

# Olympic Medallists

## Participants in the Olympic Games



## JOÃO HAVELANGE

João Havelange practised a different sport than the one which he would one day lead and virtually personify. It was as a swimmer that he took part in the Games of the XI Olympiad in Berlin in 1936 and as a water-polo player that he participated in the Games of the XV Olympiad in Helsinki in 1952. However, his name has now become inextricably linked with football, which under his leadership has become one of the great international sports. While

president of the Brazilian Sports Federation, his country won the football World Cup three times, in 1958, 1962 and 1970. A former member of the Brazilian Olympic Committee and chef de mission of the Brazilian delegation at the Games of the XVI Olympiad in Melbourne in 1956, he has been President of the Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) since 1974. He has been a member of the IOC since 1963.

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

I think back to the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, where I took part in the 400m and 1500m freestyle swimming events. Of course, as a young athlete at the time, I was struck by the presence of the great runner Jesse Owens. Winner of the 100, 200 and 4x100

metres, he set an undisputed new record. He was the great athlete of those Games. His image will remain forever as an example of Olympism.

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

It is again from the Olympic Games in

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Berlin. Inside the Olympic village itself, I had the opportunity to attend a series of concerts given by the Berlin Philharmonic. The orchestra thrilled me.

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

Every event, whatever its nature (people are sure to make the same comment in the transition from the year 2000 to 2001), must necessarily evolve. I am certain that all the IOC members and the athletes of the world are aware of the value of the IOC and the Olympic Games. The centenary, a historic, stately occasion, was celebrated in Paris with a grand Congress chaired by Juan Antonio Samaranch. In the same sphere of activities, the IOC will be holding its Centennial

Games in Atlanta, United States of America. And once again, young people will have a chance to enjoy the great event in international sport.

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

Olympism has especially affected the youth of the world, and during its first one hundred years, it has proved its worth and greatness. All over the world, it has educated young people, who have taken up sport with success, setting mounting records. Olympism has certainly taught them a great deal.

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

Sport unquestionably plays a highly important role in society in general

and for youth in particular. We must support this trend so that the representatives of these young athletes can become the great leaders of the future. My thoughts turn towards these young people: I call on them to go into the gyms, onto the sports fields and into all arenas where sport is practised. It is here that they will learn from the great examples which have inspired the sports community.

