

**Recommendations of the 4th International Athletes' Forum
29–31 May 2009, Marrakech, Morocco**

Theme 1 - Relationship between the athletes, clubs, federations and NOCs

Background

Athletes are supported by a structure composed of various bodies, including clubs, national and international federations and NOCs. Each of these bodies has a number of key roles and responsibilities towards the athletes and vice-versa. The Olympic Movement should evaluate whether the existing structures are still satisfactory or whether adjustments should be made in order to better protect the interests of both the athletes and the various bodies involved in the support structure.

Elite Athletes

What rights, roles and responsibilities do athletes have in relation to clubs, national and international federations and NOCs, as well as the sports events in which they participate?

Working Group Recommendation

Athletes must be involved in the drafting of the rules and regulations that relate to the competition and technical aspects established by all sports organisations.

Athletes have a central role to play in raising the profile of sport and recreation across communities. A clause which outlines this responsibility should be included in the relevant athlete contracts with sports organisations and, where appropriate, governments.

Roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis elite athletes

In what areas do clubs, federations and NOCs have a responsibility towards elite athletes? Should the areas of responsibility that clubs, federations and NOCs have towards athletes be more clearly defined?

Working Group Recommendation

The autonomy of sports must be fully adhered to and respected.

Sports organisations must ensure that all athletes can compete on a level playing field through the effective and impartial implementation of technical standards/equipment and judging.

Transparent and enhanced dispute-resolution mechanisms must be in place at all levels of sports organisations.

NOCs, IFs and NFs must develop tools and implement processes to communicate with athletes on a regular basis to ensure that they are provided with the appropriate level of information to fulfil their obligations and pursue their careers.

Athletes from all sports and countries should have access to an appropriate level of legal advice throughout all stages of their career. Where allegations of impropriety exist, athletes should not be excluded from similar support.

The IOC and all relevant sports organisations should work together to take into account the current trend of overloading the competition schedule, which can be detrimental to high-performance athletes from a perspective of performance, health and commitment.

A study should be commissioned to assess the impact of insurance on the participation of athletes in major events and to review best practices in the field.

Are elite athletes sufficiently represented within the management structures of clubs, federations and NOCs?

Working Group Recommendation

Sports organisations must provide opportunities for athletes to express their views. In line with the IOC Athletes' Commission guidelines, Athletes' Commissions must have representation and voting rights within all relevant decision-making bodies of their organisation, including the Technical Committees, General Assembly and Executive Board.

The Forum proposes an amendment to clause 29 1.3 of the Olympic Charter to define "retired" as opposed to "active" athletes to be those who have retired from their sports at the latest by the end of the second Olympiad after the last Olympic Games in which they took part.

NOCs must be encouraged to create Athletes' Commissions; such bodies must comply with the guidelines issued by the IOC.

IFs, Continental Associations and national federations must be encouraged to create Athletes' Commissions; such bodies must comply with the approved guidelines.

Elite athletes, amateur athletes and individuals who participate in sport and physical activity (Sport for All)

What are the roles and responsibilities towards individuals who participate in sport and physical activity?

Working Group Recommendation

To ensure increased participation in all sports and physical recreation and promote health, governments should collaborate with sports organisations to allow sports activities to have a prominent place in schools.

Communication between athletes

How can communication between athletes be improved?

Working Group Recommendation

NOCs and IFs should ensure that the information provided is made available to all athletes. The effectiveness of these measures should be reviewed at every NOC and IF meeting.

Higher priority should be attached to developing user-friendly and accessible channels for athletes and athlete organisations to disseminate and share information.

Theme 2 - Health Protection in Training and Competition

Background

Athletes' health is one of the key concerns of the Olympic Movement. Issues for consideration in this area include education, information, treatment, prevention and anti-doping. The Olympic Movement should evaluate where improvements still need to be made in terms of the protection of athletes' health.

Athletes' health

Should athletes receive continued education and training throughout their career regarding the implications of practising their chosen sport on their long-term health?

Working Group Recommendation

The IOC should implement educational programmes on health protection and injury prevention at the Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games

- Engage Athlete Role Models to endorse such programmes.
- Suggest that the IPC implement similar measures.

Role of sporting and non-sporting bodies

Which sporting and non-sporting bodies are best placed to communicate with athletes on issues relating to their health?

Working Group Recommendation

The IOC should strongly encourage National Olympic Committees and International Federations to implement educational programmes on health protection and injury prevention:

- based on IOC Medical Guidelines
- including "train the trainer" programmes and athlete workshops
- including the implementation of such programmes via the national sporting bodies and through educational institutions.

Athlete organisations

Which sporting and non-sporting bodies are best placed to communicate with athletes on issues relating to their health?

Working Group Recommendation

The IOC should insist that all International Federations include their respective Athletes' and Medical Commission representatives in all technical decisions, including competition schedules and rule changes.

- Technical decisions should never lead to the detriment of an athlete's health.

Theme 3 - The social and professional life of athletes during and after elite competition

From the very start of their career in sport, athletes should be given the opportunity to prepare for life after elite competition. Athletes should be able to live life with as much continuity and stability as possible at both social and professional levels. The Olympic Movement should re-evaluate its position regarding the retraining of athletes.

Athletes' Life

Should athletes receive specific support or assistance to achieve a level of stability or continuity (both social and professional) during and after elite competition?
Working Group Recommendation
Amend the Olympic Charter to contain language encouraging the Olympic Movement to support Athlete Career Programmes, including during their active career and throughout their transition period.
All Olympic Movement constituents should endorse the importance of combining education and sport ("dual career") <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification of athlete-friendly structures (secondary schools, universities, technical institutes, sponsors, state companies, etc.)• Use of youth events, (e.g. Youth Olympic Games) to deliver programmes and messages
All stakeholders should recognise and endorse the importance of life skills; Olympic Movement constituents should introduce programmes in this area. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of emotional support and management during the transition period• Use of youth events, such as the Youth Olympic Games, to deliver programmes and messages• Partnerships with sponsors to contribute to life projects, and not only sport performance

Agents' status

Should agents be given a status that meets specific criteria before they are allowed to manage an athlete's career?
Working Group Recommendation
The IOC should provide a standard framework to sporting bodies to develop and implement a Code of Conduct and an International Certification Model for agents. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Olympic Movement constituents should develop licence systems/certification; provide tools and education to athletes to assist them to select and manage their relationship with agents; develop agents' certification courses; and share and exchange best practice models.