

News flash

Sport for all

Each year the IOC grants patronage to several sport for all events. This year, in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the traditional "Saraj'98" picnic took place on the day of the national holiday, with the participation of more than 35,000 people. The activities, grouped under the

Around 37 orphanages from around the country took part. The final brought together 168 children in the Staiki sports centre. The programme included various games and sports competitions such as tug-of-war and group exercises. The children also visited the State Circus and the Chil-



Children doing group exercises in Minsk.



Musical programme at Saraj'98.

theme "Saraj for athletes and citizens", combined culture with sport. More than 180 people took part in a 3½-hour programme of songs. The sports on the programme included gymnastics, street basketball, tennis, athletics, volleyball, handball, football and a chess match played simultaneously at 24 tables.

In Minsk, the capital of Belarus, the NOC organized a sports festival entitled "Olympians are among us" for young orphans between the ages of five and six.

dren's Theatre. IOC "sport for all" medals and various trophies and diplomas were awarded to the winners. All of the participants went away loaded down with souvenir prizes given by the NOC and the ministry for sport and tourism.

Thousands of miles away in Rwanda, all of the national sports federations responded to the NOC's invitation to pay tribute to the athletes who had died in the 1994 genocide. Men's and women's events in ten sports disciplines were

organized during the Olympic week. Some events featured foreign participants, such as boxers and athletes from Burundi, and footballers from Tanzania. Conferences and debates were staged with the help of the association of Rwandan sports journalists, one of them on the theme of the role of the sports journalist in the development of sport in Rwanda. The event attracted many spectators in different parts of the country. During the closing ceremony in Kigali, the NOC president announced the creation of a fund for the families of athletes who died

in the 1994 genocide; this proposal received the strong support of the sports minister.

On the same continent, but in Nigeria this time, the festival of traditional Nigerian sports and games took place in the national stadium in Lagos. The colourful opening ceremony was attended by many leading political and sports figures including the permanent secretary of the ministry for information, sport and culture, Adoerike Duro Simo Eti, the sports director of the state sports council, Bank Olemoh, the president of Nigeria Sport For All, Frank



Demonstration of African pool in Lagos.



The winning basketball team in Rwanda.

Oye Thorpe, and the NOC's public relations officer, Fabio Lanipekun. Around 180 participants from 12 of the country's states competed in the following events: kokawa (traditional wrestling), dambe (traditional boxing), langa (combat sport), ayo (wooden board game) and abula (a ball game). There were also demonstrations of African pool and handball for disabled people. On the other side of the Atlantic, forty of the United States, including New York, California, Minnesota, Texas, Washington and Florida, organized sports events

under the aegis of the National Congress of State Games (NCSG). More than 450,000 people of all ages and around 100,000 volunteers were involved in 90 sports, 42 of them on the programme of the Olympic or Pan-American Games. During the NCSG national convention in Roanoke, Virginia, Soren Thompson of California and Thrine Kane of New York were declared sportsman and sports-woman of the year in the presence of Peter Westbrook, who has fenced at six Olympic Games, and Ron Allen, president of the NCSG.



(From left to right) Sandi Hill, Soren Thompson, Ron Allen, Peter Westbrook, Thrine Kane, Sheila Walker and Fred Smith.

Inauguration of the Rebuilt Zetra Olympic Hall

The Zetra Olympic Hall was the site of the figure skating and ice hockey events, and of the closing ceremony of the XIV Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo in 1984. It was destroyed during the war, after missiles made a direct hit through its roof. Through a collaborative project led by the IOC in coordination with the National Olympic Committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in cooperation with the European Union, the Canton of Sarajevo, the City of Barcelona, the International Skating Union, and the governments of Spain, Norway

and the Netherlands, as well as the Sport Humanitarian Group, it has been rebuilt and will be inaugurated on 30 March 1999. The ceremony will be a gala evening of skating, including 1984 Olympic champion Katarina Witt and winners from the 1999 figure skating championships in Helsinki, Finland. The IOC President, the president of the National Olympic Committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the International Skating Union president, and the mayor of Sarajevo will lead the opening ceremony before the gala.



Inside view of the rebuilt Zetra Hall.

Morocco

At a working meeting, the Moroccan NOC president Housni Benslimane and the executive board members of the Moroccan Sporting Press Association (AMPS), headed by Najib Salmi, discussed various subjects including the role of sports

journalists and sports leaders in developing sports practice to face future challenges Mixed commissions are to be set up, and a day devoted to studying the realities of sports journalism will be organized jointly with the Moroccan Ministry of Youth and Sports.