all Olympic medallists. All of you have climbed on one of the three steps of the podium and were deeply moved when you saw your country's flag rise to the sky. You are therefore "Olympians" in the full meaning of the term.

But can Pierre de Coubertin, however, and this will be the first question mark, justify this very specific title that cannot of course be the object of any cheating or usurpation?

The answer might surprise you. It is contained in three phrases. Coubertin was just a modest sports adept, nothing more. He is not mentioned on the Olympic Games' winners list. He did, however, win the gold medal! How was this possible?

He did of course live the feelings and emotions of athletes. He practiced fencing, tennis, riding, cycling and soon after that motorized tricycling, boxing (the so-called "French" boxing first with feet and fists and maybe also English boxing). His physical condition allowed him to play the hare in a "rallye-papier", over more than 10 kilometers in the mud, together with his friend Father Henri

Didon or, on 20 March 1892, to referee to the end the first final of the French football-rugby Championship; he also skied in the Alps, he loved rowing and was still doing it in sports attire and naked arms on the Lac Lemman in his “small racing boat” at the age of 73, just one year before his death. However, the question or the possibility of seeing him on the start line as an Olympic competitor was never raised.

So, we have to look elsewhere. The solution to the riddle may be where you least expect to find it. Did you know that from 1912 (Stockholm) to 1948 (London already) art contests in architecture, music, painting and graphic arts, sculpture and medals, as well as literature, were fully fledged Olympic contests and that their winners were entitled, like all other athletes, to the three medals, gold, silver and bronze? But even if we look at these lists with a magnifying glass very carefully, we will not find Coubertin’s name anywhere...

Turning into detectives this is the direction that we need to follow for our investigation in order to discover that the Jury of the literature contest at the Olympic Games of Stockholm had to appraise an “*Ode to Sport*” in 9 verses submitted by “Georg Hohrod and Martin Eschbach” in two languages (French on one side, German on the other), something that was quite audacious for that time given the fact that the two countries were at war. The jury found it to be worthy of a gold medal. The author’s anonymity was apparently fully respected. However, it later turned out, as you’ve probably guessed, that Pierre de Coubertin was hiding behind that double pseudonym! He enjoyed the intense and mischievous pleasure of joining incognito the number of authentic laureates of these Games, which he himself had reinvented.

He therefore fully deserves the title of Olympian.

## **II. Pierre de COUBERTIN, the “first Olympian”?**

Having settled this point, let us look at another perspective, moving to another dimension, at the level of the establishment of the modern Olympic Games.

Were Pierre de Coubertin’s role and place those of the “first” Olympian?

Putting them into perspective will allow you, who are the substance and the joy of the Games, to quickly examine them again and identify in so doing the basic elements.

There is no doubt that there were before him other attempts at revival, as shown by the important work of historians and researchers Karl Lennartz (Germany), David Young (United States), Georgios Dolianitis and Konstantinos Georgiadis (Greece). The ancient Olympic Games were buried after surviving for about twelve centuries (776 BC – 393 AD). The name and aura of Olympia, however, survived through the times. During the 19th century, when sports competitions as we know them today were starting to emerge, Olympic Games were organised in France for example, since 1832, near the city of Grenoble, for the students of the small Seminary of Rondeau, every two years; “Olympic Games” were also organised in Sweden at Ramlosa, in 1834 and 1836, on the initiative of professor Gustave Johann Schartau. More important, since 1850, there were, on the one hand, at Much Wenlock on the borders of England and Wales, the “Olympian Games” and the “Olympian Wenlock Society”, founded in 1850 by Doctor William Penny Brookes, who warmly welcomed Coubertin, in October 1890, to their 40th edition and, on the other, in Athens, the “Olympia”, sponsored by Evangelis Zappas, a national fair of industry, agriculture and fine arts, which included a sports programme and was organised in 1859, 1870, 1875 and 1889.

In all equanimity, we have to say that Pierre de Coubertin was the man whose tenacity and capacity to conceive an event of such international dimension and scope made it possible to establish an organisation underpinned by principles that would ensure its longevity.

His first reference at the Sorbonne, on 25 November 1892, to the idea of “*re-establishing the Olympic Games*” according “*to the conditions of modern life*” at the end of a lecture, did not lead to any reactions. The “International Congress of Paris”, held from 16 to 23 June 1894, revealed the full measure of his efficiency. During the last session of the Congress that was also convened at the Sorbonne, the announcement of the Games’ rebirth was enthusiastically received. In the course of these few days, the quadrennial periodicity of the games, the strictly modern character of the sports to be selected, the principle of creating an Interna-

tional Olympic Committee with the Greek Demetrios Vikelas as its first President and the principle of “Games travelling to the great capitals of the world” were all accepted.

The battle had not yet been won, however. ATHENS was chosen as the host city of the first Games. Everything had to be invented in order to put together, at the end of the 19th century, an event of such international magnitude that would include, on an equal footing, contemporary sports: athletics, gymnastics, combat sports, water sports and cycling, which had no contact between them, until then, apart from bickering among them. An endeavor of this kind was doomed to fail. Within just 18 months, however, the Greeks achieved a miracle thanks to their experience from the four “Olympia” organised between 1859 and 1889, as shown and explained by the beautiful exhibition presented in Athens by the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee in 2004. Up to 60,000 spectators filled the marble steps of the Panathenaic Stadium, 81 athletes from 12 countries competed with 230 Greeks in 43 events for a silver or bronze medal, an olive tree branch and a diploma; the victory of Spiridon Louis in the first marathon race ever run –40 kilometers in 2h.58'50"– met with huge enthusiasm. The modern Olympic Games had made their glorious entrance in the history of sport.

Such enthusiasm, however, naturally led to the temptation to claim that the revived Games should no longer leave Greece, which would have the exclusivity, the monopoly on them. This is where Pierre de Coubertin courageously intervened and resolutely stuck by the principle adopted by the Congress in 1894.

On 15 April 1896, on the evening of the closing of the Games, he would resume the Presidency, which he actively held until 1925; so, the second Games would be held in Paris and then travel from one big city to another all over the world. History has vindicated this visionary intuition.

In the years that followed, Coubertin was truly the man who methodically and progressively established this “Olympic protocol” which, instead of introducing a rigid etiquette, without any substance, transcended the successive editions of the Games. You are all quite familiar with the symbols which he meticulously wanted or accepted and you know that they embody the meaning and the spirituality of the Games. For example, the flag with the five interlaced colored rings,

which represent the union of the five continents of the world that is now the most famous logo globally was conceived and designed by Pierre de Coubertin himself who commissioned its execution to the Bon Marché stores; the oath, which may sound naive to some strong minds but whose words are morally uplifting, the flame. Is there a more thrilling moment for the athletes who feel the deep joy of being actors living their dreams, for all those who are present and for the hundreds of millions of human beings who watch them simultaneously on their television screens than the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games?

In a nutshell, in today's sports world, if the modern Olympic Games, this "four-year festival of world youth" have a special, predominant position, if, as he emphasized "*the Olympic Games are not just World Championships. They are something else and much more than that. Through them, each generation celebrates its coming, its joy of life, its faith in the future*" (B.I.P. no 7, Lausanne 1931), this is due to the fact that his broad perception, his extensive culture and intelligence as an educator, historian and humanist, has put them into orbit.

This was how he wanted them to be and they never stopped growing. He analyzed and formulated this concept like no one else: "*Olympism tears down dividing walls. It calls for air and light for all (...). This is its ideal program. Can we implement it?*" (Gazette de Lausanne. Olympic Letter of 26 October 1918). We thus realize why we are entitled to consider him as the "first" Olympian.

### III. Pierre de Coubertin, the first Olympian communicator?

This third Session for Olympic Medallists in Olympia focuses on communication. We should, therefore, ask ourselves if Pierre de Coubertin deserves to be considered as the "first Olympian communicator". This will enable us to see whether he was a man looking at the past – as he was constantly trying to learn from mankind's history – or rather at the present or the future, closely following the progress of science and inventions.

He joined public life when he was only 24 years old with his very first article that was published on 1st November 1886 in the periodical "La Revue Sociale"

on “English colleges: Harrow school”. This was the start of his intense activity as a Journalist, as shown by his 1895 press card from the “Association of Parisian Journalists”, which included about 1300 articles for approximately 70 papers and reviews in France and abroad until 1937, the year of his death. He was also the Director and Editor in Chief of the “Revue athlétique” (1890-1891) and responsible for the publication of the “Olympic Review” at irregular intervals when it first came out in 1901 to become a monthly series from January 1906 until issue 103 of July 1914. He contributed many chronicle series to the newspaper “Le Figaro” for example (1902-1906) and we should mention, in particular, the series of 21 “Olympic Letters” published in the “Gazette de Lausanne” from 14 October 1918 until 17 May 1919.

Paying attention to all available communication media in his time, he did not overlook brochures, leaflets, posters or postcards.

Coubertin is a writer. Although he wrote his original texts and abundant correspondence by hand, he was a man of the print media. His work represents approximately 14,000 published pages which do not include at least thirty or so books, from the first “L’éducation en Angleterre” [Education in England] (1888, 327 pages) down to “Anthologie” [Anthology] offered by his friends in 1933 on the occasion of his 70th birthday. They were the books of an educator, a historian, in particular a fascinating “Universal History” in 4 volumes published in 1926-1927, but in some cases also of a novelist. The “Le roman d’un rallié” was published in 1899-1902 under the pseudonym of Georges Hohrod and for you the most important are: “Une campagne de 21 ans” (1887-1908), “Essais de psychologie sportive” (1913) and “Memoires olympiques” (1931-1932). His style is literary and his formulation often quite original and strong.

The creation of the five ring “logo”, I just mentioned, is obviously the outcome of his feeling for communication.

He did not overlook any of the modern technical developments. On the evening of 23 June 1894, he celebrated “*electricity* (he was referring to telegraphy in this case) (*which*) *transmitted everywhere the news that Hellenic Olympism had returned to the world after an eclipse of several centuries*”.

We do not know if had foreseen the possible use of cinema, films, by athletes:

*"There is nothing like the reproduction of movement to control its accuracy and degree of efficiency (...) It's quite a problem to grasp the difficulties (...) When you are a witness to it though, you shall be immediately convinced and (...) able to correct more easily what has to be corrected (...). This is the only way to obtain the curve of one's technical failures."*

He was an eloquent speaker in the frequent and significant speeches, addresses, lectures that he delivered. In his high-pitched voice, this short man understood and supported athletes, which certainly makes him one of you. He was always on your side and not on the side of the officials' nomenclature, the unavoidable outcome of sport's exponential development. *"The modern athlete (...) The things that have been said against him (...) I still believe that he has been wrongly slandered and consider parents, teachers, politicians, the press and officials (...) responsible for his falls, whilst being amazed at the fact that they are not even more numerous"* (23 June 1934, in the amphitheater of the University of Lausanne).

He used radio broadcasting – television had not been born yet – advisedly. On the 4th of August 1935, he would broadcast from the microphone of Radio-Suisse Romande and then of Radio-Berlin his latest thoughts on *"The philosophical foundations of modern Olympism"*. It was on the waves, from Olympia this time –where we are gathered once again– that he had sent his message *"To the sporting youth of all nations"*. Let us listen to Pierre de Coubertin, Olympic gold medallist, creator of the modern Olympic Movement and first "Olympian communicator". His voice reaches us and his words amaze us by their energy focused on the future:

*"My friends and I have not worked to give you the Olympic Games so that they will be turned into a museum object (...) nor so that commercial or political interests should take them over (...)*

*In the modern world, full of powerful possibilities and yet also threatened by perilous decline, Olympism can become a school of moral nobility and purity as well as physical endurance and energy (...)*

*The future depends on you".*

## THE ROLE OF OLYMPIANS IN THE PROPAGATION OF SOCIAL VALUES



**Duff GIBSON (CAN)**

*World and Olympic Champion Skeleton  
Canadian Skeleton Team Head Coach*

Let me begin with a story. A friend of mine named Bob and I were talking about sportsmanship and the value of sport and it reminded him of a time when he attended

Ridley College in southern Ontario.

*“...there was a football match (North American football) being played against our arch rival. Well, you have heard of the old sleeper play were you take three players off the field and send back two into the huddle hoping the opposition doesn't notice the missing player crouched down near the sideline pretending to be part of the crowd. Well this is what our team did and it looked like the trick was going to work. When out of the crowd near this crouching lad came this bustling old man, dressed in his suit and black teaching gown and wielding his cane high above his head. He gave the lad a couple of good licks with the cane while yelling in his booming voice,” We don't play like this at Ridley! We don't play like this at Ridley!” It was the dreaded head master. Well whether we won the game or not I*

*cannot recall but the lesson of play the game fairly and properly, as I said before, was reinforced and has lasted me a lifetime.”*

There are undoubtedly those who would argue that the old sleeper play isn't breaking any rules and getting caught by it is a valuable lesson in its own right. Times have certainly changed since Bob attended Ridley College. Hitting a kid with a cane is a bit outdated but leadership is not. The point of this story is actually twofold. First, I think it takes some courage to interrupt a high school football game to say something important about actually earning what you achieve. I worry that there aren't enough people around these days that would risk being embarrassed in front of a student population to make the point. Second, Bob will be turning 76 years old this year. This is a lesson that has lasted 60 years, and in his own words, Bob has “tried to live his life by that standard.”

To me this is a very powerful illustration of the impact *one* person can have on the lives of others. In the story, we're talking about a teacher rather than an Olympian but the point is the same – one person has the potential to have a dramatic impact on the lives of others and what an absolute *privilege* it is to have a voice. As an Olympian you have a very strong voice.

Before we can discuss how an Olympian is able to promote positive social values, we first need to understand that sport serves a purpose in society and has many valuable lessons to teach. We also need to understand why we participate in the first place. In the world of business, it's the norm to have a mission statement and a number of value statements that guide the actions of a company. With respect to individuals, most people probably have a rough idea, but it is a valuable exercise to actually sit down and determine what you stand for, what your values are and what message you want to project.

### **What is the Purpose of Sport?**

Why does sport exist? Did we just want to see who was faster, higher, or stronger or does it actually have a purpose? What about for your kids? Would you want them to participate even if you knew they would never qualify for an Olympic Games, let alone win a medal? Even for most Olympians, the answer to this

last question is “yes”. I believe Olympians are great supporters of sport because they’ve experienced first hand the great joy that sport can be in a person’s life. For a young person, finding something that you love to do that is active and healthy for both the mind and body is a great gift.

Especially when we’re talking about youth, sport is also a great teacher of values – dedication, perseverance, sportsmanship, and teamwork, to name only a few, are all lessons learned through sport. As leaders in our community as Olympians are, we need to be aware of the purpose of sport for our youth and encourage the positive lessons. Jim Peplinski, who is a former captain of the Calgary Flames of the National Hockey League believes that if you focus on the personal development of kids, you actually get better athletes as well.

*“Sport can make people great athletes... Or sport can make athletes great people. If you approached sport with the goal to do your best and enjoy it, would you play longer? Would you be better rounded? Would you get more out of sport? Would you be a better person? And maybe become a great athlete too? I believe so. Get good at a sport. Be a better athlete. Get good at what makes you good at a sport, be a better person. You win both ways.”*

### **What is the Purpose of Olympic Sport?**

Why did/do you compete? Is it for the money or fame? For the most part it’s not about money. There are certainly exceptions like some downhill skiers, some track athletes who can make in the millions of dollars but the overwhelming majority of Olympic athletes make very little money. In Canada for example, a reporter for the Globe and Mail found that of all the Canadian gold medallists from Vancouver/Whistler, excluding teams such as the men’s and women’s curling teams and the men’s hockey team which are all professional, more than half of them listed their expected income for 2010 as being \$25000 - exactly the amount given to gold medal winners from the Canadian government. That’s just the gold medal winners! The majority of Olympians aren’t as lucky and without question, amateur athletes would do much better financially if they weren’t athletes.

As for fame, *if you're good enough to win a medal then you do get a lot of attention for a short period of time, once every four years. Again, there are certainly exceptions but the vast majority of Olympians won't win medals and so in my opinion, neither fame nor fortune are great motivators for Olympic athletes.*

So why *do we compete?* This is a question that you really need to ask yourself. Many athletes might answer very quickly that they compete "to win". The more great athletes I ask this question, the more I've come to realize that the better you are, the more it becomes about the *challenge*. I believe what motivates Olympians is the challenge and *trying* to be the best, knowing that failure is a possibility. If there was no possibility of failure, there would be no reward in success. If it was just about winning, wouldn't we seek out *weaker* opponents and not the biggest stage which is the Olympic Games?

Bonnie Blair competed for the United States in long track speed skating in four Olympic Games beginning in 1984 in Sarajevo and ending in 1994 in Lillehammer. In that time she won five gold and one bronze medal, amazingly defending the gold medal she won in the 500m in Calgary for two more successive Olympics, an extremely rare accomplishment. This is a woman who has done a lot of winning in her career but if you ask her, she'll tell you that one of her most satisfying moments as an Olympian was finishing 4th in the 1500m at the Lillehammer Games.

*"In Lillehammer, given the three races I took part in, the 500, the 1000 and the 1500, the 1500 was my best race. It was a personal best by over a second, it was an American record, faster than I had gone ever, so to me that was like winning a gold medal even though it was 4th. Now I don't want to take away from the two gold medals that I won because those were thrilling and exciting races but if I have to look at pure athleticism, and goals of skating there at the games, that was my best race and I was 4th. And I was just as proud of that 4th place finish as I was of the gold medals."*

At that point I asked her if she would go so far as to say it was her best race in terms of her personal satisfaction? "Yes, yes!" was her answer.

*“I look at that 1500 and that was the best I had and it was 4th and that was something that I was really proud of. When I was in the media room and they were throwing microphones in front of me and they were saying, “aren’t you disappointed?” and, “you just missed a bronze!” and it wasn’t [disappointing for me]. I was very happy with what I did”.*

Olympic sport is about being the best you can be – the pursuit of excellence. If you’re lucky enough to be one of the best in the world then being your best might be good enough to win an Olympic medal but your motivation and ultimately your satisfaction will relate to your performance relative to your ability and the challenge you face. Young people need to know this. There are a lot of mixed messages out there as to why people do what they do.

## **How Do We Propagate Olympic Values?**

There are many different ways in which an Olympian can promote positive social values. You can start a blog, you can speak to schools about your experiences or you can support an existing charitable organisation or perhaps start your own! Regardless of how you go about it, there are two steps that are necessary to make it happen, 1) believe in the importance of promoting positive social values and 2) lead by example.

### ***1. Believe in the Importance of Olympic Values***

Living in Calgary has afforded me the opportunity to see first-hand that many of the *most* successful athletes from my country are that way at least in part because of values and/or attitudes about sport and about life. I’ve also had the pleasure of competing against some of the great athletes of my sport (skeleton). It was my pleasure because of their belief in sportsmanship and because of their attitude, as described by the credo, “may the best one win”.

When I think about great sportsmanship and great champions, I think of a guy by the name of Gregor Staehli. Gregor is from Switzerland and is the most successful

athlete in the history of the sport I competed in. I think it's important to mention his success as it may have played a role in terms of the attitude he has about competition. He won his first World Championship medal in 1990 and won his first World Championships in 1994. The year after winning bronze at the Torino Olympics, Gregor won his second World Championship gold medal on his home track in St. Moritz, in what I assumed would be his last race. However, after taking the 07/08 season off, Gregor returned to the World Cup circuit and claimed his third World title. In all, he has won a total of 8 World Championship medals as well as two Olympic medals. These are astounding totals considering they have one race a year to determine who is the World/Olympic Champion. Probably the single most impressive statistic about Gregor is the fact that if you averaged every one of his World Cup races over his entire career including his rookie year, he averaged a 4th place finish!

Obviously he's been tremendously successful in his career and when you've won that often and for that many years, what value does competition still hold for you? What makes you keep training to get better? Clearly the answer has nothing to do with winning yet another medal or trophy. The answer, I believe, is the challenge. And this is a very key concept – when you realize that the great joy of sport is in the challenge, then the better the competitors are, the *greater* the challenge, and the greater the reward if you are able to ultimately succeed.

Another way of expressing it is like this – if there was no challenge, if it was *easy*, there would be no reward. How exciting would it be for a guy with Gregor's resume to beat a rival because they had a bad day? For him, is that something worth celebrating? No. So here's the key point: when Gregor Staehli wished you luck, he truly wanted you to have your best race. Then, if you did and he beat you, that *meant* something. As a consequence, I can tell you first hand that it created a great atmosphere to both compete in and achieve your best in. Competing against Gregor was an honor and pleasure, and on the few occasions that I was able to beat him, he was always very sincere in his congratulations. I'd even say that after my first win at the World level, what made that experience even greater than it already was, was the support and sincere happiness that some of my competitors had for *my* success and Gregor was a big part of that.

As an Olympian, if you've lived what I've described, then you know first hand

how important your sportsmanship and values are as well as those of your teammates and competitors is in terms of creating a sporting environment in which everyone can achieve their best in. If you have any desire to promote positive social values, you need to believe in it with respect to everything you do. As an Olympian, sport is such a big part of what you do and it's why you have a voice in the first place so train and compete with sportsmanship and all of the values that sport teaches us.

## ***2. Lead by Example***

Being an Olympian is a privilege, and you have to realize it as such. As an Olympic medallist, you have a very unique opportunity to have an impact on the people around you. I believe that this impact happens on a daily basis when you may not realize it and in ways you might not expect.

I talked about Bonnie Blair earlier and her successes and a performance that she was very proud of that didn't win a medal. I was put in contact with Bonnie originally through a friend of mine named Moira who was a teammate of Bonnie's for many years. It wasn't until after I had interviewed Bonnie that I talked to Moira about what it was like being Bonnie's teammate. According to Moira, Bonnie was the consummate team member and she led by example. Even as the most decorated American winter Olympian at the time, Bonnie never conducted herself as being any different or better than any other member of her team. Moira made the point that athletes these days often arrive late or leave early from training camps and that would be the last thing that Bonnie would have done.

There was one incident in particular that Moira shared with me that illustrated how Bonnie was a leader within the team. Around the time that the Berlin wall came down, it was rumored that the former East Germans had been taking performance enhancing drugs. On this particular day, Bonnie happened to be near by when Moira saw her results after a 500m race. Moira made that comment that although she had finished 8th, she would have finished 3rd if you "exclude[d] everyone who was cheating". I'm not insinuating that drug use doesn't happen but it is a well-documented fact that successful people take responsibility for their performances and unsuccessful people look to others to find excuses. According

to Moira, when Bonnie heard her comment, she made it clear, that kind of attitude was not acceptable on the U.S. team.

Moira also gave Bonnie the great compliment that the coaches had very little work to do in terms of inspiring teamwork and sportsmanship within the team because this was simply how Bonnie and certain other team members such as Dan Jansen, conducted themselves. With this in mind, I have talked to the senior athletes on the team that I coach on a number of occasions to impress upon them the importance of leadership within the team. Jon Montgomery, who won Olympic gold in skeleton in Whistler, has really taken this to heart and has truly led the team from within. It's so much easier to get the team motivated to do a little extra work when the current Olympic Champion is saying, "come on guys, let's get to it!"

I began this presentation with the recollection of a friend from his high school days. I'll now conclude with the story of my elementary school volleyball coach who inspired me to conduct myself according to Olympic values.

Mr. Little was a teacher and volleyball coach at Bridlewood Junior Public School when I was a student there in the late '70's. What was so captivating about Mr Little to those of us on the volleyball team, was that he was actually a referee at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal.

Montreal was my first exposure to the Olympics and immediately it had a powerful effect on me. To this day I can clearly remember watching many of the events including Nadia Comaneci getting her perfect 10's in gymnastics and Bruce Jenner winning the decathlon. I can also remember the high jump in which fellow Canadian Greg Joy won a silver medal behind Jacek Wszola of Poland but ahead of the heavily favored Dwight Stones of the United States. Watching those and many other events, I knew somehow I wanted to be a part of that. I didn't even care what sport it would be in – they were all great.

At the time you can imagine what it was like for us having a coach that had played such an important role in that event. It was pretty special. During one particular practice we were arguing as to whether a ball was in or out when Mr Little called us over and told us about a match at the Olympics in which he had been a backup referee sitting at the official's table immediately adjacent to the court.

As the story goes, there was a rally that ended when one team spiked the ball



*From the works of the Session  
in the amphitheatre.*

toward the opposing team's baseline. Although very close to the line, the ball was out but was incorrectly called in by the line judge. The player that hit the ball actually went to the referee and explained that he had hit the ball out and that the call should be reversed. At which point a player on the opposing team, having overheard this, stepped forward and stated that he had touched the ball on the way out and that therefore the call was correct. I don't know if Mr Little actually said it or not but his inference was that the player who claimed to have touched the ball, hadn't.

Whether he had or hadn't, the interpretation is the same. There was respect for the opponent and the game and the process to the extent that both players were willing to give up a point they felt they hadn't earned. I don't believe Mr Little specifically stated whom the teams involved were but I understood that they were elite teams of the competition who were vying for medals.

Like my friend Bob talking about his high school football days, I don't remember how we did as a team that year or even if we won a single game, but I remember that story. Being so enthralled by the Olympics and hearing a first-hand account from someone who was not just there, but an integral part of it, was extremely impactful to me. I remember thinking at the time "this is how Olympians act" and I still feel the story is an illustration of sport at its absolute best. The athletes Mr Little talked about clearly had a great deal of respect for the game, the officials, their opponents and the process. And it's also a great expression of the value they placed on the relationship between how hard you work for something and your own personal satisfaction. On their respective journeys to the medal podium, neither wanted to accept a single point that wasn't earned.

This story remains an inspiration for me, and like my friend Bob, I have tried to live my life by this standard. It's just one story, but I think it's a great one. My belief is that it was no coincidence that the athletes in Mr Little's story were world-leading athletes vying for medals at an Olympic Games. This is a very personal story about the power that Olympic athletes have to shape social values. If you are an Olympian then you have been given an opportunity to impact the lives of others simply because of what the Olympics represents. Take that very seriously and share your passion in a positive way.

## EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION OF TOP PERFORMANCE ATHLETES



**Assist. Prof. George MAVROTAS (GRE)**  
*Faculty of Mechanical Engineers of Athens Technical University, Former captain of the national water polo team, participated in five Olympic Games*

### 1. Introduction

Top performance athletes are a special social group. They have quasi professional commitments from a very early age. Their career reaches its peak at an age that corresponds to the university or postgraduate years. Inevitably, all their energy focuses on their sports career at an age where other people of their age add to their CVs study courses and other skills for the labor market. In such a heavy competitive schedule is there any room for studies and for acquiring qualifications that will prove useful for their post-competition life? I shall attempt to answer this question by drawing information from my *personal experience* and from *international reality*.

### 2. Why do top performance athletes need educational preparation?

Educational preparation to top performance athletes is not a luxury but a necessity, for, otherwise athletes would not be in any way different from *racing horses*. When I talk about educational preparation, I do not mean only school or university but

the broader education one should be aiming at, which is not provided only by the school, but also by the family and the broader environment. The role of education in the career of a top performance athlete is important at two levels: firstly, for his/her *current* sports career and, secondly, for his/her *future* professional activity.

### **a) *Current sports career***

Educational preparation, in parallel to the athlete's higher competitive commitments, brings a *balance* in the athlete's personality, which is of course what we want to achieve. He may, inevitably, devote less time than most of the people of his age to education, but this is a parallel process that does not allow the athlete to become "*institutionalized*" in his sport. Educational preparation will remove the athlete's blinkers and help him to acquire a broader perception and become a more fulfilled person.

I attach particular importance to the *ethical* aspects of educational preparation, which is something that we often neglect when referring to the educational process. I believe that even the few elements from humanistic sciences that one usually finds in most studies programmes can convey to the athlete concepts and elements that will prove useful throughout his life. The moral dimension of education therefore becomes even more important when we are talking about top performance athletes because, on the one hand, they are *role models* for youth and because, on the other hand, there are many *temptations* before them, which can only be avoided with the help of strong moral principles.

### **b) *Future career***

As we well know, a sports career inevitably has an *expiry date*. Depending on the sport, retirement age may vary from 24 to 36 years in most sports [1]. This is, however, the most productive period in an individual's professional life. The "*retired*" athlete experiences an *emotional "death"* in the sense that he leaves behind an activity to which he had devoted his whole life until then [2], a life that had brought him emotions, promotion, glory and friends. Now, he has to make the transition to a new situation where he may no longer be the protagonist. The

better prepared he is for such transition, the less painful it will be. In any event, only a very small percentage of athletes manage to put aside enough money during their sporting career so that they do not need to work later.

On the other hand, top performance athletes acquire, during their sports career, a number of *skills*, which are in high demand in the labor market too. *Perseverance, leadership, self-confidence, resilience, self-discipline, dedication to work, commitment to objectives* and *team work* are some of them. These are things that are not taught at any university; they are acquired in the great school of sport. These skills are, however, *much sought after* in the executives market. So, if a top performance athlete has remained in contact with relevant studies, he will have a major advantage because he has both the formal (studies) and the essential qualifications (character) for a brilliant professional career. In other words, the athlete has a legacy from his sports life that can be enhanced if it comes with certain elementary skills learned during his educational process. For example, if the athlete wishes to take on an administrative post at the end of his career, he shall be much better equipped if he has attended *management courses*, if he knows *foreign languages*, etc.

### **3. The content of educational preparation**

When we refer to the educational preparation of top performance athletes, what mostly comes to mind is university. In most cases, studies programmes followed by these athletes are related to a relevant subject, i.e. *sports science*. Wishing to follow a career in the same field, they try to acquire the necessary skills in order to become coaches, physiotherapists, nutritionists, etc. As they have experience of the practical aspects, what is missing is the theoretical part that they need complete.

*Management sciences* are another, very promising category in my opinion. Many top performance athletes will be looking for a position in the administrative structures of sports organisations (clubs, associations, federations). Competition experience is extremely useful for such positions, but it is not enough. A theoretical background in management principles is also required to allow them to perform their tasks in the best possible way. Moreover, as already indicated, athletes

would be very much in demand for executive positions in companies striving for “*leadership*”. In addition to their visibility, they possess all the characteristics which these companies want for their executives: endurance, commitment to objectives, leadership, collaborative spirit, competitiveness, etc. If they have followed management studies, we understand that they may be highly sought after. So, when their sporting career ends they can quickly become champions in this professional sector.

Finally, there are some other skills that may be part of educational preparation. For my part, I consider proficiency in *foreign languages* as very important since it has the advantage of being a process that can be flexibly tailored to the competition obligations of top performance athletes and is therefore an important asset in today’s globalized world.

We should note that the educational process I mentioned before does not necessarily have to be completed during the athlete’s sporting career. It must, however, be initiated and not abandoned to allow the athlete to remain part of the educational process which can be completed once his sporting career is over.

#### **4. How to provide educational preparation to top performance athletes**

There are two different issues regarding the educational preparation given to top performance athletes. The first is linked to what each state can provide in order to help them in their studies and the second to what they themselves should do in order to succeed.

##### ***a) State support***

There are different models, depending on the country, regarding the conditions offered to top performance athletes for their education. Many of them in fact are the subject of relevant programmes aimed at helping top performance athletes make the transition to professional life at the end of their sporting career, such as the Athlete Career and Education (*ACE*) program in the UK and Australia and others in the USA, Canada, the Netherlands, Belgium, etc. [2].

In *Hungary*, the law provides for free access to university in the case of Olympic medallists, as well as bonuses in the form of credits for other major distinctions. They are also given special facilities by universities with respect to timetable, transfer of examination dates, etc. In *Spain*, in accordance with the legislation, 3% of university places (and 5% for physical education institutions) are made available to top performance athletes who must, however, meet some minimum academic requirements. Moreover, universities have support programmes for top performance athletes (scholarships, etc.). In *Germany* there is an agreement between sports federations and universities on the educational preparation of student athletes, which covers 48 universities that offer facilities such as: more flexible admission criteria, flexible lecture hours and examination dates, etc. About 850 members of different teams are able to study in Germany in this way. In the *United Kingdom* many universities offer facilities, while there are also state scholarships whose number has increased in view of the 2012 Olympic Games [3].

In *France* too top performance athletes can adapt their educational obligations (e.g. for training, trips, competitions), while in *Sweden* there are special schools for young, talented athletes and flexible study options at universities [4]. In *Greece*, finally, the country that I know from personal experience, the enrolment of top performance athletes in university is facilitated. After that, though, there is no further support provided to them, apart from the sports scholarships offered by private organisations, mostly during the period of the Olympic Games.

Outside Europe, the *US* university education model is directly linked to student sport. Most top performance athletes study while they are training; within a system that does not allow training at the expense of education. The NCAA that governs collegiate sport in the USA has specific rules and regulations, which are contained in a thick manual and cover the obligations of student athletes and the University, down to the smallest detail [5].

In *Australia* there is the *Top Performance Athletes Friendly Universities* network, with about 40 universities throughout the country that offer programmes for top performance athletes. The object of these programmes is to offer facilities to athletes without, however, lowering the academic level. They create flexible arrangements for the athletes to help them keep up with their studies while con-

tinuing their sporting activity (e.g. transfer of exams, limited tolerance to non attendance at compulsory courses, leaves because of important competition obligations like the Olympic Games, etc.) [6].

### ***b) Good practices***

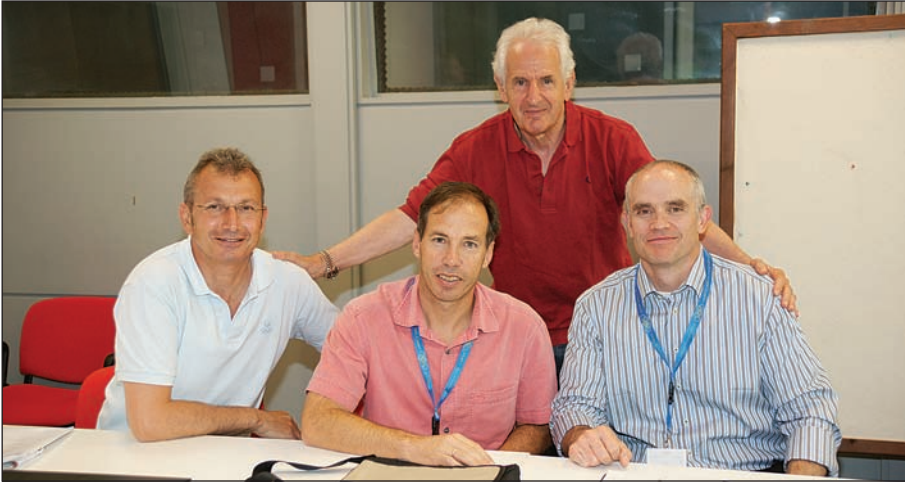
*Apart* from the facilities and the incentives provided by the external environment to an athlete for his education, his own attitude and behaviour are of the outmost importance. However positive the conditions offered to him may be, if he himself does not realize the importance of the educational process they will not have any effect. The web site of the *International Olympic Committee* under “top performance athletes” [7], includes a whole section on “Education: How to successfully combine sport and studies” with advice for successfully combining the two activities [8]. Despite the fact that such advice did not exist in the ’80s and the ’90s when I was a student, I did apply a number of them in my studies. I will now mention those that are, in my opinion, the most important:

#### *Keep in contact*

It is widely known that athletes may not be able to attend many hours of lectures and courses because of their sporting obligations (training, camps, competition, travelling). The secret is to keep contact with the course’s progress, through your fellow students (notes) or in agreement with the professor. The best thing, though, is to remain in contact with a number of students, i.e. to build a “support team” at university too. Let me mention at this point the facilities that technology offers today for lifelong learning, which have adopted now by most universities (e-learning, internet course notes, etc.)

#### *Plan realistically and stop procrastinating*

Realistic planning of activities is essential; it should be neither too lax, nor over-optimistic. Procrastination is the mother of annulment. Do not leave study or tasks for later without a valid reason. What you fail to do today will be much more difficult to cope with tomorrow.



*The lecturers of the Session (from left to right):  
Kostas Georgiadis, George Mavrotas, Duff Gibson, Jean Durry (behind).*

### *You can make good use of even fifteen minutes*

You don't need to have a lot of time during the day for work. You can capitalize on many short intervals through the day: a bus trip, a waiting period (at the airport, etc.), the duration of a flight, etc. do not have to be "idle periods".

### *Do not study when tired*

Instead of studying late at night after training, it's better to wake up early in the morning and finish your home work. If you have three hours at your disposal for studying and you are tired, it would be better to rest for one hour and devote the other two to studying. Two hours of study when you're rested are more productive than four hours of study when you are tired.

### *Self-discipline against temptations*

Televisions, long hours away from home to have a coffee for example were the main temptations in my time during studies. Today, electronic games have been added and an even stronger temptation, the *Internet*, which is of course extremely useful but also a great loss of time when it is not used in moderation. It can eat up

hours and hours of our time if it controls us instead of us controlling it. With the social networks, in particular, you do not realize how quickly time flies. Here again, the recipe is self-discipline. We must say that we shall spend half an hour on the computer and do it. The “coach” who gives the command can only be us.

### *Daily targets*

Small daily targets are the small steps of the ladder leading to the broader objective. At the end of each day we assess our performance in order to feel the satisfaction of having achieved what we had planned to do. These are all small victories that have a beneficial effect on our psychology.

### *Study helps us forget a sports defeat*

Study can act as an antidepressant after a defeat. The best time to study in my case was after a sports defeat. It helps you forget you do not think all the time about the defeat and take stock of reality. Your mind that wishes to forget the sports defeat is more receptive to other things such as study.

### *Be strict with yourself and don't find easy excuses*

This applies at all levels and not only as a tip for your studies. Self-discipline also relies on this rule to a certain extent. We know our limits better than anybody else. This is why we should not try to find excuses for ourselves. We should be proud when we try to achieve something and not feel like a fool as many people around us will probably want us to feel. Work is always rewarded, sometimes immediately, but in most cases in the long run.

## **5. Conclusions – Epilogue**

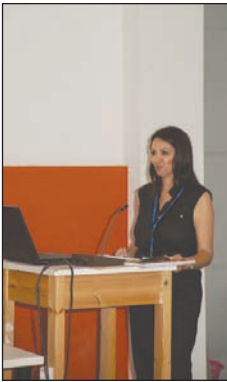
Educational preparation to top performance athletes is essential not only for their career when they leave competitive sport, but it also contributes to their sporting career. The important thing is that it brings balance to each athlete's activities and aspirations, removing the dangerous blinkers that top performance sport puts on them. Opportunities for educational preparation vary from country to

country but this need is more and more recognized and this is important. Educational preparation may vary during an athlete's career but it should never be abandoned to ensure that the athlete will have something to "hang on to" when his sporting career is over. The incentives given to top performance athletes by each state should have an educational content (study scholarships, etc.) so that their skills can be used later in other positions.

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## COMMUNICATING THE OLYMPIC VALUES TO YOUNG PEOPLE



**Dr Paraskevi LIOUMPI (GRE)**

*Physical Education Teacher*

*PhD, University of Peloponnese*

### **The Project Method**

This teaching method involves the planning and completing of a project by the students. It is a flexible, student-centered learning process, with no strictly defined limits, that can be applied in the class room but also in an extra-curricular setting, in camps or municipalities. It develops students' research skills, improves their self-confidence and teaches them to work as a team. The project method creates interaction among team members, direct personal contact, individual and collective responsibility and decentralization of authority. With this method, students do not have the feeling that they are attending lessons; they discover learning through creative activities and critical thinking. The method requires their active participation throughout the project's planning and implementation.

The project method is a form of teaching that starts with the adoption of a proposal presented by a member or the team as a whole. The proposal may be generated by an experience, an event or a current problem. The choice and planning are made under the responsibility of the team of which the teacher is also a member. It consists of four stages-phases that constitute the main frame, without being binding and contribute to a better organisation and coordination of individual activities.



These four stages-phases are:

### ***1st Phase: Reflection***

#### ***1. Choosing the subject***

During this phase, students will identify the subject after a discussion. Depending on their age group, they will choose one among the following areas related to Olympic education.

- Ancient Olympic Games
- Modern Olympic Games
- Paralympic Games
- Youth Olympic Games
- Ethical issues – Olympic values
- London 2010 Olympic Games
- Sports that are not very common

- Benefits from the organisation of the Olympic Games (for junior-senior secondary school students)

*2. Determining the scope-objectives, time schedule*

*3. Raising awareness*

This can be achieved with the help of a leaflet, audiovisual and electronic material.

*4. Expanding the subject*

Team members can present views, ideas and words, during a brainstorming process, which are all recorded without criticism.

*5. Ranking-classifying ideas, identifying domains*

***2nd Phase: Planning teaching formats***

*1. Separation into sub-groups*

There will be 4-6 sub-groups, depending on the number of students in each class and each sub-group will be composed of 5-6 students. It is better to allow the children to decide on the selection and composition of the groups, according to their interests and friendships.

*2. Methodology*

Students receive detailed information on the method to be followed.

*3. Analysis of activities*

We determine the activities that we will be following into theoretical, motor and visual and we set out each sub-group's actions.

*4. Contact with the a) direct b) indirect environment*

We work with the whole school community (teachers, headship, parents and guardians association). We also cooperate with all local community entities (local government, sports and cultural associations, NGOs).

### ***3rd Phase: Implementation of activities***

#### *1. Information gathering*

Information is obtained from books, periodicals and newspapers, the Internet, etc.

#### *2. Evaluation*

Information is evaluated on the basis of its interest and relation to the subject.

#### *3. Classification*

#### *4. Consideration*

#### *5. Synthesis*

#### *6. Presentation*

Each sub-group presents the outcome of its work to the others.

### ***4th Phase: Evaluation (self-evaluation – evaluation by the others)***

#### *1. During the project*

The evaluation is done in the course of the project by the teacher in the classroom, at regular intervals.

#### *2. At the end of the project*

The evaluation can be done either orally through discussion or by means of questionnaires to establish whether the objectives originally set have been achieved.

I will now give you two examples of Olympic education programmes based on the project method.

## EXAMPLE 1

**Age group: children 12-15 years old**

**1st Phase: Reflection**

**Thematic unit: "Ancient Olympic Games"**

*Aim:* Give information to the children about the Ancient Olympic Games.

*Objectives:*

- Acquaint the children with the main characteristics of the ancient Olympic Games
- Acquaint the children with the deep meaning of the ancient Olympic Games
- Help them explore the history of the Olympic Games revival
- Let them learn about the ancient Olympic sports
- Help them develop a cooperation and team spirit and discover knowledge
- Help them develop self-confidence through initiatives and creative activities

*Time schedule*

5 teaching units

*Awareness-raising, exploration, classification, separation into units*

During this phase, the teacher will first provide some basic information and show the photographic or other material he has prepared and then choose together with the children the topics to be considered.

*Teaching topics*

- A. Organisation and participation in the ancient Olympic Games
- B. Ancient Olympic sports
- C. Truce, meaning and importance

D. Victors' rewards and honors. Penalties for transgressors.

### ***2nd Phase: Planning teaching formats***

#### *Separation into sub-groups*

1st sub-group: Organisation and participation in the ancient Olympic Games

2nd sub-group: Ancient Olympic sports

3rd sub-group: Truce, meaning and importance

4th sub-group: Victors' rewards and honors. Penalties for transgressors

#### *Methodology and analysis of each sub-group's activities*

*1st sub-group: Organisation and participation in the ancient Olympic Games*

##### Proposed activities

- Compiling a list of ancient Olympic victors
- General information on the history of the ancient Olympic Games
- Photograph collage on the subject from historic books, the Internet.

*2nd sub-group: Ancient Olympic sports*

##### Proposed activities

- Painting with the events and corresponding photos
- Painting "wrestling"
- Reconstituting with movement ancient Olympic athletics events

*3rd sub-group: Truce, meaning and importance*

##### Proposed activities

- Historical information on the significance of the truce in ancient Greece
- Olympic truce in modern times. Proposals for world peace
- Graffiti on the subject of "peace"

*4th sub-group: Victors' rewards and honors. Penalties for transgressors*

##### Proposed activities

- Painting "kotinos"
- Construction "Zanas"
- Contests with a crown of olive branches as prize



*Lecture and workshop by Dr Paraskevi Lioumpi (GRE).*

### ***3rd Phase: Implementation of activities***

All previous activities will be implemented by the sub-groups. Children will look for information in any source they can find and discover knowledge and experience always under the teacher's guidance. In the end, after collecting their material, they will organise it and present it to the other groups

### ***4th Phase: Evaluation (self-evaluation, evaluation by others)***

A simple questionnaire with questions on the ancient Olympic Games will help to evaluate achievement of the original aim and objectives and draw conclusions. Questions like Who could compete in the Olympics? Were women allowed at the Olympics? What prizes did Olympic victors get? Who were the Olympic judges? What was the penalty for cheating? When did the ancient games begin and when did they end? A discussion with the children can also provide equally important information. Of course you can use a multiple choice questionnaire.

For example *In what year was the first recorded Olympic Games held?* 666 BC, 776 BC, 676 BC, 766BC. *What was awarded to Olympic champions during ancient times?* Silver medal, Gold crown, Crown of wild olives, gold medal.

I will show you now some creations of the children who participated in the Greek Olympic education programmes. You can see first a miniature of ancient Olympia. Now some paintings and creations using materials like fabrics. You can see also sculpturing and here small statues from clay.

## EXAMPLE 2

***Age group: children 15-18 years old***

***1st Phase: Reflection***

***Thematic unit: “Social Issues”***

***Sub-topic: “Human Rights and Multiculturalism”***

*Aim:* To make children understand concepts such as tolerance towards diversity, equality in society, respect for other persons’ rights, interculturalism.

*Objectives:*

- Have a saying in the creation of a fairer and more tolerant society
- Improve communication skills
- Learn that civilization has no borders
- Work with people of different nationality
- Acquire knowledge on other cultures
- Understand the value of the Olympic Games

*Time schedule*

4 teaching units

*Awareness-raising, exploration, classification, separation into units*

During this phase, the teacher will first provide some basic information and show

the photographic or other material he has prepared and then choose together with the children the topics to be considered.

### *Teaching topics*

- A. More things unite than separate us
- B. Human rights at school or in the class room
- C. Getting to know other cultures
- D. Olympic Games. Games that unite the people of the world.

### ***2nd Phase: Planning teaching formats***

#### *Separation in sub-groups*

1st sub-group: More things unite than separate us

2nd sub-group: Human rights at school or in the class room

3rd sub-group: Getting to know other cultures

4th sub-group: Olympic Games, Games that unite the people of the world.

#### *Methodology and analysis of each sub-group's activities*

*1st sub-group: More things unite than separate us*

##### Proposed activities

- Music and dances of the Balkans. Common cultural elements between countries are recorded and compared (dance, music instruments, costumes, musical sounds).
- We dance together. Children will choose to dance any dances they prefer teaching one another to the sound of music.
- We create a choreography using elements from the dances we danced together.

*2nd sub-group: Human rights at school or in the class room*

##### Proposed activities

- We ask children to compile school with respect to human rights.
- An imaginary country. Ask the children to imagine that they have dis-

covered a country where there are no laws and prepare a list with the rights that should apply to all citizens.

- Creation of a human rights scenario to be played as a small theatrical happening for the others.

*3rd sub-group: Getting to know other cultures*

Proposed activities

- Games from my country. Children will play and record traditional games and their name in their country's language. They will play these games with the other groups when they present them.
- Photographs and pictures from their countries and other countries of the world brought by the children. All will cooperate in creating a big collage.
- Cherished Olympic medalists and their countries.

*4th sub-group: Olympic Games, Games that unite the people of the world.*

Proposed activities

- The music of the Olympic Games. During the staging of the Olympic Games the whole world listens to this music. We encourage the children to collect some of these pieces that they like
- Children gather information on countries' participation in the Olympiads.
- They write an article on the contribution of the Olympic Games to world peace

***3rd Phase: Implementation of activities***

All previous activities will be implemented by the sub-groups. Children will look for information in any source they can find and discover knowledge and experience always under the teacher's guidance. In the end, after collecting their material, they will organise it and present it to the other groups.

***4th Phase: Evaluation (self-evaluation, evaluation by others)***

Answers to questionnaires are evaluated, followed by a discussion in which the

teacher encourages all children to participate. You might use open questions like

- ✓ What is multiculturalism? What problems does multiculturalism bring to a country?
- ✓ Would you prefer your country to be multicultural or of just one culture? In a multicultural society, should newcomers do what they can to assimilate into the culture of their new country? Why are many people afraid of multiculturalism? Do the Olympic Games support and improve cultural understanding?
- ✓ Or you can use this kind of questionnaire with closed questions

Some creations again on this subject. You can see painting, mosaics of small stones, a flag mural, a mosaic of small pieces of paper.



*Posing questions  
to the lecturers.*

*Short presentations  
by the Olympic Medallists*



**CLASSROOM CHAMPIONS**  
**Our country's top athletes making an impact**  
**where they're needed the most**

**Steve MESLER (USA)**

*Founder of the "Classroom Champions" 2002, 2006, 2010 4-man Bobsleigh  
2010 Gold Medallist & Olympic Champion*

**Mission**

To inspire, motivate and educate students in high-need schools to recognize their potential, set goals and dream big.

**Challenges**

- 2010 Gallup Poll showed lack of Goal Setting and Hope:
  - 66% Not Ready for the Future based on Hope, Engagement and Wellbeing
  - 37% Not Engaged or Actively Disengaged
  - 47% are stuck or discouraged
  - 58% do not energetically pursue their goals
  - 65% cannot find ways around problems to reach their goals
- Many U.S. classrooms still lack adequate technology
  - Students who do not engage in in-classroom technology based learning during their elementary years perform worse on multiple measures of school performance in both elementary and middle school.

- “The Learning Return on our Educational Technology Investment”  
WestEd

## Our Solution

- Synergistic goals- connect students to strong role models and build digital literacy in order to increase student engagement in school, teach about goal setting and encourage students to follow their dreams.
  - Bringing Olympians & Paralympians into the classroom *everyday* utilizing the values of Olympism in an on-going programme.
  - Provide all schools and athletes involved in programme with technology to facilitate a connection between Olympians/Paralympians and students- such as video camera and telepresence equipment.

## Structure

- Communication Structure
  - Each Athlete Ambassador provides minimum of one 60-90 second video message per month to their adopted classrooms (one message is recorded and sent to all).
  - Each Athlete Ambassador writes minimum of one short blog per month on a topic and/or current training situation/travel location.
  - Minimum of two live video chats between Athlete Ambassador and classroom per year.
  - Each classroom provides minimum of one video message of encouragement, questions or anything of interest to students per month.
  - One school visit by athlete to each adopted classroom following Olympic Games/programme completion.
- All content to be posted on private, internal site for programme participants.
- Selected content to be posted on public site, and shared with sponsors and content partners for their websites.
- Teacher resources developed by Director of Education provided to teachers.

- Lesson plan sharing and collaboration between teachers facilitated by Director of Education.
- Each teacher must utilize minimum of two lesson plans involving their athlete/sport per month and document for programme.
- All students must submit parent permission slips for participation in programme and content posting to the web.
- Full impact surveys to be taken at beginning and end of programme each year. Longitudinal studies will track student progress after programme completion.



## Pilot Programme

### *Quotes from 2009-2010 Programme*

*“You made me realize that I can be a doctor because if you can do it, I know I can do it. And since you finished your dream, I know I can finish mine.”*

3rd grader-Atlanta, GA (Classroom Champions class of 2010)

*“You encouraged these kids to believe in themselves and to have the confidence and self-discipline to reach for their goals no matter what the circumstances- not wait for things to happen, but to get up, get focused and always strive to improve themselves.”*

Michelle Lanz, 3rd grade teacher (Classroom Champions class of 2010)

*“Together we read updates in the newspaper, looked up articles on the internet and watched interviews on TV. We talked about hard work, perseverance, and the fine line between ‘winning’ vs. ‘losing’ when you’ve tried your hardest, didn’t come in first, but still achieved your personal best in sports and in life in general.”*

Laurel Kuehr, parent of Birmingham, AL student  
(Classroom Champions class of 2010)

## Solid Base (2011-2012)

- Athletes
  - Athlete Ambassadors
    - ✓ Represent the pinnacle of Olympism
    - ✓ Serve as strong role-models for today's youth
    - ✓ Selected to specific classrooms throughout the year
  - Contributing Athletes
    - ✓ Athletes from any country who wish to send short video messages of similar content as Athlete Ambassadors
    - ✓ No obligations, simply extra content for students and teachers
- Leigh Parise, M.Ed., PhD. Cand.- Education
  - Director of Education, Classroom Champions
- 501(c)(3) U.S. Public Charity status

## Moving Forward

- Expand to more schools, countries and athletes
- Improve students' trajectories by strengthening goal setting skills and improving digital literacy through interactions with Olympians and Paralympians



For information regarding expansion to your country or NOC, please visit:  
[www.classroomchampions.org](http://www.classroomchampions.org) Or email: [info@classroomchampions.org](mailto:info@classroomchampions.org)

## *Conclusions of the discussion groups*

The Olympic Medallists were asked to select the questions and subjects to discuss on during the works of the Session. The conclusions derived are published here in the form they were presented at the end of the Session.



## DISCUSSION GROUP 1

### Communication methods of Olympic values by Olympian role models

#### What do we want to communicate?

- Original values and principals of Olympism.
- Peace for mankind.
- Friendship between human beings.
- Balance of body, mind and soul.
- Each country should promote its own national values, cultural aspects and encourage respect and tolerance for the differences in each one of these countries.

#### Why do we want to communicate?

- Sport is a universal tool.
- If you become a champion, you have to keep true to yourself.
- These values are worthwhile to follow.
- To promote and communicate in a systematic and planned way, that human beings have proved that every four years, they can compete and live together, respecting cultural, religion, political and social backgrounds, in peace and with friendship.
- Sport is for everyday life and it transcends the competition. Olympic values can be used for life.

**How: Methods of communication:**

- Before the Olympic National Team leaves for the Olympic Games, each NOC should organise an instruction session for its athletes to be taught about the Olympic history, values and their responsibilities as Olympic athletes.
- Communicate through one simple message the Olympic values. This message should be easily recognized, as easily as for example the Olympic Rings.
- Produce and distribute a transcript of the history and meaning of the Olympic movement, in an easy and accessible way.
- We can better use the Olympic Opening Ceremony as an opportunity to send a clear message about the Olympic values.
- Every Olympian should think about having a legacy after retirement.
- Use technology such as social media, Internet, etc. to actively promote the Olympic values.

**Communicating the importance of a balanced life:  
combining education and elite sport**

**What and why do we want to communicate: educated athlete:**

- Better sporting performance.
- Longer sporting career.
- Better spokesperson and role model of the Olympic values.
- Much easier transition to retirement and to adjust successfully to life after sport.
- It helps to achieve and satisfy the development of the mind, body and soul.
- Cultivates multidimensional human beings, whose self worth is not only relying on sporting performances – mental health issues.

**How: Methods of communication:**

*Elite athletes:*

- Present examples of athletes who have been successful in combining sports and education and that it will not detract their performance.
- Demonstrate the potential negative issues of lack of education.
- NOCs should organise events to raise the importance of choosing the pathway of combining sport and education.
- Easy access to tools and routes to education options.
- Create a network for athletes to exchange experiences and best practices about their educational and sport experiences.

*Trainers:*

- Raise the awareness and explain the benefits of having an education in their elite athlete's careers.
- Understand that athletes' performance improves with an education and a balanced life.
- A trainer should not hold back an elite athlete if he wishes to get an education.

*Universities:*

- Should be encouraged to be more flexible to have multidimensional elite athletes in their alumni.
- The university benefits from a more diverse student body that includes elite athletes.
- Open up a discussion to see if governments should legislate to force universities to have a certain amount of athletes in their student body.

*Employers:*

- Olympic job opportunities programme.
- Promote and create consciousness in the corporate world of the benefits of hiring people with successful attributes, skills and Olympic values.

## DISCUSSION GROUP 2

### **Where in Community could the communication of Olympism by Olympic Medallists make a difference?**

The personal stories of reward and effort from each Olympian are very powerful. Add to this the Olympic Values and you have something that can be used in many places in society. This group acknowledges that this IOA visit has taught us huge amounts, and feels in the modern Olympics, where medals are everything, Olympism is being undervalued.

An Olympic Medal winner has many opportunities to promote these values, tell their story and make a difference, however without the education around Olympism there is a part of the bigger picture which is missing and whilst the message is powerful, it is just one side of the story.

#### *Medallist as International Ambassador*

Olympians can be ambassadors at an international level. You become an Olympic medallist and you have the opportunity to become a citizen of the world. Whatever the politics of the country you represent, regardless of your religion, athletes come together in friendship to pursue excellence in the race.

After retirement these athletes can continue to represent their countries by continuing to foster international friendships, promoting good health and peace and harmony beyond the sports ground.

#### *Medallist as inspiration to Youth*

It has been experienced by all the medallists at the session the increasing speed of

change in this demographic. Instant gratification has become the norm and role models on television can reinforce that.

The athlete story of reward and effort, the fun and specialness of following a three or four year plan and getting there, can really make a difference to youth. To understand hard work and determination can get you somewhere and something that money can't buy.

The medallist could do this in their own community of the sport, or choose to work with the wider community in schools.

The acknowledged challenge here is to reach a widest possible audience, therefore lends itself to the use of social media to work with kids which is their preferred method of communication.

#### *Medallist as inspiration in Business*

Athletes are an attractive target for Commerce, both for motivation and Olympism. Understanding the successful behaviours that can be transferred and used immediately in the work place, is something that can both give the athlete a career after sport and promote these values widely.

#### **Is there a moral responsibility of the Olympic Medallists to embrace their automatic status as a role model and promote Olympism?**

Whether there is a moral responsibility or not, since 1960 when through television the Olympic performances were broadcast throughout the world, many more Olympians can be given this role model tag, arguably from their reaching the pinnacle of their sport it is bestowed on them. Is it fair that Olympians should live their lives by a higher code than the rest of the population?

From answering our first question we have started to look at the possibilities for an Olympian role model to spread the message, however is there an obligation for them to be either a positive role model or keep promoting Olympism after their athletic career is over?

#### *Responsibility to self*

You could argue that the athlete has lived a life of denial and sacrifice and once

their career is over they have the right to explore other lifestyle choices. However we believe that it is compelling that each athlete owes it to themselves to live these values, otherwise they will be talking a step back in their own lives. Having dedicated their youth to the pursuit of excellence to do the opposite in their adult years would personally be destructive and tragic. Embracing Olympism can make you more successful both in the competition but also in the rest of your life.

### *Responsibility to Community*

As a role model, everything the athlete says and does could be influential on the communities that they live in. A medallist is given this responsibly along with all the other trappings of modern Olympic success. Whilst some minor mistakes can show that these heroes are also human, giving the message to others that their own flaws would not necessarily impede them from their own life success. If this athlete was to choose to behave outside both Olympic and societies' moral code then the negative impact can be considerable and with social media today the action can be broadcast far and wide.

### *Responsibility to Olympic Movement*

It could be argued that the modern Olympics has become a massive commercial juggernaut, which is about money, success and power, which appears to be contrary to the upholding of mind body and will promoted by Pierre de Coubertin for the modern games. Why then should the medallist feel part of something bigger than their own performances and be motivated to uphold their responsibility as an Olympic role model? Whilst still competing and therefore promoting the values through day to day living, is it fair or reasonable for an athlete to risk their dream of a gold medal by distracting their required selfish focus?

However this group acknowledges whatever the motivation of the stage, the fact that we've had the gift of the Olympic experience, with all the learnings and opportunity that this gives us, there is a responsibility to this movement, the people who have followed us and supported us and to athletes who dream of, but can never fulfil their own Olympic ambition to do what we can to promote Olympism.

## DISCUSSION GROUP 3

### Question(s):

**How can we apply de Coubertin's concept of utilizing the future to spread**

**1) a growth in the participation of sport and**

**2) the active pursuit of the Olympic Ideals and Olympism in today's youth?**

- The first thing we have come to realize is that there is no one way to address the moving into the future of sport progression, popularity and Olympism as we are dealing with countries from the likes of the United States to Tajikistan.

In the USA, the problem is finding ways to encourage kids to believe in the positive power of Olympic Sport and showing them that sport can empower them to overcome adversity, set goals and live out their dreams.

There are countries like Chinese-Taipei where students are given one of two paths- school or sport. In a country such as this, the government ceases to assume the responsibility of education once a person chooses the path of athletics, and at the same time someone who chooses an academic path is restricted from participating in sport.

Conversely, in a country such as Tajikistan, the issue at hand is if the school where the students we are addressing will have power throughout the entire day and have enough funding for one computer to be placed in the school. As well, is this a relevant question for a country where keeping young girls in school past the age of 12 is one of the largest concerns of the Olympic

movement? That being said- perhaps a country like this can truly benefit from the Olympic Ideals of pursuing ones dreams in the face of adversity...

With this in mind- de Coubertin's idea of utilizing the "future" takes completely different forms that are dependent upon a country's socioeconomic upbringing as well as its citizen's backgrounds.

This group encountered the entire spectrum of possibility, which made the question we have posed a most difficult one to address. Because of this, the question professed has no one correct answer or solution. We have proposed two diverging ideas on this subject that can be extrapolated in the bullet points below.

- Utilize an approach that culminates with the height of technological communication incorporating internet, digital video, blogging etc as run with Athlete Ambassadors such as Steve's Classroom Champions programme.
- Identifying and evaluating the level in which athletes are integrated into the aspirations of a given country's people.
- Once a level of interaction is discovered- it may be possible to take the "present" of one country and apply it as the "future" of another.
- In Tajikistan, Zebinisio has been the first to implement cultural events centered around Olympians that is offered to communities.
  - The "future" there may be incorporating already practiced events such as Olympic Day which is offered in many countries;
  - or teaching sport priorities as Razvan does in Romania demonstrating the importance of enjoyment, support team for success, etc;
  - progressing into camps that bring children together to focus on these ideas as in the Ukraine;
  - or sport texts and exams of knowledge of Olympic sport as in Russia;
  - or, the "Olympic Dream" which focuses on re-igniting the passion in Sweden that their Olympic Heroes are just like them and that the dream is within reach.
- To this point- Finally, possibly identifying a system (five star or something of the like) in which countries can meet certain criteria demonstrating Olympic Education, Olympism and Participation levels. For example- hav-

ing no system or minimal is 0-1 stars, and having a fully intergraded Olympic Curriculum in schools, vast participation programmes across the countries and values lessons around the Olympic Games with deep NOC involvement and large numbers of athletes participating allows a 5-star rating. The IOC can encourage this by creating criteria within a foundation system and awarding/withholding funding based on the demonstration of NOC involvement.





**Closing Ceremony  
of the 3rd International Session  
for Olympic Medallists  
ANCIENT OLYMPIA, 25th JUNE 2011**



*George Mavrotas (GRE) and Mario Ancic (CRO) are receiving their participation diplomas by the IOA Honorary Dean, Kostas Georgiadis.*



**ADDRESS**  
**on behalf of the Olympic Medallists,**  
**by Steve MESLER (USA)**

On behalf of all of us, it is one of my distinct pleasures in life to thank the International Olympic Academy for inviting myself along with the likes of so many truly unbelievable Olympians here to Olympia.

On a personal note – it has been a childhood dream come true to be in this place. To visit the ancient grounds and to sit around under the star filled nights with all of my fellow medallists. This is, and I am certain many of us feel this way, the kind of event that we never would have dreamt about as we trained so hard for all those years. When you are in the gym, on the track, the water or the ice- the last thing you're thinking about is what kind of drink you'll be ordering in ancient Olympia while sitting next to a Tanzanian distance runner, a Kiwi rower or a Ukrainian high jumper- whom I watched soar to Olympic Glory in person when I was just 17 years old over in Atlanta. How many of you saw this experience coming?

The one thing that truly astonished me, as it did all of us, was how the topic of Olympism ran true not only when guided by our wonderful lecturers –thank you Jean, Duff, George, and Paraskevi– but as we sat in the cafeteria or at the tavern with a group of 26 last night. Amazingly to me, I'm not sure if I heard any stories of Olympic Glory told over a drink- but I can not count the number of stories that were told amongst everyone as questions of peoples backgrounds, cultures and paths to success were thrown around with ease.

On another personal note – one of the most amazing experiences of my life happened yesterday as a Swede, a Romanian and I helped put our group's ideas

into action followed quickly by a Latvian from another group gladly translating into Russian as a Ukrainian, a Russian and a Tajikistani heard and understood their ideas come to life. This was then quickly followed by a woman from Chinese Taipei translating the English text for her medallist husband.

Yes – this is the world we live in here at the IOA. It is a world where athletes find ways to make situations work; because that is what they were trained to do, what they yearned to do for decades as they competed and as they now show they can do thousands of miles away from home, under any circumstances. In many cases, the actions that may seem so very simple and genuine to us, truly are what Olympism means- we just don't recognize it most of the time because to us Olympism is simply living our lives in a seemingly normal way that would be extraordinary to many others.

The topics were relevant, the discussions were lively, expressive, debatable and enthusiastic and our Greek guides were understanding and flexible to the desires and directions of the group as a whole. Kostas, Stella, Apollonia, Marie- and I'm certain I'm forgetting more so I'll just quite right there – we can not thank you enough for the hospitality and grace you have demonstrated all of us on this journey that none of us expected.

So as I aid in the closing of the 3rd IOA Session for Olympic medallists, I would like to thank my peers for selecting me to speak on their behalf. It has truly, truly been one of the great honors in my life. On behalf of my fellow Olympic Medallists, we cannot thank the IOA enough for allowing us to engage in the discussion, the energy and the experience that is the IOA and ancient Olympia. We look forward to welcoming past and future medallists from our countries and will be encouraging them to act as better Olympians in life so they may, too, have the privilege that you have bestowed upon us.

Thank you and safe travels to all!

**ADDRESS**  
**on behalf of the Lecturers of the Session,**  
**by Jean DURRY (FRA)**

Dear friends,

It has been very difficult. We were 3 lecturers, Duff Gibson, George Mavrotas and myself, and we should not forget our very interactive colleague Dr Lioumpi. Consequently, the afternoon was full of discussions and very live debates. There was a secret vote and five rounds of voting were necessary for...

No, of course I am joking. Indeed, it only took Duff and Yorgos 3 seconds to nominate me as our “voice”. I was moved.

What are we supposed to say to you?

That we have tried with all our hearts –it was our role– to give you something more than empty words. We tried to offer you in a few minutes and on a specific subject the best of what we represent at this moment to your eyes: a piece of “know how”, a piece of knowledge.

That we have found in you a team, separated at first but soon united, girls and boys many of whom pose very legitimate questions since for all of them, apart from one, their sport career is ending and a new life begins. Men and women who clearly wish to become useful in their turn by transmitting their experience, their deceptions, their joys, the way they did build themselves and this “Olympic spirit” they believe in.

But above all, that we feel more like your brothers than your seniors. Duff, gold Olympic medallist and world champion in skeleton, Yorgos being 518 (!) times selected in the Greek national team of water-polo and sixth with his team in the Olympic Games, and me the small cyclist who happened sometimes –but not



so often– to raise the flowers of victory, we tried to offer you, I hope, one of our most beautiful races. Because a lecture is a race. It takes hours or years, it does not matter, of preparation. And then there comes the “D” day: the explosive or hesitant starting, the long and difficult course of the lecture, and then the final sprint, successful or not. Your call.

In this relay race we have been the runners. We have passed the knowledge, being fully aware of the fact that we continue to ignore many things ourselves. We have been the Lecturers of today; you will be, we hope, the Lecturers of tomorrow. We wish you all the best.

At the beginning, sport is a game. But our life is finally linked with it.

Two days ago, I mentioned to you two key-words of Pierre de Coubertin, “Sport and freedom”. For all of us that this 3rd International Session for Olympic Medallists, organised by the International Olympic Academy, brought together in a moment, I would like to suggest a more modest motto, that could, in fact that should, shed some light on the human relations of the inhabitants of this planet: “Mutual understanding, Friendship that travels through time...”

Dear friends, thank you very much.

**ADDRESS AND CLOSING**  
**of the works of the Session**  
**by the Honorary Dean of the International Olympic Academy,**  
**Prof. Konstantinos GEORGIADIS**

Dear friends,

Each Session of the International Olympic Academy is special, with pleasant and unique human moments that one can experience here at the Academy. The Olympic Medallists Session though is a one and only event for us since you were able to fly like eagles to the top of Mount Olympus and become “Olympians”.

This is the third consecutive Session for Olympic Medallists and it marks our resolve to continue our efforts, together with you, in order to promote the values of Olympism since you, the Olympic Medallists, are the very heart of the Olympic Movement.

The word *sport (athleticism)* has its roots in the Greek word *athlos (feat)*. The labors of Hercules clearly show man’s efforts to transcend, to go beyond our limits, to become better. On the other hand though, Hercules who was also considered as the athletes’ protector performed his labors in order to help society develop and improve.

The athletes who like you have exceeded your limits and become better know what effort means; you respect the efforts of others and have all the guarantees to become a source of guidance, a beacon that inspires citizens to follow you on a more humane course.

The number of 22 Olympic Medallists may seem small. But if you can operate as multipliers in your respective countries then the results of this Session will be far-reaching.

At the Academy, you also made friendships and had the opportunity of reliving the atmosphere of a small Olympic village, in a different way, without the stress of the games, together with intellectual challenges.

These friendships must be maintained in order to create a network of Olympic medallists who, in cooperation with the National Olympic Academies, will contribute to the development of Olympic education programmes in your respective countries.

Do not hesitate to contact us, since we can cooperate in implementing programmes and taking initiatives.

I wish to thank most warmly all the lecturers, Mr Durry, Mr Gibson, Mr Mavrotas and Ms Lioumpi. I also wish to thank the coordinators, the secretaries and all those who contributed to the working groups, the IOA's staff, the secretariat, Ms Stella and the electricians, our interpreters and the Internet technicians.

Hoping that this Session will trigger your active involvement, I want to thank you for being here with us. It would be an honour and a pleasure to welcome you once again to the Academy at one of the other Sessions that are held here.

I wish you a safe return to your countries.

*List of Participants*



**EPHORIA  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY**

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