

Olympic Gold Medallists



JEAN-CLAUDE KILLY

A three-time Olympic skiing champion at the X Olympic Winter Games in Grenoble, Jean-Claude Killy is the only skier besides the Austrian Toni Sailer to have won in all three Alpine disciplines - downhill, giant slalom and special slalom - at the same Winter Games. Winner of the skiing world cup in downhill, his name is associated with the finest performances and most difficult runs, particularly the "Streif" in Kitzbühel. A model sportsman, Jean-Claude Killy paid a great tribute to his adoptive Alps by

obtaining the organization of the 1992 Olympic Winter Games for Albertville and Savoie, of which he was co-president with Michel Barnier. A businessman with a career in industry, he is currently at the helm of ASO, which is the organizer of the Paris-Dakar rally and the Tour de France cycling event. He has been an IOC member since 1995, and serves on the Coordination Commission for the Winter Games in Nagano in 1998 and of the Sport and the Environment Commission.

OR : What is your earliest image of the Olympic Games?

I thank Henri Oreiller for introducing me to the Olympic Games. Oreiller is one of the great names in the history of alpine athletic disciplines. He was my neighbour, and also came from Val d'Isère. I was seven years old at the

time, and had no idea what an Olympic champion was, but every time I saw him on the slopes, my one ambition was to follow in his tracks, and I did.

OR : What is your best memory or favourite anecdote from the Olympic Games?

My best memory is a striking one, in

the literal sense of the term! I was "knocked out" at the Winter Olympic Games at Innsbruck in 1964. I made a mess of all three events: I simply was not prepared physically, psychologically or materially. But that failure helped me to build toward Grenoble in 1968. I also owe much to the foresight of my coach, Honoré Bonnet, who continued to select me for the teams,

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although my results at the time did not justify this.

OR : In your opinion, what is the significance of the Centenary of the Olympic Games?

It reassures me. Knowing that good things can last, and that the candle can be kept burning for one hundred years, is a wonderful lesson to learn. It is a source of comfort and stability that we can apply to every part of our daily lives. I draw on this as inspiration for every decision I take when I organize sporting events. We must not forget that the future of humankind lies in endurance. Life is not a sequence of unrelated events.

OR : What role do you feel sport and Olympism play in modern society?

At the risk of repeating myself, it is a fundamental element, a powerful factor of balance, calm and serenity, which serves as a counterpoint and counter-balance for the excessive or unreasonable demands of life. It is a reference point, something to hold on to when things are going wrong, a source. I have always turned to sport in times of trouble, and it has always helped me to get back on my feet again.

OR : What message would you like to give to today's youth?

Pay attention to the simple things in life, the things that make sense and which contain no malice or vice. In everything that you do, be true to yourself.

