

# Sports and the IOC

by Arpad Csanadi,

IOC member in Hungary and  
Chairman of the IOC Programme Commission



## Olympic sports

Sports on the official programme of the Olympic Games are established by the IOC on the basis of the terms of IOC Rule 32 and of certain specific criteria (see bye-laws to Rule 29). These criteria will be of decisive importance in the future, in case new sports apply for inclusion on the official list. The list of Olympic sports is contained in Rule 30 of the IOC Charter. Present Rules admit not more than 21 sports to the programme of the so-called Summer Games. Out of these, at least 15 must be chosen by the organiser.

Up to the present, all the 21 sports were included only on the programmes of the 1972, 1976 and 1960 Olympic Games.

At the Olympic Winter Games organisers must include all six sports, there being no lower limit as such, as is the case with the Games of the Olympiad.

Contrasting with public belief, Organising Committees have at this stage no right to include other sports on the official programme of the Games apart from those accepted by the IOC.

The IOC, in accordance with Rule 33, carries out a regular examination and evaluation of Olympic programmes. Through examination of the criteria and other data the IOC is given the right to delete or add sports. However, changes may not occur after the Games in question have been awarded and, naturally, the competent International Federations must be consulted.

## Events programme of Olympic Sports

The case is slightly different as far as the events programme of the given sports is concerned. The IOC is constantly observing their situation and development. The events programme of the selected sport is fixed

as early as four years prior to the opening of an Olympic Games. A decision is made after comparing the IOC guidelines with particulars supplied by the given International Federation and after consulting the Organising Committee.

The Olympic events programme is not necessarily identical with that of the world championships of a given sport. One must not forget that Olympic Games include 15 to 21 sports. The events programme, therefore, is to be arranged in a comprehensive way in order to avoid imbalance and disproportion.

When deciding upon events, the IOC makes every effort not to place an extra financial burden on the Organising Committee, be it either extra facilities, officials or athletes. Nor does the IOC encourage adopting events in which judging is rather subjective. However, while considering the above-mentioned circumstances, the IOC is not averse to adopting new or extra events.

## Olympic recognition

In 1975, the IOC adopted a resolution which co-ordinates the relations of sports other than Olympic sports to the IOC. The resolution is worded as follows :

*"In order to further the development of a sport, the IOC can give Olympic recognition to the appropriate International federations, provided their sports comply with the criteria in the IOC bye-laws.*

*These sports can be included in the programme of Continental and Regional Games receiving the patronage of the IOC."*

Thus, based on criteria (see bye-laws to Rule 34) different from those applying to the Olympic sports, the IOC can grant recognition, provided that these sports and their IFs comply, in general, with IOC regulations and the above-mentioned criteria.

This recognition, however, does not give, at this stage, the Organising Committees the right to invite these sports to participate in games organised by them.

As a matter of curiosity, I recall that since 1975 up to the end of 1979 recognition was given by the IOC to eight sports : badminton, baseball, bowling, orienteering, roller skating, softball, table tennis and tennis.

It should also be noted that in 1949 recognition was given by the IOC to several IFs. This recognition was, as a whole, cancelled in 1975 and these sports had to reapply for recognition on the basis of Rule 34 and its bye-laws.

It is quite natural that the International Federations of most recognised sports endeavour to step forward after recognition and want to be included on the list of Olympic sports. This implies different procedures and investigations and also compliance with more stringent requirements. The IOC does not shut the door to any sport. But, beforehand, these sports must prove their validity as well as their popularity during Continental or Regional Games. If they fail to do so, they remain in the second category.

Quite recently, International Federations of recognised sports were given the chance by the IOC to participate, as *observers*, in regular joint meetings of the IOC Executive Board and the Olympic Sports Federations. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to become familiar with the plans and worries of the management of the IOC.

## Procedures

Leaders of quite a few International Sports Federations are not fully aware of the formal requirements of applying for recognition or adoption as Olympic sports.

Special application forms (questionnaires) of both recognition and adoption are available at the General Secretariat of the IOC. This application is to be forwarded to the IOC after filling in forms preceded by a careful study of the principles and regulations laid down in the IOC Rules. The IOC Executive Board will, on the recommendation of the IOC Programme Commission, submit the application to the IOC plenary Session for a final decision.

Adopting new events of sports previously accepted as Olympic sports is also preceded by careful examination. When examining the applications for adoption, guidelines and questionnaires issued by the General Secretariat of the IOC must be taken into consideration. Applications are studied first by the Programme Commission which makes recommendations to the IOC Executive Board and then to the plenary Session not later than four years before the opening of the Olympic Games.

## Demonstration sports

Mention should be made of a third category of sports in spite of the fact that it does not exist at the moment. They are the so-called "demonstration sports". In the past, until 1972, the IOC allowed Organising Committees to introduce not more than two non-Olympic sports parallel with the Olympic programme. These competitions, however, were not part of the official Olympic programmes. After 1972 the IOC put an end to this practice. Perhaps I would not have mentioned it at all if there were no initiatives on the part of some Organising Committees and International Federations, to restore this category. The IOC Programme Commission, following the instructions of the IOC Executive Board, is currently studying the case and will make its recommendation to the IOC Executive Board in the near future.

\*  
\* \*

I hope this short discussion will be of some help in clearing up misunderstandings experienced by the NOCs, some International Sports Federations and Organising Committees and also quite often by the press and sports enthusiasts showing an interest in the Olympic Games

A.C.

