

Participants in the Olympic Games



PHILLIP WALTER COLES

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

My earliest image of the Olympic Games was in Melbourne 1956, where I experienced for the first time the power of the Olympics to create goodwill on an international scale. It was at the height of the Cold War and yet in the 10,000m race, a Russian, V. Kouts, lifted the crowd to their feet in a standing ovation. As the stadium erupted into cheers of spontaneous warmth and encouragement, I became aware of the tremendous potential for world unity created by the Olympic Festival.

After attending thirteen Olympic Games, I have many wonderful and interesting memories, but nothing will ever compare with the memory of my first Games as a competitor. As I marched into the stadium in Rome in 1960, in company with my Australian team mates, the realization that I was representing my country in front of the whole world produced a feeling of absolute ecstasy, an indescribable thrill which will live with me forever. Later in the village, the experience of living as part of one huge Olympic Family was the "icing on the cake". WONDERFUL! UNFORGETTABLE!

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

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

Phillip Coles, Olympic canoer.

Phillip Walter Coles, formerly the secretary general of the Australian Olympic Committee, has been an IOC member since 1982. He represented his country as a member of its canoe team in three consecutive editions of the Games of the Olympiad: Rome 1960, Tokyo 1964, and Mexico 1968.

In addition to winning 25 national canoe racing championship titles, he became a member of the NOC Executive Board in 1973, one year after coaching and managing the Australian Olympic canoeing team at the Games of the XX Olympiad in Munich in 1972.

Mr Coles served the Study and Evaluation Commission for the Preparation of the Winter Olympic Games in 1987-1988. He is currently part of the Olympic Solidarity and the Sport for All Commissions.



Participants in the Olympic Games

“Centenary” - one hundred years - the significance is the continuity. This great festival has not only survived, but it is stronger and more influential now than when Baron Pierre de Coubertin first revived it, which is both extraordinary and heartening. Despite one hundred years of global turmoil and incredible change - wars, political boycotts, media scrutiny and commercialization - the Olympics have flourished. By accommodating necessary change, while adhering firmly to the ideals of its founder, the Olympic Movement survives and prospers as a constant in an un-constant world.

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

Sport is an acceptable and healthy outlet for the innate competitive drive of human kind. Nations can satisfy their need for national pride and achievement through sporting prowess. As a festival of peace and unity through sport, the Olympics provide

an arena for sporting contests and an inspirational symbol of excellence, not only for the world’s athletes, but for the entire global community. In highlighting the cultural and artistic elements of the Festival, the Olympic Games bring another dimension to the complete sporting experience. An important aspect of modern Olympism is the Olympic Truce which plays an integral role in shaping the image of the Olympic ideal. The modern Olympic Movement must use its influence as an “agent for change” to encourage world peace and environmental responsibility.

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

The Olympic Movement provides a forum through which you, the youth of world, can be educated in many worthwhile values: the importance of participation, honour and fair play; the necessity to develop both the physical and the metaphysical to become a “whole” person (fit in body

and spirit). During the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games, the youth of the world, who have lived together in harmonious competition, enter the stadium with arms inter-linked, demonstrating to the world the bond of common humanity, a lesson that should not be forgotten as you go on to lead the next generation. By studying the Olympic Movement and its ideals, you will discover a unique festival, providing a vehicle capable of spreading the message of global harmony, a festival of peace and unity through sport - the Olympic Games.

