

NEWSPAPER IN EDUCATION

FOCUS ON RESPECT



REACH FOR THE RINGS
OLYMPIC EDUCATION

VISION

The United States Olympic Committee is dedicated to preparing America's athletes to represent the United States in the ongoing pursuit and achievement of excellence in the Olympic Games and in life.

Our Olympians inspire Americans, particularly our youth, to embrace Olympic ideals and to pursue excellence in sport and in their lives.

MISSION

The United States Olympic Committee is an organization mandated by Congress under the Amateur Sports Act of 1978, to govern Olympic, Pan American and Paralympic Games, and related activities in the USA. The USOC represents athletes, coaches and administrators of Olympic sport, and the American people who support the Olympic movement.

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REACH FOR THE RINGS

FOCUS ON RESPECT

What draws us to the Olympic Games is the promise that we will witness physical feats that are almost unimaginable: a gymnast seeming to float like a bird above the balance beam; a runner pushing the limits of endurance; a skater spinning and leaping in choreographed perfection.

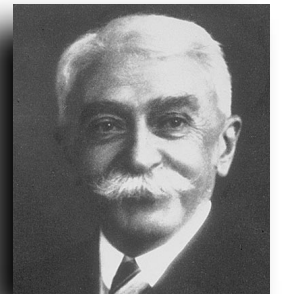
But the Olympic Games have flourished not on muscle and athleticism but on the noble ideal that the honorable pursuit of victory in sports builds and demonstrates character. Good character is ethics in action.

The Olympic Games are distinguished from all other sporting events by the unwavering demand that all who compete under the Olympic flag strive to embody that ideal. Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the French nobleman who revived the Olympic Games in 1896, believed the role of sport is "at once physical, moral and social." He fostered the notion that sportsmanship, fair play, integrity and tolerance would be the foundation upon which the Olympic Games would stand.

The athletes who represent their countries at the Olympic Games are much like you and your classmates. Most are young, some just 15 or 16 years old. Most have overcome obstacles — a physical disability, for example, or a cultural prejudice or a fear of failure. And they all share a respect for their own talent and hard work, for their teammates and opponents, and for the game they play.

Throughout the history of the Olympic Games, ordinary men and women have demonstrated extraordinary character through good sportsmanship, whether it is a bobsledder helping to fix the sled of his rival or two athletes from warring nations walking arm-in-arm before the world. They inspire us to see what is best in the human spirit — and thus what is best in ourselves. They prove over and over that character counts.

When we watch Olympic athletes triumph over their own physical limitations and moral frailties, we know there is hope for all of us to reach for the rings in our own way.



Pierre de Coubertin

HISTORY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

ANCIENT GAMES

Archaeologists believe the ancient Olympic Games began more than 4,000 years ago in Olympia, a valley in Greece. Recorded history of the Games dates back to 776 B.C., when the five days of sporting events were primarily religious ceremonies. Held every four years, the Olympic Games attracted as many as 40,000 spectators, who slept on the ground, conducted their worship and cheered the athletes.

Only men were allowed to compete, in the nude, in running, wrestling, the pentathlon, horse riding and chariot races. Women were barred from watching or competing, and were even put to death if they were caught at the early Games.

Victorious athletes were crowned with an olive wreath and treated like heroes for the rest of their lives, each with a splendid statue for all to admire.

After Greece was conquered and made part of the Roman Empire, the Olympic Games moved to Rome in 146 B.C. The original purpose of the Games was forgotten, and in 394 A.D., Christians forced Roman Emperor Theodosius to end all pagan rituals, including the Olympic Games. These ancient Games had lasted more than 1,200 years, longer than any single ceremonial event in history.

MODERN GAMES

Fifteen hundred years later the Olympic spirit was rekindled, thanks to the vision of Pierre de Coubertin, a French aristocrat and educator who founded the modern Games. De Coubertin believed that inviting athletes from around the world would lead to new international friendship and better cooperation among nations. He also felt it would benefit athletes by exposing them to people with different cultures and customs.

In 1896, the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens, Greece. Although amateur athletes from all over the world were invited, only 13 countries were represented.

Americans dominated the track and field events. All competitors were given medals and, as in ancient times, winners were awarded a crown of olive branches.

In these first modern Games, Greek fans had little to cheer about until the marathon was won by Spiridon Louis, a Greek shepherd running the only international race of his life. His wobbly arrival back in the stadium after racing 26 miles caused pandemonium, as two sons of King George ran alongside Louis as he crossed the finish line to the cheers of 80,000 spectators. The first Olympic celebrity had emerged at the modern Games.

Since this renaissance, the Olympic Games have become the greatest sports event in the world. They have faced many political crises and their demise has been predicted often.



Jesse Owens

But they have survived two world wars as well as revolutions, controversies and conflicts.

In the eyes of de Coubertin and those who succeeded him, the social and moral value of the Games — the noble spirit of sportsmanship and pursuit of victory with honor to dispel prejudices and foster understanding — was more important than the competitions themselves.

A TRIUMPH OVER PREJUDICE

Perhaps no single episode in Olympic history illustrated this value more powerfully than the track and field competition in the 1936 Games in Germany. The Olympic Games began that summer as the world was inching closer to a second World War, in large part because of the racist dictatorship of German Chancellor Adolf Hitler.

Hitler tried to use the Olympic Games in Berlin to promote his belief that Germany's blue-eyed, blond-haired Aryan race was superior to all others. "Americans ought to be ashamed of themselves for letting their medals be worn by Negroes," he said. "I myself would never shake hands with one of them."

When early on in the Games two black Americans won the gold and silver in the high jump, Hitler left the Olympic Stadium rather than congratulate them. But Hitler had a more difficult time ignoring another black American, this one by the name of Jesse Owens.

The son of sharecroppers and the grandson of slaves, Owens arrived in Berlin with a strong character and great expectations for the 100- and 200-meter sprints, the long jump and the 4x100 relay. He knew that Hitler and many in the Olympic stadium thought he was inferior because of his skin



Opening Ceremony

color, but he would not be distracted.

He was spectacular, winning golds in both sprints and another in the relay. But in his first two attempts in the long jump, Owens stepped over the foul line as he launched himself into the air.

"I was scared stiff that I would blow it on my third and last attempt to qualify and not make it to the finals," Owens said.

In the truest spirit of sportsmanship, another man of great character, the German champion Luz Long, did an extraordinary thing. Long, Owens' fiercest rival, took his towel and laid it a foot before the foul line. "You can use this for your takeoff," Long told Owens in broken English. "You should then qualify easily." Owens used the towel to guide his leap and qualified for the final. Then he defeat-

ed Long to win the gold.

After Owens' victory, Long embraced the champion, and they walked arm-in-arm in front of Hitler's box. "You can melt down all the medals and cups I have and they wouldn't be a plating on the 24-karat friendship I felt for Luz Long at that moment," Owens wrote in his memoirs.

For him, the greatest prize of the Olympic Games was Long's brave and unselfish act. Long had risked his countrymen's scorn, and perhaps even endangered his life, to honor the Olympic ideal of respecting one's opponents, no matter what their nationality, religion or color. The Olympic Games allowed Owens and Long to reach across an enormous divide of prejudice and send a message of tolerance and understanding that quietly reverberated around the world.

"Everybody should have a dream. Everybody should work toward that dream. And if you believe hard enough, whether it be in the Olympic Games, or in the business world, or the music world, or the educational world, it all comes down to one thing. One day we can all stand on the top of the victory stand, and one day we can watch our flag rise above all others to the crescendo of our national anthem, and one day, you can say, 'On this day, I am a champion.'"

JESSE OWENS

Track and Field, 1936

ACTIVITY

Use the newspaper to collect examples of people demonstrating respect. Place your clippings in an individual notebook or on a classroom bulletin board. Look for examples from many different areas: sports, the arts, government, the community. Use news stories, feature stories or opinion columns. Write a brief explanation of why you included the person or group in your collection. Divide your examples into three categories:

- **Respect for Oneself:** People who persevere to overcome obstacles, who take a stand, who succeed without hurting others.
- **Respect for Others:** People who encourage others to get along, who work to increase understanding and appreciation among different ethnic, cultural, racial or gender groups.
- **Respect for Competition:** People who show good sportsmanship in a competitive situation, who follow the rules, who bring honor to an activity or event.



SWIFTER, HIGHER, STRONGER

Wilma Rudolph

“When I stood on the victory stand to receive my first gold medal, I was in a daze. I said to myself: ‘Is this really me?’ This is what the Olympics are all about.”

WILMA RUDOLPH

Track and Field, 1956 and 1960

The Olympic motto, “Citius, Altius, Fortius,” is Latin for “Swifter, Higher, Stronger.” This motto embodies the Olympic athlete’s drive to be the best he or she can be. It means pushing one’s athletic skills to the limit, but it means more. It means demonstrating responsibility by developing the discipline and dedication to make strengths out of weaknesses, to overcome obstacles, to grow from defeats and by mastering oneself.

The greatest Olympians teach others about character through their example. Wilma Rudolph was a role model who inspired everyone through what she did and who she was.

Rudolph was born prematurely, the 20th of 22 children, in rural Tennessee. At age 4, she suffered from polio, pneumonia and scarlet fever and her left leg was paralyzed. By the time she was 6, she could hop on one leg. By 8, she was walking with a leg brace and then an orthopedic shoe. Every Saturday, her mother would drive her to a hospital 60 miles away for treatment. “Then, during the week, my brothers and sisters would take turns massaging my leg,” Rudolph wrote in her autobiography. “If it wasn’t for my family, I probably would never have been able to walk properly, much less run.”

“My father pushed me to be competitive,” Rudolph said. “He felt that sports would help me overcome my problems.”

At a summer camp, a track coach discovered Rudolph’s running talent and helped her

train. By 16, she was good enough to win her first Olympic medal, a bronze in the women’s 4x100 relay in the 1956 Melbourne Games.

At the 1960 Rome Games, Rudolph tripped over a water main and sprained her ankle but still managed to win three gold medals — in the 100, 200 and 4x100 relay.

“From the moment she first sped down the track in Rome’s Olympic Stadium,” Time magazine wrote, “there was no doubt she was the fastest woman the world had ever seen.”

After her 1994 death from a brain tumor, Rudolph remains a shining symbol. “She showed that it was okay for a woman

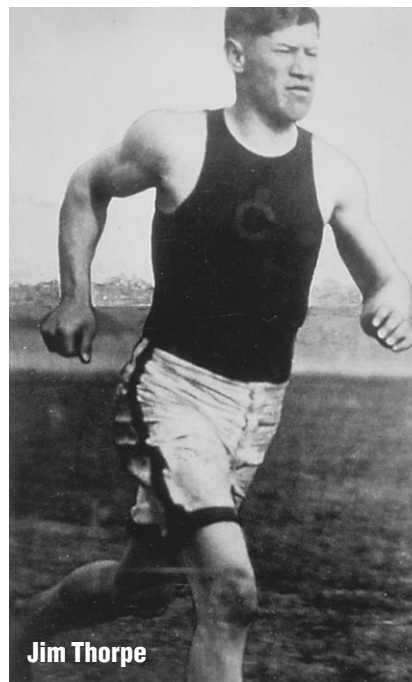
to be powerful and black and beautiful,” said Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, a 1984 gold medalist.

Wilma Rudolph inspired male athletes, too. “Everybody says Wilma was a great role model for young women track athletes,” said Edwin Moses, one of the greatest hurdlers in history. “But she was a hero to all of us in the sport.”

AN ALL-AROUND HERO

Another hero symbolizing the Olympic motto is Jim Thorpe, a Native American who was born in the Oklahoma Territory.

Thorpe first gained fame as a football player in 1911, scoring all the points for tiny Carlisle College when the team beat Harvard 18-15. He was chosen an All-American halfback in 1911 and 1912. An all-around athlete,



Jim Thorpe

he earned varsity letters in 11 different sports and was chosen to represent the United States at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden.

Thorpe's legend grew in Sweden as he competed in the decathlon and pentathlon, two sports made up of multiple events. He came in first in five events: the long jump, shot put, high jump, hurdles and discus; second in two: the 100-meter and 1,500-meter runs; and third in three: the 400 meters, pole vault and javelin.

When Sweden's King Gustav placed the Olympic laurel wreath on Thorpe and gave him his second gold medal, the King said: "You, sir, are the greatest athlete in the world." Thorpe replied, "Thanks, King."

Back in the United States, Thorpe became a national hero, honored with a ticker-tape parade down Broadway in New York City. He went on to play professional baseball with the New York Giants and the Cincinnati Reds and professional football with the Canton Bulldogs. When the Associated Press polled sportswriters in 1950, they voted Thorpe the Greatest Athlete of the Half-Century.

In 1913, Thorpe was stripped of his Olympic medals after admitting he was paid \$25 a week to play semiprofessional baseball in North Carolina several years before his Olympic victories. The Olympic code at that time forbade any athlete to compete in the Games if he or she had been paid to play any sport.

The public rallied to Thorpe's side, and when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) tried to award the gold medal to Sweden's Hugo Wieslander, who finished second to Thorpe in the decathlon, Wieslander refused to accept it.

Efforts to reinstate Thorpe's medals were not successful during his lifetime. In 1982, the IOC allowed his name to be returned to the record books, and replacements for his gold medals were presented to his children.

ASTHMA SUFFERER SWIMS TO GOLD

The Olympic motto is also personified by Olympian Amy Van Dyken of Colorado, one of the best U.S. swimmers training for the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.

At the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996, Van Dyken became the first U.S. female athlete to win four golds at a single Olympic Games.

Yet in high school, Van Dyken says, she sometimes felt "like a nerd" because she suffered from severe asthma and wasn't able to play sports as well as her peers. She had trouble breathing due to all three forms of the illness — exercise-induced, allergy-induced and infection-induced asthma. A doctor suggested swimming.

From age 6 to 12, Van Dyken swam and loved it, but her asthma prevented her from completing a lap of the pool. "I'd swim halfway," she says, "and there would be little Amy hanging on the lane line, gasping for air."

Van Dyken says she was such a poor swimmer in high school that her teammates refused to swim with her. But she persisted and after winning the 50-meter freestyle on the last night of the Atlanta Games, she exclaimed, "This victory was for all the nerds!"

Amy Van Dyken couldn't do anything about her asthma, but she could decide how it would affect her life. Rather than being overcome by her illness, she overcame it through determina-

tion and hard work. Rather than be a victim, she became a champion.

"For all the kids out there who are struggling, and their peers say they're terrible, I hope I'm an inspiration," she says. "If they love it and just keep plugging away at it, something good will come out of it."

BLIND ATHLETE'S CHALLENGE

When Jeni Armbruster of Colorado Springs started losing her sight at the age of 13, her biggest fear was that she would not be able to play sports. As a star basketball player in seventh and eighth grades, she showed potential for a major college scholarship. But by age 14, she was disheartened by her worsening eyesight and her inability to compete in the sport she loved.



Amy Van Dyken

"I still played basketball with my partial sight, but I wasn't as good as I used to be. I wasn't as competitive," she recalls.

Armbruster's vision problems were caused by a degeneration of the optic nerve. By 17, she was completely blind.

In her search for a sport to replace basketball, she discovered a new sport: goalball. A mix of softball and soccer, goalball is played on a court the size of a volleyball court, with three players who are either blind or blindfolded.

"Everyone has obstacles in life," Armbruster says. "Whether it's blindness or anything else, everyone has to find their own way, whether you go over the obstacles, or under or around them."

By age 18, Armbruster was ranked among the top goalball players in the world and she won a bronze medal in the sport at the Atlanta Paralympic Games in 1996.

"I was fortunate to have found goalball," she says. "I was also fortunate to have family, friends and teachers who challenged me. They didn't give up on me, so I couldn't give up on myself."

Armbruster is studying for a master's degree in criminology in Huntsville, Texas. Besides playing goalball, she enjoys backpacking in Europe, downhill skiing, rock climbing and playing golf.

"It used to be, 'Oh, you're a tomboy.' Now it's 'Rock on, you're a tomboy!' Now it's OK if you can bench press your husband."

AMY VAN DYKEN,
Swimming, 1996

ACTIVITY

Locate and read a newspaper story about a student who has excelled in a nonathletic situation. Organize information about the person's quest for success in a circle chart. Draw a circle. Divide the circle into thirds. In one section of the circle, list the person's motivation for success — why he or she has this goal. In another section, list the obstacles or difficulties the person faced in achieving the goal. In the third section, list the actions the individual took to become successful. Beneath the circle, write several sentences explaining what you think the student's future will be in his or her chosen field.



1980 Men's Hockey Team



1996 Women's Basketball Team

ACTIVITY

Select a team sport. Think of the physical skills athletes need to participate in that sport, such as speed, strength and endurance. Now think of the personal skills needed to be a successful team, such as teamwork, cooperation, resiliency, courage and dignity.

Put yourself in the position of coach and recruit an imaginary team from athletes appearing in the sports section of the newspaper. Select individuals you would put on your team. However, you may *not* select a person who actually plays the sport for which you are recruiting. For example, you may not select a real football player for an imaginary football team. Your players must all come from different sports. List your recruits and explain how the skills required in the sports they play can be used for the position in the sport you have selected.

If you ask retired athletes what they miss most about competing, they are likely to say working as a team and the joy of being part of something that is greater than any single individual. Becoming a team means melding various personalities and abilities into a single unit with a shared vision.

BEING PART OF A "DREAM TEAM"

Coach Tara VanDerveer faced such a challenge in 1995, when she took over as coach of the women's basketball team that would compete for the United States in the Atlanta Games the following year. She had to train 12 women, all of whom had been stars on their college or professional teams, to put aside their own egos for the good of the team.

Teamwork requires each athlete to be unselfish, to be willing to sacrifice personal glory in a cooperative effort to achieve a common goal. As the 12 women worked together over the year, they learned humility and sacrifice. They grew close, appreciating each other's strengths and accepting their weaknesses. The team didn't have much height, so they compensated by being quick and by being in better physical shape than any team they played.

Lisa Leslie stood 6 feet 5 inches tall, the tallest player on the team. The pressure was heavy on her, given her background. She once scored 101 points for her high school team. But with the Olympic team, she shied away from individual glory.

"People feel I haven't lived up to expectations," she said after one of the team's exhibition games. "People go only as far as looking at points. They don't look at all the other factors. I score as many points as my team allows me."

By the time the women's "Dream Team" reached Atlanta, they had won all 52 of their exhibition games. Then they went on to win all eight Olympic games to earn their place at the top of the victory stand. When it was over, the players huddled in the locker room and held hands. They didn't give thanks for the gold medal. Instead, as one player put it, they said a prayer "for what we've had together."

TEAMWORK MAKES MIRACLES

If the 1996 women's basketball team taught lessons about unselfishness and humility, the 1980 men's ice hockey team embodied the deep respect and loyalty teammates must have for each other in order to be successful. No one gave the 1980 hockey team a chance for gold. They were a ragtag team of no-names who had just been beaten 10-3 by the Soviets in an

exhibition game.

"We all came from similar backgrounds," recalls team captain Mike Eruzione. "We all got up early to go to the rink, spent our allowances on sticks and pucks, experienced hard practices and sacrificed other areas of our lives to play a sport we loved."

The team didn't even have the best college players, much less the best pros. But this suited coach Herb Brooks just fine. He wanted players who would be disciplined and unselfish enough to pass the puck and set up their teammates for shots.

When the United States managed to reach the semifinals against the mighty Soviets, millions of Americans gathered around their TV sets. At the time, with inflation spiraling and dozens of American hostages being held in Iran, Americans felt they had little in general to cheer about.

The Soviets scored the first two goals. By the end of the first period, the United States had tied the score, with goaltender Jim Craig making save after save. The Americans wouldn't give up. It was as if they were playing out on the ice all the struggles that ordinary people faced every day. Their refusal to back down lifted the spirits of an entire nation.

With just six minutes left in the match, the U.S. team went ahead 4-3 and held on for victory. "Do you believe in miracles?" announcer Al Michaels screamed to the TV audience as cheers of "U-S-A!" echoed through the rink at Lake Placid, New York, and across the country. Two days later, the United States won the gold medal by defeating Finland, 4-2.

"It wasn't a miracle on ice," Eruzione recalled years afterward. "It was an accomplishment by a group of athletes who believed in themselves and who believed in each other. It was an achievement by a group of 'lunch-pail hard hats' who ignored the beliefs of the majority and continued to train with courage and heart."



OPENING CEREMONY

All Olympic Games begin with an Opening Ceremony and a Parade of Nations. Greek athletes enter the stadium first, in honor of the original Olympic Games, followed by athletes from other nations in alphabetical order. Athletes from the host country enter last.

Athletes from each nation walk together as a team, following a sign with their country's name written in the language of the host country. Athletes and coaches from large countries march by the hundreds. Some less populous nations, such as Angola or Lebanon, may have only one or two athletes.

Often the underdogs draw the loudest cheers, as when the tropical island of Jamaica — which has no snow — sent a bobsled team to Calgary in 1988, inspiring the movie "Cool Runnings." The presence of such unlikely athletes gives hope that no dream is impossible.

The Opening Ceremony includes the entrance of the Olympic flag, the playing of the Olympic hymn, the lighting of the flame and the pledge by both athletes and judges. To entertain TV viewers from around the world, host countries stage elaborate spectacles of singing, music and dancing performed by thousands of adults and children.

This gathering symbolizes the ideal of unity and respect that are at the core of the Olympic Games.

SEEKING A PEACEFUL PLAYING FIELD

Five interlocking rings simply and dramatically symbolize the Olympic ideal of global unity. Designed by Pierre de Coubertin, they represent the union of the five major continents that competed in 1896: Africa, North America, Asia, Australia and Europe. The five colors of the rings are blue, black, red, yellow and green.

De Coubertin believed that if the athletes of the world can join as one in the name of sport, then there is hope that the countries of the world can exist peacefully as well. He found inspiration for this ideal in the ancient Olympic Games. Respect for the Games was so deep that soldiers stopped battles between city-states for the duration of the competition.

But despite the modern Olympic organizers' best efforts to discourage political interference, there have been times when the world's conflicts encroached on the Olympic Games.

The Olympic Games were canceled in 1916 during World War I, when 10 million men were killed and Europe was left in devastation. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) banned the defeated nations — Germany, Austria, Hungary and Turkey — from taking part in the 1920 and 1924 Games.

World War II caused the cancellation of the Olympic Games in 1940 and 1944. They resumed in 1948 in London, but Japanese, German and Italian athletes were banned even though the war had ended three years earlier.

South Africa was barred from the Olympic Games from 1970 to 1992 because of its practice of apartheid. In 1972, several African nations threatened to boycott the Olympic Games if Rhodesia, ruled by whites, was allowed to compete. The IOC consented and barred Rhodesia.

In 1980, the United States and 35 other countries refused to take part in the Moscow Games because the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan. Four years later, the Soviets refused to come to the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

The worst political tragedy of the Games occurred in 1972. That year, Germany staged the "Games of Joy" in Munich to help erase the memory of Adolf Hitler at the 1936 Berlin Games. But joy turned to tragedy when Arab terrorists in black masks stormed a men's dormitory at the Olympic Village where 28 Israelis were sleeping. With automatic weapons and hand grenades, the Black September terrorists murdered two Israelis and held nine others hostage. For the next 23 hours, millions watched the excruciating drama on TV. The terrorists killed all nine hostages as German police tried to rescue them.

Many felt the Olympic Games should have been stopped. Others agreed with IOC President Avery Brundage that the Olympic Games should not yield to criminal pressure. Eighty thousand people attended a memorial ceremony for the slain athletes in the Olympic Stadium. That afternoon, with the approval of Israeli Olympic officials, the Games resumed.

LENDING A HELPING HAND

No one personified the ideal of sportsmanship better than kayaker Scott Shipley. At the 1996 Atlanta Games, Shipley showed his character when the kayak of one of his competitors hit a rock and sank during an early run.

The hard-luck kayaker was a young man from Bosnia named Samir Karabasic. For four years, Karabasic had lived in a trench in Bihac, Bosnia, as his country was torn apart by civil war. When he slipped away to paddle his kayak on a nearby river, he was under constant threat of sniper and mortar fire.

Karabasic arrived at the 1996 Atlanta Games with a second-hand kayak to compete for Bosnia. In his first run on the Olympic course, the boat, patched together with epoxy and duct tape, hit a rock, broke in two and sank, seeming to take Karabasic's dreams down with it.

That's when the 25-year-old Shipley, three-time World Cup champion, helped out. In an act that epitomized the Olympic spirit of sportsmanship, Shipley gave Karabasic the boat he used to win the 1995 World Cup title. The gesture drew worldwide attention.

After the Olympic Games ended, Shipley traveled to Bosnia with \$40,000 in equipment for the paddlers of Bihac.

Neither Shipley nor Karabasic won a medal in 1996, but Shipley was honored with the USOC's prestigious Jack Kelly Fair Play Award and the Diploma of Honor, awarded by the International Committee for Fair Play.

THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE AND CLOSING CEREMONY

Besides the competition for medals, a highlight of the Olympic Games for most partici-

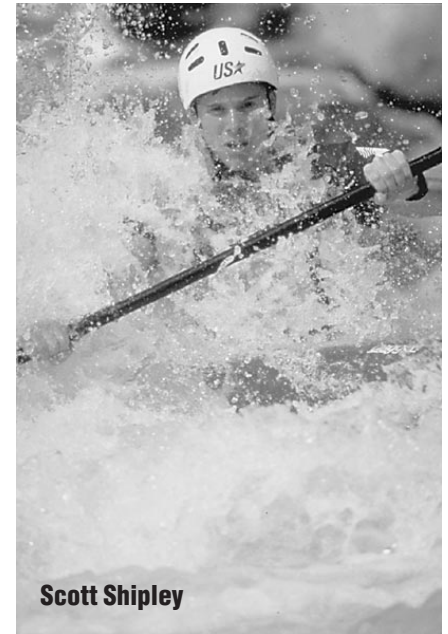
pants is the Olympic Village, where athletes and officials from more than 190 countries live together for 17 days. A cyclist from France may learn the newest dance craze from an American sprinter; the sailing team from New Zealand may go to a party with the athletes from Japan.

At the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, more than 10,000 athletes gathered on the 320-acre campus of the Georgia Institute of Technology, sharing tables in the cafeteria, playing video games and relaxing together.

Friendships forged in the Olympic Village are symbolized in the Closing Ceremony, with a march of all athletes, no longer grouped by country.

This tradition began at the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne. A 17-year-old Australian named John Ian Wing wrote to the head of the Organizing Committee. His letter said, in part, "I believe it has been suggested a march be put on during the Closing Ceremonies and you said it couldn't be done. I think it can be done. . . . The march I have in mind is different than the one during the Opening Ceremony. . . . during the march there will be only one nation. . . . What more could anybody want if the whole world could be made as one nation?"

It was done: The athletes left behind their countries' flags and walked into the stadium together as a single team.



ACTIVITY

Locate a newspaper story showing how your country cooperates with another country. Write a paragraph describing what each country brings to the situation and why they are cooperating. Conclude your paragraph with a statement explaining why you agree or disagree with the actions of the two countries.

THE OLYMPIC OATH

DO THE
RIGHT
THING



Carl Lewis

At the Opening Ceremony of every Olympic Games, an athlete chosen by the host city holds a corner of the Olympic flag, raises his or her right hand and says:

“In the name of all competitors, I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honor of our teams.”

This Olympic Oath, pledging to uphold the Olympic spirit of competition and fair play, is a symbolic gesture on behalf of all athletes. It means all athletes should demonstrate character by doing the right thing even when it is costly. It means never sacrificing ethical principles to the desire to win.

As any true champion — whether an Olympic athlete or not — knows, a victory must be earned fairly to be truly gold-

en. Any victory attained by cheating or any other unfair tactic is not a victory at all. One way some athletes cheat is by using prohibited performance-enhancing drugs.

The U.S. Olympic Committee and the International Olympic Committee have stringent policies banning the use of all performance-enhancing drugs, such as anabolic steroids, stimulants, narcotic painkillers, beta blockers, diuretics and drugs that mask banned drugs.

Although they harm the body, drugs can give an athlete an advantage over competitors that destroys the ideal of fair play. Athletes are tested for drug use before and after they compete. Any Olympian found using drugs before an event is disqualified. If discovered after, the athlete is stripped of medals and suspended.

Yet the obsession to win can drive some athletes to extremes. Often, the pressure to win can be crushing, with a millisecond difference between gold and silver amounting to millions of dollars in endorsement contracts and appearance fees after the Games. Unfortunately, this pressure sometimes tempts athletes to cheat by using drugs.

After testing positive for steroids in the 1988 Olympic Games, a Canadian sprinter was stripped of his gold medal and banned for life from competition. In the 1970s, the East German government sponsored drug use, which was not confirmed until after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. With the drugs, East Germans at five Olympic Games did remarkably well. And generations of their opponents were ripped off.

Actually, the East Germans were ripped off, too. The consequences of taking steroids included physical side effects, such as, for some, the inability to have children.

Some of today's athletes are turning to new substances that are undetectable to official tests, including human growth hormone, erythropoietin (EPO) and testosterone.

With the new drugs come increased health risks. Growth hormones can cause grotesque skeletal deformations, such as a jutting forehead and elongated jaw. EPO can turn blood to the consistency of yogurt, making it too thick to flow. The misuse of EPO has been blamed for killing at least 18 Dutch and Belgian cyclists since 1987.

The Olympic Oath stands for fair play and good sportsmanship. This means honesty and fair tactics in competition.

RESPECTING ONE'S ABILITIES

Gold medal sprinter Carl Lewis is one of many Olympians calling for higher levels of sportsmanship and tough enforcement of rules against performance-enhancing drugs. Lewis was the most decorated American track and field Olympian in