

Morocco and Olympism

"Morocco, the very model of a peaceful country, believes itself to be, through its geographic location, the link between east and west for an exemplary understanding between all athletes in this part of the world."

Hadj Mohammed Benjelloun (19th May 1959)
IOC member since 1961

MOROCCO

659,970 km².
18,400,000 inhabitants.



MOROCCAN NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (CNOM)

Founded in 1959.

Recognised by the IOC in 1959.

President in office : Colonel Mehdi Belmejdoub *

Secretary General in office : Fath Allah Honsali *

Address : Soumayah Street, Agdal, Rabat, Morocco.

Telephone : 711-96, 702-01.

Telegram : Marolympic - Rabat.

* See biographical notes.

Role of the CNOM

- To ensure, prepare and bring about Morocco's participation in the Olympic Games as well as in all other Regional Games authorised by the International Olympic Committee in co-operation with the national sports federations and public authorities.
- To assume responsibility for the development and protection of the Olympic movement and of amateur sport.
- To ensure that the regulations and decisions of the International Olympic Committee are respected.

Creation

On 15th April 1959 a telegram announcing the creation of a Moroccan Olympic Committee was received at Mon Repos, the IOC headquarters in Lausanne. A request for recognition followed soon after ; in his presentation message, Hadj Mohammed Benjelloun *, an IOC member since 1961, who was serving as acting President of the CNOM at the time, expressed himself in these terms :

"Morocco, which has just constituted its National Olympic Committee, hereby submits its request for admission to the IOC to your honourable assembly for your kind consideration. The advancement of sport in our country is founded on the dissemination of all sports activities throughout Morocco. This spread is the work of some 850 sports societies which bring together approximately



The King of Morocco.

42,000 practising athletes and whose influence extends into the most remote regions. These societies are directed by volunteer organisers whose sole objective is to enable the country's young people to devote themselves to open-air activities and to shield them from the evils of a life whose lax character may often prove injurious to their physical and moral health and in which today's youth too often regales.

It must be added that the serious nature which has prevailed in Moroccan sport is largely the issue of a multi-tiered sports organisation which has been instituted : National Sports Council, Supreme Committee for Sport, National Olympic Committee, Royal Sports Federations, regional leagues and committees, sports associations.

This organisation has firmly established and popularised sport, all to the great benefit of the young people who have

found within it the example and the encouragement needed to attract them to open-air activities ; these developments have made no small contribution to the modest renown that Morocco has earned in the realm of sport outside the country.

Moroccan government officials seek to intensify involvement in sport as Morocco is a country in which youth predominates, representing 65% of the population. This issue has not escaped the attention of His Majesty Mohamed V, King of Morocco, who, setting an example himself, is an avid participant in sport.

The Royal Family takes an active part in the management of sport, as the royal princes head numerous royal federations and it may be recalled that HRH Prince Moulay Hassan, heir apparent and chief of staff for the Royal Armed Forces, serves as President of the Moroccan Olympic Committee and that HRH Prince Moulay Adbellah is President of the Supreme Committee for Sport..."

Recognition was granted by the 1959 IOC Session held in Munich. A delegation from the CNOM then took part in the 3rd Mediterranean Games, organised that year in Beirut, and then participated the following year in the Olympic Games in Rome.

IOC members in Morocco

Hadj Mohammed Benjelloun *, since 1961.

Successive Presidents of the CNOM

1959-1965 : HRH, the heir apparent Moulay Hassan, present King of Morocco.

1965-1973 : Hadj Mohammed Benjelloun *.

1973-1977 : Hassan Sefrioui.

1977-1978 : Doctor Mohammed Tahiri Jouti.

Since 1978 : Colonel Mehdi Belmejdoub *.

MOROCCO AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES



Hadj Mohammed Benjelloun (x) in the centre of the COM's Olympic delegation at Mexico City in 1968.

● Date of first participation : 1960.

It will be recalled, however, that before the country achieved independence in 1956, several Moroccan athletes had already earned awards of distinction on international sports fields with several even participating in the Olympic Games.

In the Winter Games, Moroccan athletes were represented only on one occasion, by five skiers in 1968 in Grenoble.

● Moroccan Olympic medallists

In 1960, marathon runner Ben Abdeslam Rhadi finished second in Rome behind Ethiopian competitor Bikila Abebe who passed him only in the race's final kilometre.



A. Rhadi.

Representation of Morocco at the Olympic Games from 1960 to 1976¹

	Athletics	Rowing	Basketball	Boxing	Canoeing	Cycling	Equestrian Events	Fencing	Football	Gymnastics	Weightlifting
1960	8			7		4		7		6	4
1964	4			2					18		2
1968	5		12	5							
1972	11(2)			3					19		
1976											

	Handball	Hockey	Judo	Wrestling	Swimming	Modern Pentathlon	Shooting	Archery	Volleyball	Yachting	Total
1960	●		●	5		2	4	●	●		47
1964	●							●			26
1968	●		●	4				●			26
1972			3	3							39(2)
1976											0

¹ The figures in brackets represent the number of women included in the first figure.

x Sport included in the programme but in which no event was contested.

² Demonstration sport.

● Not included on the programme.

PRESENT ORGANISATION OF THE CNOM

● **The current statutes** came into effect in February 1973.

● **Composition**

The CNOM comprises two categories of members : those with full voting rights (IOC member, delegates representing federations whose sport is included on the Olympic programme), and those with advisory voting privileges (delegates from other sports bodies).

● **The Executive Board**

(PT, IOC member in Morocco, VPT, SG, Asst. S., T, Asst. T. and 4 to 6 assistant members) administers the CNOM, meeting once a month. It is responsible for ensuring application of the Olympic doctrine, carrying out decisions taken by the General Assembly, maintaining permanent contacts with all sports bodies, settling differences which may arise between federations with regard to Olympic issues, co-ordinating the actions of the federations with a view to their participation in the Olympic Games and orienting federations' preparation in the context of the Olympic principles. Its duties also include supplying equipment, arranging transportation and accommodation for the Olympic delegation at all Games, drawing up internal regulations in accordance with the sports legislation in effect and ensuring their application.

● **The General Assembly** is convened at least twice annually to determine the programme of activities, draw up and approve the budget and approve reports from the executive authorities. The General Assembly meeting which immediately follows the close of each celebration of an Olympiad must approve both the financial and the "moral" reports on the lapsed Olympiad

in addition to electing the members of the Executive Board by secret ballot for a four-year term.

● **Current members of the Executive Board**

PT : Colonel Mehdi Belmejdoub * ; *VPT* : Rachdi Alami Hamid ; *SG* : Fath Allah Honsali * ; *Asst. SG* : Fawzi Bouamrani ; *GT* : Lieutenant-Colonel Zekri Mustapha ; *Asst. GT* : Moudden Abderrahman ; *IOC Member* : Hadj Mohammed Benjelloun * ; *Ms.* : Dr. Hammouda Yousri, El Ouffir Hamid, Medkouri Abderrahman, Ben Omar Mohammed, Hasnaoui Hamid and Wissam Hamid.

● **Financing of the CNOM**

Resources are provided by the State.

● **Federations affiliated to the CNOM**

Federations	Licensed members	
	1971	1977
Athletics	4 200	4 260
Rowing	183	108
Basketball	1600	3 500
Boxing	192	567
Cycling	370	600
Equestrian	1 220	2 000
Fencing	170	368
Football	8 321	16 730
Gymnastics	554	1 840
Weightlifting	180	268
Handball	600 ¹	1 400
Hockey	160	220
Judo	2 300	4 500
Wrestling	450	700
Swimming	300	1 450
Ski and Mount. Sp.	450	800
Archery	—	100
Tennis	4 700	10 000
Table tennis	60 ¹	524
Volleyball	660	1 420
Yachting	389	550
Automobile	—	661
Pétanque	4 700	2 600
Rugby	882 ¹	1 365
	32 641	56 521

¹ 1972 figures.

THE CNOM AND OLYMPISM

● Olympic award received

Olympic Order

Abderrahman Khatib, bronze medal winner from among the 1976 nominations, lawyer practising in Casablanca, former athletics champion, former Minister of Youth and Sport and a valuable counsellor for sports affairs in Morocco.

● Olympic day

A project is under study for staging this event annually.

● Protection of the Olympic emblems

Although no provision has been made for statutory protection, the CNOM intends to adopt the necessary measures to participate in protection on an international basis.

● International Olympic Academy

Several Moroccans have taken part in the work of the IOA Sessions.

SPORT IN MOROCCO

● State aid for the sports movement

The development of sport is entirely assured by the State, which provides subsidies for the CNOM and the royal Moroccan federations governing the different sports disciplines. Provision is also made for training sports leaders

through the granting of both national and international scholarships. A significant part of the budget is set aside for the promotion, development and popularisation of sport.

● Other sports governing bodies

National Council for Youth and Sport, Supreme Council for Sport, Committee for School and University Sport and Military Sport.

● Training of sports leaders

The most important institutions are the Ain Sebaa regional educational centre in Casablanca, the Taza centre in the Fez region, the Moulay Rachid Institute in the Maamoura forest near Rabat, the Bellevue centre in Rabat and the military sports centre in Rabat.

● Sport in school

Three hours are devoted weekly to physical and sports education in secondary schools. In addition, three hours per week (optional for students) are set aside for sports activities.

● Sports installations in Morocco

According to the latest statistics installations comprise :

- 15 football stadia and 25 training fields.
- 12 swimming pools.
- 7 gymnasia.
- 6 athletics tracks.
- 118 basketball courts.
- 53 handball courts.
- 71 volleyball courts.
- 7 rugby pitches.
- 60 tennis courts.

● Sports which draw the biggest crowds

Football, basketball, boxing, Cycling, tennis, handball.



Hadj Mohammed Benjelloun in discussion with a journalist.

● **Sports experiencing the greatest development**

Gymnastics, handball, tennis, table tennis, boxing, swimming.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Hadj Mohammed Benjelloun

IOC member since 1961.

Born on 25th January 1912 in Casablanca, this diversified sportsman became involved in athletics, gymnastics, swimming, basketball, handball and football.

In 1937 he created one of Morocco's most prestigious clubs, the Widad Athletic Club (WAC), and founded the Royal Moroccan Rugby Federation in 1957. He was a founding member of the Supreme Committee for Sport in 1957 and a founding member of the NOC whose presidency he assumed from 1959-1965 by appointment and then from 1965-1973. A member of the International Committee for the Mediterranean Games since 1959 and a member of the International Amateur Rugby Federation since 1956, he has served as Vice-President of the latter body since 1974.

A company administrator, Mr. Benjelloun is a former municipal councillor for the city of Casablanca, occupying the office of Chairman over a period of six years, a former member of the Chamber of Councillors for the Kingdom-the Moroccan Senate-and served as a member of the Cabinet of the Minister of National Education and then as Director of the Cabinet of the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport.



Colonel Mehdi Belmejdoub

President of the CNOM since 1978.

Born on 4th February 1935 in Sidi Kacem (near Mek-nèsa), he practised several sports : athletics, swimming and equestrian. It is, however, in football that he acquired a reputation which is still very much alive.

A former international football player, he served for ten years as acting President of the renowned Royal Armed Forces Club, better known by the abbreviation FAR.

Secretary General of the Royal Moroccan Football Federation for five years, he has assumed the duties of President of this body since 1976, also serving as President of the Moroccan delegation to the International Committee for Military Sport (CISM).



Fath Allah Honsali

Secretary General of the CNOM since 1978.

Born in Rabat in 1942, he completed secondary and post-secondary studies in that city:

He gained fame in his sports career through two parallel activities : an ardent yachtsman, he has served for many years as Secretary General of the Moroccan Yachting Federation and as Vice-President of the International Yacht Racing Union (Vaurien class). An information specialist, he also holds office as the Secretary General of the Moroccan Sports Press Association, having won the silver medal in the 1968 competition for journalists on the theme of the celebration of the Olympiad in Mexico City.

A teacher, he occupied many responsible positions within the Ministry of National Education, where he currently heads the Minister's Cabinet.

