

** Broken time



by F. Don Miller,
Executive Director
US Olympic Committee

The International Olympic Committee recognizes that training for and competing in the Olympic Games can cause a real financial hardship to the athletes involved. Furthermore, the 26 international sports federations are now considering this broken employment time aspect of the eligibility rule for implementing their regulations.

It is the policy of the United States Olympic Committee to assist in relieving financial hardship suffered by an Olympic athlete as a result of lost time from his or her job because of the demands of pre-Games training and later in the Olympic Games competition as a member of the United States Olympic team.

*
* *

Also, it is the policy of the USOC to help relieve the financial hardship, not to reimburse him or her solely for competing in the Olympic Games or to compensate the competitor, necessarily, for the full amount of wages lost because of absence from his or her job.

We believe that we have established a practical method for all athletes (who believe they may be suffering a financial hardship because of pre-Games training or participating in the

Olympic Games) to file for consideration of their circumstances. Upon receipt of each application the USOC will promptly contact the athlete's employer, in writing, to request that the athlete's salary be continued during the period of training and Olympic competition.

As a result of the efforts of Joseph Scalzo, President of the Amateur Athletic Union, more than 80 corporations, and some states too, have agreed to support this "broken employment time" concept by continuing the salary or wages of athletes involved in the Olympic Games.

The USOC has encouraged other national amateur sports governing bodies to participate in this program by contacting employers to request that salaries of qualified athletes be continued. If these national governing bodies are unsuccessful in this approach with employers the national governing bodies have been requested to consider providing financial assistance to help relieve justifiable financial hardship cases.

Starting with the members of the 1976 USA team for the Olympic Winter Games, we have provided each team member with an application blank requesting reimbursement to relieve loss of wages or salary, after he or she was selected for the team.

Upon receipt of the completed application, the employer and the respective national governing bodies were or will be contacted for additional information. Then after receiving this additional information each request was or will be acted upon by the responsible committee of the USOC.

The International Olympic Committee over the years has revised its eligibility rules and its policy for the payment of "broken employment time" to reflect the changes in recognized preparation and competition time.

Before the current revision, "broken time" payments were limited to 30 days in most cases, and in no case exceeded 60 days in one calendar year.

Under the new regulations, it is recognized that national sports governing bodies may also reimburse athletes for training and participation in the international competitions. However, these regulations are subject to the regulations of each individual international sports governing body. These regulations may be more restrictive than those adopted by the IOC. Incidentally, the IOC no longer has set forth in its regulations any restrictions on the number of days for which an athlete may be reimbursed for "broken time" when preparing for and competing in the Olympic Games.

In short, "broken employment time" reimbursement may be handled either by the National Olympic Committee or the cognizant national sports governing body, or the reimbursement may be shared by the two organizations.

*
* *

We heartily endorse and support the new regulations because they make it possible for National Olympic Committees and national sports governing bodies to realistically consider each case on its own merits. Furthermore, we are grateful to the number of USA corporations who have pledged their support of our fine athletes who will be competing in the Olympic Games with the full backing of company management.

D. M.



¹ Published in "The Olympian", USOC's official bulletin.