

# A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

*Three pictures of a modern athlete : during competition, as a businessman (below) and in the service of sport (right) with members of the Study and Evaluation Commission for the Winter Games.*



*By Peter Montgomery*

The members of the IOC Athletes' Commission have been invited to submit a brief article on their sports careers and Olympic experiences. One must be careful in situations where personal publicity may be regarded as self promotion. Despite such reservations, I have set out below some details of my involvement in the wonderful sport of water polo, the oldest Olympic team sport - played continuously in every Olympic Games since 1900.

A relatively unsuccessful swimming career, interrupted by occasional bouts of illness, led to a single-minded determination to play in the Olympic Games in water polo. My favourite sport was rugby, which was to be abandoned for only one year - 1972 - while playing water polo in Europe for 3 months and competing in Munich. The effect of the Olympic Games was even more profound than I had anticipated, and, despite the initial desire to resume rugby, the excitement and challenge of international water polo ensured that my efforts continued to be directed to

that quixotic ambition of Australian water polo, to achieve an Olympic medal.

After four Olympic Games (1972, 1976, 1980, 1984) and countless other competitions, we finished in 5th position in Los Angeles, only one tantalizing goal away from a bronze medal. At the age of 34, I had been "over the hill" as a player for some time, and increasingly relied, in the water, on experience and guile. Expanding professional and business obligations in the law and real estate business ensured that retirement from national teams was certain.



Having been involved in Australia with the foundation of the Australian Water Polo Association, as a separate entity from Australian Swimming Inc., and as its inaugural Honorary Treasurer, I took a hesitant step into the world of international sports administration at the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984, by agreeing to become the Honorary Secretary of the Technical Water Polo Committee of FINA. This position was until Seoul, and is now renewed until Barcelona, and has involved the conduct of all major FINA water polo events in the last 7 years including the Seoul Olympics, 2 World Championships, 6 World Cups (Men & Women), 4 World Junior Championships, Goodwill Games etc.

The activities of the Technical Water Polo Committee and the IOC Athletes' Commission have made for me a very busy "Honorary" role in international sport officialdom. An involvement with the Sydney 2000 Olympic Bid is the culmination of the hopes of many years that the city of my forebears would finally have a chance to invite the IOC to entrust it with the Olympic Games.

As one moves through life, it is fascinating to meet, and in some cases become friends with, outstanding figures who previously may have seemed to be unapproachable and on a pedestal.

The development of the role of NOCs' Athletes' Commissions (in addition to the IOC) has allowed the athletes to feel that they have a distinct role in the Olympic Movement, other than actual sports participation. The preparedness of the Executive Board, and in particular the President, to listen to the views of athletes is well understood by the members of our Commission and hopefully by most members of the Olympic family. We should increase our efforts to ensure that all athletes in the world realise that they have a voice at the highest levels. *P. M.*

**Peter Montgomery** played in four Olympic Games for the Australian water polo team, in 1972, 1976, 1980 and 1984, when as captain, he took his team to fifth position

He played in four World Championships and many cups and tournaments. Honorary Secretary of FINA's International Water Polo Committee from 1984 to 1992, his team took first place in the FINA Masters Water Polo in 1988.

He became a member of the IOC Athletes' Commission in 1988 and, represents this commission on the Cultural Commission, the Olympic Academy Commission and the Study Commission for the Preparation of the Olympic Games. He is a member of the Sydney Olympic Bid Committee for 2000 and, as chairman of the Australian NOC's Athletes' Commission, is on the NOC Executive Board.

