



# THE OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE





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Front Cover: Greek actress Maria Nafpliotou, playing a high priestess, holds up the Olympic torch, which she kindled from an altar holding the Olympic flame, signaling the start of the 2008 Summer Olympics torch relay. The relay began in March near the Temple of Hera in ancient Olympia where the Olympics were born in 776 BCE.

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Inset: A photograph of the Beijing Olympics 2008 logo.

© AP Images/Greg Baker

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# About This Issue

When an Olympic medalist stands at the center of the world stage, a single, eye-filling, heart-bursting moment reveals a lifetime dream come true. We dare say that most everyone on the planet with a television has seen that moment at least once and wondered what it must feel like. For this issue of *eJournal USA*, we sought out athletes who could tell us.

Every four years when the world's nations join together in the Olympics, the event spotlights national aspirations and international causes. In 2008, this “celebration of humanity,” as one of our contributors calls it, unfolds in Beijing, a city that has also been striving for excellence as it prepares to welcome the world. We'll see some of the stunning new additions to the city's skyline and learn of the Chinese plans to host an event that reflects the goal of “One World One Dream.”

Yet the heart of the Olympics is a celebration of individual excellence — what the Greeks who invented the Games in 776 BCE called *arête*. The Olympic veterans who share their stories on these pages reveal the work before the moments of glory, the small victories, and the great disappointments. You'll read of injuries, setbacks, and days when the Olympic dream was a weak glimmer. The athletes you'll meet on these pages speak with humility and candor about their experiences on the way to the Olympic Games.

A U.S. gymnast describes his indefatigable dream of making the Olympic team, even moments after an injury that could have ended his career. A Romanian runner tells us about pushing past the physical pain of the last 100 meters. A U.S. soccer player describes how honor can be had in losing well.

The stories the Olympians reveal are not only about themselves, but about all human endeavors and the need for persistence and tenacity in the pursuit of excellence, for acceptance and dignity in the face of failure.

Olympic moments of success and failure are transmitted to the world by thousands of journalists who flock to the host cities. Several veterans of that assignment also share memories of their experiences in and around the Media Village.



This Hong Kong stairway conveys the history of the modern Olympic Games as the Chinese prepare for the 2008 events.

As the Olympic Games approach in the weeks ahead, some nations and competitors will raise their hopes for victories, and a drumbeat will pound for those coveted medals. Perhaps these pages might remind that the true meaning of the Olympic Games is not the medals, but our shared human struggle for excellence and our devotion to pursue purpose in life.

—The Editors



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# PREPARING FOR THE GAMES

## Olympic Ideals and World Realities

*Close to 11,000 athletes will flock to Beijing for the 2008 Olympics in the months ahead, hoping to do their best to live up to the Olympic motto “faster, higher, stronger.” At the same time, proponents of very different causes — including increased human rights, open media, and environmental quality in China — will also be competing for the world’s attention.*

**T**he Olympic Games are set to open in Beijing August 8, the first time the summer event has been held in East Asia since the 1988 Games in Seoul. Since being named the host city for the Games in 2001 by the International Olympic Committee, the Chinese have been working to welcome the world to their capital.

Their efforts have been trailed by a chorus of questions — from nongovernmental organizations, human rights activists, and even some governments — about the readiness of the city and the nation to host a global event that in many ways has come to symbolize humanity’s highest aspirations. Does the Chinese human rights record cloud its qualifications to host this event? At a March ceremony in Greece to mark the lighting of the Olympic flame, protests of China’s policy overshadowed the event itself. As the flame stopped in various cities, its arrival was met with celebration by some and indignation from others opposed to Beijing serving as the host city. How often might that happen as the date of the Games approaches?

The protests and marches focus negative media attention on China, a government still considered an authoritarian state, according to the State Department’s report on human rights released in March 2008. “The govern-



An actress, left, played the role of an ancient Greek high priestess passing the sacred Olympic flame to Greek taekwondo athlete Alexandros Nikolaidis, right, during a lighting ceremony held in March. Human rights protestors briefly disrupted the ceremony.

ARIS MESSINIS/AFP/Getty Images

ment tightened restrictions on freedom of speech and the press, particularly in anticipation of and during sensitive events,” said the report.

Thousands of media representatives will be in China for the Olympic Games. If they are subjected to restrictions on access and reporting, then China could fall at odds with its major partner in the sponsorship of the Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which is committed to an open media environment by its governing charter. “The IOC takes all necessary steps in order to ensure the fullest coverage by the different media and the widest possible audience in the world for the Olympic Games,” according to the IOC charter.

In a statement issued prior to the flame-lighting ceremony in Greece, IOC President Jacques Rogge placed this longstanding commitment to open media in the context of the controversy that began in March with clashes

between Tibetans and Chinese authorities.

“We believe that China will change by opening the country to the scrutiny of the world through the 25,000 media who will attend the Games,” he said. “The Olympic Games are a force for good. They are a catalyst for change, not a panacea for all ills.”

China has been working toward change in various areas during its years of preparations for the Games. Poor air quality and other environmental problems raised questions about Beijing’s suitability as a host city from the time of selection. In response, the city has been on a steady track to adopt more sound environmental policies in the midst of a break-neck gallop toward economic growth. With technical assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, China has worked to improve conditions and create a green Olympics, investing \$120 billion in the effort, according to China Central Television.

The IOC has also been monitoring the Beijing environment and its potential impact on athlete performance. A March 2008 IOC announcement based on athlete performance data collected in Beijing in August 2007 found that “the health of athletes was largely not impaired.”

Despite these efforts, some athletes have expressed concern about how poor air quality could impair their performance, and odds-makers aren’t looking for record-setting performances in Beijing.

Mounting public attention to this array of controversies is making its way to the highest political levels in some nations. A few Western leaders have announced they’ll not attend the opening ceremonies. Others reject attempts to link politics and sporting events.

As this publication goes to press, four months before



City workers in Beijing prepare to destroy coal-fire stoves confiscated within certain districts of the city as part of an effort to reduce the city’s air pollution. The stoves are commonly used for cooking and heating in older homes and restaurants.

© AP Images/Color China Photo

the games, we can’t know what will happen before the August opening day. Despite the questions and the uncertainties, we continue to hope that the Chinese organizers welcome the world to Beijing in the Olympic spirit and that the athletes will get their chance to shine upon the world stage.

The organizing committee for the Beijing Games summarizes this spirit with the motto “One World One Dream.” According to the host committee’s explanation of the motto, “In spite of the differences in colors, languages, and races, we share the charm and joy of the Olympic Games, and together we seek for the ideal of Mankind for peace. We belong to the same world and we share the same aspirations and dreams.” ■

— Charlene Porter

# Olympic Sports Administration in the United States

Bridget Hunter

*The United States differs from most other nations sending teams to the Olympic Games in the way athletes and their sports are organized and supported.*

*Bridget Hunter is a former officer of USADiving, the national governing body for competitive diving in the United States. She is currently an editor in the State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs.*



© AP Images/Lenny Ignelzi

**U**S. participation in the Olympic Games,

although framed and authorized by federal law, relies on private enterprise, personal philanthropy, and ultimately the energy and talents of thousands of volunteers to make Olympic dreams a reality for American athletes and coaches.

The United States Olympic Committee (USOC), headquartered in Colorado, is the coordinating body for Olympic-related athletic activity in the United States. It seeks to “assist in finding opportunities for every American to participate in sport, regardless of gender, race, age, geography, or physical ability,” according to the organization’s Web site.

The USOC is unusual within the international sports community in that it is funded by contributions from private citizens and by major support from the corporate community. The USOC, unlike the vast majority of the 198 national Olympic committees, receives no ongoing

Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, a 1984 Olympic gold medal winner and the director of Olympic training centers in the United States, stands outside the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, California. There are additional training centers in Colorado, New York, and Michigan.

government subsidy. In addition to income generated through donations, sponsorships, and licensing fees, the USOC sells USOC-licensed apparel and other items through catalogs and an online store.

Funding also is provided by the U.S. Olympic Foundation, a nonprofit entity that was established after the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles to benefit Olympic and amateur sports in the United States. The original capital investment — approximately \$115 million — was raised through the sale of commemorative Olympic coins by the U.S. government and surplus funds from the operating budget of the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

The foundation aims to reinvest up to 50 percent of its investment income and distribute the other 50 percent in grants to the USOC’s member organizations to further develop sports in the United States.





© AP Images/Sandy Huffaker

U.S. coach Todd Henson videotapes pole vaulter Lindsay Taylor to examine her technique at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, California. Many Olympic trainers are using advanced video analysis software to help athletes perfect their performance.

### FEDERALLY AUTHORIZED, PRIVATELY SUPPORTED

The Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, a federal law enacted in 1978 and named for a longtime U.S. senator from Alaska, chartered the USOC and set specific requirements for its member governing bodies for individual sports. According to the law, the USOC's purpose is "to promote and support amateur athletic activities involving the United States and foreign nations." The act was amended in 1998 to expand the USOC's role to include the Paralympic Games and increase athlete representation.

Legally, the USOC is a monopoly. The Stevens Act directs the USOC to "exercise exclusive jurisdiction" over all matters pertaining to U.S. participation in the Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games, and the Pan-American Games, and it is recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as the national Olympic committee for the United States.

The IOC recognizes sports nationalities rather than political nationalities, guided by decisions from the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), an international judicial panel that has sports disputes as its sole jurisdiction. The CAS has ruled that sports nationality refers to an athlete's eligibility for international competition as a representative

of one nation or another. That, the CAS has determined, is a different status than the individual's legal citizenship.

The concept of sports nationalities allows independent territories, commonwealths, protectorates, and certain geographical areas to have discrete identities for international athletic competition. For instance, Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, sends its own team to international competitions. Each national Olympic committee governs Olympic affairs within its jurisdiction, including identifying, training, selecting, entering, and funding an Olympic team in its trip to the Games.

Many of the USOC's responsibilities for Olympic athlete selection and training are performed by its more than 70 national governing bodies (NGBs) for individual sports. The NGBs, in addition to their Olympic responsibilities, carry out a range of activities to promote their sports by broadening participation, expanding public support, encouraging construction of competitive-quality facilities, and setting standards for competition. Typically, U.S. NGBs operate with very small paid staffs and rely on volunteers — board and committee members as well as officials at all levels of competition — to do much of the work involved in sports administration.

Each NGB coordinates its activities not only with the USOC but with the international sports federation that governs international competition in a particular sport or sports. For instance, USA Swimming, which sets rules for competitive swimming events of all types for all ages of competitors in the United States, is responsible for ensuring U.S.-hosted international events are conducted in compliance with standards set by FINA, the international federation for aquatic sports.

Each U.S. NGB funds its operations through various sources, such as membership dues; sanctioning fees for competitions; sales of sportswear, accessories, equipment, and promotional items; and charitable donations.

For many NGBs, significant financial support comes from their alumni — former competitors who are seeking to give back to a sport that enriched them in ways that cannot be measured in trophies or medals. ■

## What's New at the Beijing Games

The 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics will showcase world-class competition in 28 different sports, some new and others with a long history in the Olympic movement.

Sports such as aquatics, cycling, rowing, tennis, and wrestling have been Olympic events since the late 19th century. Other sports such as the triathlon and taekwondo were introduced as recently as the 2000 Summer Olympics.

Many sports have been added, changed, or removed from the program through the years of the modern Olympic movement. Although no new sports will be seen in Beijing, new sporting events will make their debut: in cycling, an individual men's and women's bicycle motocross (BMX); and in aquatics, a men's and women's 10-kilometer marathon.

BMX is a cycling sport featuring special bicycles with larger or smaller wheels than traditional bicycles, allowing riders to perform tricks. According to Olympic.org, BMX was developed in the United States in the late 1960s by young people who wanted to participate in a sport called motocross. A motorcycle is required equipment in motocross, and these young people couldn't afford the more expensive equipment. Replacing a motorcycle with a less expensive bicycle, the participants dressed themselves in motocross gear and raced their bikes on self-made tracks. During the Olympics, BMX athletes will race on 350-meter circuits that will include jumps and obstacles.

The new 10-km marathon in swimming is a long-distance, open-water competition. The event in Beijing will not be held in the temperature-controlled, 50-meter pools where many other swimming events are taking place, but rather at the Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park, which has a 6.35-million-square-meter water surface where the rowing, canoeing, and kayaking aquatic events will also take place.



Riders compete at the Motocross (BMX) Supercross World Cup in 2007, one of 26 test events being held at various Beijing Olympic venues. BMX will make its Olympic debut at the 2008 Beijing Games.

© AP Images/Greg Baker

In order to complete the marathon of swimming, the 25 male and 25 female athletes will take four laps around the rowing basin at Shunyi, a distance that could typically take less than two hours to complete.

In addition to the new BMX and marathon swimming events, women's events have been added to the existing men's events in both equestrian and fencing competitions. Also, doubles events in table

tennis will be replaced by team events.

Events included in the Olympic line-up change with the times. Tug-of-war, polo, water skiing, and power boating are all events that have been dropped from competition. The International Olympic Committee keeps a list of proposed new sports and periodically reconsiders events that might be in or out in forthcoming Olympiads.

—Alexandra Abboud

### 2008 Summer Olympic Sports

Aquatics	Fencing	Softball
Archery	Football	Table Tennis
Athletics	Gymnastics	Taekwondo
Badminton	Handball	Tennis
Baseball	Hockey	Triathlon
Basketball	Judo	Volleyball
Boxing	Modern Pentathlon	Weightlifting
Canoe / Kayak	Rowing	Wrestling
Cycling	Sailing	
Equestrian	Shooting	

# From Spectator to Champion: The Evolving Role of Olympic Women

Women's participation in the Olympic Games has come a long way since the ancient Greeks barred women from participating in Olympic sport.

During the 1900 Olympic Games in Paris, France, Filleaul Brohy and Marie Ohnier of France competed in the sport of croquet and became the very first women to compete in Olympic events. That same year, tennis player Charlotte Cooper of Great Britain became the first female champion. A century later, during the 2004 Summer Games in Athens, the birthplace of the Olympics, 4,329 women competed, accounting for 40.7 percent of the total athletes and setting a record in women's Olympic participation.

But women's participation in the Games goes beyond athletics, and the history of women's roles in the Olympics shows an evolution of women from spectators to champions and influential administrators.

The goal of the Olympic Charter is "to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women." The Olympic movement brings an influential alliance of organizations to that task: the International Olympic Committee (IOC); the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), comprised of representatives from participating states; and the International Federations (IFs), nongovernmental organizations that administer sports at a world level.

As a result, the IOC, NOCs, and IFs have established goals to promote women in Olympic decision-making positions. Currently there are 15 female members of the 155-member IOC, up from 12 in 2005.

In March 2008, during the 4th IOC Conference on Women and Sport, held in Jordan, 600 male and female



Kelly Holmes of Great Britain leads the field of runners as she crosses the finish line to win the gold medal in the women's 1,500 meters at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens.

© AP Images/Rusty Kennedy

members of the Olympic movement met to discuss diverse issues, such as new opportunities to increase the participation of women in sport, female athletes as role models for young girls, and how culture determines women's access to sport.

One result of the conference is the Dead Sea Plan of Action, which outlines ways "to use every opportunity available in the Olympic Movement to advance the cause of women in sport and through sport," including stressing gender equality in national teams, their leadership, and technicians, and encouraging women sports journalists to actively cover the Games.

On the ground, women are working to encourage participation in sports in their home countries. One athlete, Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said, the first female and the youngest minister

of youth and sports in Malaysia, was recognized by the IOC for, among other things, her work in establishing almost 600 community centers that enabled nearly 100,000 women to participate in sports activities.

On the most basic level, each aspiring woman athlete has a role to play in ensuring equality in the Olympics. In an IOC podcast, Barbara Kendall, an IOC member and Olympic champion in windsurfing, has a message for young girls around the globe: "If you really want to do something you will always find a way... Follow your dreams, that's the thing that starts any story."

— Alexandra Abboud

## “Spirit in Motion”

After the Olympic Games draw to a close in August, a second cadre of elite, world-class athletes will arrive in Beijing. Close to 4,000 Paralympic athletes will travel to China from some 140 countries to prove their skills in the Paralympic Games September 6-17.

The motto of the International Paralympic Movement is “Spirit in Motion,” words that capture the goal of its endeavors, “enabling athletes from all backgrounds to unite on a single stage, inspiring and exciting the world with their performances.”

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC), based in Bonn, traces its origins to a 1948 competition organized in England for injured World War II veterans. Olympic-style games for athletes with disabilities were first held in 1960, and by 1988, the Paralympic Games joined the Olympic Games, both winter and summer, in the same host city.

The goals of this movement reach far beyond a two-week series of events held every two years. The president of the International Paralympic Committee, Sir Philip Craven, says sport “gives people the passion to fight for their lives and lead a full life.” Craven, who uses a wheelchair as a result of an adolescent accident, is a five-time Paralympian. He made the comment in an interview with the official Web site of the Beijing Games.

The U.S. Paralympic Committee cites research finding that physical activity helps all people lead better lives — they have better relationships and a greater sense



Three Paralympians charge toward the finish line during the 200-meter final at the 2004 Paralympic Games. Oscar Pistorius of South Africa, center, won the race, breaking the world record in his category. American Danny Andrews, left, won three gold medals in other events that year. American Marlon Shirley, right, took the silver in this race and the gold in the 100-meter event that year.

© AP Images/Petros Karadjias

of achievement that extends beyond physical activity itself to influence all aspects of their lives. U.S. Paralympics, a division of the U.S. Olympic Committee, wants to convey this message to 21 million Americans with disabilities who have typically lower rates of physical activity than average.

Beyond the training and support provided to elite athletes who will compete at the global level, U.S.

Paralympics works to increase access to sports for people with disabilities at the community level, with a goal of establishing programs in 250 cities by 2012.

In early 2008, the IPC launched the Paralympian Ambassador Program, naming 11 past and present athletes to heighten awareness and understanding among young people about the Paralympic Movement.

—Charlene Porter



© AP Images/Petros Karadjias

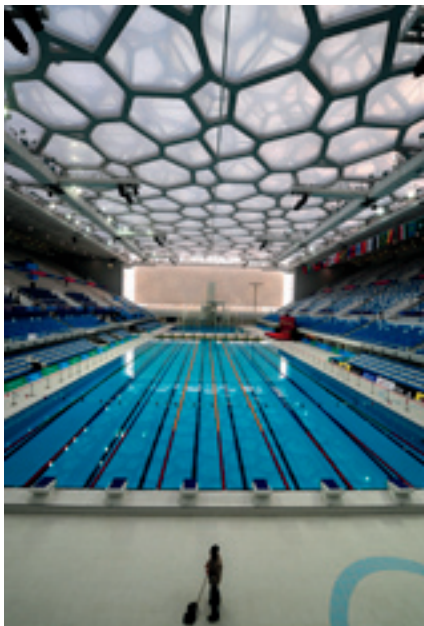
Wheelchair Paralympian Cheri Blauwet, on the starting line of the 2008 Los Angeles Marathon, went on to win that race in March. Also a gold medalist at the 2004 Paralympic Games, Blauwet is now serving in the Paralympian Ambassador Program.

# Olympic Architecture: Building Higher, Stronger

The Olympic motto is “faster, higher, stronger.” Normally a mantra for the athletes’ aspirations, the motto might also apply to the cities that host the Games. Cities vie for the International Olympic Committee nod to host the Games because history has shown that the events can be quite profitable, bringing tourists and spectators, televising the city, and spotlighting its attractions.

When a city is named an Olympic host city, you can be sure major construction will follow. Building new sports venues and accommodations for athletes, media, and spectators has become part of the hosts’ role in welcoming the world for this quadrennial event. The world’s best

architects compete for the assignments and employ the most bold and innovative techniques of their time. The structures they build remain fixtures on the city’s skyline and become monuments to that two-week period when the world’s eyes were focused on one place. The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) has played its part in that tradition with the construction of some stunning new facilities. They are shown on these pages along with examples of architectural feats achieved in other Olympic cities in recent decades.



FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP/Getty Images

This interior shot of the Water Cube was taken when officials previewed the facility to media in January 2008.



© AP Images/Xinhua, Luo Xiaoguang



CHENG GONG/ChinaFotoPress/Getty Images

An evening view of Beijing’s National Stadium, which was built in anticipation of the Games and completed in 2008. The structure’s unique architecture has won it the nickname the “Bird’s Nest.” The stadium will host the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic opening and closing ceremonies and the track and field competitions.

The Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad built the National Aquatic Center for the 2008 Games. Familiarly known as the Water Cube, the venue can hold a crowd of 17,000 and will host the swimming, diving, and synchronized swimming events.

# Olympic Architecture



TORSTEN BLACKWOOD/AFP/Getty Images



© Paul Murphy/Sydney Webcam

Nineteen solar-powered lighting towers along Olympic Boulevard represent the number of cities that hosted the Olympic Games prior to 2000 when Sydney hosted the events.

Sydney, Australia's Olympic Boulevard, seen from the air, joins the International Aquatic Centre, top, Stadium Australia, center; and the SuperDome, foreground. All the sites are now park of Sydney's Olympic Park, considered the nation's "premiere sporting events hub."



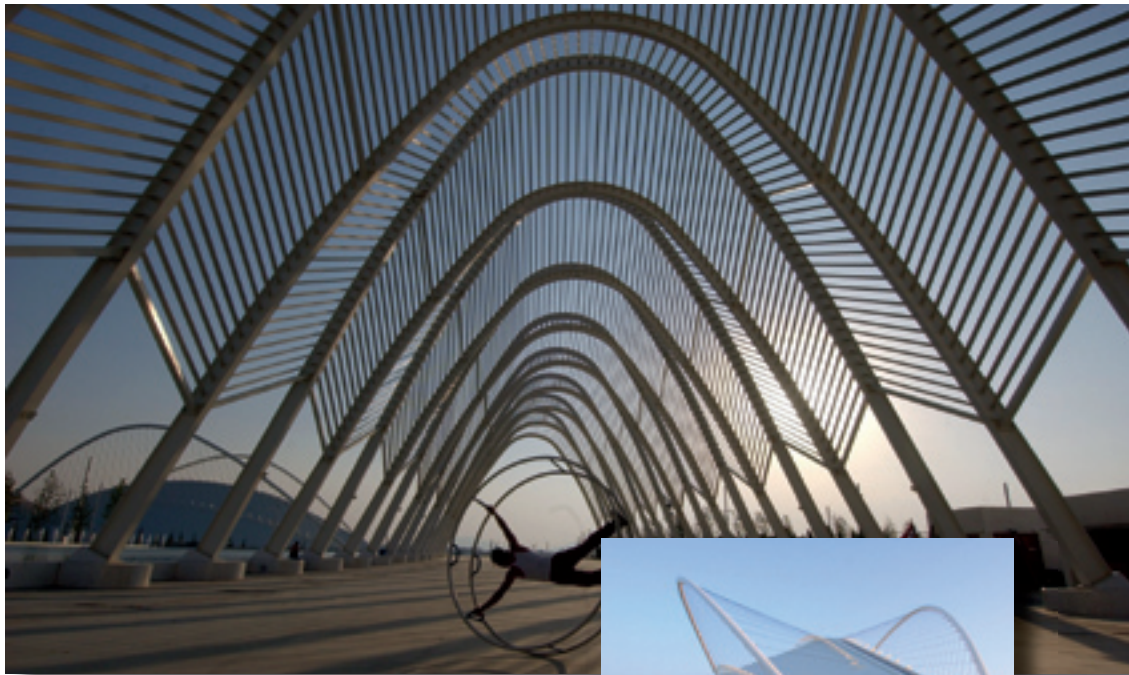
Billy Stickland/Allsport/Getty Images

A view of the 1988 Olympic Games opening ceremony in Seoul, South Korea. Today the stadium is one of six still in use for sporting events and performances. The facilities are surrounded by a park of 1.4 million square meters, which has become a popular gathering place.



Photo by Todd Warshaw/Getty Images

On its way to the Athens Games in 2004, the Olympic flame passed through the World Peace gate in Seoul, South Korea, the site of the 1988 Games. The gate evokes traditional Korean architecture and welcomes visitors into the Olympic Park.



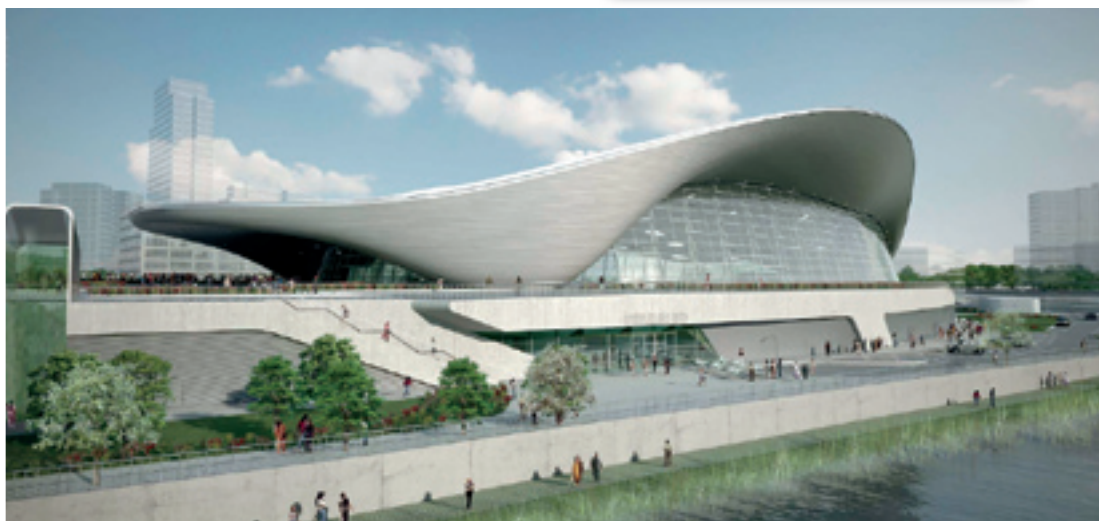
A street theater artist performs at the Olympic complex in Athens with the velodrome seen in the background. The facilities opened to the public in 2005, a year after the opening of the Olympic Games.



In another 2005 photo, a cyclist rolls by the velodrome, used for cycling events during the Games. Other stadiums in the Athens Olympic complex are now used for sporting events and concerts.

© AP Images/Thanassis Stavrakis

© AP Images/Thanassis Stavrakis



London is the designated host city for the Summer Olympics in 2012. This is an architect's rendering of how the Aquatics Centre will look after the Games, when it will be put to various community uses.

Courtesy of London 2012 Organising Committee

# INSIDE THE GAMES

## The Crowd Lifted Us Up

Bart Conner

*Gymnast Bart Conner earned spots on U.S. Olympic teams in 1976, 1980, and 1984. He won two gold medals in 1984: an individual medal on the parallel bars and a medal for the all-around team competition.*

When I was just about nine or ten years old, I could hold a headstand for five minutes, and I could kick up against the wall and go into a handstand. If I wanted to go from the living room to my bedroom, it became a challenge to see if I could make it there walking on my hands.

Then we had 13 wooden steps down into the basement. Most parents would say, “Oh, my gosh, you’re going to break your neck!”

My mom wasn’t exactly happy that I was trying it, but she knew this was something I was excited about, so she said, “Just make sure you put a bunch of mattresses and pillows at the bottom of the stairs in case you crash.” So we did that, and I practiced walking down the stairs on my hands.

At school, when we did gymnastics in physical education, the teacher, a guy named Les Lange, said, “You really are good at this. You want to see what gymnastics is all about?”

So he took me over to the high school, where they had a pretty good program. We went into the gym, and I just thought it was so cool. There were rings, bars, trampolines, things to swing from and jump off of. Mr. Lange lifted me up to the parallel bars. I swung a few times, and I went up into a handstand, the first time I was ever on the parallel bars. To me, it seemed a lot less dangerous than walking down the stairs on my hands. That was the “Aha” moment for me, when I realized, “I want to be a gymnast.”

I was small, I was strong. I could walk on my hands. I



U.S. gymnast Bart Conner practicing on the parallel bars in the 1980s, an event in which he won a gold medal at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

© Focus on Sport/Getty Images

could do a back flip in the backyard. It gave me confidence because I could do nifty tricks my friends couldn’t do.

By the time I reached the eighth grade, prior to getting into high school, I was the Junior Olympic National Champion. I was 14.

I had a lot of international opportunities. My first meet was in Montreal in 1975, so I was 17. I was getting a lot of fun benefits from my work in gymnastics.

When I was 18, I made the 1976 Olympic team. We came in seventh as a team, and I was something like 46th place in the all-around. But by 1979, I was world champion. In 1980, I was bound for the Olympic Games in Moscow, but that was the Olympics the United States boycotted [in response to the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan].

My last Olympics was 1984 in Los Angeles. I was 26 by then — which is ancient for a male gymnast.

Seven months before, at an international meet in Japan, I tore my biceps competing on the rings. I jumped





© AP Images

Conner in action at the 1984 Olympic Games.

off the rings, and I was immediately thinking, “This is a defining moment in my career. This might put me out of the Olympics. I might be done right now.” Here I was at an advanced age, and a serious injury at a late stage usually means “game over.” An odd sensation came over me, and I thought, “I *am* going to make that Olympic team in 1984. I *am* going to march into that stadium.”

I visualized myself entering the stadium, waving to the crowd, and I could hear the sports announcer saying, “Hey, folks, here comes the American men’s team. Seven months ago I never would have believed this, but guess what? Bart Conner is on that team.” I planned that out in my mind. There I was with an ice bag on my arm, trying to get to the airport in Tokyo to return to the United States for surgery, and I already visualized how I wanted that scene to play out.

So when I actually marched in the opening ceremonies in 1984, it was pretty emotional for me. There were a lot of reasons why I shouldn’t have been there, but I was.

Distinctly, I remember walking into the L.A. Coliseum. There were, I don’t know, 80 to 90 thousand people, just a sea of people. We marched in to hear this enormous roar from the crowd. I was walking next to my teammate Jim Hartung, who had been one of my rivals since we were 10 years old. I said to Jim, “Wouldn’t it be cool if we could find our parents?” And Jim says, “Hey, look, there’s your mom.” There was a section of parents of U.S. Olympians, and Jim noticed a bunch of people waving American flags, and he spotted my mom.

### About Bart Conner

Birth date: March 28, 1958

Birthplace: Chicago, Illinois, USA

#### U.S. Olympian

- 1976 Montreal
- 1980 Moscow: A U.S. boycott of the Games due to the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan prohibited the team’s participation.
- 1984 Los Angeles: Gold medals — team gymnastics and parallel bars.

Scored the first perfect 10 in Summer Games history.

Achieved top honors at collegiate, national, and international competitive levels.

Inducted into the **International Gymnastics Hall of Fame** in 1996.

**Today:** Conner now co-owns a gymnastics school in Norman, Oklahoma, with his wife, Romanian Olympic champion Nadia Comaneci, and his former college coach, Paul Ziert. In addition, the partnership owns several gymnastics-related companies, including *International Gymnast* magazine and Grips, Etc., an online gymnastics store. Both Conner and Comaneci will be working as television commentators at the 2008 Olympics. They have one son, born in 2006.



© AP Images/Sue Ogracki

Conner is shown here at the gymnastics school he co-owns in Norman, Oklahoma, with his wife, Nadia Comaneci, and his former coach, Paul Ziert.

I remember a sense of calm when we saw our parents. After all these years of work, we were enjoying the moment of just being there. I didn't know what was going to happen over the next two weeks, but I had made it. To share that moment, that very instant, with my family was pretty powerful. They're waving at me, I'm waving at them, and there's this sense, "Look what we did together." There was an enormous sense of pride.

We got into that meet and felt this tremendous support. It was like the crowd lifted us up, like we could do no wrong.

In gymnastics when you put a punctuation mark on a performance, you "stick" the landing or the dismount. We were just sticking dismounts, right and left, even beyond what we thought we could do. I saw a video from that event the other day. I did a high bar dismount, and I just completely drilled it. I looked up, and the camera caught this look on my face that said, "Wow! Can you believe that one? I rarely stick this thing, and I drilled it that time."

A lot of things happen at the Olympics that are beyond your control. In order to be lucky enough to win something, the stars and the planets have to line up, but there is a definite advantage to being in an Olympics in your home country because of what you get from the crowd. We were pulled along in this wave of enthusiasm and support from that hometown crowd. ■

# Hearing My National Anthem

Iztok Cop



© Jamie McDonald/Getty Images

Iztok Cop, front, and Luka Spik of Slovenia compete at a 2004 race in Munich, Germany.

*The Balkan nation of Slovenia broke away from Yugoslavia in 1991, the first of the republics to do so, declaring itself a free nation after a 10-day civil war.*

*Barely a year after independence, rower Iztok Cop gave his newly independent nation its first distinction in the Olympic Games — a bronze medal in his sport. Eight years later the Slovenian rower also brought home a gold medal. Cop recalls both wins and reflects on how time has helped him better appreciate the significance of their meaning.*

**A** few months before the Olympics, we still didn't know whether we would be able to compete for Slovenia or not, whether the International

Olympic Committee would recognize Slovenia as an independent country. So the whole nation was very, very proud, very emotional about it. To see the Slovenian flag among medal winners in Barcelona was a big thing. I was a bit too young to realize it then because I was 20 years old and for me it was mostly a racing success.

To see it from the athlete's point of view, Barcelona was not my best moment, not what I was hoping for. I was hoping for at least a silver medal, and a bronze medal was a little bit less than what I expected. Winning the gold medal in Sydney in 2000 was the bigger success. Before the Sydney Olympics, I was aiming for gold. It was a lot of pressure on me. I was aware that it could be the chance of a lifetime, and I wanted to grab it.



© JOERG KOCH/AFP/Getty Images

Luka Spik, left, and Iztok Cop celebrate a gold medal at the Rowing World Championships in Munich in 2007 with Cop's daughters Amber, left, and Ruby.

After I succeeded, I just felt so ... I can't even explain ... a little bit relieved and proud. Proud of me, proud of my country, and everybody around me.

Listening to your national anthem at the winning ceremony, that is the most emotional moment in the athlete's career. Very often, you see in the ceremonies on television, athletes who crack at listening to the national anthem. With the success, the relief of everything you've been through, seeing your flag on the middle bar, and listening to your anthem, this is a moment I would love everybody to feel once in their lifetime. I was even more proud for my country, and happy that I could give that to the Slovenian people.

In 2008, I'll be going to the Olympics for the fifth time. I'm trying to do everything to succeed in Beijing because it's about time to start doing something else in my life. It is not easy to admit that you have to retire. I think

that's why I am enjoying rowing even more than I did in the past. I'm aware that my career is coming to an end, and I'm more focused on everything. My body is not able to do the same things that I was able to do 10 or 15 years ago. I have to be very cautious about my training because the body can't recover as it did before.

And I am having a family now, so rowing is not the only thing in my life. So I appreciate and respect those moments I spend in a boat.

In the last 10 years, what I enjoy most is being with my rivals. Off the water, we are really great friends, and on the water, we know what we have to do, and we try to beat each other. If you are friends with somebody, you try to do that even more so. This is such a good atmosphere, a healthy atmosphere with nothing phony. If you are the

### About Iztok Cop

Birth date: June 17, 1972

Birthplace: Kranj, Slovenia

#### Slovenian Olympian

- 1992 Barcelona: Bronze medal — men's coxless pairs with partner Denis Zveglj.
- 1996 Atlanta: Fourth place — single sculls.
- 2000 Sydney: Gold medal — double sculls with partner Luka Spik.
- 2004 Athens: Silver medal — double sculls with partner Luka Spik.

**World Champion:** 1995 - single sculls; 1999 - double sculls (with Spik); 2005 - double sculls (with Spik); 2007 - double sculls (with Spik).

**World Silver Medalist:** 1991 - coxless pair (Denis Zveglj); 2001, 2002 - single sculls; 2005 - quadruple sculls (Spik, Davor Mizerit, Matej Prelog); 2006 - double sculls (Spik).

Rated among 2007's top 10 male rowers in the world by WorldRowing.com.

**Today:** Cop is expected to represent his country at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. He is married with two daughters.

first one on the finish line, no matter whether people like you or not, if you look good or not, you are still the fastest one, and this is what I like. No subjective calculations.

I am asked to give speeches to young people sometimes, and I tell them they have to enjoy the sport, not enter it with the goal to become an Olympic champion. They have to go step by step. But mostly I tell young people if you enjoy your time in sports, even if you don't make a top result, that is still time well spent. You can gain so much more from sports than just medals, like work habits. No pain, no gain, as they say. If you don't work hard, you

will not succeed. You get used to win, to lose, and to learn something from losing and to not get totally depressed after things are not going the way you want them to go. You learn to respect your opponent, and also you know the difference between work and fun.

I just hope I will be able to stay in sport, at least recreationally, that I'll be able to sit in a boat a couple of times a week. I just can't imagine how I can live in a future without sport or exercise. I just hope that I won't feel comfortable getting fat and lazy. ■

# Everything Else Stops

Gabriela Szabo

*As an Olympic competitor in 1996 and 2000, Romanian runner Gabriela Szabo won a bronze, a silver, and a gold medal — the whole collection, as one of our contributors calls it. The final moments of a winning race remain clear in her memory.*

In a 5,000-meters race, it's only in the last 200 meters that you start to count your steps. It's like everything else stops, and you're the only one who is moving. The sound of your breath is competing with the sound of your steps, and you don't see all the people around you anymore. Suddenly, the crowd becomes unclear in your vision. It is like taking a picture and focusing only on a single object and nothing else. In those final moments of the race, the only object in focus is the finish line.

The last steps of a race are not part of a normal running move. You run for victory and that gives you strength and speed to reach your goal.

I wish I could say that you don't feel any pain. I can't. Still, it's a mixed pain. Your muscles hurt, but your mind is focused on victory. You struggle between both those



Gabriela Szabo bursts across the finish line for a victory in the 5,000-meter race at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. She writes of the moment, "The sound of your breath is competing with the sound of your steps."

forces pulsing through you. Suddenly, the training makes sense. Those times when you pushed your body to the utmost don't seem meaningless anymore. It prepared your body for winning!

When someone asks me to describe the feelings I had in a race, I remember Sydney and my story becomes the story of that 5,000 meters race. It was a tough race, even though I can't say that it was tougher than other races. Maybe the fact that it was an event in the Olympic Games made it special and, consequently, the victory was fantastic. I don't know if I was ever so proud to be an athlete and to represent Romania. I loved that honor tour

around the course with the flag on my shoulders! And suddenly the pain of those last 100 meters wasn't there anymore.

I have been running since I was 13 years old. I was lucky to meet Zsolt, my coach, who would later become my husband, and we shared the effort of all the races. So, through all the difficult training and pushing my body further and further, I wasn't alone and I knew that down to my soul.

© AP Images/Doug Mills



© AP Images/Amy Sancetta

At the 2001 World Track and Field Championships, Szabo takes a victory lap with her national flag in hand after winning the gold medal in the 1,500 meters.

to achieve them. Running taught me what success looked like, and Sydney was a part of that lesson. I also found out what failure is. Still, luckily, I knew that after both you have to work harder than before.

I hope to share my passion for sport with all the people I meet and talk to. It's very good to see how they discover sport and the pleasure of it. I especially love children and how they see sport as play. I want to make sure they hold on to the belief that sport is fun, so that when they grow up, they don't quit athletics.

And if only one child will become a champion, I'll know that my effort was worth it! ■

I retired from the sport in 2004 because I felt I couldn't push my body any longer. Still, I knew I had a responsibility toward the people who enjoyed my victories as an athlete. Now, I'm the vice president of the Romanian Athletic Federation and I initiated a social campaign, "Sport for Life," through which I try to spread awareness and get



© Jerry Lampen/Reuters/CORBIS

Szabo shows off a gold medal for the 5,000 meters at the 1999 International Association of Athletics Federation World Championship.

people out on the streets and tracks to run. I also spend a lot of time visiting schools. I tell kids how good it is to practice sport and that running can be a lot of fun.

I tell them what I learned in all those years of athletics. Sport taught me to establish goals and to work hard

### About Gabriela Szabo

Birth date: November 14, 1975

Birthplace: Bistrita, Romania

#### Romanian Olympian

- 1996 Atlanta: Silver medal — women's track and field, 1,500 meters.
- 2000 Sydney: Gold medal — women's track and field, 5,000m; bronze medal — women's track and field, 1,500m.

Named **1999 Best European Sports Person** by the European Union of the Sportive Press.

**World Outdoor Championship titles:** 2001 Edmonton, 1,500m; 1999 Seville, 5,000m; 1997 Athens, 5,000m.

**European Indoor All-Time Record** in 3,000m.

**Today:** Szabo is currently vice president of the Romanian Athletic Federation.

# Always Play for Big Goals

Dawn Staley

*Dawn Staley is a five-time all-star in U.S. women's professional basketball and a three-time Olympic gold medalist, representing the United States in 1996, 2000, and 2004. She coaches Temple University women's basketball and will be a coach for the 2008 U.S. women's Olympic basketball team. Her foundation creates and supports educational and sports programs for at-risk youth in her hometown of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

I'm fortunate because this will be my fourth time participating in the Olympics. The first three times I went as a player, and this year I'm going as a coach. Any time I get to represent my country in an event like the Olympics, it's truly an honor because not a lot of people get to participate in something like that.

I love being associated with the U.S. Olympic basketball team because it's like Utopia for me. Players are brought together with the one goal of winning the gold medal, and nothing interferes with that.

The first time I went to the Olympics in 1996, it was the most incredible feeling. It takes so much sacrifice, work, discipline, and perseverance to get there. To be a part of the Olympics was a lifelong dream of mine, and



Dawn Staley, number 5 on the U.S. women's basketball team, drives around a Spanish player in a preliminary game at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens. The U.S. women's team won the gold medal that year.

© Nick Laham/Getty Images

when you achieve your dreams, it's a feeling that you want everyone to be able to feel.

As a coach I know my team, like all teams, may face challenges during the 2008 Olympics. If they do, I'll tell the players that from the very beginning of the games, you have to always play for big goals. Every team is going to play their best game against us regardless of their rank, so we have to play our best game from the very beginning, with the ultimate goal of winning the gold medal always in mind.

But there are always successes and failures, and those experiences are learning tools. When things aren't going your way, in sports and in life, you still have to persevere.

That's why I founded the Dawn Staley Foundation in 1996. We target at-risk young people

and offer an after-school program, a summer basketball league, and mentoring programs for girls. I want to teach young people how to be disciplined and do something positive.

We want to make sure the students are excelling in the classroom and have the necessary tools to go on to high school and college and to beat the odds.





Dawn Staley, right, coaches a player on the U.S.A. women's team.

© 2006 NBAE Kent Smith/NBAE via Getty Images



Dawn Staley, left, and teammate Natalie Williams celebrate the Olympic gold medal with a win over Australia at the Sydney Games in 2000.

© Sam Mircovich/Reuters/CORBIS

I also have an incredible sense of wanting to beat the odds. Where I grew up, the odds weren't always favorable. I always heard people say that I couldn't go to the Olympics or graduate from college. When people told me I couldn't do something, it motivated me even more.

I've seen poverty, and I now have a good job and live comfortably. What's important to me is that I have a balanced life and that I'm an example to the young girls in our program. That's fulfilling to me.

I've always had high goals. I grew up as the youngest of five children. I always had to compete for attention and to play with my older brothers. My biggest thrill used to be playing basketball with guys on the playground: It was fun and competitive and allowed me to focus on something positive. That's where I set my goals. When I used to watch women playing in the Olympics,

on the world stage, I knew I wanted to play on that platform.

One thing I've learned is that many people think they can generalize about your abilities because of how and where you grew up, but I don't like that. That's why I like to talk to people and understand their experiences.

At the Olympics there are people from all walks of life. What I enjoy most about the Olympics is that I know what it took for each and every athlete to get there. One out of 10,000 athletes participates in the Olympics, and when you're there, you can feel the joy of being around people who have worked as hard as you to get where they are. ■

### About Dawn Staley

Birth date: May 4, 1970

Birthplace: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

#### U.S. Olympian

- 1996 Atlanta: Gold medal — women's basketball.
  - 2000 Sydney: Gold medal — women's basketball.
  - 2004 Athens: Gold medal — women's basketball.
- U.S. flag bearer at opening ceremonies.

**U.S. Professional Women's Basketball:** American Basketball League, 1996-1998, two-time all-star; Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), 1999-2003, five-time all-star; namesake of an annual WNBA Community Service Award.

Received **WNBA Entrepreneurial Spirit Award** in 1999 for her work with the Dawn Staley Foundation, which sponsors athletic and academic programs for inner-city youth.

**Today:** Staley will serve as an assistant coach of the USA women's basketball team at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. She is head coach of women's basketball at Pennsylvania's Temple University and was voted 2004 Atlantic 10 Coach of the Year.

# You Lose a Lot of Games to Get There

Tab Ramos

*Tab Ramos is a professional football player, with three trips to the World Cup as a member of the U.S. team and stints on professional teams in Spain, Mexico, and the United States. He is also an honoree in the U.S. Soccer Hall of Fame. Before those achievements, though, Ramos was a member of the U.S. men's soccer team at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. He learned something there that carried him through his career and that he shares with the new generation of soccer players he coaches today.*

**I**n 1988 the United States was certainly not recognized as a soccer nation at all. Those of us on the Olympic team, we were trying

to earn respect everywhere we went. It was so difficult because anywhere we went, everybody thought the U.S. was supposed to be a last-place team.

When we arrived at the Olympics in Seoul, we were drawn into a very difficult group for the first round. Argentina was one of the teams, one of the world powers in soccer for 70 or 80 years. The Soviet Union was in our group; they ended up being the gold medalist, so obviously they were the strongest team. Then South Korea was in our group, and they were the home nation.

If anything, we were expected to lose all three games, so the pressure was off of us a little bit. When you are not expected to do anything, it's a little bit easier to play. But at the same time we felt like we wanted to prove something. I remember we took the field the first time against



Tab Ramos celebrates his game-winning goal during a World Cup final-round qualifying game in 1997.

© AP Images/ Don Ryan

Argentina. Actually Argentina was very lucky. They tied us with two minutes left in the game, 1-1, a game we had been winning since the first half. So we almost pulled that off.

Then we played the host South Korea in the second game, and I believe we tied 0-0 in that game. So here we are going into a third game against the Soviet Union. We knew they were very strong, and they had some professional players obviously. We ended up losing a pretty good game, 4-2, to the team that eventually took the gold medal.

We were eliminated at the group stage, so we didn't make it into the semifinals. We didn't advance into the medal round, but it was a good showing for us. That was



Tab Ramos, left, on the field in Paris in 1998 when the U.S. team lost a match in the World Cup finals to Germany.

Photo by Popperfoto/Getty Images

not trying hard enough. It will have to do with them not being talented enough to be there.

Winning is obviously something everybody wants, but unfortunately there's only one winner. Everybody else loses. After a long career in soccer, there's one thing that I always tell the kids I coach now. "I've lost more games than you will ever win," I always tell them. That's something that really sticks with every athlete who has made it to a high level. You've lost a lot of games to get there, and you've lost a lot of big games to get there. That doesn't need to make you fall apart. That's the fun of it — to make yourself try harder the next time.

To tell you the truth, I don't like to lose, even at board games, so I'm not saying you should like to lose. But you need to learn how to succeed after loss, learn that you are not going to win all the time, but you still keep trying. ■

the first time U.S. men's soccer competed strongly at a high international level.

Even though we didn't win anything, we left there knowing that we'd done our best and that we helped U.S. soccer step up a notch.

We went as a bunch of athletes that no one knew, playing against soccer stars from other countries. We absolutely did our best. We knew we had given it all we had.

That's a good lesson to remember in sports and in life. I keep it in mind with my own children, who are playing soccer now, and with the other kids I coach. I think the greatest goal is to do the best you can. That's all you can ask of yourself.

I played in a team sport, so I can only do the best I can to help my team win. At the end of the day, if that's not good enough, well, that's not really a big difference between winning and losing the game. As long as you're doing what you can to help your team, then you should be proud of that.

There are plenty of kids who will be growing up in the next few years who will hope to be in the Olympic Games, or on the U.S. Olympic team, who will just not make the team. That will have nothing to do with them

### About Tab Ramos

Birth date: September 21, 1966

Birthplace: Montevideo, Uruguay

#### U.S. Olympian

- 1988 Seoul: Men's soccer team.

Played in three consecutive **World Cup Finals**: 1990, 1994, and 1998.

Seven years with **U.S. Major League Soccer**, as a midfielder on the New York/New Jersey MetroStars.

Voted one of the **Top 100 Players in the World** by *World Soccer* magazine in 1991.

Elected to the **National Soccer Hall of Fame** in 2005.

**Today:** Ramos, who became a U.S. citizen in 1982, is the owner and operator of Tab Ramos Sports Center in Aberdeen, New Jersey. He is married and the father of two.

# The Climax of Everything

Bernard Lagat

*Kenyan-born runner Bernard Lagat is set to compete in the Olympic Games for the third time in Beijing. For the first time, he will be a member of the U.S. team. Currently the American record-holder for the 1,500 meters, Lagat has traveled a long road to reach this point in his life and athletic career.*

The entire meaning of the Olympics is to meet athletes from so many countries, to come together and celebrate humanity through sport. But this year I will be trying to win a gold medal too. That is my goal right now. I won the bronze medal in 2000 in Sydney as a member of Kenya's Olympic team and the silver in Athens in 2004 against the great Hicham El Guerrouj from Morocco. So I think it's time now for me to do my best to win the gold medal in the 1,500 meters.

To have the collection of all three medals from the Olympics would be fantastic — bronze, silver, and gold together.

I am really happy about running for the United States because I've realized a lot of dreams that I could not even think possible. I'm proud to be part of the revolution now in America, whereby track and field is getting recognized and the athletes are getting better and better all the time.

To be at the Olympic Games again, wearing the U.S. uniform, that would be the climax of everything. Representing the United States and getting the gold medal would be a wonderful opportunity for me.

Opportunity was a big part of my decision to become



Bernard Lagat rejoices in his moment of victory in the 5,000-meter race at the International Association of Athletics Federation in Osaka in 2007.

© ERIC FEFERBERG/AFP/Getty Images

an American citizen. I wanted to settle in America, live like any other citizen, and have more opportunities for my family.

I came to the United States from Kenya in 1996 to go to Washington State University. I earned my degrees in 2001 in decision science and management information systems.

I was happy to be a student in America with my student visa. I had come to America to study, and I was going to go back home. Then my roommates told me about the Diversity Visa [DV] program, which allows people from select countries to apply for a permanent residence card, the "green card." About 50,000 applicants are selected each year. So my roommates said, "Hey, let's all apply." Luckily, I applied, and I got the piece of paper back saying, "Congratulations you won the DV lottery."



© TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/Getty Images

Bernard Lagat takes the silver medal in the 1,500 meters behind Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj at the Athens Olympics in 2004. Lagat was behind the winner by only 0.12 seconds.

I'm bringing up my family in America now. It was, of course, a tough decision to relinquish my citizenship from Kenya, but I think it was the best decision for me.

Opportunities to work and to earn money in the United States allow me to actually help the people back home. I started my foundation in 2003 to help students from poor families who are ranked top five in their classes. That is the basis of my foundation: academics. In Kenya, you find all these kids who are so smart, but they run the risk of being sent home because they cannot pay school fees. So my foundation helps them pay the school fees for the whole year. If I can help one family, if I can educate one of their kids, that will make a big difference in their family.

The violence that occurred in Kenya after the

December [2007] elections is a big concern. The kids were supposed to go back to school in January. But the unrest delayed the return to school, so one month was disrupted, and it sets back the kids from what they were ready to learn. Then they have to cram up the lessons in order for them to finish the term. So it is a disruption.

Another concern is violence. Kenya is known to be a peaceful country. It's been a model of peace in Africa. The economy has been going so well, but then suddenly this election violence turned things the other way. It concerns me because of the safety of my friends, general citizens, and my folks back home. I still have my family also in Kenya, and that is something that makes me worry.

But when we look at the bright side of things, I believe they will get a resolution, and I believe Kenya will become peaceful again. ■

### About Bernard Lagat

Birth date: December 12, 1974

Birthplace: Kapsabet, Kenya

#### Kenyan Olympian

- 2000 Sydney: Bronze medal — 1,500 meters.
- 2004 Athens: Silver medal — 1,500m.

Six-time winner of the **Wannamaker Mile** at the Millrose Games in New York City, the oldest invitational, indoor track-and-field meet in the United States.

**U.S. National Champion 2006:** 1,500m and 5,000m.

**U.S. National Champion 2007:** 5,000m.

**Osaka World Championships 2007:** Gold medals, 1,500m and 5,000m.

U.S. National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

**Indoor Male Athlete of the Year for 1999.**

**Today:** Lagat is expected to represent the United States at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. He became a U.S. citizen in 2004 and a father in (2006 when his wife, Gladys Tom, gave birth to son Miika Kimutai Lagat. They live in Tucson, Arizona).

# Giving Every Effort

Rulon Gardner

*Wrestler Rulon Gardner was raised on a ranch in Wyoming and earned his place in Olympic history at the 2000 Sydney Games. In a match dubbed the “miracle on the mat,” Gardner took down his heavyweight rival, Russian Alexander Karelin, who had not lost in 13 years before his matchup with the American farm boy. But Gardner’s greatest victory came later, at the 2004 Games in Athens when he took a bronze medal. Compared to that four-year-old gold, you might say, “So what?” But Gardner had his second trip to the Olympic Games after an accident in which his feet were frost-bitten. Doctors feared he might not even walk again and warned that his Olympic career could be over.*

**T**hat day, it was February 14, 2002. Me and two of my friends, we decided to go snowmobiling. I wanted to have fun with my friends, relieve a little stress, so we went snowmobiling. I got sidetracked in a place that my two friends couldn’t get to me. The only way to save myself was to follow the river, so I followed the river until my snowmobile got stuck between two big boulders. I was trying to pull my snowmobile out, and I slipped and fell into the river. As I fell in the river, I realized I was in a really bad position. That day I was less prepared than I should have been. Coat, gloves, a hat, matches — I didn’t have those types of things. I had to spend the entire night, and it was 25 below zero by morning. I spent a total of 18 hours out there stranded by myself.

If I was going to survive, I knew my only choice was to keep fighting and keep fighting back.



Rulon Gardner, left, was considered the underdog when he entered the ring against world champion Russian wrestler Alexandre Karelin, a three-time Olympic champion. Gardner took the gold medal in this 2000 contest in Sydney.

© Vincenzo Pinto/Reuters/CORBIS

So after I got rescued and started recovering, I would get up every day and just expect myself to come back to compete again. Some people said, “Why are you coming back?” For me, it wasn’t about medals or anything else. It’s about me going out there and doing what I felt was the important thing that I needed to do in my life. That was to wrestle. A lot of people doubted me, and the chances of me coming back to the team were very, very slim, but I still came back. I had my determination about what was important to me, and I didn’t care what other people said.

I was the youngest of nine kids, so with eight brothers and sisters you have to know who you are, what you want,



© AP Images/State Journal/Doug Lindley

Rulon Gardner makes frequent appearances before youth groups, as seen here at a 2006 wrestler's workshop for athletes ranging in age from 5 to 18.

could have a chance to go to the Olympics. They'll look back at me, and say, "Right. You're kidding me, right?" I just tell them how I did it. It's all about realizing internally that you can become strong and powerful.

When I went to the Olympics, I wanted to represent the United States; I wanted to represent every person in this country and make them proud. That's why an Olympic athlete competes. It's not about winning medals or any-

and where you are going in life. You have to make yourself special. The only way you can do that is by having determination every day.

I wasn't really good as a wrestler at a young age. I had a brother who was 16 months older, and every day, all the way through high school, my brother used to beat me, but I continued to work, and I won the state championship my senior year.

By my junior or senior year at college, I said to myself one day, "There's a chance you can go to the Olympics." So I thought about it, and I told myself I had to give 100 percent every day and reach my potential. I wasn't going to give a half effort; I was going to give everything I could.

When I started training for the Olympic team, the U.S. heavyweight was named Matt Ghaffari. He took second place at the Olympics in 1996, and in 1998 he took second at the world competition. He was better than me, but I just got up every day, and said to myself, "You may not beat him today or tomorrow, but you're going to beat him eventually, coming back at it every day." That's what drove me to get better.

I go out and talk to kids now, and I tell them they

something else. It's about representing your country and loving the place you are from. ■

### About Rulon Gardner

Birth date: August 16, 1971

Birthplace: Afton, Wyoming, USA

#### U.S. Olympian

- 2000 Sydney: Gold medal — Greco-Roman wrestling, 130 kg individual.
- 2004 Athens: Bronze medal — Greco-Roman wrestling, 130 kg individual.

USA Wrestling 2001 "Man of the Year."

**Today:** Gardner is an inspirational speaker and author of his autobiography *Never Stop Pushing*. He will be a broadcast commentator at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

# A Sense of the Water

Janet Evans



© AP Images/Denis Paquin

Janet Evans competed in the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, which she calls “my greatest Olympics even though I left without a medal.”

*With five Olympic medals in her trophy case, American swimmer Janet Evans had a terrific Olympic career. At only 17, she won three gold medals in the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, then another gold and a silver in 1992 in Barcelona. But when Evans thinks back on her swimming career, the Olympics, and what she learned along the way, the medals aren't the most important thing.*

**W**hen I started swimming competitively, I wasn't as tall as most of the other kids, so people were always telling me I was too little to be a really competitive swimmer.

In my mind, that didn't make any sense. I knew I had the capabilities, I had the desire, and I just thought I

could make it happen. At a very young age, I didn't care what people said about me or what they thought about me because I knew what I could do.

So I had to face people's doubts about me all the time as a young competitor when I was 10, 11, 12, all the time. Everywhere I went, I was always swimming against girls who were bigger than me. But I had a lot of discipline. I had great family support. I had great coaches. I had a great stroke. I had a great sense of the water. Most importantly, I worked really hard.

By my first Olympics in 1988, I was 17, and I was 5 feet [1.5 meters] tall. I was swimming against women from East Germany who averaged 5 feet, 10 inches [1.75 meters].





© AP Images/Michael Probst

Janet Evans passes the Olympic flame to former Olympian and world champion boxer Muhammed Ali during the 1996 Summer Olympic Games opening ceremony.

When it came to 1996, with the Games scheduled here in the United States, in Atlanta, Georgia, I was looking at the only chance of my Olympic career to swim for my country, in my country. I was 24, and at the time that was considered aging in swimming. I wasn't over the hill, but I was pushing the limit. Just making the Olympic squad was a greater challenge for me than it had been in the past.

My coach and my parents said to me, "You need to swim in Atlanta not to win. You need to swim in Atlanta to experience the Olympics, to compete in your home country, to realize that life isn't just about winning." Of course, I went to Atlanta wanting to win.



© AP Images/Eric Risberg

Janet Evans, left, is shown here in a gold medal-winning moment at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul.

Beyond the size issues in my swimming, what I learned by both my failures — I had a lot of failures along the way, too — and my successes was that I could do whatever I put my mind to.

So that mindset was with me at my first two Olympics, 1988 and 1992. I thought that if I didn't go to the Olympics to win, then I was a failure. I never stopped and said, "Gosh,

I'm really honored just to represent my country at the Olympics." In 1988 I won three golds. In 1992 I won a gold and a silver, but I was very disillusioned with my silver medal. At that time, I thought the Olympics was all about winning.

### About Janet Evans

Birth date: August 28, 1971

Birthplace: Placentia, California, USA

#### U.S. Olympian

- 1988 Seoul: Gold medals — 400 meter freestyle swimming, 800m freestyle, and 400m medley.
- 1992 Barcelona: Gold medal — 800m freestyle; silver medal — 400m freestyle.
- 1996 Atlanta: Competitor; stadium torchbearer with American boxer Muhammad Ali.

First woman to break the 16-minute barrier for 1,500 meters during the 1987 U.S. swimming championships.

**Today:** Evans is an inspirational speaker, a wife, and the mother of a daughter, born in 2006.

Who doesn't want to win? But I'd put a lot of miles on my shoulders by then. I just didn't have it when I got there, for a variety of reasons.

In Atlanta, I really learned it was okay not to win. It was okay to represent my country, do my best, and be satisfied with the results. And I was.

The Atlanta Games were my greatest Olympics even though I left without a medal.

I experienced the whole thing as I never had before. I passed the torch to Muhammad Ali; I went to opening and closing ceremonies. Far and away, the Atlanta Olympics was my best Olympic experience.

Being an Olympian is a fantastic experience even without winning, and that's what I was missing before. By

1996, I was just happy to be an Olympian, to be competing and representing my country. Obviously I was more mature when I was 24 than when I was 17, so that was part of it too.

I remember sitting in the Olympic Village in Atlanta and listening to five or six different languages being spoken around me in the dining hall, and I just sat there by myself, and said, "Wow, this is incredible." I'm living in a community for two weeks with 10,000 athletes — how great is that? That's the stuff the Olympics is really all about. ■

# The Contenders

**T**he final months in the countdown to the Games are a critical period in the four-year Olympiad. Preliminary and trial events are being held as nations select the strongest competitors to join the teams they will send to the Olympic Games.

Though individual team rosters are not complete in all nations, the past may be a guide to how individual nations may perform in these Summer Games. China, the Russian Federation, and the United States have long records as ranking highest among medal-winning nations in recent years. This year, Chinese athletes will also have the home advantage, possibly bettering their chances. Several other Western European and Asian nations have grown accustomed to leaving an Olympic city with lots of medals in their trunks.

Some national and individual winners of recent competitions may become the strongest contenders in the Beijing Games. We feature some of these athletes on the pages that follow, even as we await those thrilling moments when an unknown and unexpected competitor bursts out of the pack to surprise us all.



© AP Images/Manu Fernandez

Taekwondo competitor Diana Lopez, right, lands a kick on a South Korean opponent during a 2005 competition in Madrid. Lopez made Olympic history in April 2008 when she and her two brothers all made the U.S. team in this sport, the first time in more than a century that three siblings qualified for the same Olympic team. Steven Lopez won two gold medals at previous Olympics. Her third brother, Jean Lopez, will be a taekwondo coach for the U.S. Olympic team.



© AP Images/Eckehard Schulz

In 2004, fencer Mariel Zagunis — competing here, left, in the Fencing World Championship in Germany in 2005 — was the first U.S. woman to win an Olympic gold medal in the sport in a century. She is expected to be on the U.S. Olympic team in 2008.



© AP Images/L.G. Patterson

Michael Phelps is among the top U.S. swimmers, winning eight medals at the 2004 Athens Games — six gold and two bronze. At a 2008 meet in Columbia, Missouri, shown here, Phelps checks his time in the 200-meter finals. Phelps won the race but did not break his own record.



© AP Images/Chitose Suzuki

China's Zhang Yinin, left, and teammate Wang Nan enjoy their table tennis victory at the Athens Olympics in 2004.



© AP Images/Thomas Kienzle

Russia's Yelena Isinbayeva prepares for her pole-vaulting event at the Athletics World Indoor Championships in Spain in March 2008. She won the Olympic gold medal in 2004 and remains a strong competitor; having won the gold medal at this Valencia event.



© AP Images/ Rick Bowmer

Russia's Alexander Povetkin, left, defeated Italy's Roberto Cammarelle on his way to the gold medal for super-heavyweight boxing at the 2004 Athens Games.



© AP Images/Anja Niedringhaus

China's Liu Xiang won the 110-meter hurdles in Athens and tied the world record in the event. Liu is expected to pursue the medal again in Beijing in 2008 and is also a candidate to serve on the International Olympic Committee. Athletes participate in the elections to be held during the Games in Beijing.



© AP Images/Michael Sohn

France's gold medalists, from left, Jerome Jeannet, Hugues Obry, Eric Boisse, and Fabrice Jeannet, savor their victory in the men's team épée competition at the Athens Games. Fencing is a traditionally strong sport for France, which also has a solid record of ranking among the top 10 medal-winning nations during the Olympic Games.



© AP Images/ Itsuo Inouye



© AP Images/Koji Sasahara

The Italian men's volleyball team will go to Beijing attempting to defend its 2004 gold medal win. In this 2006 victory at the World Championship in Hiroshima, Luigi Mastrangelo spikes against Roberlandy Simon Aties of Cuba.

The Italian women's water polo team won the gold medal in Athens. Manuela Zanchi, right, defends in a preliminary match against Kazakhstan.



© AP Images/Eric Gay

Members of the Cuban baseball team sprint across the field with their national flag after winning the gold medal in Athens in 2004. Cuba was 11th among national medal winners in 2004 and ninth in 2000.



© AP Images/Ricardo Mazalan

Japan's Tadahiro Nomura, right, throws Georgia's Nestor Khergiani during the judo men's extra-light final in Athens. Nomura repeated his victories of 1996 and 2000 and won the gold medal. Competing again in 2008, he will attempt to join a rare elite among Olympians, those who have won gold medals four times in the same event.



© AP Images/ Mark Baker

Ethiopia's Meseret Defar claimed the gold medal in the 5,000 meters in this moment at the Athens Games. At the 2008 World Indoor Championships, she won her third gold medal for the 3,000 meters. Ethiopia has a long tradition of fielding strong competitors in long-distance running events.



© AP Images/ David Guttenfelder

Andreas Dittmer of Germany paddles to the gold medal in the men's canoe-single 500-meter final in Athens in 2004. The Germans took 16 medals in men's and women's canoe and kayaking events that year, putting their country sixth among nations in medal totals.



© AP Images/Ed Wray

German shot putter Nadine Kleinert watches her throw fly to a bronze medal in Athens.



© AP Images/Eric Risberg

The Australian cyclers won the men's team pursuit in Athens. Australia placed fourth among total medal winners by nation in both 2000 and 2004.

# FROM THE PRESS BOX

When the Olympic Games first became available worldwide through satellite television broadcast from Tokyo in 1964, the contests became local events for people everywhere. Heightened public interest attracted the attention of more and more news outlets, transforming the Games into epic media events. It's a plum assignment for sports journalists, but also a demanding one — two weeks with too many events to cover, too many crushing deadlines, and not enough sleep. Beyond the demands of the job, sports journalists also discover that they can unexpectedly find themselves on the sidelines of history as it is made.

## A Journalistic Marathon

Claudio Nogueira

*Claudio Nogueira covered the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens for Rio de Janeiro's O Globo newspaper. He recalls the assignment as a test of skill and endurance not so different from what athletes experience.*

*Nogueira has been a journalist for O Globo since 1987. He will cover the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.*

When I arrived in Athens to cover the 2004 Games, I felt like I was meeting the whole world in one city. Just as every athlete dreams and works hard to participate in the Olympics, the same is true for sports journalists. Covering this event is one of the most important assignments a reporter can have, and one of the most demanding.

Covering the Olympic Games is hard work. Right after breakfast, I would rush to the media transportation shuttle to get to the competition or training venue on the day's agenda. I was usually covering one event in the morning, a second one after lunchtime, and probably a third in the



U.S. triple jumper Tiombe Hurd talks to reporters at the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

© AP Images/Armando Franca

evening. In the intervals between interviews or competitions, I tried to write with as much speed, skill, and creativity as I could bring to the task.

Being at the Olympics as a reporter also makes you an athlete in a way. You start early and move fast every moment each day. You're coordinating with colleagues



about different events to cover, running for shuttles between the venues, and carrying a laptop and other equipment that becomes heavier each hour. I also had to find time to record a daily audio bulletin to *O Globo's* Web site [[www.oglobo.com.br](http://www.oglobo.com.br)] about anything I had covered that day. Somewhere in that schedule, I also tried to eat and call my wife, Vania, at home.

The day ends sharing dinner with colleagues, and then on to sleep to ready for another day in this journalistic marathon.

When I arrived in Athens, I already had a list of events to cover, based on my reporting background and on the sports in which Brazilian athletes were expected to shine.

My first priority was the floor exercises event in gymnastics. Brazil had gold medal hopes for Daiane dos Santos, who had been world champion in 2003. Unfortunately, Daiane had a leg injury and ended in fifth place at the finals, losing the so-desired gold medal. That was the greatest disappointment of the Athens Games for Brazilians.

After the frustration of gymnastics the first week, my main assignment the second week was covering the Brazilian men's volleyball team. At that point in the competition, Brazil was on its way to the finals, playing against Italy. The stakes were high for the team. Brazil had taken the gold medal in men's volleyball in Barcelona in 1992, and everyone hoped for a repeat of that performance. It was a very tense match indeed, but Brazil won the final — 3 sets to 1 — and took the gold.

I had covered the Pan-American Games in 1999 and 2003, and I had watched my country's competitors win many gold medals. But Athens was the first time I'd covered a Brazilian win for an Olympic gold. I must confess, an Olympic gold is a different experience altogether. That is the top, the maximum.

That story reveals one problem all sports journalists must deal with during international competitions — the balance between my professional responsibilities and my



Members of the Brazilian volleyball team celebrate their gold medal win over Italy in Athens.

© Sergio Moraes/Reuters/Corbis

own emotions. I am a journalist, but I am also Brazilian. So, when I am covering an event, I obviously hope that the Brazilian athletes will win. At the same time, I am not there to cheer. Through the course of my career, I have learned to keep my cheers quiet and to watch a competition as an observer, accredited by a newspaper to write about what I saw. Writing is my duty. When I write for a newspaper, I am somehow part of history and part of my nation's story in the global celebration that is Olympic competition. ■

# The “Greatest Foot Race” Goes to Dust

James Mossop



© AP Images/Mark Duncan

Ancient Korean rituals and space-age technology were united to create a three-hour spectacle at the opening ceremonies of the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul.

*James Mossop is a sports journalist with the London-based Telegraph, who has covered the Olympic Games eight times and will also be on assignment at the Beijing Games. He received the British Press Award of Olympic sport writer of the year after his coverage of the 1992 Games in Barcelona.*

*The 1988 Games in Seoul stand out in his memory because of the way they changed the nature of sports reporting and Olympic competition.*

I remember the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul as my arrival at a cultural and technological crossroads.

The Games began with a superbly choreographed opening ceremony that surpassed anything that had gone before. The main stadium and its architectural delights were hugely impressive, with a sweeping, curved roof

and an array of innovations in light and information display. All the electronics in the venues, the timing and measuring devices, were ultra-modern, a demonstration of South Korea's increasing sophistication and its status as a booming, cutting-edge economy.

More mundane matters affected those whose job it was to communicate events in the South Korean capital to media outlets elsewhere. Precious few of the Western television, radio, and written media personnel spoke the language.

That made traveling anywhere by taxi a novel experience. The vehicles were small, and the drivers all wore white gloves and insisted on grinning at you rather than looking at the road ahead.

It was especially unnerving because Korean drivers

were not always aware of lane discipline to which we are accustomed in Britain. I was constantly bracing myself against impending collision. Taxi drivers in Seoul — and possibly other parts of the country — also had a habit of pulling up at bus stops and offering people lifts along the way to my intended destination.

The technological challenge came with the laptop computer, the first time many of us had ever covered such an event with such a machine. Some of us had been given no more than a half an hour's instruction on the basic Tandy computer and packed off to the Games, sensing that pencil and paper were no longer the tools of our trade.

Deep into the night in the Media Village, you could hear shouts of frustration from people attempting to file their stories to editors back home, as their computers refused to cooperate.

In the end, sections of the British press contingent threw their laptops back into the suitcase and reverted to the time-worn method of dictating copy to their offices. Given the time difference between Korea and Britain, this invariably meant more nocturnal work.

With events running from morning until late at night, most of the media fed themselves during the day from the pot noodle stall behind the media stand. Some of us remember the Seoul events as the “pot noodle Games.”

Despite the dining, the language, and the technological challenges, the greatest ruckus in the rooms and corridors of the Media Village came as people were awakened by the news, broken by the French news agency AFP, that Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson had failed a drug test.

The scramble for instant information was intense. Members of the International Olympic Committee were roused from their beds. Phone lines started to jam and the laptops that could have aided communication remained useless.

Two days earlier, everyone had written reams about the greatest foot race of them all. Johnson had been portrayed as a stunningly impressive athlete over the 39 strides that took him from the pistol to the line and the 100-meter gold medal. All that was now dust.

The hero had become a cheat who protested his



Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson was surrounded by reporters at Seoul's Gimpo Airport as he tried to leave the country. The International Olympic Committee stripped Johnson of his gold medal in the 100-meter sprint after he tested positive for steroids.

© AP Images/Lennox McLendon

innocence, but everyone knew he was guilty. Misconduct had tainted the Olympic Games before, of course. In 1976, a Russian fencer in Montreal was found to have a wired-up weapon bringing him an illicit haul of points. Looking back now, it is easy to regard Johnson's malpractice as a new arena for cheating in sport and the overture to further drug stories to come.

Johnson had been caught because new technology in the drug-testing had advanced the science of detection. Since Johnson's disgrace, the prevalence of drug use has grown at the same time technological advances in detection attempt to keep pace. The shamed list includes many famous, now infamous, names — U.S. runner Marion Jones, U.S. sprinter Kelli White, and English sprinter Dwain Chambers. The Greek sprinters Kostas Kenteris and Katerina Thanou brought shame to their country when they avoided testing in Athens in 2004 and withdrew from competition mysteriously as the Games were about to start.

Twenty-four violations were discovered across all disciplines during the 2004 Athens Olympics, and no doubt others will try to beat the system in the future. Still the testing posse seems to be getting closer to keeping performance-enhancing drugs out of the Olympic Games. ■

# “There’s Something Happening in the Olympic Village”

Barry Newcombe

*The Olympic Games create a brief window of time when we allow ourselves to believe that peace and good will prevail in the world, that competition can coexist with harmony. That belief became illusion on September 5, 1972, in Munich when Israeli Olympians were taken hostage by the Black September terrorist organization.*

*Barry Newcombe recalls the day and his role in it as a young reporter for a British newspaper.*

*The author is now the chairman of the Sports Journalists’ Association of Great Britain.*

**I**t was the second Tuesday of the 1972 Munich Olympic Games. Because there were no track and field events that day, in prospect there would be less work. But the phone next to my bed rang just after 6 a.m. The caller said, “There’s something happening in the Olympic Village; you should get down there.”

I moved fast, down the stairs of the press accommodation, out into the morning air. All around me people were scurrying towards the village, pushed along on a tidal wave of rumor. By the time I reversed that journey 24 hours later, the Olympic world had been stood on its head. So had mine. I was a sportswriter involved in covering the biggest news story of my career.

In timing, the story of that day dropped exactly into the production schedule of my newspaper, the *London Evening Standard*. Munich was an hour ahead of London; my first edition would soon be rolling. Another four editions would be printed by the end of the afternoon. There



Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images

At the 1972 Munich Games, an armed German policeman was on the roof of a dormitory where members of the Black September terrorist group had earlier captured and held members of the Israeli Olympic team.

were two of us to do the job: my senior colleague, a track and field writer, and myself. Another of our team was in hospital, requiring heart surgery.

Compared to today, communications were limited. To communicate with my office, I had to find a telephone that would offer an international connection, and so did other journalists massing from all over the world. The demand for phones was extreme and was a key part of the hassle surrounding the extraordinary task. There were no call boxes on the position outside the Olympic Village in which, at an address called 31 Connolly Strasse, Arab terrorists were holding 11 Israeli athletes as hostages.

Rumor chased accurate information through the day. On Fleet Street, we call it “the mass doorstep” when a crowd of reporters will wait and wait for hours in hope of a tidbit of news on a developing story. The facts came to



© AP Images

Two German police helicopters stand on the field at Fürstenfeldbruck air base after they were used to transport armed terrorists and Israeli hostages from the Olympic team. The helicopter in the foreground was destroyed by a hand grenade explosion set off by one of the terrorists, apparently committing suicide rather than risking capture. Eleven Israelis died, along with one German policeman. Five of eight terrorists were killed by police in a failed rescue attempt.



© AP Images

An unidentified cameraman was shoved from the Olympic Village by a German policeman after he tried to film the building where terrorists held Israelis hostage.

us slowly that day. By the time my production cycle finished, everyone was in their original positions — terrorists, hostages, media. They said one reporter had put on a track suit and run into the Olympic Village, saying he was a marathon runner in training. Another was said to have crawled under the surround fence.

As the light faded, it became clear the authorities were going to move the lead players from Connolly Strasse to an airport. The word was that the terrorists had demanded the release of 234 Arabs held in Israeli jails, together with their own safe passage from Germany. A bus and two helicopters took terrorists and hostages on their way.

Our two-man team had to cover the two airports

where the departure from Germany could take place. My colleague Wally, who had served in the tanks corps in the Second World War, spun a coin that decided it. He went to Fürstenfeldbruck, west of Munich, myself to Riem to the north.

The air base at Fürstenfeldbruck was the place to be. My colleague took up position on the perimeter. Suddenly, shooting broke out in the darkness. “Get down, right down, and stay down until I say we get up,” said Wally to a young writer alongside him. The firefight in and around the two helicopters was said to be decisive, and few knew with any accuracy what had happened. Again, rumor preceded the facts.

The media withdrew to the main press centre. The first news was joyous — all safe, said the authorities. That statement

was reported as fact on the front pages of all the newspapers in Britain and many other places. The long day and night was over, satisfactorily, we thought.

But it was not over; it was far from over. Another press conference was called within the hour. This time the story was drastically different — nobody had been saved. All dead, they said. The dawn came in bleakly a few minutes later.

I found a desk, wrote the story, and when my office opened for the new day dictated more than 1,000 words on what had been the longest operation I had known. Like many other sportswriters, I had had to front up to the demands. It was an indication that the lessons I had learned when I was a trainee would hold good under pressure.

The Munich Games restarted and were extended for a day. Those who were there will never forget them. The implications for security have been obvious ever since, and the Olympic spirit will have to coexist with that security. There is no escape from it. One thing is certain about Munich 1972. What happened there has shaped the planning for every Olympic Games since and will continue to do so. ■

# Resources

## Sources for information about the Olympic Games

### INTERNET

#### Beijing Olympics

<http://en.beijing2008.cn/>

#### Beijing Paralympic Games

<http://en.beijing2008.cn/paralympic/>

#### Official Web Site of the Olympic Movement

<http://www.olympic.org>

#### Olympic Games History

[http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/index\\_uk.asp](http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/index_uk.asp)

#### U.S. Department of Energy

The United States is engaged with China in a variety of bilateral and multilateral projects to advance clean and efficient energy use.

<http://www.energy.gov/news/5080.htm>

#### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been working with the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games to assist the city in reaching its goal to have healthy air for the 2008 Summer Olympics.

<http://www.epa.gov/international/airandclimate/byregion/chinaair.html>

#### U.S. Olympic Committee

<http://www.usoc.org>

#### U.S. Olympic Movement/Team USA

[http://www.usolympicteam.com/19116\\_18922.htm](http://www.usolympicteam.com/19116_18922.htm)

### ATHLETES

#### Bart Conner

Official site: <http://www.bartandnadia.com/biobart.html>

#### Iztok Cop

Official site: [http://www.iztokcop.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=24&Itemid=33](http://www.iztokcop.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=24&Itemid=33)

#### Janet Evans

Official site: <http://www.janetevans.com/index2.html>

#### Rulon Gardner

Official site: <http://www.rulongardner.com/charity.html>

#### Tab Ramos

Official site: <http://tabramos.com/>

#### Dawn Staley

Official site: <http://www.dawnstaley5.com>

#### Gabriela Szabo

Official site: <http://www.gabiszabo.com/>

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**Hasday, Judy L.** *Extraordinary Women Athletes.* New York: Children's Press, 2000.

## BOOKS BY OLYMPIANS

**Conner, Bart.** *Winning the Gold;* with Paul Ziert. New York: Warner Books, 1985.

**Evans, Janet.** *Janet Evans' Total Swimming.* Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2007.

**Gardner, Rulon.** *Never Stop Pushing: My Life From a Wyoming Farm to the Olympic Medals Stand;* with Bob Schaller. New York: Carroll and Graf, 2005.

## FILMOGRAPHY

### FEATURE FILMS

**Chariots of Fire** (1981)  
Director: Hugh Hudson  
Running time: 124 minutes  
Synopsis: In 1924, Britain's finest athletes begin their quest for glory in the Olympic Games. Their success will win honor for their nation, but for two champion runners, the honor at stake is personal and the challenge they face is a challenge from within.  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0082158/>

**Munich** (2005)  
Director: Steven Spielberg  
Running time: 164 minutes  
Synopsis: The 1972 Munich Olympics were interrupted by Palestinian terrorists. This film deals with these events and the Black September aftermath, involving five men designated to eliminate those responsible.  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0408306/>

### **Running Brave** (1983)

Directors: D.S. Everett, Donald Shebib  
Running time: 106 minutes  
Synopsis: The story of Billy Mills, the American Indian who came from obscurity to win the 10,000-meter foot race in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0086220/>

### **Without Limits** (1998)

Director: Robert Towne  
Running time: 117 minutes  
Synopsis: The film follows the life of famed 1970s runner Steve Prefontaine from his youth in Oregon to Oregon University to the Olympics in Munich and his early death at 24 in a car crash.  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0119934/>

## DOCUMENTARIES

### **Olympic Century** (2004)

Running time: 150 minutes  
Synopsis: Superb footage of champion athletes in action, with insightful interviews, historical footage, and photographs dating to the birth of the modern Olympic movement in 1896. (Two DVD set; available on DVD only.)

### **16 Days of Glory** (1986)

Director: Bud Greenspan  
Running time: 145 minutes  
Synopsis: Photographic record of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, told "from the inside" through the lives of the participants.  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0090559/>

### **Tokyo Olympiad** (1965)

Variant Title: **Tokyo Olympic**  
Director: Kon Ichikawa  
Running time: 170 minutes (1984 reissue) /  
USA 93 minutes  
Synopsis: An epic study of athletes struggling to excel against their own bodies and against each other. Kon Ichikawa used 164 cameramen and more than 100 cameras to show the humanity of the competitors — the tears of the Japanese women volleyball champions, the bellow of the hammer throwers, the pain of the collapsed marathon runner, and the solitude of the loser, finishing his lap, picking up his sweats, and leaving the field.  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0059817/>



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