

Readers' correspondence

For some years now I, and my friends, have been very concerned by the way that politics and overt nationalism have crept into sport. Most men like myself want to enjoy the spectacle of good sportsmanship, regardless of colour of skin, or political creed. We look to you for a positive lead in this direction, and let the howls of the few militants bay *outside* the Olympic stadium.

J. S. Pan
Tenderden (England)

Much has been said about the need for the Olympic Games to retain and increase their importance in world sport and the need for major changes in the Olympic movement to solve the problems that face the Games today including size, cost, political interferences, the introduction of new sports, new events and extra events for women.

The answer could be to make every fourth year Olympic year with groups of sports taking place at different times in different parts of the world, each with its own simple opening and closing ceremony during which all medals won could be presented, as now happens at the Olympic yachting events. The link between the events would be the Olympic flame lit in Greece on New Year's day.

My suggestion is to divide the present events into ten sections and to add new sports to them. Each NOC could send one team or three individuals to each event to save any difficulties over qualifying standards. The IFs should be asked to make Olympic champions world champions for Olympic year and Olympic events should be the same as those of world championships. An urgent review of all world sports not on the Olympic programme should be made and those suitable added. Such sports might include badminton, cross-country, curling, karate, roller skating, skibob, table tennis, trampoline, water skiing, etc. If new sports are not added to the Olympic programme,

the Olympic Games could soon lose their important place in the world of sport.

Holding the Olympic events in different places would allow more use to be made of existing sports facilities, thus reducing the cost and allowing more countries throughout the world to stage a part of the Olympic programme.

B. K. Hammond
Ipswich (England)

As an amateur athlete, albeit of poor quality, I look upon the Olympic Games as the ultimate goal of an amateur athlete. I believe the desire to achieve or view excellence in sports is a great unifying force common to all people of the world.

Unfortunately during the last several years political problems have overshadowed the Olympic Games. I therefore put forth several ideas which could help achieve this goal.

First: At the opening ceremony of the Games, instead of a parade of nations, I propose a parade of sports.

To further eliminate nationalism from the Games, I propose that the playing of the anthems at award ceremonies be replaced with the playing of the Olympic theme which is heard so often on television. This reform could be accomplished by 1988. Perhaps by that time the various sports and political factions could even be convinced to replace the national flags at award ceremonies with those specially designed flags designating the events.

Another problem besetting the Olympic movement is the extraordinary expense of staging the Games. There are several ideas that might be implemented to help alleviate this problem.

One suggestion is to somehow limit the size of the press and media contingents at the Games. Much money could be saved by eliminating the need to house, feed, and provide communications facilities for several thousand excess people.

Perhaps a site should be picked on each continent so that area would host a Games every 20 years. Such sites could include permanent training facilities for use by athletes between the Games.

G. Eisenstadt
Hagerstown (USA)

A few years ago, I travelled extensively in east and southern Africa. It is very apparent that all African countries are not being judged by the same set of standards.

G. J. Volger
Washington (USA)

I wish to express my objection to the continuation of the ban on South African sportsmen and women competing in the Olympic Games. The Olympic Games Committee should not allow itself to be used as a political weapon.

*Miss S. M. Wagenaar
Havenhill (England)*

As an athlete, coach and supporter of the Olympic movement, I am greatly concerned about the growing involvement of politics in sport. I urge the International Olympic Committee to act quickly and decisively on this matter.

W. F. Morrow
New Milford (USA)

It is very unfortunate that one of the noblest and most beautiful athletic events takes place every four years with an underlining of political intrigues. To no one is this more sad than to the Olympic competitor who is forced to return home by his government. I hope very strongly that this problem will be reduced by 1980.

*R. W. Bitter
University of Rochester (USA)*

We believe that politics have entered into international sports and feel that they have no place there. We recognise them for what they are ulterior motives.

At the same time we feel that a democratic majority rule should be accomplished through a transition over a period of several years, and sport is an excellent arena for an initial step.

H. Edelstein
Los Angeles (USA)