

# Hopes for the future of sport\*

by Lord Killanin

President of the International Olympic Committee

*I am disappointed by the influence that politics have been allowed to play in sport. The recent Asian games is an example of the deterioration they can cause.*

*At the games, North Korea refused to play basketball with South Korea, but did agree to play them in volleyball competitions. The reason for the agreement to volleyball was that both teams were separated by a net, cutting out direct physical contact.*

*This, I believe, is as low as you can get in sport. I want to see an end to this type of thing.*

*I also dislike the growing practice among athletes of teams who withdraw at the last minute from competitions because countries whose political, or national philosophies they do not like are taking part.*

*This is just bad manners. There is no need to accept an invitation to compete if they feel this way. I regard this as one of the worst developments that has crept into sport, and I believe it is governments and not sportsmen who are involved.*

*There should be no government interference in any individual sports when it comes to saying who will be an official or a competitor, or which countries they can or cannot play.*

*This is a complete denial of the freedom of the individual.*

*For the future of sport, I want to see more assistance given by governments. There is a need for more help in sports, leisure and recreation by making facilities available for training and coaching and help is needed with international travel for athletes and sportsmen.*

*I am in favour of the continuing sponsorship of sport by industry, providing this is controlled by the national federations and National Olympic Committees. For example, I do not want to see individual sportsmen having to do anything against their consciences.*

*One of the significant improvements made by the Olympic Committee is the new approach in the rules applying to the amateur status of competitors.*

*I wish to stress that the Olympic Games remain non-professional, and that athletes are not paid to perform in them.*

*I might point out, however, that the International Olympic Committee is now allowing national federations to write their own rules, to be approved by the IOC, over the amount of time given to training, and the conditions under which competitors may be recompensed. This includes cases involving loss of employment.*

*The problem differs for various sports and in various countries.*

*If you are an Irishman you cannot ski in Ireland, for example, so you must train in another country. If you ride a horse, it costs £2,000 a year to keep one let alone buy one.*

*Some National Olympic Committees are poor and others are wealthy.*

*Summing up, amateur athletes have no right to automatic payment for financial losses, but cases are now being taken on their own merit, and it is hoped to give greater and more equal opportunities to all competitors in the future.*

L. K.

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