

Italy
(CONI)



**The 10th anniversary
of the Youth Games,**

by Mario Pescante,
Secretary General
of the CONI.

Instituted in the same year as the Olympic Games in Mexico City, these Games, a project initiated by the CONI, are intended for young people throughout Italy from 6 to 18 years of age.

The organisation of these Games was initially entrusted to sports associations and communities. Since 1974, the responsibility has been assumed jointly by the CONI and the Ministry of National Education which, through physical education teachers, has to a great extent, integrated the Italian schools, the result of which has been a progressively increasing number of participants, with three million bodies currently involved.

The Youth Games are staged at various levels : school, community, provincial, cantonal and national. The organisation at each level involves the formation of special commissions composed of representatives from local authorities, the schools, the CONI, the sports federations and bodies concerned with the promotion of sport and the trade unions.

The Winter Youth Games involve winter competition sports (Alpine and Nordic skiing, luge and ski jumping) and ice sports (figure and speed skating, ice hockey). The national phase, which provides a fitting climax for all these events, takes place in the first two weeks of March.

The cross-country Youth Games are completed by their national phase in the first half of April.

The Summer Youth Games comprise the following sports : stadium games, baseball, football, canoeing, boating, cycling, fencing, gymnastics, field hockey, swimming, water polo, diving, basketball, handball, volleyball, rollerskating (artistic and racing), modern pentathlon (with an introductory programme limited to cross-country and swimming), rugby, tennis, table tennis, archery and yachting.



The conclusion of the Summer Games is marked by a great national event held in the first two weeks of June, with the participation of 5,000 young people for all the sports, selected in the course of the previously mentioned phases.

In addition to the events listed above, the Youth Games are being developed in younger elementary school classes with a special programme which includes simple gymnastics routines and a team sport known as "quattroporte".

These Games are the occasion for celebrating Olympic day, at the local level during the various stages of the event, or at the national level with the fundamental elements of Olympic ceremony being shown to the country's young people, including the raising of the flag, the playing of the national anthem, the lighting of the Games' flame and the reciting of the "promise" whose contents coincide with the Olympic oath.

The CONI takes out insurance against all accidents for those taking part in the Games who hold a "participant's card", the only document necessary in order to compete.

M. P.