

USOC Expects To Finish On Top In Medals Race

U.S. Olympic Committee leaders say they expect to win the medal count in the 2008 Games. The forecast came at a wrap-up press conference Friday in Beijing, where the USOC panel further acknowledged making no progress on its revenue-sharing stand off with the IOC.

With the U.S. Olympic team on track to exceed the number of medals it won four years ago in Athens, the U.S. Olympic Committee leadership praised the nearly 600 U.S. athletes for their performances on and off the field of play.

With three days of competition left and medals assured in men's and women's volleyball and basketball, USOC chair Peter Ueberroth said the U.S. would exceed the 102 total medals won in 2004. The U.S. is also expected to win the overall medal count, although host nation China will win the most golds.

Olympians' Behavior Praised

Ueberroth and CEO Jim Scherr said the team's report card wasn't just based on the medal count.

"We're really just really pleased with how our athletes have behaved," Ueberroth said in a briefing Friday. "We've pledged a clean team and it appears we've done that. We've left a few people home."

However, the U.S. has lagged far behind China in the number of gold medals won.



Bronze medal winner Donny Robinson of the US (L) races during the men's BMX finals at Laoshan cycling venue. / Getty Images

By mid-day Friday, China had 46 golds and the U.S. had 30, six shy of its gold-medal tally in Athens.

"The Chinese team is fantastic," Ueberroth acknowledged. He added that he expected the Chinese to maintain the high level with their resources and efforts in every sport. "We're going to have to redouble our efforts in future Games," he said.

Scherr said the USOC considers the Beijing Olympics "one of our most successful engagements in the Olympic Games ever" and that the team has not declined in performance since Athens.

One measure of success, Scherr said, was the improvement in team sports.

"We're succeeding in virtually every team sport

(continued, page 3)

Vancouver 2010 Aims To Surpass Beijing Experience



Vancouver 2010 CEO John Furlong said organizers of the 2008 Games have set new standards, but they didn't reach perfection.

"Awesome as it was, I think the door has been left open in some areas where we see the opportunity," Furlong said at a Friday news conference. "One of those areas is in sport production where we feel that there is an opportunity to really create additional magic." When the Beijing Games close Sunday, Vancouver will take center stage as the host for

the next Olympic Games in February 2010. The Games will be smaller in size and scope, but Furlong said there are many lessons learned.

Ensuring a magic atmosphere at venues means filling as many seats as possible, Furlong explained. BOCOG claimed the Games were sold out, but many events went ahead with thousands of empty seats, at least in the early stages of competition.

"These are my third Games," said VANOC (continued, page 11)

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USOC's Ueberroth Rejects Charge of 'Racist' NBC Coverage

(continued from cover)

we've had here," he commented. He then said that team sports are important because they're visible on TV broadcasts and are played by millions of young people in the United States.

"We will not abandon those sports in an attempt to earn medals in individual sports," Scherr said.

He also cited breakthroughs in sports such as fencing, rowing, shooting and sailing.

But Ueberroth noted that the USOC needs to focus on the many sports "where we really don't show up at all or don't show up anywhere near our potential. We have to try to fill in the spots."



He singled out track cycling - the sport that embarrassed USOC leadership on the eve of the Games when four track cyclists wore masks over their faces as they arrived at the airport.

Suggestion of Racist NBC Coverage

It wasn't just high notes at Friday's press conference though. One reporter criticized television coverage of the Games suggesting that NBC had emphasized sports in which white athletes excel -- such as soccer, beach volleyball and football - while giving "the back of its hand" to athletics, which has many athletes of color.

"I disagree with the premise of your question and I don't think NBC is whites-only in any way, shape or form," Ueberroth snapped. "I think they've been covering the Olympic Games very, very well."

"If we thought for a second that there was any truth to your allegation, we'd be all over that subject."

No Movement on Revenue Sharing

Coverage wasn't the only sticking point for the USOC leadership. Ueberroth also deflected a question about whether the revenue sharing issue may force the USOC to take a smaller piece of the more than \$300 million in IOC funds it now receives per Olympiad. Although the IOC's Denis Oswald said he met with Ueberroth

and Mario Vasquez Rana during the Games, Ueberroth emphasized that this wasn't an issue while the Olympics were going on.

"We've had an informal meeting during the Games in the lobby of the hotel," he said. "That's all - this is a matter to take up at another time."

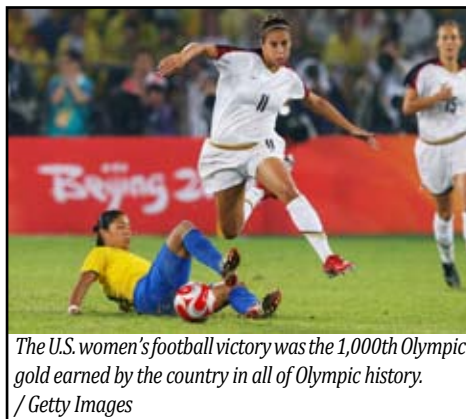
Ueberroth insisted a USOC proposal was "basically accepted about two years ago," but the international politics of the IOC interfered with adoption of the proposal.

"Everybody wants to have a different judgment," Ueberroth said. "I think that after these Games, we'll be able to make the progress we need."

Oswald, the ASOIF president, had claimed in a letter to the IOC that the share of revenue received by the USOC was "no longer morally acceptable." The \$300 million is more than the combined total received by the other 204 NOCs in the world. Under the current formula, the USOC's share was expected to go up to \$450 million in the next four years.

At the time, Ueberroth called the letter "badly spirited," saying it "was a pre-emptive move to embarrass the United States" and attack the Chicago bid.

IOC member Hein Verbruggen accused the



USOC of dragging its heels on negotiating a more equitable settlement.

He argued that the addition of IOC TOP sponsorships from outside the U.S. has changed the formula. In the past, the IOC earned most of its revenues from U.S. sponsors and U.S. television.

A Plug for Chicago

It wasn't all Beijing on the agenda, though, Friday. The USOC leaders also took the opportunity to look ahead eight years. Ueberroth said the IOC cannot lose when it chooses one of the four candidates to host the 2016 Olympics.

While he said all of the cities are very capable, he feels Chicago stands out because of its stature as a business headquarters.

"I think that it will be a great time to reconnect for the whole Olympic Movement with a major corporate center to revitalize and reorganize the TOP program," Ueberroth said.

"We've never had an Olympic Games in a really major company center in the U.S. Los Angeles isn't and neither was Atlanta or St. Louis."

He also stated that Chicago is one of the most diverse cities in the world.

- ATR Staff



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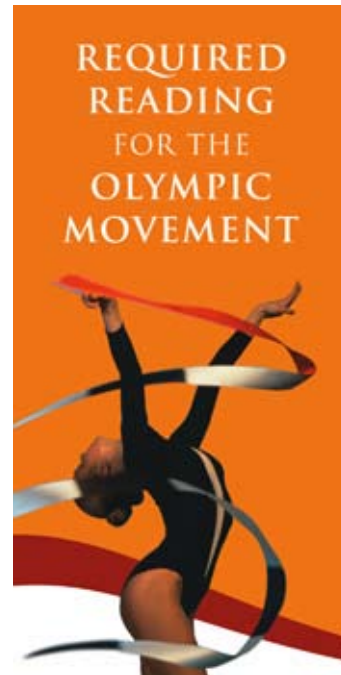
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Today's Highlights

• **8 a.m.** – ATR Newsmaker Breakfast. First-ever joint appearance by the four 2016 bid cities. Leaders from Chicago, Madrid, Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo discuss strengths their cities offer, what makes them suitable.
Venue: McDonald's, Olympic Green, north end.

• **5 p.m.** – Athletes Tyson Gay, Kim Gevaert and Yelena Isinbayeva appear at the Omega Pavilion on the Olympic Green.

Quote of the Day

"We have to go back to developing our sprinters. Whether it's the college system or just training and being prepared, we have to concentrate on taking it up to this level. We can be spoiled at times in the United States."

- U.S. sprint coach **Bob Kersee**



Main Press Centre

• **No daily IOC/BOCOG press briefing**

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• **12 p.m.** – Spokespeople from the city of Beijing hold a press conference on safety during the Games. Hall 1.

• **4:30 p.m.** – Movie screening: "Invisible Wings".

Coming Up!

• **Aug. 24, 1 p.m.** – Press conference with IOC President Jacques Rogge at the MPC after IOC Session meeting.

• **Aug. 24, 3 p.m.** – Outgoing FIVB President Reuben Acosta formally transfers leadership to Wei Jizhong and addresses media and guests. Beijing Institute of Technology volleyball venue.

2008 Medal Projections

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total		Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
China	50	18	34	102	Netherlands	7	4	5	16
U.S.	43	33	33	109	France	6	16	15	37
Russia	24	27	28	79	Ukraine	5	8	10	23
Great Britain	19	15	16	50	Jamaica	5	6	2	13
Germany	15	11	17	43	Canada	4	8	6	18
Korea	11	11	9	31	Hungary	4	6	6	16
Italy	10	11	13	34	Kenya	4	6	3	13
Japan	9	8	16	33	Czech Republic	4	4	1	9
Australia	7	13	15	35	Belarus	4	3	9	16
Spain	7	6	6	19	Romania	4	3	3	10

Today's projections were updated after the completion of 247 Olympic events. Projections are by Luciano Barra, former director of sport for the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI), and deputy CEO of TOROC 2006. Barra has been projecting medal counts for 10 years by analyzing past performances.



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SOME EXAMPLES OF MAJOR SPORTS EVENTS HOSTED IN DENMARK:

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 World Orienteering Championship 2006 (IOF)
 World Match Racing Championship for women 2006 (ISAF)
 World Standard Championship 2006 (IDSF)
 World Floorball Championship for women 2007 (IFF)
 World Sailing Farr 40 Championship 2007 (ISAF)

SOME EXAMPLES OF UPCOMING MAJOR EVENTS TO BE HOSTED IN DENMARK:

World Taekwondo Championships 2009 (WTF)
 UEFA Congress 2009 (UEFA)
 World Wrestling Championship 2009 (FILA)
 121st Session & XIII Olympic Congress 2009 (IOC)
 World Track Cycling Championship 2010 (UCI)
 World Road Cycling Championship 2011 (UCI)



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Beijing Provided Ultimate Olympic Experience for Wrestling

Wrestling has enjoyed the ultimate Olympic experience at the Beijing Games, said a senior FILA official.

The wrestling competition of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games wrapped on Thursday night, producing a gold medal each for Georgia (Men's Freestyle 84 kilogram), Russia (96 kilogram) and Uzbekistan (120 kilogram).

Mario Saletnig, FILA vice president and technical delegate, told Around the Rings that the wrestling venue was flawless and that he was impressed with the standard of competition.

Saletnig stated "the best of the best" competed in the Beijing Olympics after opportunities to qualify at the international championship, various continental championships and two other events.

"To arrive at 344 (total) competitors... some of them had to compete four consecutive times to make it here," he said.

He remarked that women competitors performed "way above expectations."

"Every event was sold out. The wrestling venue was considered one of the liveliest in Beijing."

The venue has a capacity of more than 8,200 seats, with sections reserved for the IOC Family, FILA, venue technology and the median, reducing the total number of public seats to about 5,500.

Saletnig said FILA held its congress during the Beijing Games and decided to maintain the status quo.

"We are very pleased with the rules and we're going to keep them until 2012 - everything's good," he remarked.

Attending his ninth Olympic Games, Saletnig noted that technology is becoming increasingly important to the sport.

Saletnig added that he visited Beijing six years ago when he became technical delegate and the first test event was not perfect.

But he said communication between FILA and BOCOG venue staff since then had managed to rectify any problems.

Because of this, wrestling avoided the language difficulties experienced by many other international federations in the lead-up to Beijing.

"It was easy because they assigned to



FILA vice president and technical delegate Mario Saletnig. (ATR)

each delegate two English-speaking persons.

Russia dominated the wrestling competition with six gold medals - one more than in Athens - three silver medals and two bronze medals.

Japan placed second, with two gold, silver and bronze medals. Georgia ranked third with two gold medals and two bronze medals.

Venue staff celebrated the end of the tournament by posing for photographs in the various wrestling arenas and designated VIP areas.

- Anthony Stavrinou

[View full story at www.aroundtherings.com](http://www.aroundtherings.com)

Event of the Day: BMX Turns Heads on Olympic Debut

Crashing and burning in Olympic sport has never been so much fun as in BMX racing, if the screaming crowds at the Laoshan dirt track in west Beijing are anything to go by.

BMX racing skidded into the Beijing Olympics with a blast of speed, skill and some heart-stopping wipeouts, providing a shot in the arm for the IOC as it seeks to widen the appeal of the Olympics to a younger generation.

Pat McQuaid, president of the International Cycling Federation, was delighted with the organization and presentation of BMX at the conclusion of the competition Friday.

"It has got a great future," he told ATR.

"The atmosphere is incredible, the athletes are superb. Those who were watching it on television tell me it was absolutely spectacular," he said.

The UCI had to lose two track cycling disciplines to get BMX racing into the Beijing Olympics, sacrificing the 1km for men and 500m for women. While the decision caused controversy in the

cycling community post-Athens, he insisted it was the right one.

"It was unfortunate we had to lose two medals. It's very attractive to the young kids, so from that point of view for the



UCI president Pat McQuaid. (ATR)

UCI it's very important," he said.

Under blazing sunshine, Anne-Caroline Chausson of France won the first BMX gold medal. Her compatriot, Laetitia le Corguille, avoided three pile-ups in the eight-woman final to clinch silver. U.S. rider Jill Kintner grabbed bronze.

In the men's BMX racing, Latvia's Maris Strombergs stormed to gold

- his country's first of the Games - with a stylish display of riding in an incident-packed final. U.S. riders Mike Day and Donny Robinson claimed silver and bronze in a race which saw three riders crash out.

Positive IOC Feedback

IOC President Jacques Rogge's plan to visit the Laoshan track was ended by postponement of competition.

But McQuaid said there were plenty of IOC members and VIPs keen to experience BMX for the first time at the Olympics.

IOC members from Britain Princess Anne, Philip Craven and Craig Reedie, along with Prince Willem Alexander of the Netherlands, were among guests Friday. The IOC's Executive Director Gilbert Felli also attended.

"The feedback was excellent. They have really enjoyed it," McQuaid remarked.

- Mark Bisson

[View full story at www.aroundtherings.com](http://www.aroundtherings.com)

EYES ON THE FUTURE



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On the Scene in Beijing: Daily Briefing Contentious to End

The contentious mood throughout the Games during joint press briefings by BOCOG and the IOC continued in the last session. On Friday, BOCOG's spokesman accused the media of bias against China, while the IOC communications chief was forced to defend her smile.

"There are so many criticisms in this room," Wang Wei, BOCOG executive vice president and secretary general, said during a session in which the laundry list of critical questions from the past two weeks was presented again.

There were questions about internet censorship, media access to Tibet, two elderly women sentenced to a year of labor and lack of activity in protest zones.

There also was a new political topic: reports of Chinese police opening fire in Tibet.



The IOC on Friday formally stripped Ukraine's Lyudmila Blonska of her silver medal after a positive drug test. / Getty Images

"It just reflects how biased some of the media are about China, how little some of the media understand China," Wang replied.

Although he said Tibet is not a BOCOG subject, he took a few minutes to lecture reporters on his personal experience with Tibet and how China has helped raise the standard of living there.

Davies, the IOC director of communications, was asked if political and human rights issues swirling around the Games made the IOC second-guess its choice to bring the Olympics to China.

"Whether the Olympic Movement will leave Beijing thinking it made the right decision coming here, the answer is unquestionably yes," she said. "We feel this country has developed enormously through sport."

Smiling Faces

A German reporter remarked that Davies is usually smiling in these press conferences. He said she may have "private reasons," but asked, "Why do you look so fed up with the job you're doing right now? Your smile is not sincere." Smiling, Davies assured him, "my smile is real."

Age of Gymnast Scrutinized

Davies said a Times of London report that the IOC is investigating the age of gold medal-winning Chinese gymnasts He Kexin was "probably misleading."

"You shouldn't regard this as some kind of formal investigation," she said, "but, yes, we have asked the gymnastics federation to look into what have been a number of questions and apparent discrepancies on this case."

She explained the IOC believed it had addressed the issue earlier in the Games, and said passports were produced to justify claims that the athletes would be at least 16 this year, making them eligible to compete.

"The IOC simply wants to do due diligence to 100 percent clarify the situation and put this to rest," Davies said.

Computer experts say they have evidence, since removed from a web site, that He is 14, too young to compete. She was part of the gold-medal winning team event and also won the uneven bars, edging U.S. gymnast Nastia Liukin.

Christophe Dubi, the IOC sports director, said this is an ongoing process. He added that FIG has again asked the Chinese gymnastics federation to produce evidence of He's eligibility.

"But so far everything that has been received shows that we have no problem with eligibility for these competitors."

The ages of two other Chinese gymnasts have also been questioned.

BOCOG's Wang said the Chinese Olympic Committee had "cleared up" the matter.



IOC spokeswoman Giselle Davies was told by one reporter her smile was not sincere. (ATR)

With two gold medals at stake Friday, USA Gymnastics President Steve Penny said in a statement, "USA Gymnastics has always believed this issue needed to be addressed by the FIG and IOC. An investigation would help bring closure to the issue."



BOCOG VP Wang Wei says media are biased against China. (ATR)

Closing Ceremony Top Secret

Wang said he couldn't disclose any information about Sunday night's closing ceremony.

He was asked if spectators will be able to "believe what we see" at closing ceremonies because of "faking at the opening ceremony." The question referred to the pretty little girl lip-synching the live singing of another girl deemed to have crooked teeth, and fabricating giant fireworks footprints using pre-taped video.

"That's a strange question to me that I heard for the first time, 'faking the previous ceremonies,'" Wang said.

He insisted he doesn't believe anyone would spend the time or money to fake it. "It's not worth it," he said.

Fredericks Accepts Bolt Spontaneity

Four-time Olympic silver medalist Frank Fredericks of Namibia said he's never won an Olympic gold medal or run 9.69 seconds, so he doesn't know how he would have reacted had he been in Usain Bolt's shoes after the 100 meters. IOC President Jacques Rogge criticized the Jamaican sprinter's antics.

"This is a unique moment, a moment an athlete has trained for so long and he's making history," said Fredericks, new chairman of the IOC Athletes' Commission. "It's not a thing you have planned or rehearsed. There's no time to do that."

Handball Protest Rejected

The International Handball Federation has rejected the protest Korea filed after its 29-28 loss to Norway in the women's semifinal. Korea asked that Gro Hammerseng's last-second goal be annulled and the match continued into overtime. Korean coach Lim Youngchul said several Korean TV stations told him that the ball crossed the goal line one or two seconds after the buzzer.

Where's Jacques?

IOC President Jacques Rogge saw the men's beach volleyball gold medal match at Chaoyang Park. He also stopped in at modern pentathlon and boxing, and met with the newly-elected members of the IOC Athletes' Commission.

- ATR Staff



VANOC 2010: Time to Move Full Steam Ahead

(continued from cover)

Executive Vice President of Revenue, Marketing and Communication Dave Cobb. "It seems that not a lot has changed when it relates to the challenge of getting a body in a seat for every competition."



Vancouver 2010 CEO John Furlong.
(ATR/B.Mackin)

VANOC begins the public sale of 1.6 million tickets on Oct. 3. Multiple-session tickets will be limited and there will be a VANOC-authorized ticket exchange program during the Games.

Redistribution of tickets was a big problem for Beijing, Cobb noted. He said VANOC has also discussed with the IOC a plan to maximize the amount of tickets available for the general public by expanding or contracting the size of media tribunes based on event demand.

"We're not going to assume we can just do things the way they've been done before and expect our seats to be full," stated Cobb, who compared the challenge to selling two seasons worth of Vancouver Canucks' National Hockey League tickets in a 17-day period.

"Hockey's an example that has relevance to the Olympic Games. A ticket purchased for an NHL game generally is a ticket used," he said. "Very low no-show rates in Canada."

Cobb and Furlong added that they were impressed with the size of Beijing and the amount of open space around venues that allowed ticketholders to circulate. Vancouver and Whistler, by comparison, are smaller and more intimate and there will be challenges getting ticketholders to and from some venues.

"The flow of people will be a challenge that we're going to have to meet head on," Cobb admitted. "That's one of the things we're going to be dedicated to when we get home."



VANOC leaders are confident of full venues for ice hockey in 2010. / Getty Images

VANOC is preparing for a busy September in which it will launch the look of the Games and pictograms, a new Web site and an advertising campaign for the Games-time motto. The events are part of a strategy of promotion before the launch of ticket sales.

- Bob Mackin

Was Japan's Win a "Sayonara" to Softball for Good?

The last out in the Olympic softball "grand final" Thursday night was a routine throw from third base to first that gave Japan a 3-1 victory over the United States.

Whether it goes down in history as the last out ever in an Olympic softball game is still up in the air.

Voted out of the Olympic program for 2012, the sport has a chance to come back swinging in 2016. Softball is one of seven sports lobbying to get in - or back in - the Games when the IOC votes in October 2009 in Copenhagen.

By crowning a different champion, the sport now has a new argument for reinstatement. The U.S. had a stranglehold on the gold medal since the sport took the Olympic field in 1996 -- and such dominance was criticized by some IOC members. The U.S. went into the gold-medal match-up with a 22-game Olympic winning streak dating back to Sydney, and an 8-0 record in Beijing. It even had beaten Japan the previous day 4-1 in extra innings.

"I really kind of feel that maybe people will get off our back and realize that there is some parity in this game," U.S. coach Mike Candrea said. "Who knows what will happen? I don't worry about that. I've

been in the game long enough to respect everyone we play. Sometimes the game looks easy and it really isn't."

But U.S. players failed to see any silver lining in their silver medal. They were grim and teary-eyed on the awards stand. If softball does make it back into the Olympic fold in eight years, many will be too old to play or will have moved on without the incentive of the London Games.

"The loss just hurts too much to think that far ahead in the future," said losing pitcher Cat Osterman. "It's disappointing, but hopefully for some of the really young ones there's a chance at reinstatement and another shot at this."

According to the ISF, about 35 to 40 IOC members attended a softball game during the Olympics. IOC members Richard Pound of Canada and Anita De Frantz of the United States saw the gold-medal game and then took part in the awards ceremony. The 10,000-seat Fengtai Softball Field was nearly full, and had vocal cheering sections from Japan and the United States.

IOC President Jacques Rogge, honorary President Juan Antonio Samaranch, and new executive board



International Softball Federation president Don Porter and co-chair of the Back Softball campaign Donna de Varona will lead campaign to return softball to Games. (ATR)

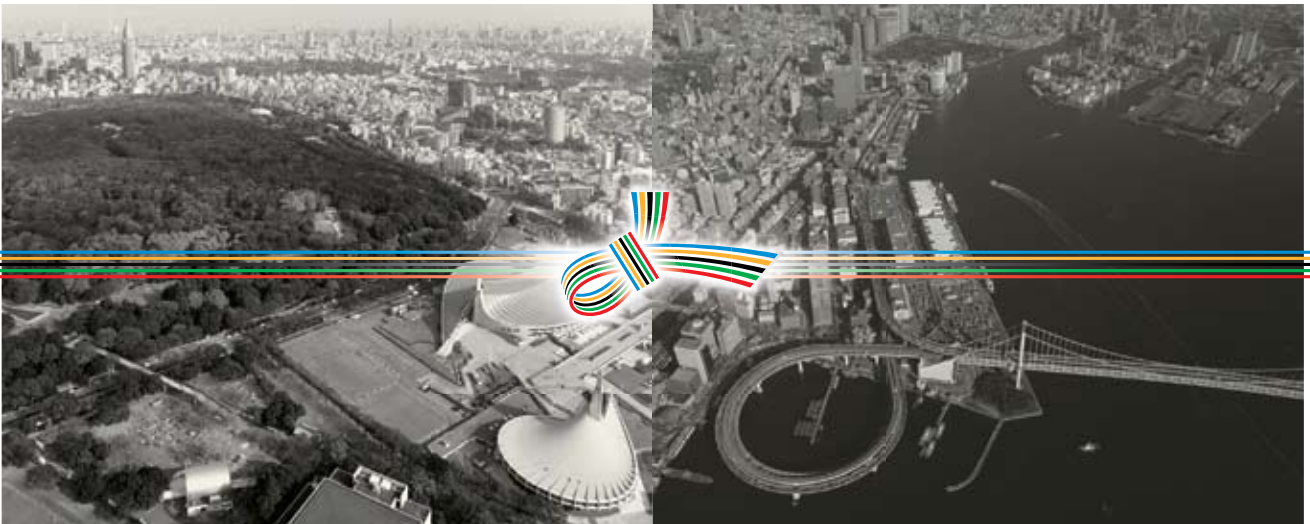
member Nawal El Moutawakel of Morocco attended the Wednesday night game that determined Australia as the bronze medalist.

The sport can't afford to strike out with the IOC. It was originally booted off the Olympic program at the 2005 IOC session in Singapore, falling one vote short of staying. The next year in Torino, the IOC decided not to vote on softball again. That's two strikes. Three and they're out for a very long time. Maybe forever.

-ATR Staff

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