

TWO CENTRES FOR OLYMPIC STUDIES OPEN IN AUSTRALIA

BY RICHARD CASHMAN AND JOHN A. DALY

Two Centres for Olympic Studies were launched in May and June 1996. The respective directors of these two centres, Richard Cashman and John Daly, report on previous academic Olympic initiatives in Australia, which provide the background for recent developments. This report also contained a brief outline of the objectives and operations of each Center.

Olympic Research in Australia

(John A. Daly)

The concept of a Centre for Olympic Studies linked to a University was proposed by John Daly in 1992. The original idea suggested one national location (in Adelaide), but provided for a national “staff” made up of Olympic scholars from around Australia. Most of these people would be located in tertiary institutions, but the concept would allow for others, such as Olympic historian Harry Gordon, to be involved. A national Journal, emanating from this Center in Adelaide, would proselytize the philosophy of Olympism and the educational ideas of de Coubertin while encouraging a critical analysis of the modern Olympic movement in Australia.

Of late the idea was extended to allow for “leadership” and “coordination” from Adelaide while encouraging the establishment of a Centre in each State. This would allow for each Centre to link with its State Olympic Council and thus provide an education “arm” for existing Councils (soon to be “Branches”) of the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC). Olympic Academies, on a regular basis, could be conducted by the Centres in each State under the auspices of their Council, but they could also encourage Olympic scholarship in tertiary institutions in their State.

Olympic Academies had been conducted in Australia from the mid-1980’s under the leadership of Ian Jobling, University of Queensland, and included John Daly, Bob Paddick and Frank Pyke as the original Academy staff. Initially deemed to be the Oceania Olympic Academy, the concept was successful from the first and over 100 delegates from the Pacific countries (Australia, New Zealand and the

Islands) attended the first Academy in Canberra in 1985. The Academies were run on a regular basis and followed a pattern of explanation and discussion of the philosophy of Olympism, critical analysis of the Games and the Olympic Movement along with historical studies and so forth. When New Zealand developed its own Academy, the Oceania Academy became the Australian Olympic Academy. This still exists as a “without walls” Academy, convened whenever the need is expressed to provide a national education forum for particular population groups (such as young people and the media) and indeed several have been convened under the direction of John Daly for Olympians prior to their Games experience. It is anticipated that any future national Academy will draw staff from Centres for Olympic Studies.

To date there have been two Centres established with the endorsement of the Australian Olympic Committee, at the University of South Australia under the direction of Professor John Daly, and at the University of New South Wales, where Associate Professor Richard Cashman is Director. John Daly has been given the task of national coordination of these Centres and the development of an Olympic Society which will provide a source of contact for Olympic scholars around Australia. This will eventuate in the near future and may be termed The Pierre de Coubertin Society (Australia), thus linking it with similar groups overseas.

Centre for Olympic Studies,

University of South Australia (Centre Press Release)

The Australian Olympic Committee has endorsed the establishment of a Center for Olympic Studies at the University of South Australia under the direction of Dr. John Daly. Professor Daly is a sports sociologist in the School of Physical Education, Exercise and Sport Science and an international track and field coach of renown. He lectures regularly at the International Olympic Academy in Greece and has been a member of five Australian Olympic

teams (Montreal, Moscow, Los Angeles, Seoul and Barcelona). The purpose of the Centre for Olympic Studies will be to proselytize the Olympic philosophy of sporting excellence in an honorable contest, to engage in critical analysis of the Games particularly the apparent political and commercial exploitation of the world's greatest sporting event.

The Centre will seek to raise the awareness of others of the important moral imperative that is modeled in the Olympic arena through the following educational activities:

- An Olympic Academy will be conducted biennially under the auspices of the Olympic Council in SA. Special populations, such as journalists, will be targeted for discussions on issues relating to the Olympics.
- A series of public lectures on Olympic themes (e.g. drug taking that demands honesty) will be organized on a regular basis with guest speakers from both within and outside Australia. The Centre will publish these papers in an annual journal.
- Olympic topics will be taught in undergraduate degree courses on request.
- The Centre will encourage postgraduate research in Olympic studies.
- There will be developed at the University of South Australia Library and the Centre a specific collection of texts, videos, research data etc., relating to the Olympics. This will be available on loan to the wider community.
- The Centre will provide suitable educational material to Schools and conduct in-service courses on the teaching of Olympic themes.

It is anticipated that in the lead up to the 2000 Olympics in Sydney the Centre will have a major role in preparing South Australians to be thoughtful spectators of institution that claims a moral imperative for sports participation but is often criticized for its excesses and failure to match professed ideals with the reality of contemporary sporting involvement.

In addition to the establishment of the Centre at the University of South Australia, Professor Daly has been asked by the AOC to coordinate work of other Olympic scholars throughout Australia and establish an Olympic Society (or the like) of these people to encourage academic discourse and research in the field.

Centre for Olympic Studies,
University of New South Wales
(Richard Cashman)

An Olympic Studies Centre was launched at the University of New South Wales on 21 May 1996 by Phil Coles of the Australian Olympic Committee. Richard Cashman is the Director and Anthony Hughes is

the Centre's Executive Officer. Initial funding for the Centre has been provided by the Vice Chancellor. The Centre has been supported by six faculties Australian Defense Force Academy, Arts, Built Environment, Commerce, Professional Studies and the College of Fine Arts who have also contributed funds. Other faculties are likely to join the Centre. The Centre emerged after an international seminar, organized by Professor Roger Layton, Dean of the Faculty of Commerce, in July 1995. The seminar featured four prominent academics from UCLA, involved in the organization of the 1984 Games, who outlined some of the ways in which universities can contribute to the Olympic Games.

The six point Mission Statement reflects the broad ranking character of the Centre:

1. To promote and coordinate scholarship, research and teaching within UNSW in areas of Olympic studies.
2. To ascertain areas where the University can assist in the Sydney Olympics both by making available existing research and by undertaking new research to deal with particular aspects relevant to the Olympics.
3. To create contacts with academic institutions and with industry, commerce, government in the area of the Olympics.
4. To develop projects and to secure consultancies that will supplement the funds provided by the University that will enable the Centre to become self funding by 1997.
5. To project the University's involvement in the Olympics, and other similar international events, as a form of community service.
6. To gather information about the organization of the Sydney Olympics, and other major international events, which will provide a research database to assist in the organization of similar events in the future.

Specific Centre activities will include:

- Public lectures and seminars on Olympic projects;
- Publication of occasional papers and a bimonthly newsletter;
- Undergraduate subjects will be taught on 'The Modern Olympics' and "The Sydney Olympics; The Event and its Impact";
- Establishment of a home page, a major data base and resource center;
- Creation of Olympic resources (and possibly Archives) in conjunction with the University Library;
- Liaison with the AOC, the Centre at South Australia and other Olympic scholars in Australia; and
- Organization of international conferences in conjunction with the above.

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