

THE ATHLETE'S CODE

Great thought has been aroused by the necessary revision of the Eligibility Rule, resulting in an Athlete's Code drawn up by the Commission for the Olympic Movement presided over by the President of the IOC. This text, which had been mentioned at the end of the meetings in Lisbon last October, is on the agenda of the meeting of the IOC Executive Board at the beginning of February this year. Below we publish the presentation given to us by one of its authors, Colonel Raoul Mollet, President of the Belgian and Interfederal Olympic Committee, and a member of the Commission for the Olympic Movement.

At the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad in Los Angeles, observers of the evolution of the Olympic Movement could not help being struck by an irrefutable observation : France's football team, composed exclusively of players under professional contract, had become Olympic Champions. Even if this was not a completely new phenomenon, a page had nevertheless been turned.

Soon new questions sprang to mind. What would be the rule governing the admission of tennis players whose sport is now included in the programme of the next Games of the Olympiad in Seoul ?

How to settle the case of "professional" ice-hockey players ? And that of show jumping horsemen, the best of whom compete all year round in top-level competitions endowed with substantial prizes, resulting in some of them being banned from the Olympic Games because they are considered professionals ?

In Mexico, in November 1984, the Olympic Movement held important meetings. The National Olympic Committees Assembly, after long and serious consideration, drafted the "**Mexico Declaration**", Article 7 of which asked for the urgent revision of the eligibility rule.

It was then up to the Commission for the Olympic Movement to include on its agenda the study of this question, which concerns athletes, Federations and Olympic Committees to the highest degree.

Encouraged by President Samaranch, who presided over this commission, a whole series of

ideas gradually developed out of long and thorough consideration of the problem, culminating in the proposal entitled **The Athlete's Code** by its authors - Messrs. Alexandru Siperco, Boris Stankovic and Raoul Mollet.

It was forwarded by the President of the IOC to the Admissions Commission, presided over by Mr. Willi Daume, IOC member and President of the FRG NOC, who at the 91st Session in Berlin had made a speech on the new trends in regard to admissions. The Athletes Commission, presided over by Mr. Peter Tallberg, IOC member in Finland, and composed of famous champions like Sebastian Coe (GBR), Nadia Comaneci (ROM), and Edwin Moses (USA), also studied the draft of the Athlete's Code and made a number of useful suggestions.

It was in this constructive and resolutely future-oriented climate that, at its annual session in Lisbon on 17th October 1985, the Commission for the Olympic Movement agreed to the principles of the Athlete's Code and decided to have the matter studied by all members of the Olympic family.

THE ATHLETE'S CODE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The three important bodies forming the basis of the Olympic Movement, IOC, IF, ANOC, each have their own responsibilities. It was felt important to define and respect them. That is why the Athlete's Code makes the International Federations responsible for defining the admission

rules for their members. The specificity of the Federations is great. It is up to them to determine the rules best serving their identity, their development and their authority.

The IOC, for its part, said to the Federations : "Here is a series of basic criteria that you must absolutely include in the rules of admission for your athletes".

They lay down a **code of good sports behaviour** : respect for fair play, rejection of doping, acceptance of federal authority, behaviour in all respects beyond reproach. To be applicable, these rules should, of course, be included in the "Olympic Charter", which is in the process of revision.

The National Olympic Committees, finally, remain responsible for the selection of the Olympic athletes. Their decision will be final, but athletes must be given every possible guarantee of objectivity and justice.

THE ATHLETE'S CODE FOLLOWS THE TRENDS OF MODERN SPORT

The Olympic Games and big sports events (Football World Cup, tennis tournaments, athletics world championships), are all big business today.

These events generate considerable resources. It is only logical that the actors should benefit too. As a matter of fact, simple and reasonable allowances have been made for this in the Code. The hypocrisy that for so long dominated and corroded the sports ideal has now been banished after, unfortunately, having tarnished the image of sports authorities. A healthy reaction has now occurred.

The differences existing between East and West, between North and South have led to a search for greater equality of preparation and participation for all athletes throughout the world. In this field, the work of Olympic Solidarity is moreover of vital importance.

The Athlete's Code incorporates these trends. It proposes, in fact, that admission to the activities of the Olympic Movement, particularly to the Games, should, from now on, depend upon what could be called a certificate of good behaviour based on a respect for honour and fair play and the rejection of doping and violence, those plagues of modern sport. It is a real return to the origins.

The new Code is really intended to protect the educational and humanist values of sport.



The present dangers do not threaten sport alone but society as a whole.

THE ATHLETE'S CODE AND THE SPORTS AUTHORITIES

The authority of the sports "powers that be" guarantees unity of thought. This is becoming clearer and clearer within the Olympic family, as is shown by the considerable action of the President of the IOC, the growth of the Associations of International Federations and the dynamic steps taken by the Associations of National Olympic Committees.

The Athlete's Code aims to restore the authority of the organisations responsible for the administration of sport and, as has been so aptly put by Michel Clare (*L'Equipe*, 20th October

1985), everything must be done to combat the influence of promoters when this is excessive and represents a breach of the traditions of the Olympic Movement.

The recent upheavals in the world of "professional" tennis where promoters and agents have been taking each other to law, one after the other, are in this connection sadly significant. A strong reaction was therefore needed.

By way of conclusion, we sincerely feel that the time has come, with only three years to go before Seoul, to act quickly so that athletes can come to the Games sure in the knowledge that their qualities, as men of integrity aware of their role as examples, are recognised by all because they respect their code.

R. M.