

TOP-LEVEL SCHOOL AT THE WATER'S EDGE

Magnificent setting for all sports.



By Henri Courtine



A course director for the Olympic Solidarity Itinerant School of Sports Administration, Henri Courtine, who is also an 8 dan black belt judoka, describes the physical education and sports centre he heads in the south-east of France.

Specializing in training top level athletes and their coaches, this school is one of France's top sporting institutions. It is ideally situated for the forthcoming Mediterranean Games in Athens and Olympic Games in Barcelona, looking towards both Europe and Africa, and has the international vocation which is fundamental to sporting development.

In the 1950s in France, Regional Centres for Physical Education and Sport (CREPS) were set up under the leadership of the Secretariat of State for youth and sport, with the principal aim of training sports and physical education teachers. Many of today's sports leaders in French-speaking Africa studied at one of these centres. In addition, these establishments

also host seminars for coaches or sports leaders, athlete proficiency courses or courses connected with educational activities. In all, there are twenty two of these centres on French territory, including one on the island of Reunion and another in Guadeloupe.

NEW MISSIONS

In 1986, a decree giving these centres financial autonomy also gave them new missions to accomplish. As permanent national centres for training top level athletes, the CREPS are necessarily involved in the sports preparation of these athletes. Their task is also to train officials from various public organizations, together with volunteer or permanent managers of associations. They contribute to regional, national and international sports development; organize activities related to study, research and documentation in connection with the various partners involved; and contribute to the development of social communication.

A vast programme then, even without taking into account the fact that certain important factors (land area, environment, climate, human resources) necessitate a policy which is specific to each CREPS and defined by the administrative board of each of them. As a result, in one CREPS the top level sport department might be the most highly developed, while in another it could be the education department or training course section.

AN EXCEPTIONAL MICRO-CLIMATE

Situated four kilometres from Saint-Raphael, in the south-east of France, sheltered by the Estérel mountains, the Boulouris property covers 82 hectares by the sea, and enjoys an exceptional micro-climate which favours the practice of all outdoor sports. All the space available has not yet been used to the full, which gives an idea of the development possibilities which exist. Thanks to a genuine effort on the part

of the national and regional authorities, the Boulouris CREPS has modern sports and accommodation facilities widely used by the training course participants whose numbers are constantly increasing. The sports facilities include four wooden-floor gymnasiums; an all-weather tartan athletics track; an omnisports hall; a covered archery range; a multisports athletics area; ten tennis courts; various additional rooms including a weight-training room and a 250m by 150m golf practice range; and a specially marked-out jogging course. As for the accommodation facilities, these include a restaurant service which can cater for over 250 people, single, twin, three- and four-bedded rooms with all creature comforts, a documentation centre, video and computer facilities, teaching rooms and saunas. The whole centre is run by a team of around fifty people under the authority of the Ministry of Education, in particular physical education and sports teachers and also national coaches.

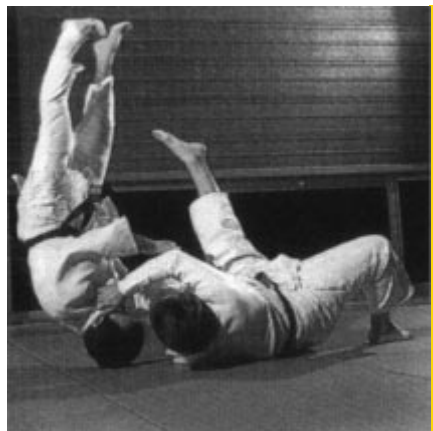
In the shade of the palm trees.



WHAT HAPPENS AT BOULOURIS?

First of all there is the technical and educational training connected with careers in sport. The emphasis this year is on Sport

Individual, team and combat sports.



for All activities, gymnastic expression and associated disciplines, swimming and tennis. The training, which extends over most of the year, is tested either by continuous assessment or by a final exam which, if the participant is successful, earns him a state teaching certificate. The second area is top level sport, with the permanent training and teaching centre (CPEF) which aims to provide a first-rate permanent training, principally intended for specialists in water skiing, tennis, archery and volleyball. A section for track and field and sailing will also be opening in the near future. This top-level department is an active partner in the Solidarity scholarship programme, with two athletes from the Central African Republic at the centre this year. The French Athletics Federation looks after the physical training of these two young women in the afternoons, and in the mornings they attend the general teaching courses. The number of such athletes is set to increase next season.

Parallel to this, a large number of courses of all kinds takes place during the year. These generally last between eight and ten days, and are open to sports leaders, coaches or French and foreign athletes. In 1989 there were 46,000 training course teaching days, a figure which gives an idea of the pace of activity, running uninterruptedly for eleven months of the year. Last November, part of the Belgian national team came to train under the autumn skies of the Cote d'Azur, where they were visited by the NOC president Jacques Rogge along with other members of the Belgian NOC.





*Multi-purpose
athletics track.*

FUTURE PROSPECTS

The climate which the establishment enjoys, its geographical location ("the California of Europe"), and its available land area are all exceptional assets for a CREPS whose vocation is certainly to become a sports centre on an international, predominantly European, scale. Such prospects, viewed favourably by both the administrative board of the centre and the local and regional authorities, would bring with them new needs, and thus extra investment; a reorganization of all the services of the CREPS; and personnel trained to carry out these new missions. But all this is depend-

ent on the decision of the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport. All the CREPS are characterized by the desire to perform a public service, and that is especially true of the Boulouris centre. Thus any organization can hold sessions there, and enjoy a great number of benefits at a very low cost.

Rather than just performing a task by presenting the various facets of sport, it sees its role as being to accomplish a mission, by defending the educative and humanistic values of sport, and by putting into practice one of the mottoes of the IOC : "sport for and by people".

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