



U.S. OLYMPIC ACADEMY

2014



2014

ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 2014 U.S. OLYMPIC ACADEMY

April 15, 2014

Los Angeles, California



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The 2014 U.S. Olympic Academy was presented by Gordon Crawford, with additional support from the United States Olympic Committee and the LA84 Foundation

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U.S. Olympic Academy



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ANITA L. DEFRA NTZ

Anita L. DeFrantz:

The 2014 U.S. Olympic Academy took place on April 15, in Los Angeles, at the LA84 Foundation. It was the first Olympic Academy in the U.S. in 23 years. The revival of the U.S. Olympic Academy resulted from a partnership between the United States Olympic Committee and the LA84 Foundation, supported by generous funding from Gordon Crawford.

The United States, by bringing the Olympic Academy back to life, now joins 146 other nations that operate an Olympic Academy. The objective of such Academies is to create a national forum for the exchange of ideas and the advancement of the principles of Olympism.

The 2014 Academy in Los Angeles brought together more than 100 Olympians, Paralympians, sport leaders, coaches, journalists, scholars and students. Hundreds more watched the event as it was streamed on the USOC’s website. I would like to extend special thanks to Olympic swimming champion John Naber who served as the master of ceremonies, providing context and continuity throughout the day.

The theme of this year’s academy was athlete development. Our goal was to examine the topic through the lens of Olympism, which is based on the Olympic ideals. We selected athlete development as the focus of the conference because few topics are more intertwined with Olympism and its underlying values.

Olympism is a term coined by Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games. The Olympic Charter, the guiding document of the Olympic Movement, presents the “Fundamental Principles of Olympism.” The first principle states, “Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind ... Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for the universal fundamental ethical principles.” The Charter continues, “The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the right of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.” The principles of Olympism also state that the Olympic Movement is inspired by the values of Olympism and that it “reaches its peak” when the “world’s athletes” gather at the Olympic Games.

In my professional life, over four decades, I have been privileged to closely observe the full range of sport from community-based youth sport to elite sport at the world championships and the Olympic Games. I have observed at every level from Little League to the Olympic Games that fundamental ethical issues and the ways in which they are resolved can profoundly affect an athlete’s development. It is impossible, therefore, to separate athlete development from the central tenets of Olympism.

An adherence to Olympism means confronting ethical issues at every turn in sport. These issues include access, equal treatment, fair play, transparency, safety, health, education and the development of athletes outside the sporting environment. The development of athletes, whether they aspire to the Olympic Games or simply wish to play recreationally, is

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affected by their own values, as well as by the values and ethical decisions of their coaches, schools, teams, parents, doctors, national governing bodies and national Olympic committees.

The program of the 2014 U.S. Olympic Academy provided an opportunity to examine athlete development as it pertains to both elite sport and youth sport. Some sessions of the Academy dealt with only high performance sport. Some dealt with youth sport exclusively. Other sessions covered both areas.

- **Scott Blackmun, “The U.S. Olympic Endowment and Athlete Development: A 30-Year Perspective”** - The year 2014 marks the 30th anniversary of the 1984 Olympic Games, which produced a \$232.5 surplus. Sixty-percent went to the USOC for elite athlete development; the balance was used to establish the LA84 Foundation and support youth sport. USOC CEO Scott Blackmun began the day by reviewing how the USOC has utilized its share of the funds for the past three decades.
- **Alan Ashley, “Team USA Performance Review: London and Sochi”** - USOC Chief of Sport Performance Alan Ashley discussed the USOC’s strategic approach to elite athlete development and its effectiveness in Sochi and London. In addition, Mr. Ashley explained USOC programs designed to improve athlete education and career planning.
- **Kristen Dieffenbach & Wade Gilbert, “Athlete Talent Development: Current Status and Future Directions”** - Dr. Dieffenbach’s and Dr. Gilbert’s presentation covered all levels of sport, but focused on sub-elite development. Drs. Dieffenbach and Gilbert reviewed the state of scholarly knowledge about athlete development. They noted the disparity between recommended best-practices in youth sport and the reality of every-day programs, and the failure of the youth sports system to deliver services to all children who wish to play sports, or to effectively address public health problems.
- **Dionyssis Gangas, “The International Olympic Academy”** - We were particularly honored to hear a presentation by the Director of the International Olympic Academy. Dr. Gangas explained the origins and subsequent history of the IOA, in Olympia, Greece, before turning his attention to current programs of the IOA. His presentation included a 15-minute video about the IOA.
- **Tom Farrey & Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, “Elite Athlete Development and Positive Youth Sports: Are They Compatible?”** - Mr. Farrey of the Aspen Institute’s Sports and Society Program and Ms. Fitzgerald Mosley, the USOC’s Chief of Organizational Excellence, discussed how the two organizations are working together to re-imagine youth sports so that it becomes a healthier, more positive experience for young people.
- **Ken Martel, “Case Study: How USA Hockey Does It”** - Mr. Martel provided a look at USA Hockey’s innovative athlete development model, paying particular attention to the intricacies of implementation and the obstacles that stand in the way of youth sport reform.
- **Dotsie Bausch, Brenda Villa & Jarryd Wallace, “Becoming an Elite Athlete”** - The final session was an Olympian and Paralympian panel, in which three athletes representing cycling, water polo, and track and field discussed their roads to athletic success, covering their early involvement in sport and addressing issues that they must deal with as world-class athletes. Journalist Alan Abrahamson moderated the panel.

The document that follows is an edited transcript of the Academy sessions, providing a written version of the day’s sessions. If you would like to see and hear the 2014 Olympic Academy verbatim, I invite you to watch it at www.teamusa.org/academy. Whether you read the proceedings or watch the event online, I think you will find that all of the presentations were underscored by an awareness and consideration of the ethical values inherent in Olympism.

Anita L. DeFrantz



“It’s not the words that we put into books or on websites or in newspapers. It’s really the actions and the lives of our athletes that make the difference.”

SCOTT BLACKMUN

Scott Blackmun:

Thank you, Anita [DeFrantz]. Thank you, Anita, for doing this this year. Thanks to Gordy Crawford. Gordy is one of our biggest benefactors. He started what is now known as the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Foundation a little over a year ago. We had the idea. It was really Gordy’s leadership that caused us to do this. Thanks, Wayne Wilson for the great job on the program. Thank you very much.

And, most importantly, thanks to all of you for caring. Thanks for being here. Thanks for caring about Olympism and the Olympic Movement. It’s why we’re all here. John [Naber] mentioned that our mission is relatively narrow. We’re focused on sustained competitive excellence at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. We believe that our calling, our job within the global Olympic Movement is to do the best that we can do to empower American athletes to do the best that they can do. The IOC’s mission is a little broader. It talks about Olympism as a philosophy of life. It talks about mind, body, spirit. It talks about the values of friendship, excellence and respect. And, it talks about the joy found in effort, which I think is best said by John Wooden, which is that success in life is knowing, is the peace of mind that comes from knowing that you did the very, very best that that you can do. That’s really important.

But, what we find is that those two kind of different missions – sustained competitive excellence on the one hand and the joy found in effort on the other – come together in our

athletes. The way that the USOC tries to deliver against that broader mission is by empowering and exposing our athletes to the world so that their character, their trials, their victories, their tribulations can be seen by everybody. It’s not the words that we put into books or on websites or in newspapers. It’s really the actions and the lives of our athletes that make the difference.

We, the U.S. Olympic Committee, are here first and foremost to serve our athletes. There are some really important partners though, because we have 47 National Governing Bodies. Chris Ramsey is here from USA Water Polo. It’s those governing bodies that are out there in the communities generating the grassroots support, trying to identify the future athletes who are going to compete on the Olympic team, trying to talk to kids about the importance of participation. We’ve also got Tom Farrey here, from ESPN. Tom started a project, Project Play, which is all about getting kids more active. It’s a huge problem in the U.S. today. I’m sure Tom is going to talk about that a little bit later. Kids are playing less and less sports, and we’ve got to figure that out. We’ve got to get kids more active. So, listen carefully when Tom comes up to speak.

My subject today is the U.S. Olympic Endowment, which was formerly known as the U.S. Olympic Foundation, which as Anita described is also known as the organization that got the Games legacy from Los Angeles. Just for some historical context, we had the terrible crisis with the terrorists in Munich. In Montreal, we had a situation where the Games on the field of play were successful, but financially it was a huge burden for the city of Montreal, for the province. And, we have Denver, which had won the right to host the Games, but then decided that they didn’t want to host the Games and they withdrew.

L.A. as Anita mentioned ran unopposed. Games were provisionally awarded to Los Angeles because nobody in Los Angeles would guarantee the financial performance of the Games. So, the USOC stepped in and agreed to provide a guarantee capped at \$25 million, which is kind of silly because as Anita pointed out we really didn't have any assets back then anyway. The USOC was more or less bankrupt at that time. We were delighted and a little surprised that the IOC accepted our guarantee in lieu of the city of Los Angeles.

We got a \$10 million grant. We like to say that we don't get any federal funding whatsoever, but we got a \$10 million grant from the White House because we were so low on cash. So, we made a deal with L.A.: We'll provide the guarantee capped at 25 million if we get 60 percent of the surplus from the Games.

That surplus as John pointed out ... I thought it was \$232 million – I don't doubt John that it's \$232.5. So, we got \$139 million out of those Games. What we got first and foremost was stability. For the first time in the history of the U.S. Olympic Committee we had stability. So what did we do with that money?

In 1984 we created the U.S. Olympic Foundation. It's currently called the U.S. Olympic Endowment – and I'll describe the difference between the endowment and the foundation in a minute – but it's chaired by Bill Hybl. It has a board of directors of about 10 people. They have made \$271 million worth of grants to the USOC since 1984, which is just unbelievable when you think about the fact that we started with – how much again? - \$139 million is what we had. They have not only grown that \$139 million because they currently have more than \$200 million in the bank, but they've given out \$271 million in grants.

Let me move off to the side for just a minute here and talk about the U.S. Olympic and Paralympics Foundation. The foundation that was created in 1984 was essentially an organization that managed money. They did a fantastic job of managing money, but what they didn't do is what so many nonprofit organizations need, which is empower a group of very, very capable volunteers to go out and raise money for the USOC.

So, in our discussions with philanthropists and potential donors we concluded that we really needed a separate vehicle, a separate entity that our volunteers could manage, that they

could use their contacts and, yes, their leverage to go out and get their friends to support the U.S. Olympic Committee. So, early this year we launched what we decided to call the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Foundation. It has over 60 members on its board of directors each of whom has agreed to give us at least \$300,000 – just an amazing amount of philanthropy. Just for comparisons sake, four years ago we raised less than \$1 million a year in major gifts for the USOC. We are now raising in excess of \$12 million dollars a year on the major gift side. Interestingly, we have a goal that Anita and the rest of her fellow board members set of raising \$50 million a year by 2016. So, Christine [Walshe] and I have our work cut out for us.

But, if you think about it, empowering that group of volunteers to go out and engage Americans with Olympians ... Again, our purpose is to support our American athletes. We couldn't do that if what we were selling is just sport. We're selling something much, much more than sport. We're selling a philosophy of life. And, we're selling the opportunity for those donors to connect their kids with something more than just fun, something more than just recreation. Frankly, something more than just competition. We're talking about a value system and that's a value system that gets driven down all the way through our system, through our NGBs.

So, what do we do with this money? It sounds like a lot of money. Our operating budget is about \$200 million a year at the USOC. One of the biggest budget categories that we have is the direct financial support that we provide to our NGBs and our athletes. It's about \$60 million a year, most of which goes to the NGBs, who in turn pass that through to our athletes in the form of programs. But, a significant amount, more than \$15 million a year, especially if you include the cost of the health insurance that we provide, goes directly to our athletes. We also run programs, like sports medicine and sports science. We have three training centers – one in Chula Vista, one in Lake Placid and one in Colorado Springs – that we operate for the benefit of our not only world-class athletes who come there to train and prepare for the Olympics, but also swim clubs and smaller organizations that get that one opportunity when they come in for a one-week or a two-week camp to really touch the Rings, touch the Olympic symbol and feel like they're Olympians for a couple of weeks, and hopefully inspire them, whether they're world-class athletes in our Olympic pipeline or otherwise just to be the best that they can be.

Athlete careers and education. Our athletes in order to be competitive on the global stage have to spend almost all of their time, almost every hour of every day, training. So, they don't always have the time, and in many cases, their coaches don't necessarily want them to take the time to think about life after competition. We've had an athlete career and education program for a long, long time, but in all candor we haven't moved the needle as much as I think we can in terms of really helping athletes to prepare for life after competition. Under Benita's [Fitzgerald Mosley] leadership – I'm sure she'll talk a little bit about this later – we launched a revived athlete career and education pilot program. We're going to staff it with three or four professionals whose job it is going to be to advise and mentor out athletes vis-a-vis their career paths, and importantly vis-a-vis education.

We also entered into a sponsorship agreement with DeVry University. DeVry is offering our athletes education on a basis that works for them because it's flexible. They don't have to be in a given place at a given time. They can go online and it's been just a tremendous, tremendous program for our athletes.

We want to invest in our athletes. Again, not because we want to do good. We want to invest in them because if they have viable career opportunities, they're going to stay in our system longer. They're going to compete longer. Frankly, we're losing some athletes in their early- and mid-20s because they look at things and say, "Should I stay in the system? Should I compete for another year? Another four years? Or should we begin to prepare for the rest of our lives?" So, we have to find a way that they can do both.

We also launched just this year, actually last year, a safe sport program. One of the biggest issues came out in a story that dealt with U.S. Swimming and some coaches that had sexually abused kids in that sport. The truth is that happens across society broadly. It happens across sport broadly. It's never been a subject that we as sports administrators have wanted to address head on. Now we have done so. So far our programs have focused on education and awareness and making sure that each National Governing Body has policies that make membership in the organization and contact with children contingent upon having rules and regulations against abuse, all kinds of abuse, not just sexual abuse, but things like bullying and hazing and things like that. Our board of directors is literally, as we speak, considering launching an even more serious commitment to safe sport. I can't really talk about it

right now, but I do believe that that's something that we need to focus on.

And then, our athlete development model, which I think our partners from USA Hockey are going to talk about a little bit. Again, the importance of kids playing and having fun. While the USOC is really focused on high performance, we are not focused on grassroots. We recognize the importance of grassroots. Working with our NGBs we jointly developed an athlete development model that frankly USA Hockey gets a lot of the credit for because they had already developed a model that they were putting into place with their young athletes. The idea is that we shouldn't have national championships for 6-year-old golfers. We should have opportunities for kids to participate and stay involved in multiple sports.

So, what is what we do have to do with the Olympic values? What does the USOC have to do with Olympic values? The truth is it goes back to what I said in the very beginning. We believe that the best way to inspire people, the best way to fulfill that part of our mission is to empower our athletes to be the best that they can be. It's not people standing up at the podium describing the values of Olympism. Quite frankly, our athletes embody those values in the way that they speak and walk and compete and everything that they do.

So, our mission at the USOC is to raise as much as we can in the way of resources to support our athletes. We left some time at the end for questions. Now is the time. I'm here to answer the tough ones. I'm sure I'm going to get one about the USOC's role in the Olympic Academy and look forward to taking that one. Anybody have any questions at all?

Audience Member: The United States finished first in the medal count two of the last three times. Finished silver medal, first runner up in Sochi. Is that a source of pride or a source of frustration?

Scott Blackmun: It's certainly not a source of frustration. Our athletes competed very, very well in Sochi. We had one sport, speed skating, where we have tremendous world champions, world-class athletes who didn't have their best performance. We're very, very proud of what our athletes did. Until Vancouver, I don't think we had ever won the winter medal count. So, you know our expectation is pretty high. I know Alan Ashley, who you'll hear from and runs our sport performance group, sets the bar pretty high in terms of our goals. But, the truth is it's mostly a source of tremendous

pride because not only did we finish second, but our athletes comported themselves in a way that made us extremely proud as a nation. We didn't have any of the behavioral issues. We didn't have any of the inappropriate celebrations. We had pure unadulterated joy expressed when we won the medal. You know, we went into Sochi with a lot of trepidation, a lot of concern, about security, about the, the politics around the LGBT issue. The truth is that once we got there we were able to focus on the competition and, as it always does – and Anita has told me this in the past – We were getting all wound up about security and other things before the Games, but once we got there and we started competing all of that fell away and the focus was on the athletes. It was a great celebration. So, the short answer, John [Naber], is that it's a source of pride.

Audience Member: Hi, my name is Tamara Christopherson. Thank you so much for being here. As president of the alumni in Southern California, both Olympians and Paralympians, know we're always eager to give back. With the foundation and all the initiatives going forward, what are some of the specific ways that you see Olympic alumni and Paralympic alumni giving back to that process?

Scott Blackmun: If you look at the events that we've had for donors and potential donors and our foundation, the greatest joy that we can provide to them is to provide connections between them and their families and our Olympians and Paralympians because at the end of the day that's what they would all aspire for their kids to be. They would all aspire for their kids to be the best that they can be.

So, for us it's the telling of your stories and finding ways to connect your stories, which are incredibly compelling, with our donors, and frankly, with Americans generally. We did something two weeks ago, which we had never done before. We did an awards show. We did it with some ... reservation is too strong a word ... but we like to celebrate the whole team. We bring them to the White House, all of our Olympians and our Paralympians and the idea of an awards show ... Should we be singling out some Olympians over other Olympians? And, we decided to do it and I think it turned out to be a huge success because it brought all of the athletes and a television audience together. It was on the NBC Sports Network to really celebrate the great success we had, not only competing but just creating special, special moments.

I think the more that we can connect Americans with our Olympic and Paralympic athletes the better off we're going

to be. We're really the only developed nation in the world that doesn't get government support. We're one of only four countries in the world that has an Olympic Committee that oversees Paralympic sport in addition to Olympic sport. That gives us some really special opportunities because if you look at the whole concept of inspiration, that's a concept that is very well told by people with disabilities who decided we're going to compete in sport. What changed at the USOC was that 10 years ago, I would say, is that the Paralympic movement was a disability movement. What it is for us, quite honestly, right now, is a sport movement. It's about sustained competitive excellence for those athletes. It's not about telling the tear-jerking stories about our Paralympic athletes. It's about empowering them to compete on the field of play. I think bringing our Olympic and Paralympic programs together with that single goal has made a huge difference in terms of how we think about our resource allocation process and the importance of what we do. Thanks.

Anybody else?

Audience Member: Good morning. I'm Laurel Brassey Iversen. You said something at the end of your talk about we don't really want athletes standing up at the podium spouting Olympic values. I'm not sure where that went from ...

Scott Blackmun: No, it's the guys in the blue blazers that we're not going to rely on for the athletes. When the athletes talk about Olympic values we love it.

Audience Member: Right. So, I'm just wondering, "Do you see a way that this Academy can be instrumental in helping our athletes understand more about the Olympic Movement, not dwelling on history, but just to have an idea of how we got to this point, where do we come from, what's this all about, how's it going help us in the future? You know, I am totally in agreement with Anita about this is a peace movement. I mean when you understand what goes on and you start to be in competition with other people from other cultures and learning tolerance and respect, there is a lot that can be said for that. So I'm just wondering if this Olympic Academy can be infused somehow into our training programs and some portion of that coming through our athletes' training.

Scott Blackmun: You know, I think that's something that we should explore with the National Governing Bodies. We get the athletes for about 20 days every four years. We have a program called our Ambassador Program where we require

everybody on the team to spend a half a day with us and talk about what it means to be on the Olympic team, what opportunities they have to represent themselves well and their nation as well. Definitely a part of that program relates to the values of Olympism and the importance of carrying on those values with your conduct and behavior at the Games.

So, we touch on that a little bit. But, candidly, 99 percent of the time that the athletes spend in the run up to the Games is with their National Governing Bodies. So, we really should take that up with Chris and his colleagues about whether there's a way that we can create that kind of opportunity for them. I think realistically there will be a number of NGBs who will agree that that's really important because when we see the kids come into the training center and their eyes get this big and they get to be part of the Rings, it's very, very special. We've evaluated the training centers in the past against the metric of how many medals does it generate, but there's a powerful impact that the training centers have completely separate and apart from medals, which is, What kind of an impact does it have on the young men and women who come there and train and see the stories of our Olympic athletes?

Audience Member: Elizabeth Hanley from Penn State University. I know that there's no real grassroots level for the USOC, but I was just thinking of Rafer Johnson's book, *The Best that I Can Be*. I would assume that everyone here has read that. Whenever I spoke about that to my Olympic history students I kept thinking, "This is a wonderful way to get at the grassroots." Is there some way that we can use the former Olympians to do something at the grassroots level in terms of Olympic education?

Scott Blackmun: I think there is. We have a wonderful program called Olympic Day. It's in June every year. We mobilize hundreds if not thousands of Olympians and Paralympians in that process. Making stories like that that people would find compelling and inspiring I think would be very important. So, I think Olympic Day might be the vehicle for that and our U.S. Olympians and Paralympians Association is our side-by-side partner in that event. I think there is an opportunity for that.

John Naber: There was one more and then we'll go. There was one other question.

Audience Member: Jan Palchikoff. I'm curious. You mentioned the 47 national sport governing bodies. To what extent are the NGBs involved in the promotion of Olympism and to what extent does the USOC get involved in the athlete development programs reviewing, approving, advising, anything?

Scott Blackmun: The way that our funding program works, and you'll hear more about this from Alan, is that each NGB has to submit a proposal for high performance sport. We review all of those proposals and we evaluate which ones we think can really have an impact, which ones could lead to the U.S. having a podium opportunity and we actually enter into a contract with every single NGB that we fund that says, "We'll provide this amount of support for these particular programs because we think this will lead to a potential medal opportunity down the road." So, we are very involved in helping them to evaluate and improve, if we can, their plans for high performance. Part of ... When we look at an NGB part of what we look at is, How good is their pipeline, and are they focused enough on their pipeline at the at the lower levels? Do they have enough young kids coming into their sport to sustain it over the long term? So, while we're not actually in the communities except on days like Olympic Day interacting with kids, it is something that we try to make sure that our NGBs are doing and frankly most of them at the Olympic level are doing a real good job.



“The Paralympics, just like the Olympics, is about putting our athletes in the best possible position to win, and to make sure they have the resources to win.”

ALAN ASHLEY

Alan Ashley: Thank you very much for having me here today. I want to talk about high performance today and the role that I play with regard to the U.S. Olympic Committee. I think it's important when we're talking about athlete development to ask, "What is our role going to be as the National Olympic Committee for the United States in helping athletes achieve at the very highest level?"

So, what I want to go into is the mission and how the mission applies to my department. How we then have taken that and really talked and partnered with the National Governing Bodies and with the high performance management organizations for Paralympics, and the challenges and some of the things that we face today as we go forward as it relates to competing with the rest of the world.

The mission is really clear, but I want to focus on two things. Earlier today we talked about sustained competitive excellence and inspiring Americans. The sustained competitive excellence piece is the part that really applies to my department.

Sport Performance in the U.S. Olympic Committee is responsible for taking the resources that are available through our National Olympic Committee and figuring out how to position them as best as possible to help our athletes achieve on the international stage, whether that's at world championships and World Cups and Grand Prix's and of course the Olympic and Paralympic Games. When you think about it, in our world there is no other organization that can really step in and fill this void. If you look at how competition is unfolding worldwide right now, every country that goes to the Olympics, that goes to the Paralympics, is becoming more and more focused on performance and on how they help their very best athletes get the resources they need to maximize their capacity as an individual and to perform at the very highest level.

There's a lot of discussion about athlete development, about coaching education, about all these different parts of the pipeline, but when you think about it – our role – there is no other organization in our country that can step in and help our very best athletes make that final push with their NGBs to actually be the best in the world and to achieve at their highest level. I think what John [Naber] said is really right. I mean I look at this as being about individual performance. At the end of the day, yeah, there's the medal count and every day at the Olympics and Paralympics at the closing of the show they show you who's won the most medals.

*Click to play
PowerPoint presentation*



But, what it's really a reflection is how well we did as a nation in providing the resources that our athletes need to achieve what they are completely capable of. When you think about it in those terms that manifests itself in a medal count, but what it really shows you is we did our jobs to make sure that they had what they needed. I'll give you an example.

I worked for the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association for a long time before I came to the U.S. Olympic Committee. When I first started with the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association I was looking at our alpine program. At that time I think we were 12th or 13th in the men and women. We were pretty far down the list internationally. Then we started to do a kind of international competitive analysis and see what other countries were doing whose athletes were ahead of us.

What were they doing to support their athletes? One of the things that we found out is that they were training a lot more days on snow, that the quality of the snow conditions was a lot better, that the equipment testing was a lot better, that they were going to the right competitions with their athletes and thus, they were providing a better training environment and competition environment for their athletes than we were.

And, I looked at that and I said, "You know what? We're asking these individuals to go out and compete and be best in the world and yet we're not willing to put the resources behind them in order to put them in a position where they can compete," and that just didn't seem right, didn't seem like that was the right place to go and the right place to be. So, we started to look at this and said, "Okay." We got up the number of training days. We've got to make sure that the athletes which are capable of competing at the highest level internationally aren't at a deficit as it relates to how they are prepared as athletes.

And so, we went to the USOC and said, "We need some more resources." We looked at ourselves as an NGB and said, "We need to develop more resources," and ultimately together we improved the training environment, and over time results improved, but that was a reflection of providing a better environment for the athletes. So, when it came to the USOC one of the things we talked about as a board and we talked about as an organization is we need to guide how we allocate resources.

We need to give some principles to this so that ultimately we're not trying to do everything for everyone, but instead we're

focusing the resources we have in a laser way on the very best, to help our athletes achieve at the very highest level and make sure that those who are capable of being best in the world have the chance to do it. So, we came up with four guiding principles. Really the first one's kind of self-evident: Invest in the best opportunities for medals, which meant we're not going to try to do everything for everybody, but what we're going to do is we're going to look at those individuals who are competing at a high level internationally and who are on a trajectory to potentially go and achieve significantly in the Olympics and Paralympics and make sure that we're working with the NGB to give them the program they need to go as far as they possibly can.

Because we have limited resources and because we're not government funded we're always going to be really scrapping and scrapping to figure out how to get as many resources as we can into the hands of the athletes, but there's never going to be enough. So, we looked at it from the standpoint of looking at the places where we had the best chances and then kind of looking down to our opportunities, which were maybe sports, which is where there were individuals who weren't achieving yet, but you could see that they were on a trajectory. They were moving forward quickly against their international competition so that down the road in two or three or four years they could actually be in a position to compete successfully at a world championship or World Cup or Olympic or Paralympic Games.

The second thing we did is we said, "We need to form all the resources we have as the National Olympic Committee, they need to be deployed at one time against a plan." So, we asked each of our partners, the National Governing Bodies, to put together a high performance plan, which gave us a roadmap of how they intended to train, to compete, to coach, to put together the program for their best athletes to win medals and then we along with the National Governing Bodies invest in that plan so that ultimately our athletes have a chance to win. At the time we came in we had training centers over here, we had sport science and medicine over here, we had health insurance over here, we had funding for the National Governing Bodies over here, and they weren't coordinated in terms of how they were being deployed against the needs of the athletes.

So, we rounded all this up and said, "Okay, we're going to deploy them all together and at one time against one plan based upon what the NGBs, the experts were saying to us

in terms of their needs.” The other thing we did was we integrated the Paralympics into this allocation process. So, when we’re looking at high performance support it was not only on the Olympic side, it was on the Paralympic side as well, and it goes back to what Scott [Blackmun] had said. This is a performance movement.

The Paralympics, just like the Olympics, is about putting our athletes in the best possible position to win, and to make sure they have the resources to win. Therefore, if we had a sport which wasn’t performing well, which didn’t have athletes that were in the hunt on the Olympic side, we would not fund them before we’d make sure that we did as best as we could for our Paralympic athletes who were in the hunt, just like we’re doing on the Olympic side. It was a very systematic process to say to Paralympic and Olympic athletes, “Let’s figure out what it takes to win in your sport. Then, let’s make sure that we deploy resources against it.”

The third thing was that everything has to be customized. There was a time when the U.S. Olympic Committee had these basic grants, which they gave everybody something. My feeling has been that one, we need to be true to the principle number one, and two is we need to look at the specific needs of each and every sport and each and every discipline uniquely. They are not – everything is different. Every sport is different. Every discipline is different. Every need is different and for us to be as effective as we possibly can, we need to understand what the needs are of each individual sport and then do the best we can to supplement those needs and to partner with the NGB to make sure that we’re meeting those programmatic needs for the athletes.

This was an important concept because the sophistication and the difficulty in some sports is different than in other sports. The amount of training, the sophistication of the training, the number of competitions you need to go to, the number of coaches you need, the technical aspects of the sport equipment-wise, they vary greatly. So, we cannot get in this idea that everybody gets a little something, but instead let’s do the right things based upon the nature of each individual sport.

And then finally, where we have success let’s provide consistency and continuity so that there’s not this guessing game every year about whether the resources are available or not available. Instead we try to get more proactive about making sure that when we have success we have great

athletes, we have great programming that we support over the long haul. This means looking at a quad instead of on an annual basis.

We deploy those principles, which were approved by our board of directors. There are 47 Olympic and Pan Am sports in our country. So, there are 47 National Governing Bodies or national federations, and these are really the workhorses of the movement. The organizations that basically support the athletes on a day-to-day basis are the NGBs and what we call the high performance management organizations, which actually take care of the Paralympic sports.

So, there are 47 on the Olympic side, 19 on the Paralympic side. In the end what we’re really trying to do is take all those sports and figure out how to make sure that we are in the best partnership possible with each of them. As you look at it from my perspective and our department’s perspective, what we’re really trying to do is one, provide resources, whether it’s training center access, cash, lead athlete health insurance, direct athlete support any kind of support we can to help the athletes in the sports actually move forward. The second thing is we’re trying to find efficiencies. This is a really important concept because when you look at all these different sports organizations what you find is that there are lots of them that have common challenges, common opportunities, and common solutions that I don’t think have shared as often as we could.

As an example, we’re starting tomorrow up in the Nike headquarters up in Beaverton. We’re having a team sport conference. The idea is to bring the coaches together from a lot of different team sports and have them sit down in the room and start sharing best practices between the team sports so that they can help each other achieve because you know what? In many, many cases they’re facing the same exact challenges and some of them figured out how to work them. Some of them have not figured it out. Now is a chance for the coaches to sit in the room together and share best practices. The third thing is our department basically organizes the effort on the ground at the Olympics, the Paralympics, the Pan Am Games, ParaPan Games and the Youth Olympic Games both winter and summer. It’s really again kind of interesting to look at it.

The execution for our Olympians and Paralympians on the ground is part of a long-term plan of success, so what you do in the last few weeks leading up to the Games and what you

do on the ground at the Games are all related to each other. We need to make sure that whatever we're doing when we execute on the ground at our Games is consistent with what the coaches, the athletes, the high performance directors and the sport have been doing consistently over time with their organization and not try to recreate something because it's an Olympics. It's a unique experience.

You know, Paralympics and Olympic Games are unique because you bring all these different sports together at one time into a multi-sport environment, but in the end what you're really asking for is you're asking the athletes to perform just like they did at their world championships or their World Cups. You've got to create an environment, which helps them to get the most consistent delivery of services, the most consistent ability to compete and that really is an important part of our mission.

The final thing is research, innovation and networking. We were just having a conversation about this. We in my department have done a mediocre job of research over the last 10 years. We used to have a research fund and we actually funded projects by universities and private industry, but we stopped doing that. One of the reasons we stopped doing it is because we thought we're not probably researching ... picking the right projects, because a lot of times they were bubbling up from someone's interest within the academic field versus bubbling up from the coaches themselves or the athletes. So, we're actually changing this around right now.

We're in the process of developing a medical network where we are partnering up with different medical facilities around the country to provide services to athletes, to help us in this area. We're about to launch a sport science network where we hope to be able to reach out to excellent sport scientists around the country who are in nutrition, physiology, strength conditioning, biomechanics, etc. and bring them problems that have come from the coaches and athletes specifically, and then ask them to do the research on those so that when the research is completed it actually has a tangible effect on the athletes and coaches and it's not one which can't be related back to the reality of what it takes to train and compete in this world.

So, those are a few of the things we're working on. If you take those guiding principles and apply it to this system, you can see that that's how we allocate our resources. A couple things I wanted to share on this, and this is where it goes back to

athlete development. In the end, what we're doing is trying to develop athletes as far as they can possibly go as individuals to compete at the highest level that they're capable of. For some people that's a gold medal in the Olympic Games. For some people that might be a tenth place at the World Junior Championships or the Junior Olympics. We don't really know where that actually ends, but the concept is the same concept everywhere. That is, let's make sure that we do the very best job to support people as far as we can.

What I've been looking at is the London Games as an example. First of all, this is called medal market share. Instead of just looking at absolute medals, I look at the percentage of medals that our team has won in each of the Games because as we see in 2016 we'll add golf, we'll add rugby sevens, so the program changes. On the winter side it changed dramatically from what we did in Vancouver to what we did in Sochi. If you look at percentages, then ultimately you get a little better reality as to where things are going.

This table right here shows you that there are 85 countries that won medals in the Olympics in 2012. I looked at the top 20 as part of our analysis. What you really see is that the diversity of medals and who's winning the medals is really starting to change. If you went into all 85 of the sports that changed, you even see more depth. The winter side was the same sort of thing except even more extreme. The same number of countries, 26, actually won medals in the Sochi Games, but the percentage of medals changed greatly. Fourteen countries won more medals, nine countries won less medals, and what you're really seeing is this is becoming very focused on discipline-by-discipline activities.

Where it used to be that we were going in and we had really, really strong track and field and swimming and gymnastics and wrestling, going through the list of medal opportunities. What you're seeing now is those are being challenged a little bit because people are coming in and they're saying, "You know what? We're going to be really good at high jump. We're going to be really good at this specific – we're going to be good at equestrian or we're going to be really great in shooting." When we look at the overall impact on our team, they are bringing on the competition in these individual sports or individual disciplines. The diversity of where the medals are being won is actually increasing to more countries, which frankly is awesome.

I think it's fantastic. Love the competition. That's the whole idea behind this. Ultimately, if more countries are becoming more competitive, then more Olympians are going home with success and spreading the Olympic values in their country. So, I like that.

This is actually a by-discipline analysis just on our teams. When you look at Sochi versus Vancouver, you can see in some places we went up dramatically such as in bobsled and skeleton. In other places we dropped off a little bit, and in other places we had really new opportunities. This is why the medal market share concept is an important one because when you look at slope style and skiing and snowboarding, the team event in figure skating, there were a bunch of new disciplines that were added in Sochi. They gave us an opportunity and they gave everyone an opportunity to win more medals, but they also gave us more opportunity to have more athletes involved and engaged in the Olympic Movement.

When I look at this from my perspective it adds even another dimension to this whole idea of how you deploy your resources, because I'm starting to look at where are other countries going to challenge us and how do we make sure that we are paying close attention to what they're doing and not putting our athletes at a disadvantage in those disciplines and in those sports. I'm going to just make a quick discussion here on the decision-making process.

You have this kind of international competitive analysis. You see the landscape changing. We know that this is based upon these principles; how do we make decisions? I look at five specific areas when it comes to decision making: athletes, coaches, training competition and leadership. If you go into each of these, you can have a really in-depth conversation about every one of them.

Athletes. What does the athlete pool look like? Is it an athlete pool that is successful at the senior level, which is competing well in the world championships and the World Cup and the Grand Prix at the Olympic Games, or is the sport actually in a position where their World Junior team is actually the one that's achieving at a high level and is on par with their peer group internationally?

The reason it's important to analyze this is you really need to understand what the details are around the athlete pool by discipline so we know where an investment can be good. As I mentioned earlier, we're going to make sure the very best

athletes that are poised to win medals are the first priority because they're the ones that are really in most need of our resources and our partnership with the NGBs, but in certain circumstances there's an opportunity to look a little further down the pipeline, and say, "You know what? We don't really have any seniors that are in that position right now, but we got a really great group of juniors that are coming up."

How do we help them so that they stay on track with their peer group internationally? And, we move them through the pipeline so that three, four, five years down the road they're in a position where they have been able to maximize their capability as individuals because they're showing that they're that talented and we need to make sure we're getting behind them. This is the sort of collaboration we have to have with the National Governing Bodies.

Coaching. Coaching is such an important part of our movement, but coaches when you think about it, they go through generation after generation after generation of athletes and their influence and their ability to help individuals achieve at the highest level is really important. When I'm looking at a sport or a program, one of the questions I'm asking is, What does your coaching staff look like? Who are they? What is their success rate? How do they communicate with the athletes? Do they understand how to individualize? Do they understand what's going to basically provide the resources, the programming, the leadership to help our very best athletes achieve at the highest level?

Training and competition. Do we understand what the rest of the world is doing? You know, I started in this and there were a few sports that came to me and said, "You know what? We have athletes that won the National Championships." And, I'm like, "So? Everybody's got somebody that wins the National Championships. How are they doing internationally?" Well, some of them didn't want to talk about that, but that's the real question here because in our role we need to help the athletes achieve internationally because that's where the governments are stepping in. That's where other National Olympic Committees are doing a really good job and we have got to do a great job with our NGBs in supporting that level.

Then finally, leadership. Is there a commitment to help the very best athletes win? You know again this is a – I can't tell you how important a concept this is. I was with a sport this weekend and we were talking. I was talking to their board.

One of the things we were talking about was the board's ability to one, make sure that we're taking care of the first four on behalf of the athletes and not micromanaging, but instead saying, "You know what? We're empowering the staff to get this done and it's your responsibility. Now go out and get it done on behalf of the athletes." And two, is that there was an absolute dedicated mission from the board to say, "Not only are we going to have a great membership program, not only are we going to basically provide good competitions. And, not only are we going to have good development, but we are committed to making sure our very best athletes have the chance to win and the chance to succeed because we know if they do that they will inspire our community." I mean there's nothing better than when an Olympian comes home or a Paralympian comes home into their community and the celebration that happens around that. The families and the kids and the community suddenly are touched by Olympism and by the Olympic Movement and inspired. Suddenly, they want to go out and try to do that themselves, but we have got to be in this together.

If the NGB's board as an example isn't committed to that level, you know there's a problem potentially because they're not going to allocate the resources. They're not going to have that passion and go, "You know what? We got a \$1 million program, but really we should have a \$1.5 million program so we're going to go out there and raise more money. We're going to figure out how to do it because otherwise, you know what? We're not doing the best thing for our best athletes, and so this has been a really important part of it."

In this process you obviously have to do an assessment, so we try to do a stakeholder assessment. The primary portion of that actually comes through the National Governing Body, although, when you're trying to start to look at how do we expand this to get even further input from the true stakeholders, which is the athletes and coaches, and then how do you look at the international competitive analysis and make sure that you have a clear picture of what it takes to win? So, at one point a few years ago I was talking to one of the wrestling coaches and they were kind of saying, "Well, you know, all these other countries have more coaches and more training and better training centers and all this stuff." And I said, "You ever record this so that we can build it into your high performance plans? Actually write it down and go 'Here's what our competitors are doing. Here's how many days they're training. Here's the type of training they're doing. Here's how many athletes are in the room.'" "No we've never done that."

"Do it. Go out and figure out how to do it. Some of it's going to be objective, some of it's going to be subjective, but collect the information so when we talk about what it takes to help our very best athletes win, we know what it is that we need to be providing for them."

Then finally, I always get the question, What about individual versus team sports? Team sports get only one medal. One thing we talk about a lot are Olympians and Paralympians. You know you might win so many medals, but you oftentimes send way more people back with a medal around their neck. I think in London we had 104 medals and 214 Olympians. What that means is 214 people went back to their communities as Olympic champions, as Olympic medalists, as Olympians, and inspired those communities. So, when I look at the teams I give them a lot of emphasis, because while it may only be one medal in the medal chart, it's a lot of individuals going back and spreading the Olympic values and spreading the enthusiasm for the movement.

How do you take all that and connect it to inspire Americans? We've done some things that I think are pretty good around this and I'm going to talk about a few of them, about excellence, friendship and respect. I always think about those three words everywhere I go and in everything I do because the excellence piece of it really speaks to how do we let people become as excellent as they can be, not how do you tally as many medals as you can because that will come naturally just out of excellence. How do you let people do what they're capable of on the field of play and off the field of play? It's such a unique movement. I mean when you look at sport in our world, when you look at almost anything in our world, we're dealing in a completely different environment, which is unique and very special and deserves our attention.

And, the individuals I have worked with ... I've had the pleasure to work with, whether it's coaches or athletes. Athletes are a unique group of people in this world and it's fun because what I really want to say is, "How do you help that unique group of people to inspire and have impact?" Not only impact on themselves and their own personal career, but impact for their family, for their community, for their state, for their country and for the world.

I think that one of the things we are now really trying to move forward is not only being excellent on the field of play, but also how do we put the athletes in a position where they can take that and transcend maybe things they even thought they could

do? So, a couple things that we're working on ... The first one is a Team USA Ambassador Program. This one Scott touched on briefly, but I am really happy with this program and I think it's one of the cornerstones of our future. In 2006 we had some behavioral issues on the Olympic team, I guess I'd say. There were some issues, and I think this probably happened in '06 and over time there have been issues.

Initially the idea was we need to get together and talk about not having issues, and really that wasn't the right approach. What we need to do is we need to actually get together and talk about what's possible, and that has been the evolution of the Team Ambassador Program is to say, "Let's get future Olympians, national team members together with Olympians, with Paralympians, and talk about what's possible. What's possible for you as an individual? If you go out and win a medal, what's possible? What's possible in terms of how you influence your own career, how you represent your family, how you speak about your community and the hometown you come from, how you talk about your sport, how you talk about your country? What's possible?"

This isn't about right and wrong. This is about what's possible. So, we got into these open dialogues where we'd send an ambassador, either an Olympian or a Paralympian, along with a staff member and maybe sometimes two Olympians or Paralympians depending on the size of the team. We'd send them to a camp, a training camp, a competition, somewhere where the athletes naturally were already going to be instead of asking them to come in and come to Colorado Springs and go to a meeting. Said, "You know what? We're going to reach out and we're going to have an afternoon where we're just going to talk about what's possible." And, it has transcended into a really, really positive experience for our national team members and eventually our Olympians and Paralympians because it's given them an opportunity to visit with each other and visit with people who have already been through this before to talk about the challenges of the multi-sport environment.

What happens when you go to the Olympics? What's it like to win a medal? What's it like to be an Olympian or Paralympian? What's it like to have all this social media around you and how do you handle it? And then suddenly, they were helping each other to become absolutely as button-down and as, as educated and well informed as possible about what can come next. I think the outcome of that has been what we saw in Sochi, what we saw in London. The athletes

are just able to really communicate and convey their excellence based upon the fact that they've thought about it, and when they go into these situations they're already prepared to really to achieve not only on the field of play but off the field of play. So, this has been a really good program.

Another one is Team for Tomorrow. This kind of evolved in 2008. Some athletes came in and said, "We want to contribute back. We want to make donations. We want to donate our time. We want to basically become more involved in our community and we want to be ... we want to actually take Olympism and the Olympic values and the Olympic Movement and our involvement in it and turn it into something special." So, this has grown now. I think, John, actually you're an ambassador in the program, right?

John Naber: Yep.

Alan Ashley: I think this is something that's actually grown considerably since 2008. Again, it's not USOC saying, "We've got to do this." It's actually our awesome athletes going, "We're going to do this. We're going to go do something special. We need your help on how to convert, but we want to convert."

Another thing we've been working on is how to do media events, which allow a much richer environment for athletes to tell their stories about performance, about who they are, where they came from and about how they've achieved.

Our Communications Department in partnership with the NGBs has developed our media summit where athletes get to sit down for two days. They talk to a whole bunch of different media, but not in a five-second communication. They sit down for 15, 20 minutes and have an open conversation, which gives them a chance to really tell their stories and gives our communications system in the country an opportunity to really understand better who these individuals are and to talk about what they ... the inspiration that comes along with their achievement.

Athlete career and education. Benita [Fitzgerald Mosley] has taken on the responsibility of ultimately developing a program that really gets into this area of giving our athletes not only a chance to succeed on the field of play, but also a chance to succeed after they're done competing, and you know when you think about it, that is part of inspiring. How would it

be to have an athlete that was educated, had a great career background, and actually worked for your company?

I talked to a guy in Chicago a few days ago and he was like, “You know what? I have gone out of my way to try to hire Olympians and Paralympians in my company because they are such unbelievable people to have around, and their ability to work through issues, work through problems is, is unparalleled.” All we have to do is make sure they have the skills and the ability to tap into those types of environments and the skills to actually execute on them. I think that Benita has really helped with that. Then we talked about Olympic Day. I think it was, how many was it last year, 180? Eight hundred fifty Olympic Day celebrations around the country and it lasts for actually ... not just on Olympic Day, which was June 21st, 23rd. Jeez. You can tell I’m a sport guy. Sorry.

Anyway, the idea around Olympic Day is to take, is to figure out ways to activate in these communities and to use the U.S. Olympic and Paralympians Association to use all of our resources over a scope of time in June really to convert Olympic values into an opportunity to celebrate in the communities. I’m interested in this piece of it because I think that it’s really the unique transcendence from the field of play to off the field of play that this movement has this, this really special and really why I got involved in it. So, with that I’m going to see if anybody’s got questions about various aspects of all that information I just gave you.

Audience Member: Thank you, Alan. Wayne Wilson from LA84. Alan, you said that when you are deciding how to allocate resources going into an Olympic Games you look for the athletes and the NGBs who have a greatest chance of success and you direct the money that way to ensure that they get over the hump and can win at the Games.

Alan Ashley: Yeah.

Audience Member: And, I understand that, but it also makes me wonder what happens to those athletes and NGBs who are performing poorly and in some sense need the money just as much if not more. It’s always struck me as like throwing somebody in 19th century England into debtor’s prison and then asking him to pay his bills. So, how is it that the people who are not on the receiving end of resources get from mediocre to excellent?

Alan Ashley: Yep. That’s a really, really good question. So, usually when we’re in a situation where a sport is mediocre, if you look at those five buckets that I laid up there, the athletes, coaches, training, competition, leadership, one of those is really in deficit. What we generally try to do is say, “Look, let’s see if we can focus on one or two of these areas, which are actually holding you back.” Now, I would say in some cases it’s actually leadership, which would be a board issue, a governance issue, and we’ll attack it on that front.

I’m not going to just leave them hanging, but it will be a different approach than giving them support for high performance. It’ll be, “Actually, can we support them in reforming their board, in becoming more efficient and effective in recruiting new athletes?” Bobsled is a great example of where they have transformed their board, but they also came up with a really good plan on how to recruit athletes, which is get push athletes on track and field or football, which was, you know, a way to take excellence on the field of play in one sport and transcend it over to another.

So, it’s not like we’re going to put them in debtor’s prison. It’s basically we’re going to come at it a different way and we’re not going to use high performance resources to fix the problem, but instead we’re going to use our NGB organizational development department to figure out if we can’t make sure that when we do deploy resources into an organization they’re going to be used effectively and they’re actually going to help athletes move forward because one of the things that I was discouraged with is I felt like we were investing high performance resources in certain circumstances and getting absolutely no return. The athletes weren’t getting return. The program wasn’t getting return. It was not having impact.

We need to set up the situation so that when those investments are made they have impact, and it might be a little further down the pipeline, but at least if we know it’s getting to athletes and helping them move forward then we’ll do it. Great question.

Audience Member: Alan, Gary Moy with USA Volleyball. You know me. I have a question about technology, specifically sport related technology and high performance. You’ve been to Vancouver; you’ve been to London. What are some of the trends you’re seeing on the use of that performance helping our Olympic teams medal, and also where is the U.S.A. right now in the world of sport technology? Are we up there? Are we behind? Are we in the middle?

Alan Ashley: Technology I think is being widely used by our competitors in terms of analysis and feedback to the athletes and to the coaches. Examples of that in 2008, or actually 2010, we were providing information to our coaches as quickly as we could, a video analysis of individual runs like in bobsled so people could see the line and the athletes could see the line and they could adjust accordingly. And you know, that brought up a big issue with the IOC. They said, “Boy, not every country is doing that,” and we said, “Hey look, why don’t we help every country get that?”

So now, as an example, every country can have access to the live feed so they can do video analysis. They can do Dartfish. They can essentially implement instantaneous feedback to their athletes during the Olympic Games and during the Paralympic Games. We’re seeing a lot of evolution in technology like that. I think we’re in the middle right now. I think some of our sports are actually quite sophisticated. We have as an example really good equipment testing in some of the sports where I think we are very much cutting edge in terms of selection of equipment and in terms of evolution of new equipment, but we’ve got a ways to go. One of the reasons I want to get into this concept of a sports science network is I want to be able to engage a lot more organizations around the country in the movement, and I want to be able to tap into their expertise.

That is something that we have not done as good a job of as we should. We’ve got a great country that has so many smart people and so many good businesses and universities and opportunities for us to network on behalf of the NGBs with people that are trying to solve problems specifically and have technology and ideas on how to solve those problems that we would never come up with. So, I’d say we’re middle of the road. We get this sports science network up and running, I think that’ll actually significantly improve us.

Audience Member: Time for one more quick question. The Miracle on Ice hockey team had absolutely no chance of beating the Russians. When you talk about choosing the team that has no chance of winning medals, I’m curious to know if you’ve done any studies as to what is the impact of that declaration? Does that NGB redouble their efforts or do they quit and pull out?

Alan Ashley: I haven’t done the research on it yet. I know that there are, but I can tell you one thing, when we see that an NGB is throwing up their hands and going to quit and pull out, then ultimately that’s when we jump in and say, “Look,

don’t pull out. Let’s figure out how to solve this.” Because this is a practical approach. I mean I agree that it’s not pretty sometimes and I understand in some ways it seems kind of harsh, but at the same time when we were spending resources in places where it wasn’t having impact, we were actually hurting the athletes that it might’ve helped. We could have used those resources in a very productive and impactful way.

In those situations where somebody throws up their hands and says, “Gosh, we want to give up,” then we’re coming back to them and saying “If you’re going to give up, let’s find somebody that won’t give up, and if you’re really not going to give up let’s, let’s get better. Let’s actually figure out a way to improve.” Because I ... There’s no sport that I don’t love. I want every sport to be successful, but I also think you’ve got to hold people’s feet to the fire a little bit when they’re not doing a good job and say, “Let’s do a better job, because if you’re not going to do a better job, then ultimately we’re never going to make advances on behalf of the athletes. The athletes just won’t get resources. They will not feel the impact of the USOC’s resources.” Anita [DeFrantz], you wanted to -

Anita DeFrantz: Thank you. Do we share too much? I know we rely heavily on our college community for sports, and I think it was in 2010 I saw a statistic that 7,000 of the athletes taking part in Division I, II and III were not U.S. citizens. Are we sharing too much or not enough?

Alan Ashley: I overall believe in transparency and in sharing. I think that as an example when you have athletes from all over the world competing in a university environment it just improves the quality of competition all the way across. Yeah, there are both sides to that story in terms of scholarships and resources, but from a competitive standpoint I know you can get into a situation where you might have some of the best runners, skiers, whatever in the world that are your teammates.

It’s only going to make you better, and so in that environment I think you need to take advantage of it because at this stage of the game I’d say that is the environment we live in. So, rather than thinking that we’re going to somehow change that right now, I look at it and say, “Take advantage of being able to train and compete with the best in the world.” And then, use that to your advantage to springboard you to the top. So, I think we need to be transparent. We need to share, and actually it makes us better when we do.

Audience Member: Somewhat of a related question. Your assessment process includes coaches, competition, etc., a lot of which touches the NCAA, right? There's a big debate right now in how the concept of unions may impact competition. As someone from the media world we think about, What is the impact on the practical level with a big school where football and basketball are the big revenue generating sports, and all of a sudden if the costs go up the broadcast costs go up? What is the trickle-down impact to non-revenue generating sports? How does that impact our competitiveness?

Alan Ashley: I don't know the answer to that yet exactly, but I will tell you that we rely heavily in certain sports on the college system, on the NCAA system. I mean when you look at the number of athletes, which came from colleges and universities, which were on the London team, I mean it's huge. It's a huge impact.

It's a big part of our development pipeline and it's an important part of our development pipeline. You worry about it because they're not necessarily the revenue-generating sports in the university world. They're always the ones that are kind of on the edge. So yeah, I look at that and I'm concerned, but I also know that we can clearly say when someone asks us how important is it to us? It's very important to us. I'd say it's pretty darn important to a lot of other countries, too, as a matter of fact. Thank you.



“Most definitely we want performance and we do a pretty good job at that, but we also want mass participation and personal development.”

WADE GILBERT

Wade Gilbert:

Good morning and thank you for this tremendous opportunity to share with you some insights that Kristen and I have had from our collective years of work as sports scientists, coaches, athletes, parents. We’ve lived this athlete development journey from every different angle and we wanted to use this opportunity to share with you what we think are some messages. There’s a tremendous amount of literature available on these topics. We just want to leave you with actually six key messages. If you can remember six things, that would be great for today. When we think of athlete development, it’s natural for us to think of the target, right?

You might think of this as the “what” and the “where.” Where do we want to go? What do we want to achieve? We might argue that ultimately we want to achieve excellence in performance. You see an example of that was Michaela Schiffrin, world Olympic champion, but we have the target in mind, the next logical step is to ask these types of questions. How and when? How do we get there and when should

we start? And, really this is an exercise in what you might consider reverse engineering. So, you plan back and execute forward. Okay, we see where we want to go. How do we do that? Let’s work back, work forward. I’m going to show ... Some of you may have seen there were a series of commercials recently leading up to the Olympics by TD Ameritrade sponsoring some of our Olympians and profiling their journey, their what, where, how, and when.

Visualize a commercial, 30 seconds. Some of you may have seen these commercials. The commercial was a series of different athletes in reverse. They have video clips and still images of these athletes from in the Olympics or world championships working back across their life to when they were young children, 3 or 4, that first exposure to that experience. That’s kind of the, the idea we have in mind when we think of athlete development.

We’re building athletes, and we can work back in that process. Then it’s almost like a recipe. Start them young. Get them involved in the activity. Do lots of training and ultimately we’re aiming for this target.

So, we start out thinking of the target or the goal. Logically we think of performance excellence. Then we start to think about how and when do we start that. How do we do that? We could think of it as a reverse engineering experiment, and then you see this, right? You may have seen this story leading up to the winter Olympics. This is Brett Smith I believe in New York State. He watched the Winter Olympics many years ago with his son who was 6 at the time and they saw this event, luge, and they thought, “Wow, this is amazing.” Well, he went out and built a luge run in his backyard.

*Click to play
PowerPoint presentation*



This is a great story. If you haven't seen it, you could Google it. True to scale, all out of wood in his backyard, and his son at 6 started; this was his sled run. Not bad, right? Now we see his son in the winter Olympics, the last winter Olympics. So, it's that idea of reverse engineering in action. We have a clear image of where we want to go, what the target is. We just work back. We take these little steps. It's that TD Ameritrade commercial and you see it in action right here, but we want to... So we could talk today about the science of that, and there's lots of research on that, and we're pretty good at doing that to be honest with you.

Kristen and I talked about it, and we said, "What do we really want to leave them with today?" We want to essentially leave you with a few key messages and get you thinking. So, you walk out of here today with reflection and some questions, maybe more questions than answers. Because you can read the literature and we can gladly give you reference lists of anything you want to follow up on, but we think about why. I want to start with this, a little bit of a reflection activity.

If we look at the United States, latest census shows we're a country of approximately 316 million. We also see that we have roughly 62 million youth, our prime athlete development target. This is our market right here, around 62 million kids about 5 to 19, ages 5 to 19. Now, how many of those kids participate in youth sport? There's no accurate or reliable numbers that we've seen. Wide ranges, but let's call it around 50 million. There's some variance there, but that's a rough estimate. We have a pretty good handle on this. This is the number of youth in America in high school sport. These are many of our future Olympians and some are actually current Olympians, so around 7.7 million. You're seeing a trend here.

The ball gets a little smaller when we look at our collegiate athletes, many of whom are Olympians, again training for the Olympics or already in the Olympics. Then we see we have about 15,000 professional athletes, again some of whom compete in the Olympics in different sports. These are your Olympians and Paralympians. Last two Olympics, summer and winter Olympics, just over 1,000. So, we start to think about, yeah, we do a pretty good job at the what, the when, the where and the how, and we have a lot of science on that, but why?

We start to ask, "Why do we invest so much energy and resources into this effort?" When we juxtapose that number with some of these headlines I pulled out of the newspapers

and media leading up to this talk, you see all this effort for 1,000 and you also see this in our country, okay? These are just headlines I pulled out in the last two weeks. It's every day, right? It forces us to reevaluate this idea of the Olympic Movement and how it's shaped athlete development, is shaping the landscape of our country and the way we invest our resources in youth development, if you will, people building.

Why can't we have both? Why do we have this gap and a growing gap, right? How can we use what we're learning and these insights and this energy that we have in this room to have both? It shouldn't be one at the expense of the other. We want performance. Most definitely we want performance and we do a pretty good job at that, but we also want mass participation and we also want personal development, and I share this with you as an example of what might be referred to as a personal assets approach to athlete development.

And, we talk about it. You've heard people before us come up here and talk about what is the Olympic Movement and what does it represent. I think it represents this in spirit at least, but you're going to see after we show you some of the evidence today that that doesn't necessarily translate into action and what you see in a typical sport environment here in the United States today. So, we're going to focus a lot on the "why." I'm going to pass it over to Kristen.

Kristen Dieffenbach: Hi. Welcome. Thank you all for being here and for giving us an opportunity speak, and we wanted, as we get into the crux of the presentation, to go over a couple of the key things that we're going to be talking about. We'll talk just briefly about some of the common development models that are out there and why they're important and where they come into play here. We're going to hit on four key themes in the science and talk a little bit about how those apply and how that's useful in the information that we're talking about. Dr. Gilbert is going to talk a little bit about a project that they're doing to try to apply some of this science that we are seeing and how it's working in his community, and then we're going to try to finish up with some key recommendations for everyone to take home to your programs and the things that you're doing, and then summarize and offer some time for some questions and see what we can add to this really unique program that's going on today.

To start off, we want to talk about these common models. I think there's a really nice depth and breadth of information and experience in this room. Those of us who have been

coaching and around sport for a long time know that there have been development models for athlete performance around for a long time. We've talked about how to get athletes high performance. I started out in track and field. I was going back through some of my notes and I found some stuff back from my earliest days coaching when everything was still mimeographed, that we've got these models, and I think that the difference between what we're seeing now and the models that we're seeing, they're much more inclusive and they're much more about this pathway, the "why." How do we get more people involved?

How does performance become a part of the model instead of the model itself? We're going to be talking just briefly about a really nice report put together by Bailey and some of his colleagues over in the U.K. about the participant development model in sport and academic review that they did in 2010. and in this they really profiled four key models, and you may be familiar with some of these, the long-term athlete development model, Balyi and his group out of Canada has become very, very popular, and you'll hear some different things about that today in the rest of the program. The development model of sport participation, which was Jean Côté out of Canada; the psychological characteristics of developing excellence, which is Abbott and Collins and some of his folks; and then the model of talent development in physical education because I think one of the things that we see a lot is that sport performance and physical education get separated as opposed to seen as the continuum. So, we'll talk about these just briefly like I said.

This is a very simple chart that takes the four models and presents them to you. The LTAD being the model that really is mostly based in the physiology, talking about how do athletes develop, how do they grow, what are some of the things we know about the different phases of development, presenting it in the six stages, starting out with fundamentals, the physical literacy, getting kids movement, fundamental movement skills, the importance of those opportunities, moving into fundamental sports skills as they develop through talking about some critical periods and the importance of maturation from a physical perspective, but also from an emotional and social perspective.

Côté's model - social psychology is really the focus on that one and really looking at how do athletes and how do the pathways evolve to get into high performance. Talking about deliberate play, deliberate practice, some key things that Dr.

Gilbert will pick up on in a little while here, the importance of sampling and considering the needs of the athlete. Getting into performance psychology in the PCDE model. I've had the ability to do some research in this area over the years with Dr. Gould and some other folks that are in the field looking at what are the characteristics of excellence, what do we see in top achieving people, and then thinking about how do we develop them and help provide those opportunities to get there and how do we do that through sport, particularly, and this I think is very interesting, in the concept of the non-linear pathway that it's not always this nice straight shot from the luge in your backyard to the mountains in Sochi. And then, the final model, the idea again that the stages for talent identification and multi-skilled practice and thinking about how do we put all of this together in our system, thinking about the fact that most of our kids, if we think about scholastic sport, get involved in physical activity and sport way before they get to the school model. Our 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds are getting into community sport. They're getting into NGB-based sport. They're getting into recreational opportunities, and then we get into the school system. How do we bring those together better so that this is a systematic holistic that looks at ... for many different levels as we were talking about.

So, just an idea that there are models out there and these newer models, the thing that I want to highlight about them is they're very good. They give us a good starting point. They help us identify the things we know, but they also help us identify the things we don't know yet or the assumptions that we have and how we have to address those. That's what's so exciting about some of these sports science initiatives. How do we help find out and fill the gaps of the knowledge so that we can start functioning on things that we know and that we're learning as opposed to just things we're assuming? These provide a great opportunity for us to start to tease some of those things out and work through this as we continue to improve sport for the kids and for our culture.

We want to talk briefly about these four key areas. I'll be talking about the fallacies of early talent identification and structural issues. Dr. Gilbert will talk a little bit about developmental activities and then the concept of coaching effectiveness, something we've been hearing bits about today as we've been going along. Let's start off and talk about the fallacies of talent ID. This is a particular interest area of mine just because there's a lot of talk about this. When you go out and talk to parents and coaches this is what they want to talk

about. They want to talk about talent ID. They get really excited about this.

As Wade was talking about a little bit, 20 percent of our population are this, this group of kids that are in that potential pool. We've got a lot of kids, but we don't do a very good job of getting them past the kiddie pool. We don't do a good job of getting them to be lifetime physically active people. We don't do a good job of getting them to that Olympic level. I'll get to that concept in just a second. The first talent-ID fallacy is that we do a great job. Everybody gets really excited. We've got all those people involved in pro sports. We've got all those Olympians. We do an excellent job. I'd actually like to put the idea out there that we don't do as good a job as we think we do.

If you look at medal count - I wrote it down to make sure I get it right - since 1896 we've won just over 2,300 medals. That's not including our Paralympic medals. We've got a lot of medals. We usually come out at the top of the medal counts, but when you start to look at the medals per capita, we don't do so well. We're routinely in 20, 30, 35, I've heard some occasionally up into the 40's. We don't do as good a job as we think we do, and then we go back to that slide that Wade had with all the other health problems and physical problems and movement problems that we have in this country and we're not doing such a good job.

I think that it's easy to say we do a great job just because of the way that looks, but when we really start to dig underneath the surface, are we doing as good a job as we could be doing and as we should be doing given what we know and what we have out there? You might recognize some of these folks. What do they have in common? They're all little kids who've been profiled very, very big in the media, given a very, very big spotlight.

This is Jan Silva, 5 years old in 2007, on the cover, front page of USA Today as the future of tennis, given a full scholarship. You'll notice it's a very large racket that's bigger than his head. Given a full scholarship to an academy over in France and his whole family moved. He's still playing, but haven't heard a whole lot more about him. Some of you might recognize, Jeremy over there. Jeremy Tyler, 2009, 6'11", skilled, his senior year of high school. Went to play overseas. Do the follow-up story on him. Read up on him a little bit. Struggled immensely on an emotional game level as well as a personal emotional level to handle the pressures of playing at that level.

Freddie Adu, 14 years old, also 2007. Very good. Youngest person to sign an adult pro contract and watch the media feeding frenzy on that young man over the next few years because again, emotionally from a game perspective, but also from a personal perspective was he prepared to play an adult game at an adult level? Keep in mind that most of these kids, most of our sports are late specialization sports that require full-blown adult physical bodies but also emotional maturity and psychological skills.

And then, this is the latest, you may have seen this just a few weeks ago, 9 years old, Kelly Xu at the Augusta Masters. Won the 9-years-old, chip and putt, or whatever it was. I'm not a big golf person myself, but - and again, big, big pressure, big, big adult model, and so again we're talent ID-ing, but are we really ID-ing talent? When I was 5, I wanted to be a marine biologist, a fireman, and President of the United States, my big three. How do we know at this age? How do we really help? And then, we also didn't know how tall was I going to be, all those different things. Big spotlight.

We also have this great American myth, which is really, really important: "Anything is possible" culture. That's the pull yourselves up by the bootstrap American way. That's what we do. If you work hard enough, you can get there. The problem being is that we know - and again folks in this room are well acquainted with this - that sport performance is so much more than just "I want it." Genetic talent matters. Some of the USOC exercise physiologists say, "Choose your parents well." It's the biggest thing, but we also just have all those pitfalls and all those things that happen along the way as we're working with our athletes.

The other thing about this that I think is really tragic is there's still that idea that sport is the best way out of bad situations. When the sport statisticians have done the work they've shown that it is not, that people from inner city or lower-income situations, are least likely to make it out, and we'll talk about that in a little while, and so it's a very big myth. One of the other issues that I wanted to highlight is that we have a whole culture that is built, is making its living on the backs of these kids playing and in participation, and so we have a lot of select team and travel team exclusivity, and a lot of opportunities that shut out very early depending on the money.

Year-round loyalty expectations. National scouting reports on children before their performance is there. Plenty of people doing that kind of stuff. This college recruiting fanning the

fires. Just in the last ... Both in December and then again early this year, the New York Times has run two stories on kids making commitments, verbal commitments to colleges before they get to high school, before they get to high school. Again this talent ID and the way we're doing it is not yet really matching up with what the opportunities are and what works. As a result we get to this situation where we really fail to retain talent.

Kids get burned out very quickly. The literature is very clear on that. They get entrapped. They don't enjoy it. We're losing not only potential performance, but we're losing also these lifetime participants and supporters of our sport. We have poor skill development because of the exclusivity early on. I've talked to a couple folks, Cathy Sellers with U.S. Paralympic Track and Field being one of them, talking about how you've got kids at the elite level because all they've ever done is one sport. They don't have well developed athleticism, and that hurts the ability of those kids to perform. How many kids are missing out on the model because of that?

We really don't maximize their true physiological base because we're not developing athleticism on which to build our athletes. Development of bad psychological habits because the kids really don't get a sense of what does it mean to succeed, fail, try different things, really be successful. And, of course, where is the fun? Fun doesn't always have to mean giggle, giggle, ha, ha. It can also be the "I enjoy this. This is something that's powerful to me. This is something that really makes my life meaningful." All these things that we're really not doing so well as we think about how we're not doing talent identification properly.

Wade Gilbert: Thank you, Kristen. Okay, the second scientific theme that we want to share with you is this idea of developmental activities. Deliberate practice is a concept that has become quite well known around the world, but particularly in sporting environments. If you've looked at any of that literature a lot of it is traced back to, Anders Ericsson, who did a lot of research originally with chess players and musicians, artists, and then that work and that model was tested if you will in sports settings. There's quite a bit of literature now on this idea of deliberate practice in sport and what it means to athlete development.

Not only has it had quite an influence from a scientific perspective, but it's been picked up by the media and made very popular. What we see when we're out in the communities

is that most people aren't familiar with Anders Ericsson or the original research, but they've heard of deliberate practice and 10,000 hours and things like that. A lot of it is because they're picking it up through these media accounts. In fact, there's a golfer. You may have heard of him, The Dan Plan. You can look that one up. He's trying to accumulate 10,000 hours to get on the PGA and he's up to – he quit his job and started at zero – he's up to 6,000 hours and I hope, Dan, if you're listening, good luck, but I'm not sure it's going to happen.

When we think about deliberate practice, what is deliberate practice? Really deliberate practice is a special type of practice. You're going to look at this and say, "Of course, that's training." Yes, this is training, trying to meet that challenge/skill balance. It's effortful, right? You have an opportunity to get very clear on ambiguous feedback through this type of training. It's something that we can control and repeatable so that we can continue to fine-tune and identify errors and refinement, and it's grounded in this idea of a monotonic benefits assumption whereby the amount of practice you invest, specifically deliberate practice, is directly related to your level of expertise and skill.

The more training, specialized training you do, the more skilled you will become. Seems to make sense, right? In fact, their original research came out with this idea of about 10,000 hours or ten years to become an expert. Well, I put an asterisk beside that because that's since been tested – quite a few studies in sport – and you don't need 10,000 hours. In fact, we have world champions with 2,000 and 3,000 hours. Of course, they did other things, so there's transfer of skill, but you don't need 10,000 hours of focused skill, specialized skill.

The reason we share this with you is because what has happened now is this has been picked up and played into the mindset of our athlete development stakeholders, particularly in the United States. We see this separation of practice and play. We don't have time for play. We need to get our 10,000 hours, right? We need to specialize, start as young as we can, and train. No time for play, and we see it in schools too, right? We eliminate recess, we eliminate physical education. Standardized test scores go down? The answer is more studying, more deliberate practice, and you see it in all aspects of our life.

Kids don't really get to play very much anymore. So, it's a separation, and this is what it would look like. This is a picture I took a few weeks ago, with, near my house, kids

playing baseball. This is a tryout, a form of practice, so this is deliberate practice, adult-led, very structured, all those components that I showed you. This is deliberate practice in action, right? Now juxtapose this with this picture. This is a picture I took in my back yard. Some of those same kids a week later playing in the back yard. I was barbecuing and I put my head up and I saw this game of baseball. I said, "Oh my gosh, get a picture" because this is play.

When do kids get to do this? They make their own rules. They develop decision making skills, interpersonal skills, creativity, but we don't have time for this. We've got to train. There's no time for play. What you're seeing is when you look at the research, there's some studies that look at Olympic athletes, professional athletes, and their life history studies, so we look back and we chart their hours in different activities. Many of the best ones have a profile that integrates play and practice. They don't specialize early. They invest in lots of play activities. They sample at young ages and they specialize later. Depending on the sport, the age would dictate that.

One way to think about how we could integrate play and practice into athlete development systems is this image here that I share with you. Jean Côté, a professor at Queens University, does a lot of work in this area and he shared this with me just a few weeks ago. It's his way of pulling together the literature and the research to put it into an image, a picture, one page where he can say these are the different types of activities, developmental activities that kids need or people need to really maximize their potential in sport for example, and just go quickly through this, but when you think of this top left quadrant, this is training. This is what you see on a daily basis across the youth sport landscape right now, lots of adult-led, very structured, and there's not a lot of opportunities for kids to really create things, right? They're being trained.

Another component here would be if we move over a little bit, still adult-led, but with this idea of a play practice or emotional learning where the focus is on maximizing engagement and participation. This is still in an adult-led environment, but the focus is a little different. I don't want you to walk out thinking that there's a right answer here, it's one or the other. It's all of this. We want all of this. Then on the bottom we have youth-led or athlete-led activities, and we can separate this into informal learning or spontaneous practice.

This is the kid shooting hoops in their driveway ... They're still practicing. That still contributes to skill development, but it's

at their pace, right? And then, we also have at the extreme here creative learning. This is what you saw on that image of the kids playing baseball in my backyard. They make up the rules. It's not training driven. They didn't set that up because they wanted to practice baseball. They wanted to play, but guess what? They're developing skills that are going to be transferable to their ability to compete as a baseball player. All right, we're going to pass it on to Kristen for the third theme.

Kristen Dieffenbach: So, again trying to give you some pockets of literature and pockets of ideas of things to be doing, and I think the third area that we often really need to talk about and we don't spend enough time on is this idea of structural issues. You'll see a little bit of overlap to the talent ID fallacy that we talked about before. Often when we think about sport, we tend to think of suburban sport. We think about the sport that media puts out in front of us. We think about the beautifully groomed complexes. We think about the kids in the matching little uniforms. We think about those kinds of things that we see most often out there. Unfortunately, when we look at it only from that perspective, we're very often missing some really key points that influence how sport happens in America, how well we're doing at providing quality developmental sport both for long-term athlete development but also for high performance.

The first thing we need to consider as we think about some of these issues ... We have to think about the haves or the have-nots. Sport takes a lot of time and it takes a lot of money. We know that parents who make over \$100,000 a year are much more likely to put their children into sport at a very young age, the 3-, 4-, 5-, 6-, 7-year-olds, giving those kids earlier opportunities for fundamental movement development, giving them opportunities for fundamental sports skill development, than other people might have in those situations. We also know that the time that it takes dropping kids off, picking kids up, moving kids around, getting them involved in multiple sports is something that the haves are much more likely to do than the have-nots, again because of the time and the resources, and some of those things just strictly from that perspective.

This is a slide that I debated whether it should go in the earlier talent ID fallacy sort of things or over in this access issue side of things, but this idea of the relative age effect – and again this has been shown in multiple sports in multiple places – this idea that when you have a cut-off date, the kids that tend to get the most time and the most resources and the

most emphasis as we cherry pick. We're very good at cherry picking the talent off the top, aren't we, at 5, 6, 7, 8 years old? They tend to get the most opportunity and then that perpetuates as time goes on. We've seen that in soccer. We see that in hockey.

Again, there are many studies that have done this over and over again with even just looking at these soccer players here. Seventy percent of the kids that are given the most opportunities, given the opportunity to develop at the elite level are born in this first six months after that cut-off date, and again thinking about how do we restructure, how do we rethink how we might do some of those rolling cut-offs for other things so that we can get more of the kids involved even if they happen to be a late "maturer" or someone who's going to develop a little bit later, because we all know stories of the kids who didn't grow as fast, but yet turned out to be the 6'4" strapping young man, just never got the opportunity to develop the skills or whatever the case might be.

We know that in rural America we have a couple of really unique situations. There's, of course, rural poverty in those areas. We also have a very spread-out population. They tend to not get as much access to as many different types of sport opportunities. They tend not to have the same types of facilities. Some of you might recognize this. I stole some pictures from the "Field of Dreams." "Build it they will come", but that's not always the case because again the opportunity, the resources, the things that they have in the rural communities are not necessarily what you might expect. I did a presentation a couple years ago down in Texas talking to a mother whose young son, 7 years old, had been very, very sick, and spent about two years in and out of the hospital.

When he came out he was about 8 ½, going on 9, and he loved basketball. Ate, slept, did everything basketball, but because he was so sick when he was a little bit younger, he did not get into the youth basketball league, and because he didn't get into the youth basketball league he hadn't been playing. He couldn't make the select cut-off team for the 9-year-olds going into the coming season, and there was nowhere else for him to play. They lived about two and a half hours from any other communities, any other areas, and now this young man was shut out of playing basketball. The only thing I had to offer her was, "Maybe hire a high school kid who can come in and tutor him a little bit," because there was just nothing else that we could be doing. There were no other opportunities for

this young man to play. I think those kinds of things play out time and time again when you're in a very rural setting.

We don't want to pick on just the rural settings. We also have big issues in cities. We again have issues of time, we have issues of poverty, we have issues of resources. We also have issues of crime. Some of our buddies up at the Institute the Study of Youth Sport at Michigan State University have done some stuff in Detroit and found one of the biggest barriers they had to youth sport participation was that the field had been taken over by gangs and by crime in the different areas, and they couldn't even get the kids out to play until they had made those areas safe and accessible for the coaches and the kids to hang out and to play there. So, we have some really unique access issues when we start getting into the cities.

Finding a place to participate, and again I don't want to make this just about cities and locations. We also have issues when we start thinking about abilities and different types of abilities, and athletes with disabilities have some really unique challenges not just from the facilities themselves but also from the knowledge and the attitudes of different people about what can we do for inclusion, what can we do to bring these sports and make them more accessible, and there have been some laws passed and some other things done, but time and again we talk to folks and they don't know where to, they don't know how to, they don't know what to do with inclusion and helping provide these opportunities.

Just as an idea for some of these overcoming barriers, if you're in the world of track and field and you're familiar with the throws rings, very often they're set aside from the rest of the track. It's a good ways away, and very often there's no paved anything to get there. It's through the grass, which can be very challenging for someone with a disability or a wheelchair to get to in the first place, but once you get there and to do a seated throw, how do we go about doing a seated throw? Do we need a very expensive several thousand dollar chair? Can we do it from a very simple ... Someone's going to ... As you can see, actually someone's sitting here holding on and stabilizing the jumps box that they're using as a seated throw platform. But again, overcoming those barriers takes some knowledge, takes some information, takes just some thought into what are the barriers that these folks might be facing.

Some of the additional access issues that we see time and again in the literature – being female. It's been quite a while since the opportunities have been changed and since Title 9,

and we still see that in many places being female is a place where it's going to limit the girls' engagement. Something like 25 percent of high school girls are not engaged at all in any sort of sport.

Single-parent households. Again, this is coming into the resources of time and money kinds of issues. We're seeing that children in single-parent households are participating in fewer sports if they're participating at all. We did an interesting statistic before with the number of kids involved in high school sports, and we're seeing that there's a limited and shrinking number of scholastic sports being offered at all with about 10 percent of the high schools around the country not offering any sport opportunities, or turning to pay-to-play type opportunities, which again is now adding another barrier of time for many of the families.

City schools, fewest opportunities for boys and girls. Per population the number of varsity slots for kids to play is the lowest in the school, in the city schools. We know that certain states, California being at the bottom of the top of the list, Tennessee and Georgia providing the fewest opportunities in the scholastic system. So again, seeing these problems of access and inclusion at these places where we make the assumption that kids can play. We're seeing that it's not quite as simple or quite as easy as we think it is.

Wade Gilbert: Our fourth and final scientific theme that we want to share with you today relates to coaching effectiveness. We thought it would be important to tap into that element of the athlete development system or model. It revolves around a simple question: What is a good coach? The people we charge most directly with shaping this athlete development process, what should they look like and what characteristics and behaviors should they have? We have a considerable amount of research available on that, and I just want to share a few overviews with you.

Fortunately, we have other people who've gone out and invested a lot of time in reviewing the literature for us. I have a few examples to share with you of what we found in those reviews. One is Andrea Becker who wrote a chapter in this recent handbook where she went out and reviewed over 150 different papers on coaching effectiveness. What does that look like? Are there common themes? Sure enough there are.

She [Andrea Becker] found these seven common themes across the evidence and the literature that quality coaches share in

common. You can see from this list that we do integrate a lot of these things into some of our coach education programs and coach development, but the one at the bottom – I put behavioral signatures under consistent – is quite interesting to us because that's fairly recent. Frank Smoll and Ronald Smith up at the University of Washington have been doing research in this area for almost 40 years. They've recently started to write about this idea of behavioral signatures in quality coaches or effective coaches. What we're seeing, studies that I've done with basketball coaches and studies that other people have done with swimming coaches, some of the best coaches in America, we see the same thing.

They have a very stable behavioral pattern, interaction pattern between themselves and their athletes across competitions and practices. So, you think about why that might be effective. There's not one profile. They all have different profiles, but they have a very stable profile. That's very comforting and reassuring to an athlete, particularly young athletes. They don't have to wonder which coach is showing up today. You take that anxiety out of the equation and you allow people to do what they want to do, what they're capable of doing. You give them that stable environment. That's a fairly new idea. Building on that, Karl Erickson and I were asked to do a review on the research specific to the youth sport context.

What do good coaches look like in that type of environment? And, this is based on just research. Just looking at the research, what do we know about this? This is what we found. We found that you could organize all this evidence around these four general constructs. You see some examples here again of being supportive, positive, but even things like autonomy supportive. What does that mean? Well, it's this idea of "and," right? It's not "or." It's sometimes you are autocratic and sometimes you're democratic. You need to be both. You need to give people choice and input, but you also need to have structure.

This is kind of a combination of practice and play environments, mastery learning climate. These are things that we've seen across the research when you really dig into it. What are those common themes? A third one that I share with you is based on some research that Jean Côté and I did where we went and reviewed broadly talent development literature, human development, athlete development, youth development, coach development, systems. What are some common themes across those bodies of literature and how might that inform how we define good coaching? Believe it or

not there wasn't any consensus on that simple concept: What is a good coach?

Everybody has an idea, but what does the evidence show? This is our definition, and then I'll show you an image of what that really means, but it's this idea of being consistent in applying different types of knowledge to develop specific athlete outcomes in specific contexts. There're three components here. There're knowledge, athlete outcomes and coaching context. So, coaching effectiveness is context specific. If I want to have a great coach for 8-year-olds, I need to look at other coaches who are effective in that environment. Bringing in my Olympic coach is inspirational to talk to these people, but they don't live in that reality. They don't work with these types of kids.

Expertise is very ... We used to think novice to expert, like a continuum, you build up, eventually you're an Olympic or pro coach. That continuum exists in every type of coaching context. How might that play out? You can think of these different types of knowledge – knowledge of your sport and how to teach it, knowledge of how to connect with people. Think of emotional intelligence, and then knowledge of yourself, introspection and self-awareness, and how do you use that knowledge to help build these different athlete outcomes, which we refer to as the four C's: competence, confidence, connection, and character. That's building off the literature in youth development where they actually had five C's, but this seems to fit better with sport environments. We've found that this framework works really well. It's simple and it's evidence-based, and it seems to resonate with stakeholders.

When you look across all these reviews and all this literature, what's the one thing that really connects all these different types of coaching environments and coaches? Here you have three examples of some of the best coaches in the world at different levels. What do they all share in common? The one thing they really share in common when you look at all this evidence and research is their teachers, their teachers. Coach Wooden, for example, always used to say, "I teach at UCLA." Never said, "I coach at UCLA." That's really the foundation, and we have lots of evidence to show that the best coaches think like teachers, teachers developing these four C's. They don't necessarily use that language, but that's exactly what they do.

The last thing I'll leave you with here in terms of coaching effectiveness ... A group of us put together a framework,

a simple tool. Building off all this research could we put it together in a simple practical tool that we could share and use with lots of different stakeholders to give them a model or a framework for understanding what is good coaching? What does that look like? We called it the "Pyramid of Teaching Success in Sport." It's actually kind of a compliment to Coach Wooden's original "Pyramid of Success," but this one's more for the teacher or the coach, the leader in this particular perspective.

Okay, so we're going to switch. Those are four things from the science. We're going to switch at the moment into the applied part of this, where [we ask], "What would that look like if you took those principles and actually tried to do something with that? That's nice, you give a presentation, you write a research paper or book chapter. Do something. What does it look like in action when you try and build a system around these types of principles.

What you see right now ... We always think about what is possible and we heard that today a few times, but if you've been outside at all and around our sport environment, there's a huge gap between the stuff we're sharing right here and the things you're learning and what happens out on that field. You go out to your basketball tournament this weekend or your volleyball club, and it's two different worlds. We just do not have a direct way to connect these concepts and these principles. There are some examples and you can hear from Ken [Martel] with USA Hockey of how we're trying to build that gap, but that's not normal yet. We want to make that normal, not an exception.

We might think of this as an athlete development gap that we have in this country right now. How can we bridge that gap? So when you think, one of the concepts that Kristen shared with you today was this idea of long-term athlete development, very probably the most popular athlete development model in the world right now, many countries are racing to try and reformat their development structures around this pathway of long-term athlete development or just LTAD. It's not necessarily a good thing or a bad thing, but it's something. They need a model and this is something that's available to them, but it's very reductionist, right? It takes the athlete out of the system, and, and we know from research across disciplines that a systems approach is what is sustainable.

So, here we remove the athlete from the system and we try and build the athlete and we ignore the other components

of the system. Yes, we have elements of training and opportunities for different stakeholders, but we really isolate the athlete part. What if we pulled them together and had a development system that was integrated? It's driven by athlete development needs, but it also simultaneously develops the other stakeholders in the system. We don't send coaches to clinics to learn about things that maybe they don't need while we do something over here for athletes and athletic directors go somewhere else, right? All these people should be learning together driven by athlete needs, and it can be done.

In fact, there's a lot of literature across different disciplines, business, science, medicine, and you might refer to this as a systems approach or systems thinking. Peter Senge at MIT is probably the most popular person right now in terms of writing about systems thinking and how you reengineer a system using this kind of integrated approach. So, what we're going to do for a few minutes is just share with you some evidence of what that might look like in a typical sport or athlete development system here in the United States. I call it the Fresno Experiment.

This particular experiment is actually – kind of the genesis for this was about ten years ago one of my former graduate students who's now an athletics director at Fresno High School, we started having those “what if” conversations. Why can't we, why can't this be normal? What would it look like if we tried that? And so, building with support from Fresno Unified School District of 80,000 students and BeLikeCoach, a national non-profit who's helped inform a lot of this thinking and discussion, and then Fresno State were pooling all this information and said, “Let's try it. Get out and try it. Do something.” So, this is what it looks like.

It's Fresno High School. You can think – this is a flagship high school, over 100 years old and at Fresno Unified, a long, very strong tradition in sport, and in fact it's a mini-Olympic team when you think about it. We have about 650 student athletes across 23 different sports. So, how can we build a system that uses these principles? If we think about long-term program development instead of long-term athlete development, what might that look like? First thing you do - and Alan [Ashley] talked about it a little bit in things they're doing now – you have to understand the system. You don't try and create a new system. You try and make sense of what the current system looks like and look for strategic leverage points. You meet people where they are, and that's what Alan was talking about a little bit.

We looked at how do coaches and athletes spend their time? Across every sport, what do they have in common? They have four distinct phases in their development process each year. They have a preseason, every sport. What do you do in that preseason? What should you do in that preseason? You should be identifying targets. This is the “what's possible” part of the equation, but targets revolve around a common core, and the common core we shared three p's with you earlier: performance, personal development and participation.

In this particular setting ... their language, they came up with this idea of participation. We want lots of kids out. Engagement. We want those kids coming back. Achievement. We want to win and succeed and do good things and get better. Great. So, we sit down with each coach. We go through this, and this connects. Now they have a common language. The water polo coach can talk to the soccer coach, can talk to the track coach, can talk to the football coach. In the past, What do I have in common with that person? You have a preseason and you're doing the same things at the same time and you have a lot in common to share. Then we move into the action in a sense.

Every sport has an in-season, right? The goal here is to go out and implement, enact. We call it the enact stage, and get out of the way. We don't want to burden people with additional meetings and development activities. Get out of the way. Let them do what they want to, what they're here to do, go and coach, but notice. So, we put coach and notice. There's a lot we can learn from these experiences, but not now, okay? Notice things. Take note of what's happening. Connect it back to our targets and in the postseason. That's where the real development efforts come into place for the coaches and athletic directors.

At the end of the season, again every sport has its same phase, postseason. It's our examine phase. We look at what happened. We collect subjective and objective data. We get data from the student athletes. We get data from the coaches. We get objective data in terms of performance, and participation and engagement. We compare it year-to-year, and then what we do is enhance. We take the time in the offseason to work on things that matter. This is really important point. We're really good at adding things. We should do more of this and more of that and more of this, but it doesn't matter. That's the hallmark of deliberate practice. Do things that matter, which means you have to ignore other things. So, it's a focus exercise, right?

I'm going to show you a couple tools that we created that have been really, really simple but valuable. Every coach in every sport program has these little index cards about this big, double sided, reflection cards. Every coach completes this after every competition. This one here, a volleyball example. You have their sport specific achievement targets. These are things that they agreed on at the beginning of the preseason. These are just things you tell us are important and matter for these kids to be getting better and for this program to be getting better. So, let's focus on these things. We asked them to do this each game.

After the competition ... Here's another example from lacrosse. They're all sport specific, but there's alignment and there's a core here. The backside is the reflection. There's a couple of prompts. We're not having a big meeting right now. We're not making big changes, but notice. What are you noticing that matters for development? They have to connect it back with what you just noticed today in this competition. Why do you think what you did in the practices and the training leading up to this event might have contributed to what you circled on that other side? And then, the last prompt is, What might you do in the following training sessions to help achieve those targets more consistently?

Another example here, very simple one from a different sport. They can do this very quickly, but it gives them focus and alignment with these principles that we're talking about. We also have a tool, a toolkit basically, with student athletes to get feedback from them on this experience related to competence, confidence, connection, and character, the athlete development needs because that drives the whole system. What we do is each coach gets a report, a very simple report, and most people think in terms of achievement zones. In physical education we have healthy fitness zones, so target zones. We do the same thing with coaches. We show them your zone, your target zone is five to seven. All these questionnaires have the same scale, four being neutral, zero to three negative, and five to seven positive.

If you're in the zone, great. Leave it alone and work on things, gaps. That's a system of continuous improvement. Focus on gaps and the things you're doing well, keep doing them. An example, we can go into some of the specific elements of those questionnaires. We sit down, show the coach, and we have a discussion. So it's not summative, "You're bad; you're good." Here are some gaps that are holding us back perhaps from reaching our potential, our athletes and ourselves as coaches

and directors. We can look at the question numbers here to see what's happening here in these questions.

Maybe he won the championship this year or maybe he won zero in 10, but there's some things that still could be improved upon. So, these are some of those questions from that particular questionnaire that we have a discussion on with that coach. This drives development efforts. These are things we might want to think about trying to address and work on. Instead of just sending you to a clinic or bringing in an expert to talk about motivation, let's work on things that matter. The last thing, the last piece of the puzzle here, you are not leaving that session or 45-minute meeting at the end of the season without some action. Do things that matter, but that means you have got to stop some other stuff.

We actually adapted this from the Coaching Association of Canada and it's a very simple tool. What are you going to continue? What are you going to stop? What are you going to start? Because we're really good at adding a bunch of stuff. "Oh yeah, I'm going to do this and this and this." Okay, what are you going to take out in order to allow you to focus and do those things well? When you think about actually ... We're in the fourth year of this experiment, we have lots of data. What's happened? We've reengineered this environment now whereby participation rates are up, more kids are playing, more kids are coming back, and they're actually starting to be more competitive across the board in their sports.

When we asked the coaches for feedback, they said, "What do you think of this experience?" This is a very representative quote from one of the coaches, "Very helpful. It gave me a true insight as to what I needed to improve on and what I was doing well."

You think about long-term program development driving these types of systems that we have for athlete development. How we can make them more integrated and more holistic in a very simple and practical way that's evidence based and driven by scientific principles? We can do it. Ken's going to share an example with you later today, too, from USA Hockey. All right, Kristen's going to share the key messages.

Kristen Dieffenbach: We want to sum this up. Like I said, being both that we're teachers and educators it's just so important for us to make sure you have take-home messages. I'll throw them up here in the interest of time and then we can just really quickly emphasize the idea that we've got to

get our stakeholders. We've got to get the parents. We've got to get those of us who are in administrative positions, the coaches, to really think about and understand this in a little bit of a different way and to start to draw some of these pictures together.

Bring those three P's: performance, participation and personal development. They aren't different pieces. They are part of a continuum and they all matter when we start talking about whether it was the earlier presentations by Scott [Blackmun] and Alan talking about how elite athletes need even help developing what are they going to do with the rest of their lives, all the way down to little kids helping figure out what they are going to do with their lives and make sure they have all those skills developed. De-emphasizes premature talent identification and stop the cherry picking of talent and really, truly develop talent.

Practice-to-play integration and thinking about how do we provide opportunities for all of those things to happen in our programs so that the kids can get the holistic development they need. Really thinking about access and inclusion equities and how do we address those in our programs and where can we find places is as simple as providing equipment, because equipment is very, very expensive and that can be a barrier, or are we helping kids get to and from practices, other opportunities. Effective coaching, effective teaching. Absolutely huge piece of the puzzle that I don't think we address enough, and the idea that how do coaches get those skills. We don't let people work with children in development in any other area without providing some really quality training.

Where's our quality training here and what's it designed around? What's it based on that's evidence-based that we can use? We've got the information. We're just not doing it as well as we could be. And then, thinking about this long-term systemic program development. Just to give you some idea of some of the things that are currently being done that Wade and I are both very heavily involved in the ICCE. The International Council on Coaching Excellence is an international group that's working on integrating many of the ideas about how do we help improve and enhance the systems, how do we support the systems so that we have the best quality coach development, athlete development programs and systems.

Part of that in the United States is NCACE, the National Council for the Accreditation of Coaching Education systems that we're working on to try to get up to national standards and to meet some of the international standards with some of the other countries and what they're currently doing. For those of you who may not be aware, the National Coaches Conference is in June this summer in D.C., June 18 through 20. It's co-sponsored by the National Federation of High Schools, the USOC, and AAHPERD, the American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

Just so you know, they've changed their name. They are now SHAPE America, which is much easier to say. Still stands for a bunch of stuff, but SHAPE America. I strongly encourage folks to attend that. Like I said, it's co-hosted with the USOC, the NFHS and a few of the other groups. The whole purpose of the program this year is long-term coach development. How do we systematically provide it for the administration side? What can we do practically for the coaches?

If we leave you with just six key things that you can be thinking about in your programs, hopefully this is helpful. We'd like to open it up for questions.



Dionyssis Gangas:

Thank you. Well, it's a hard to be second after Wade [Gilbert] and Kristen [Dieffenbach]. What a performance they did. I hope that my presentation is not going to be boring after that, but at least it's something that goes very close to the development, the athlete development. I will finish with a video so you will go have lunch with some icons in your mind.

First of all, thank you very much. Anita [DeFrantz], thank you very much for inviting us. I say "us" because we at the International Olympic Academy are not me only. There are some other people that are working for that. And we really, really thank you for this invitation. And, congratulations for the beginning, the revival of the U.S. Olympic Academy. Today it's not in the Olympic Academy. Today is one action, one action of the new Olympic Academy. And, I really believe that in the future will have many actions and many events of this U.S. Olympic Academy.

*Click to play
PowerPoint presentation*



“Pierre de Coubertin was the man who conceived the idea of creating a cultural center for the protection and propagation of the Olympic idea.”

DIONYSSIS GANGAS

You know already that I'm a retired professor university and retired lawyer. I'm not retired from the Olympic Movement. But if you give a microphone to a retired professor, a retired lawyer, you will never end. You will have no lunch. So, I wrote some things and I will read from there. I'm sorry that it is not the right way to pass messages, but I have to do it otherwise you will have no lunch.

To appreciate the role of the IOA and its contribution to the Olympic education we have to travel a little back in history. History researchers are quarrelling about who was the inspiration behind the inspiration of the idea of creating the IOA in ancient Olympia. They did, however, agree on one thing. Pierre de Coubertin was the man who conceived the idea of creating a cultural center for the protection and propagation of the Olympic idea.

In 1937, Pierre de Coubertin wrote to the German government, "I could not finish what I wanted to achieve. I believe that a center of Olympic studies, which does not necessarily have to be in Germany, would contribute more than anything else to the preservation and continuation of my work and would protect it from the deviations which I'm afraid will happen." And, of course, you know very well that these deviations will live, these deviations that Coubertin was afraid of.

When Carl Diem came to Olympia in 1938 for the burial of Coubertin's heart in the commemorative stele that had been erected in 1927, it appears that he conceived the idea of establishing there this important center of philosophical research on the model of the Institute for Olympic Studies that already operated in Berlin. The Second World War did not allow the implementation of the plans of Diem and Ketses.

From 1947, however, Ketsias decided to continue his effort and make Coubertin's idea and Diem's proposal a reality.

In '55, the IOA acquired its first legal personality. And, the Hellenic Olympic Committee commission began to work in 1961. It started its operation with its first session.

The International Olympic Academy is one of the institutions established for the promotion of the education and cultural agenda of the Olympic Games. Coubertin conceived the idea, considered the idea of reviving the ancient Olympic Games within a framework of global revival, with sports acting as an instrument for the physical, ethical and cultural education of young generations.

Understanding both the conception and the idea of the academy and its foundation and operation should therefore be related to the ideological content of Olympism as Anita tried to explain this morning. It is a neologism coined by Coubertin. According to Coubertin, Olympism has a philosophical and educational dimension. It refers to the value system of the gentleman and to the ethical qualities contained in the *religio athletae*, while also comprising Olympic education.

Fifty years after its integration, the IOC has finally succeeded in becoming a unique authentic cradle of Olympic culture worldwide. The IOC itself has recognized the IOA in its charter by name and includes the protection and furthering of its activities among its obligations.

The official role of the International Olympic Academy was not restricted, however, to the form given to it by its founders. It was always – it was only natural that alongside the growth and evolution of the Olympic Movement the IOA would also develop and evolve up to the present day through its own progress and action.

Well, when its operation started in 1961 the academy organized an educational institution in a very simple form. For many years patricians lived under Spartan conditions. It's in its facilities in Olympia. You will see that in the video alone, so I am not going to explain to you how the life was there in these days. This was however, combined with a very high level of educational exposure leading to a series of philosophical approaches that marked its first years. The leading figures of this period, 1961 - 1986, Otto Szymiczek, the dean of the academy, and Nikos Nisiotis, a philosopher,

succeeded in changing the strictly conservative nature of the IOA, which John MacAloon had the opportunity to write about it these years, forcing on more contemporary pursuits, more sessions and more participants. The facilities were extended and accommodation quarters, as well as lecture halls were improved.

Now, the presence of Juan Antonio Samaranch at the helm of the IOC contributed significantly to the development of the IOA. National Olympic Academics began rapidly to grow in numbers, thus promoting the culture and educational process of the Olympic Movement. Nikos Filaretos, who was the president of that period, worked a lot of that and of course helped the creation of a number of National Olympic Academies around the world.

In 2003 the IOA became a private legal entity, acquiring operational autonomy with the financial support of the Greek government that period and the IOC.

Two thousand nine today, up to date. Today, the IOA with the IOC consent, has managed to expand its capabilities and to play its own role within the Olympic Movement by adopting a different pace, opening the doors of its facilities to various events with an Olympic content while still maintaining a traditional approach with respect to its already established structure and curriculum, seeking the cooperation of all National Olympic Academies and educational institutions, 146 until today. From today on it is 147 with, of course, the American Olympic Academy starting its works again.

The IOA, under the presidency of Isidoros Kouvelos today who revived the, also the Hellenic Olympic Academy and is a big lover of the Olympic Movement. The only thing I want to tell you out of this text is that Isidoros Kouvelos decided to choose the presidency of the International Olympic Academy instead of the presidency of the National Olympic Committee, which gave to a friend, Spyros Capralos, but he continues for his second mandate to be president of the International Olympic Academy and he does not want to leave this position at all. Believe me.

As you may already know, the IOA is not a profit organization, whose expenses are much bigger than its income. Therefore, in order to push to, to pursue its task, the IOA looks for financial support from either the IOC or from prominent donors or sponsors who recognize and appreciate the valuable

and indispensable work of the IOA, especially nowadays given the current difficult economic situation in Greece.

So, the new role of the IOA involves three areas of action. First, coordination. The rapid decrease of the National Olympic Academies in the last 20 years in which the IOA had a leading role requires an organization and coordination of activities. Operating as the umbrella of this large family, the IOA must provide guidelines for their operation within the organizational structure of the respective NOCs. In this large family of academies, the movement toward more autonomy is inevitably evolving due to the different, mentalities of the administrations of this institution. The IOA has an obligation to assist in organizing any National Olympic Academy that needs help while simultaneously promoting and enhancing the role in local communities, strengthening the relationship with the National Olympic Committees.

Okay, that is out of the text, but I'll tell you why I'm saying that. This is a photo taken four days ago in the Panathenaic Stadium. And, this is an activity of the National Olympic Academy. Forty-five thousand students were there and they broke the Guinness Record. They created the biggest dove of a peace using paper boats and sticking them in the center as you can see in the icon there. So, 45,000 students were there. They went and they stick that and they created the biggest dove of peace in the world after Guinness had approved that and recognized as a new record. This is the dove and all these are in white papers, small papers. And, this is the end of the ceremony, of course. And, here is the president of the International Olympic Academy, Isidoros Kouvelos, putting the last paper boat in this huge image of the dove.

Here we have the second area of action, which is education. The present IOA administration decide to take a major step in the field of education establishing in cooperation with the University of Peloponnese, the first international master's degree in Olympic Studies based at the beginning on the financial and support by the John Latsis Foundation. Since 2009, and for five consecutive academic years, 139 students from 63 different countries have attended this program with great success.

Moreover, since 2012 a cooperation between the IOA and leading educational institutions such as Harvard, Georgetown, St. Andrews, Yale Universities have been established a series of lessons, summer lessons in the academy.

Finally, the third action is guidance. When Coubertin dreamed of an educational center for Olympism in the world in which he was living at that time, he would never have imagined that pluralism and the propagation of the ideas of Olympism would grow as they have nowadays. One thing is certain, though, if this great visionary were alive today, he would have wanted to see his educational center playing a more complex role in disseminating the Olympic principles. And, this is the role that the IOA wishes to promote and perpetuate today.

In order to define the boundaries of this role, we should start from the assumption that the various National Olympic Academies and Olympic committees may have to a smaller or larger extent developed the Olympic education in accordance with their own educational programs. But, it is also certain that in each country the level of education local cultures and specificities outlines the content of the Olympic education that has been taught. However, regarding the Olympic education there is only one content, and its unity should be respected by all the teaching units of general or complementary education. This is where the IOA enters the stage in order to perform its role.

This is the role of coordination and guidance that any member of the Olympic family expects the IOA to play with the support of the work of the IOC Commission for Cultural and Olympic Education. This is the action it intends to play and implement in the future after obtaining the approval of IOC's relevant commission. What is this? This is to create with the help of the appropriate infrastructure a central research team that will study and analyze individual Olympic educational programs towards the goal of achieving the necessary blending of different approaches that will finally lead to the development of a joined educational program capable of being applied with very few variances in all societies and become a useful supportive instrument of the IOC policy.

Dear friends, Pierre de Coubertin used to say the future of our civilization does not rest on political or economic foundations. It only depends on the direction given to education. And, now allow me to show you a video, a documentary video of the International Olympic Academy.

TOM FARREY, Executive Director, Aspen Institute's Sports and Society Program

U.S. Olympic Academy

BENITA FITZGERALD MOSLEY, Chief of Organizational Excellence, USOC

MODERATOR, WAYNE WILSON, VP, Communications & Education, LA84 Foundation



“Seventy percent of Olympic athletes considered themselves multi-sport athletes when they were growing up.”

BENITA FITZGERALD MOSLEY

Wayne Wilson:

W

e chose athlete development as the topic of this academy because it raises the kinds of ethical questions that are at the heart of Olympism and concepts of fair play. It's also a topic that affects every level of sport in just about every kind of sports organization. And, as John [Naber] said, we have people here today representing two organizations with seemingly very different missions. Benita represents the USOC. Their core mission is to support athletes as they attempt to achieve sustained competitive excellence. Tom represents the Aspen Institute's Sports and Society Program which has launched something called Project Play, which is the re-imagination of youth sports. I don't think it would be premature to say, although Tom still has work to do, that the re-imagined youth sports landscape will include a greater emphasis on access, long-term participation, positive health outcomes, positive social outcomes off the field of play, and at the same time, a de-emphasis on competitiveness and competitive outcomes, particularly at younger ages.

So, what we're here today to talk about is how these two organizations have come together to find common ground. I think that what we could do with this panel is have us dominate 95 percent of the time that we have and then leave a couple of questions for you to ask, but what I'd rather do is ask a first round of questions. Then after Tom and Benita have had a chance to make their opening remarks we'll just open it up to the audience right away. In a moment I will ask Benita to explain why the USOC has endorsed Project Play, but before we do that I want to ask Tom to explain on a personal

level how he got interested in this topic, why he's involved in it and then to talk a bit about the work of the Aspen Institute as it relates to sports. Tom?

Tom Farrey: Well, thanks, Wayne. It's a real honor to be here. I got into this because I'm a father and a journalist and I've always been interested in the issues of children and sports and how they're socialized, what they get out of it. When I became a father I remember my son was 5 or 6 years old ... 6 years old I think. And, I'm on the sidelines of the soccer game and the parents are freaking out. And, you know the whole thing and the coaches don't know what they're doing. It was so hyper-organized and so intense at such an early age and it just made me reflect upon my childhood which was so different like so many people in this room here. I did play organized sports as a kid, but I think I slipped on a uniform when I was 7 or 8 years old. Maybe 8. Most of my experience as a kid was hopping on my bike, going four blocks away, making up games, playing all day, never thinking of it as exercise or physical activity. Working through all the playground politics. Falling in love with sports for a lifetime. Becoming a fan and otherwise.

I just felt like as a journalist someone has to explain how we moved from what life was like in the 1970s from a youth sport perspective to how it got to now. And, also explain how we became this: the world sports super power, but at the same time having the world's worst or one of the world's worst obesity crises. Right? What gives? What contribution is the sports system making to these two diametrically opposite outcomes.

I was also interested in why some of our national teams couldn't seem to win at the international level. I mean when

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I first started researching my book the U.S. men's basketball team, which gets the best athletes in the country of 300 million people, couldn't beat Puerto Rico and Greece and some of these other countries. So, I'm saying, "What's wrong with our ... There's something fundamentally wrong with our system here."

So, with an open mind I went into it said, "Okay, let me talk to a lot of people in a lot of different sports and look at how from the grassroots all the way to the leagues how things work." It took a lot of original reporting. There are 15 guys like me around the country whose beat it is to understand athletic development.

So, 384 pages later I end up writing something called *Game On, The All American Race to Make Champions of Our Children*. And, I went around the country and did the lecture tour and told people what I learned. They all said, "Oh, that's great. That's really ... My God that's fantastic. I didn't know about that. Thank you very much. Now, what do we do about it?" Right? And, I don't know. I'm a journalist. What do I – I don't have the answer here.

But, I did have quite a community and quite a Rolodex of people who had kind of organized around the book and responded to it and reached out to me and wanted something good to happen. And, you know if not me, then who? How do we get this going?

So, I spoke at the Aspen Institute, which is a not-for-profit nonpartisan convener. It's an educational policy studies group out of Washington, DC. The CEO was Walter Isaacson, the guy who wrote the *Steve Jobs* book. I thought, "Maybe the Aspen Institute is the tool to get all the right people around the table, identify the best ideas, bring them to the surface, create alignment among disparate groups around these key ideas and that would lay the groundwork for partnerships that could be developed to address the central question that I have, which is of Project Play, which is how do you get and keep more kids active in sports into the teenage years as a means of giving them lifelong patterns of health and fitness? And, oh by the way, if you do that, you're also going to win at the Olympic level and at the elite level."

So, that's how I got into it in 7,000 words or less.

Wayne Wilson: Great. Thank you. Benita, in 7,000 words or less, can you tell us what the USOC's interest is in Project

Play and why the USOC, which is an organization as we've heard before dedicated to sustained competitive excellence, has chosen to endorse this movement.

Benita Fitzgerald Mosley: Certainly. I come at this much like Tom, not as an expert in youth sports, but as a mom, as an Olympian and as a sports administrator, with a cross section of interest in this area. And, the USOC has been involved in these discussions about appropriate sport development and access to youth sports for many, many years. And, so, when Tom and Project Play and the Aspen Institute of Sport and Society began their conversations and convening different groups together to talk about this, the USOC certainly jumped at the chance to participate.

On its face it seems like sustained competitive excellence and youth sport development might be on opposite ends of the spectrum, but I really feel like they're two parts of the same continuum. Ultimately we endorsed Project Play because we see the value and importance of investing in physical activity to advance America's youth. So, if we can decrease the obesity rate and also decrease the attrition rate away from youth sport, we'll have lifelong fans, like Tom was talking about. We'll have a healthier populous and we'll also ultimately feed the pipeline of athletes who ultimately become Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

The NGBs, our National Governing Bodies, have the primary responsibility for developing youth athletes. As a young athlete myself ... I mean USA Track & Field, our NGB in my sport, was instrumental in providing those opportunities to me in addition to the scholastic, interscholastic competition I participated in in middle school and high school. We've banded together our NGBs, along with, as I think Scott earlier talked about, USA Hockey and their American Development Model. We have also created an American Development Model in conjunction with these conversations that we've been having with Tom and Project Play because we know that the Olympic Movement is under the microscope, particularly around times like these when we're just coming out of the Olympics and Paralympics in Sochi. So, our taking a leading role in this area is really important.

The American Development Model really helps athletes explore their full potential. It's based on several principles of fun and engaging atmosphere, motor and foundational skill development activities that are within the mental and physical reach of the athlete. So, developmentally appropriate

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activities, multi-sport participation and an opportunity for future athletes to maximize their potential.

We think that by doing that we can both grow the general population of athletes and develop fundamental skills that transfer between sports, provide an avenue to fulfill an athlete's, a child's athletic potential, and also create a generation that loves sport and physical activity, which, again goes to increasing the health and fitness levels of the populous, particularly our youngest among our citizens.

Another thing that the USOC has done is re-launched a study called Path to Excellence. Alicia McConnell, one of my colleagues, was instrumental in the original study that was done for the '84 to '98 Olympians. This current study is for the 2000 to 2012 Olympians. And, there's a lot of common themes.

Seventy percent of Olympic athletes considered themselves multi-sport athletes when they were growing up. Eighty-eight percent of them considered multi-sport play really valuable or in fact, invaluable to their success as Olympic and Paralympic athletes. Many of them played more than three sports under the age of 12 and beyond. Many more played two sports well into college. And, being a great athlete ... They realized that having that positive experience as a youth athlete really inspired and motivated them to continue participating in sports through the time that they became world class athletes.

As a mom, it's interesting to watch my kids. I have a 10-year-old daughter, who's in the fourth grade, Maya, and a 15-year-old son, who's a freshman in high school. And, you know we, both my husband and I are real sticklers for introducing them to a wide variety of experiences while they're growing up in order to find what makes them tick, what talents and interests they have and develop those interests. But also, particularly in the sports arena, to get them that multi-sport experience. That was invaluable to me growing up. I played softball. I was a majorette. I was a gymnast believe it or not. I'm five ten and if any of you could see me walking around, I wasn't really good at – well, I was horrible honestly. Really, good just doesn't even describe it. I was horrible at all of those things.

But, ultimately it led me, thankfully, to my middle school gymnastics coach who was also the track coach. It led me to finding the sport that I really loved. But without that multi-sport experience I think throwing and jumping and flipping or whatever else I was doing in gymnastics and softball really

ultimately helped me to become a better track and field athlete. And, being a track and field athlete doing the hurdles and the high jump and relays and long sprints and short sprints - that was a multi-sport activity in and of itself. Track and field has so many different aspects to it.

I watch my son and we were very careful with him. He found a passion for basketball very early on. But, we made sure not only did he do basketball and kind of follow that natural progression where they start doing the travel teams and all that, but that he stuck with other sports. He played a little football. He played baseball. He played soccer. And, now as a high school athlete he's playing basketball. He's on the varsity team and played a little JV as well. And, also now he's running track. And, I see all the jumping and throwing he's been doing in football and basketball is now ultimately translating to him being a really great track athlete. Who knew?

I'm so excited. I can't even ... I'm beside myself. Okay. I digress. But, he told me the other day, "Mom, I really like the 200 meters." I'm really loving this. The point is basketball is his love. Trust me. He wants to be a D-I basketball player. But, he sees ... The main motivation for going out for track is not only to please his mama, but also that he knew that those skills and the things that he did on the track were going to translate to helping him be a better basketball player. Now he's falling in love with that sport too. And, I think it's great.

My daughter, on the other hand, is still in that formative stage where she's trying to figure it out all. And, putting her in soccer, and basketball and track and field and some other sports she's finding her strengths and what she likes and what she loves. I found when I moved to Colorado a few months ago, I stuck her in indoor soccer league and she was like somebody lost. I mean these girls play majorly competitive travel soccer. And, now that we're ... Those girls, put them in a field that's the size of a postage stamp with walls where the ball can bounce all over the place and they're running and they're aggressive and they're knocking each other down. And, Maya's standing in the field from a development soccer league in Virginia, and what in the world is going on here? For a lesser child, someone who didn't have parents that constantly encourage and support her, I think she would have been so discouraged by that experience that she probably would never have wanted to play soccer again. But, she sucked it up after those first couple of games and said, "Okay, they're going to elbow. I'm going to elbow right back. If they're going to, you

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know knock the ball off the wall, I'm going to do the same thing." And, she by the end of that eight- or nine-game season, you know, she was right in the mix with the rest of those girls.

So, I see that as an opportunity cost sometimes of professionalizing youth sports too early where girls and boys ... I didn't even start running track till 12-years-old, by 12-years-old if you haven't become expert, you know at certain sports you're just totally out of the mix. And, I think Kristen [Dieffenbach] alluded to that a little bit earlier and Wade [Gilbert].

So, ultimately this path to excellence survey really highlights the fact that multi-sport activity as a youth all the way through high school and beyond is really something that's advantageous and, and really supports sustained competitive excellence in the long term. We at the USOC really are committed to that as well.

Lastly, we're going to continue to collaborate with the Aspen Institute and Project Play and various other organizations. I was talking to Alicia earlier and talking about our multi-sport organizations and really linking them to the activities that our national governing bodies do. There's a symbiotic relationship definitely there where those multi-sport organizations, like the Boys and Girls Club or the YMCA are always looking for programming. The NGBs are, obviously are looking for athletes to fill their pipeline. And, I think having them collaborate more closely is some way that we can help facilitate the propagation, I guess, of this American sport model.

So, thanks, Wayne, for asking.

Wayne Wilson: Thank you both, Tom and Benita. Let's open it up to questions right now. Let us know who you are and what organization you represent.

Audience Member: My name is Bernadine Bednarz and I work for the Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games. Some of the common themes you mentioned, the common themes of health and fitness, prevention of obesity and the other diseases that are associated with it. We have a program here in Southern California called Ready, Set, Gold! And, some of the Olympians have been in the program, like Rafer Johnson, Cathy Marino, Adam Duvendeck, John Naber. We match Olympians and Paralympians with Los Angeles schools and they go in inspire, exercise, motivate. There are quantitative measures of the program. Because there is a test

called Fitnessgram that the kids have to take in fifth, seventh and ninth grades. And, there are qualitative measures of the program. Their own testimonials, the Olympians and Paralympians testimonials themselves.

So, there is a program right now that is going on in this country, and it's scaleable and replicable for anywhere. I'm glad to talk to anyone else about it.

Wayne Wilson: Thank you.

Audience Member: Do you know of anything like this? Cause we're the first and only program of its kind.

Benita Fitzgerald Mosley: I haven't heard of anything like that at all, but I think it's great and I wish that – who was it talking earlier about Olympians and Paralympians and what kinds of programs they have – that we can get into. Cindy Stinger is here with our Olympic and Paralympians Association. I'm sure you've gotten in touch with Southern California Olympians. But, I think it'd be great to, to really maybe talk about that with Cindy and see how maybe some other chapters might like to get involved as well.

Audience Member: I have a question. My name's Jack Elder. I was a multi-sport athlete as well until I found luge in my 20s. At one time I was asked to deliver a speech, do a speech at a group of planning engineers. And, I chose for my topic a discussion of the difference between team sport and individual sport. I took the position that in individual sport you had to have strong individuals in order to be in an individual sport. But, as a team sport you also needed to teach children to become individuals so that they didn't subjugate their own personality to the team and for the long term not be able to survive in society.

So, is there any discussion going on quantitatively or qualitatively across the board of talking about the promotion of individual sport, trying to keep up with the prominent team sport in television?

Tom Farrey: I don't know. Maybe Wade or Kristen or the academics in the room know of research in that area. I agree with you. I think that one of the benefits of playing multiple sports is you have different ... You might be the star on one team and you might be a benchwarmer or, the first guy off the bench in another setting. And, I can see the benefit of being part of a team as well just individually expressing yourself.

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Wayne Wilson: Wade or Kristen or anybody else aware of research on that? Okay, why don't we go then to the next question. Tom Hunt in the back.

Audience Member: Hi, there. I'm Tom Hunt from the University of Texas. I first want to say thank you both what you're doing. My question has to do with the opposite end of the spectrum. In the U.S. we talk a lot about youth sport and getting youth involved and that being the development model. If you look at the American system, though, participation in sport really falls off after college. Do you guys have any thoughts on how address say someone who's 35, looking for a sport opportunity and it's not there? Does that make sense?

Tom Farrey: Yes. I think part of the problem is just the structure of sport in this country. We've run sport through the schools. So, at the end of high school, when the football team and the baseball team, all the varsity teams disappear, you're sort of left to find a way to recreate again. Right? Or, after college ... Usually pretty good at intramurals in a college setting. So, I mean a club-based system? I mean can we shift the whole structure in this country to a club-based system that supports multiple teams and you don't stop playing at the end of high school? I don't know. That's a big ask. But, I think it's a structural reality that we have and we have to contend it.

Eventually, with my program we'd like to get to that, to re-imagine institutions other than youth sports, and adult sports is one of those. But, we haven't gotten there yet.

Wayne Wilson: Yes, Elizabeth.

Audience Member: Elizabeth Hanley, Penn State University. Back in 2008 at the International Olympic Academy at the education session there was a big debate among us international members there about the Youth Olympic Games. And, not everyone was really in favor of young people participating at that age in such competitive sports. I'm wondering what your feelings are, both of you?

Benita Fitzgerald Mosley: I think there's nothing wrong at all with athletes being highly competitive at a young age. What I think [is bad], though, is when the system kind of prescribes it as opposed to it being a natural evolution of one's ability and talent. You know what I mean? I look at again as a mom. I just look at the situation with my son and if I allowed it, he would play basketball seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. And, it's just out of control. So, I feel like, part of me says,

"Gosh, I was 12 when I started running track and I was on an Olympic team by 18. It can happen, right?" Even in this current over-specializing at an early age kind of a situation. So, I think the Youth Olympics are wonderful celebration of youth sport. I made my first junior team when I was 16. I probably would have done it at 14, but my dad saw that I got injured doing long jump or something like that in the high school season. And, he wouldn't let me do post season after that. He didn't let me do Junior Olympics. He said, "You know what? We're going to let your knee rest this summer. And, if you know those opportunities come up for you again next summer, that's great." And, I just bless my dad for that because I really think that I probably would have gone and done it and ruin my knee in the ... I have a bad knee, but that knee probably would have been bad much earlier. I don't know how that would have affected ultimately my career.

But, in some cases kids just really grow up and become amazing athletes. And, I think we should celebrate that and give them all the opportunities in the world within certain limits to pursue that and to enjoy that.

Tom Farrey: Yes, I'd say, I'd say it's a great question. I mean I think we have to be careful about competition structures in this country. It's not that competition is bad. If there's anything I'd correct, Wayne, in terms of how you set me up, it's Project Play is not interested in making youth sports less competitive. I think competition is good. I actually don't like participation trophies. I mean to me it's all about how can you get more ... If only three out of 10 kids in this country play sports on a regular basis, how can we lift that number to five in 10? Or seven in 10? Which is the definition of a healthy society really.

So, how many more kids can you give access to competition? Where competition gets to be problematic is when it begins to exclude kids. When we create that travel team in second or third grade and we say, "You know what, you're the good ones and you're not." And, the kids who are not on the team now get the message that I'm second class, you know rec ball is ghettoized ball and, and therefore, I don't want to be involved. And, next thing you know after two or three years they've checked out, including the late bloomer who might actually be the better athlete in five or six years.

USA Hockey has figured it out. I mean let kids grow into their bodies, their minds and their interests. And, once they hit puberty then you can get into the more segmented

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pathways. I applaud USA Hockey for getting rid of national championships at the pee-pee level, at the 12-and-under level because it sets up a certain kind of mania among parents: “Well, we’ve got to win the championship. That means we have to practice this much and train this much and only put the best kids on this team.” It sets off an awful – and what’s the purpose, really?

So, when you ask about the Youth Olympic Games I would say, what’s the purpose? Why exactly are we holding a Youth Olympic Games and at what age does it begin? I don’t want to answer that question. I would just say you ought to be real clear about why you’re doing that because it could be some negative downstream consequences, including on the Olympic Movement.

Wayne Wilson: Marc Smith, go ahead.

Audience Member: Marc Smith, San Diego Surf. What’s a good conversation to have with the parent that is pushing only one sport or even living vicariously through their kids?

Benita Fitzgerald Mosley: You know I was thinking about that. That was the comment I was going to make. My husband coached my son’s AAU basketball team. The parents were so focused on winning that they would move their children from team to team based upon the team that had the better record. And, my husband and a guy who actually played college ball, was an All-American high school basketball player, much more skilled in basketball than my husband, [coached], but my husband just understood that teaching them the fundamentals of basketball, to enjoy the sport, to have a good time, understanding teamwork and all of that was going to serve them much better in the longer term. And so, you know it’s funny, to look at the kids that played on those teams versus ones that hopped around they are the ones now that are making the varsity squads and and really doing well in high school. Others may have been on a winning AAU team that went all around the state trying to win champions and over-trained and did all those things where the parents were just so focused on winning, but they ultimately didn’t develop the skills. They’re still shooting a jump shot from way down here somewhere. And, I am a track athlete, but I know that that’s not the way to shoot a jump shot, right?

I think it’s really interesting. My son went to talk to an AAU coach and tryout for a team on Saturday. And, the coach said, “Gosh, you can tell he was really well coached as

a youngster.” And, my husband’s like, “Well, thank you so much. I was his coach.”

But, it’s true. I mean it’s those fundamentals. The skill development and age-appropriate activities that allow a child to mature at a normal healthy rate, not get injured and really enjoy the sport. It’s really not about winning at eight- and nine- and 10- and 12-years old. It’s when they become those elite athletes.

Last story. I’ll say that my sport, track and field, is supposed to be a no-cut sport. How many in your middle school and high school was it a no-cut sport? Most people? Yes. It’s supposed to be a no-cut sport, everybody comes. In my son’s current team there are 120 kids on the high school track team. That’s the way it’s supposed to be. Boys and girls. Heck, let them all just have at it. Have at it. Figure out what it’s supposed to be.

Well, in his middle school it was a cut sport. Hundred twenty kids go out, only 50 made the team. Well, it’s just silly, you know. Back to the participation aspect of it.

And so, I think it’s parents. It’s schools limiting the opportunities and requiring a certain level of expertise by the time they get to middle school in order to even make the team and everybody else go home. I think all of those things collectively lead to the problems that Tom is talking about.

Wayne Wilson: We have time for one more question. I think Dr. McNitt-Gray has a question in the back.

Audience Member: Thanks. Jill McNitt-Gray, University of Southern California. I think you’ve brought up some really important issues, especially about teaching kids basic fundamentals early on. One of the key things that we see is that some of the best coaches we really need in the elementary school as part of the PE programs and things like that. We’ve gone away from that. I know in California it’s been really tough. We’ve had to sell chocolate bars to actually pay for PE teachers. I’m not sure if that’s the really the best mechanism for that. But, you know the other part of it is also educating the parents. So, this is ... Some other groups also it seems like essential to that ... I’ve been involved, my kids have been involved in sports and some of the things we’ve ended up doing is doing coaches education for the parents because usually you have 200 kids and you only have 10 parents who reluctantly say, “Yes, I’ll coach a team.” But, yet you want that participation there. And, so, we’ve gone through programs,

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actually it was sponsored by LA84, to actually make that happen, make it easier for parents to say, "Yes," and schools to say, "Yes," for really teaching some fundamentals.

My question is how do we continue to build those bridges and make that happen and sustain them? We were able to keep it going for eight years, but after that it's really hard for the next group to come in and say, "Yes, it's a meaningful bridge. We want to keep it going." And, any thoughts about how to actually build that bridge and keep going?

Tom Farrey: I have a thought on the coaching question in particular. You know at one of our roundtables ... The USOC hosted one of our roundtables in November and we talked about coaching in particular. We introduced research showing that there are 6.5 million youth coaches in this country for kids' teams 14-and-under and only about a third of them are trained in the competencies that kids need to have a positive experience in sports. So, general philosophy, what's the point here? Safety and skills and tactics. Right? So, we need to train up more of these coaches really.

How do we do that exactly? There has to be some scaleable model. There probably has to be some kind of online platform that's going to not give you the full suite of things. It's not going to make you into a master coach or anything like that, but maybe it can begin to create a common language around what's expected of coaches in this country, give some tools to that, to that kitchen table coach. And, maybe some tools to the PE teacher. So, I don't know if that answers your question, but ...

Benita Fitzgerald Mosley: I would just refer you back to our National Governing Bodies. I know track. USA Track & Field for one just developed a fundamentals of coaching track and field course that's online exclusively, outside of their normal level-one, two- and three- coaching program. It's less expensive. It's more accessible. And, I think there are probably other NGBs that have similar programs in place. So, I would really urge you to ... as you're encouraging these parents to become coaches in particular leagues ... that there are some opportunities there, with their NGB's.



“...the competitive structure always dictates development, always ... people in the field are going to do their very, very best to ... be successful in tomorrow’s competition, not maybe what’s best for our athletes down the road.”

KEN MARTEL

Ken Martel:

On behalf of my colleagues at USA Hockey I’d just like to say that we are really, really proud to be a part of the Olympic family. I’d like to thank Wayne [Wilson] for asking me to come up and represent USA Hockey and tell you a little bit about what we have going on. I have to recognize one of my colleagues. One of my teammates is in the room, Ty Hennes. Ty is one of our regional managers. He is one of our professionals that provide boots on the ground for us to affect change across our country and what we do.

I’ve got to thank Alan [Ashley] for putting up his nice small numbers up on the board up here to at least point out that USA Hockey had the highest reduction in medal count. We had a 50 percent reduction at the last Olympics, but I’d like to point out your math is a little bit wrong because we’re really 33 percent reduction because our sled team came through once again with another gold medal.

Fantastic performance by those guys. In Alan’s slides, one of his first slides says “guiding principles.” He put up the things that they do at the USOC in his department. Number one was “Invest in the best opportunities for medals.” Under that first was foundation, second was medal opportunity and third was development. Well, for me and for what I do and our group at USA Hockey, development is number one. For us going forward, I do have to acknowledge what great teammates we have within the USOC family. When our team shows up at the Olympics it’s Team USA, and that’s been going on for as long as we’ve been sending teams to the Olympics.

What’s really neat now for us doing on the grassroots side of things and the development side of things is our NGBs are starting to work together. We’re recognizing that we have the same issues. In the past we’ve been operating on our own little silos and now we’re starting to interact, starting to share information. I’m so happy that I’ve got great teammates in tennis, in USTA, and from USA Swimming, and USA Volleyball, and all of the other NGBs that are making contributions. You know it really is becoming Team USA at a whole different level. So, we’re really proud of that. Thanks for letting me come speak. Our American Development Plan – this is really about player development.

I do have to acknowledge the other presenters that were up this morning, Kristen [Dieffenbach] and Wade [Gilbert]. Some of their research has gone into what we do. Tom [Farrey], Bonita [Fitzgerald Mosley] carrying the message. This is going to take a team effort for all of us to make changes in our youth sport culture, because it’s not about our sports.

*Click to play
Prezi file*



It's really about culture here. So, I'm going to start off with a video. I think this gives a feeling for what we've wrapped into our American Development Plan.

[Video Plays]

So, we as a sport NGB recognize that all of that goes into hockey development. It's not just what kids do when they come to the ice rink. To make healthy, happy kids we've got to provide them with lots of opportunities not just in our sport but in other sports. Play is hugely important. All of this are things that we're now promoting because we see it in our best players and our best athletes. We started off this process about five years ago with some real critical self-evaluation. I'm proud of our organization because we do a pretty good job of looking into the mirror on a regular basis and saying, "What is it we can do better?" I think that's a cultural thing within our organization that's really important.

So, my background ... We started off ... We've got this 17-year experiment going on right now. I can't believe it's 17 years this year, but USA Hockey did something radical 17 years ago. We decided we were going to create two standing national teams for boys 16 and 17 years of age because for us to compete and help our best up and coming players we thought we had to do something different. And, the organization went out and you know what? We spent \$2 million a year on 46 athletes.

When you spend that kind of money on a small group of athletes you really pay close attention to what you're doing. I can tell you since I was involved as a coach in our program early on, we made a lot of mistakes, and learned from those, and the best part about it is we're now very, very successful. Seven gold medals, three silvers, and a bronze in the last 11 years at the under-18 level. We're now winning at the under-20 world championship level. So, Alan, when you go back and you start looking at funding, we're on the upward trajectory. Our men didn't do well this past Games, but they deserve every penny. So, just keep in mind that we're still on the upward trajectory and we're making improvements.

But, we've had this program going on and one of the things those of us that are in our own sport know is that our talent pool isn't real deep. We have real good players, but it falls off really, really quickly compared to the number of kids we have playing. So, for us doing our own research and our own self-evaluation we knew that, you know what, if we're going

to make some changes, the changes in our sport really need to happen down here 6 to 14. That's where we've really gotten off kilter in what we do. We have good coaches and I think we're like most sports where some of our best coaches matriculate to the oldest levels because that's where the money is. We need good coaches at the younger ages. We need people involved in grassroots sports.

We're making some changes like I said. Just so you know where we stand as a sport, these are the countries that played in the 2010 Olympics. I haven't updated the chart, but in 2014 it really didn't change a whole lot. We added a couple smaller teams down here. I guess anyone who was paying attention to our sport [would know] Slovenia participated. We've got more kids playing ice hockey in Colorado Springs than they do in the entire country of Slovenia, and the Slovenians gave Canada a pretty good game at the last Olympics.

If you look at this, and these are the numbers right here, the youth numbers, male and female. Well, in 2010 men's and women's we were in the gold medal game against Canada. Based on our player populations and the resources that we have, we should be. If we're not on the podium we're underachieving, severely underachieving. It's a foregone conclusion that if our men, especially our women, I mean look at the numbers. What's interesting here is that if Minnesota, which is one of our hockey states, these are our four largest hockey states population, player population-wise in the United States.

Minnesota would be the fourth largest hockey-playing country in the world if they were their own nation. I joke with my Minnesota friends that sometimes they think they are within our world. They're on their own little island. But, could they field the team that played at the Olympics, or could they field the team to play against the Swedes? Close, but I don't know who their goal tender would be.

Massachusetts, absolutely not. New York, absolutely not. Michigan, absolutely not. This is one of the things we have some perspective on. We try and go back to our local organizations and they have a hard time understanding why the very best player in the state of Massachusetts just isn't good enough. So, we look at this and we say, "Okay, this is just an indicator that maybe we could do better." I think this is something that's happening in not just our youth sport but in a lot of sports and that is we're winning the race to the wrong finish line. Our focus is on the wrong things.

The state of Illinois, for example, in ice hockey, they pare down 10-year-olds to four teams, four what they call tier one teams. It's absolutely ludicrous, all right? Even if you look at it five years later, look what's happening to their players. Kids – a whole bunch of them – aren't even in the sport. Only 19 percent are still playing at that level that they think they should be playing at. So, what kind of job are we doing? This league, the tier one elite hockey league ... "Elite" is thrown around in our youth sport culture like nobody's business, but players, 80 percent of the kids at 16 took a different path.

These youth sport organizations, they grab their kids, get them in as tightly as we can because we've got to work with them. We're going to develop them. And, they end up driving them away. And, then for us we have some problems with relative age effect, which I'm sure most of you in the room are familiar with.

Audience Member: What does the "U" stand for?

Ken Martel: "Under," 10-and-under, 10-and-under. It's an age classification for us in team sports. Relative age effect is difficult in team sports to get at in some regards because you have to group kids together to have a team, but there are some strategies. Based on that research we knew that we needed to do something different. We came up with an LTAD [Long Term Athlete Development] plan, based on our own internal research. Wade brought up Jean Côté and some work he's done with our Canadian friends.

One of the great things about our sport ... I wouldn't say great, but the fortunate thing about our sport is it's very popular in Canada. So, their universities tend to do a lot of research. If they're going to do sport research, they do it on ice hockey. So, we get to tap in and see some things. This is something that our Olympians match up extremely well with, this graph. In August we had our pre-Olympic camp. Forty-eight of our potential Olympians there. We went around and did interviews with all of them, and this is almost the identical playing history.

[Speaker explains PowerPoint slide] Deliberate play, lots of activity. Those are hours on the side, age over here. Lots of deliberate play early on. Multiple sports, playing multiple sports, and then these two lines down here, that's ice hockey and hockey practice, small percentage of what they do. Then when they got to about 14, 15, 16, things switch. That's when they started to specialize a little bit. This is exactly what our

Olympians look like. The range was anywhere from 12 years of age to specialize up to 18, but the bulk of the players started to specialize in high school in the sophomore, junior year in high school. So, we are a late specialization sport.

With our own internal evaluation, things back up, backgrounds of our best players. The LTAD just provides us a framework. We're not so prescriptive with it, but it's the glasses that we sort of look through when we evaluate the things that we're doing in our sport. We had examples of success around the globe that we could look at in our own sport. For example, a little town in Sweden that's up in the Arctic Circle area of Skelleftea, population of 40,000 people. You would think it's a northern climate and the kids are going to play hockey year-round, which is not true.

The ice is only in there for them to play in their program six months a year. Their kids multi-sport, late specialization. It's parent volunteer coached, just like we are. Their kids, their 7-and -unders are on the ice twice a week, 10-and-unders three times a week, 12-and-unders four times a week. Our kids here get just as much ice time as they do for practice and for training. So, what are they doing? Because out of the 300 players in their club a few years ago they had 21 players on Swedish national teams at U-20, U-18, and U-17 from the same club.

They have a team in town that plays in their elite league in Sweden. It's the third best hockey playing league in the world. Of the 27 players they had under contract last year 14 of them were homegrown from town, grew up in their local communities, started playing there when they were 6 years old, and that's not counting some of the players that they got from that little town that are playing over here in our National Hockey League as first round NHL draft picks. So what are they doing? Well, obviously from our end there's no rocket science here. It's really just they're patient with their kids.

So, we have examples of the things that they're doing, doing well, that show us maybe the way. Some points that we've got to consider with our own American culture ... First is the competition structure always dictates development, always. I don't care what sport it is because people in the field are going to do their very, very best to be successful in the competition. Whatever they think is going to help them be successful in tomorrow's competition, not maybe what's best for our athletes

down the road. As a governing body or someone that is in position to dictate competition structure, pay close attention to that.

The key stakeholders don't always want what's best for the athlete and their development. For me in my job and for Ty when we're out in the field when I hear people go, "I'm in it for the kids," that's when the alarm bells kind of go off like, "Whoa."

Follow the dollars. Facts don't win the argument; emotions do. People are so emotional about their kids' involvement that you've got to realize that to make any kind of change you've got to tie some emotion back in.

Then, what is our American Development Plan? Well, it's really age appropriate competition and training for our kids. That's it. That's the condensed version, age appropriate. We have this LTAD plan; now we've got to put it into action.

So, we start off. This is what we came up with to initially to get things going. Fortunately for us we have Big Brother. Big Brother for us is the National Hockey League, and we're very, very thankful for what they do. USA Hockey and the NHL have two mutual long-term goals, because guess what? In 20 years we're the two organizations that are going to still be involved as stewards of our sport. The first one is to have more American kids play the game. The second one is to have more American kids play the game really well. So, what did we do? We went out and hired seven regional managers to work in the field, boots on the ground to kind of get things going.

One of them was female specific. Michelle Amidon was our national team women's director, a former college coach. Now she's our female director and we're actually expanding. We're hiring two more people because we're seeing the impact on what this is doing. We started at the youngest age group. How do we make changes with – for us it's the 8-and-under age category because that's sort of an entry point for us. Most kids come to ice hockey at that particular time. For us, let's get them in, but get them started off well. Get them started off on the right path and maybe they'll decide to stick with our sport. We established best practices, those kinds of things – get in with local leaders, build support. Utilize our Olympians and Paralympians to go out and talk, speak and do things for us on behalf of our programs. They are absolutely fantastic.

I know that the reputation in the media is that ice hockey players are some of the very best to deal with. Most of them – now you always have a few bad apples in the group – but most are very humble. They do a tremendous job as ambassadors for our sport, and we're really thankful that they're the people that they are.

We worked on changing legislations, bylaws and playing rules that work against development. I think when you go around and you look at your own particular sports or where you're involved, you're going to see that sometimes things have crept in to make life easier on the adults, but make no sense for the kids and their development and what they do. So, we've gone through our rules. We're trying to clean up what we do to make it more kid friendly, not adult friendly, kid friendly.

Update our coaching education program. That was a huge thing that we'll talk about. Then transfer where applicable national team programming to a more local level. That under-17, under-16 national teams we talked about at the beginning, we learned a lot of lessons because at the beginning we were treating them like pros instead of 16- and 17-year-olds. It finally got better because we made some changes. About five years ago we go out, we hire a bunch of people, we get into a room together, and at that particular time probably 200 years worth of hockey development, hockey experience in the room together. We had our theories. We had our facts. We had common sense. We had a belief, passion on our side. You know, now what do we do? Well, be prepared for anything.

[Video Plays]

You think it's funny [referring to video], but you know, we were the guys running around getting shot at. In our youth culture when you're trying to make change there's always people with vested interests. And, change, even if you're doing the right things, change is hard. It just is. So, the view after one year? Theory, facts, common sense – that means nothing. It really doesn't. It's like the vaccination paradox. We know there's tons of research out there on vaccinations help kids. I mean anyone paying attention to the news, the World Health Organization just declared India polio-free. Last three years not a single case of polio due to a huge vaccination program. What a fantastic thing for the world, yet because somebody runs around and says, "Well, vaccinations cause autism," people get their emotions tied up into it.

There's no facts there. There's no facts, but that myth continues to perpetuate itself and in areas it's causing parents to run out and say, "I'm not going to get my kid vaccinated. I'm not going to do it." Myth, not fact. The emotions get in the way. We learned really, really quickly that it's not hockey. None of what we do is ice hockey, because we gathered all these hockey experts and for the people at the high end of our sport, they all get this. They look at it and go, "This is a no-brainer." But, it's not hockey; it's change.

So, now that we've put in the plan. We've got it going in place. It's adopt a plan. I think this is true for high performance sport, for grassroots, for whatever you do, business, whatever – you plan, execute, review; plan, execute, review; plan, execute, review. That's the way you improve. We have the plan. Put in some execution, but review. We're trying to create that paradigm shift. What's important in the field?

For us, we thought we knew what was important, but maybe we didn't. In our culture exclusivity is king. Every parent wants to think that their kid is special. This is why all the elite travel super teams crop up at these young ages, because everybody wants to think that their kid is elite, their kid is special, right? Create an elite program for everybody.

I mean mediocrity ... Our elite kids are – we're like a lot of sports, I think, where now when you finally see a kid that is somewhat precocious in our sport, everyone gets so excited. They're so desensitized to mediocrity that you really don't know. So, change starts at the bottom, but it's driven from the top, and for us. Ron DeGregorio, our president, Dave Ogreaan, our executive director, we have great leadership in our sport. They give us the ability to go out and do what we're doing, make change. So, start off, know the landscape and don't underestimate the dollars and the passion for parents in what's going on in the field, whether that's in the coaching realm, the administrative realm, whatever it is because this is us in our sport.

[Video Plays]

Is that not every youth sport parent?

Every kid is – right? For us, you've got to know what you're up against – our affiliates within our own structure, our affiliates, our districts, local rules. I talked about changing the rules that we've put in place at the local levels, and sitting down, our staff that we have out in the field. One of their jobs is

going around to our local affiliates, our districts, our local associations, and helping them with their internal structure, changing the things that they're doing to make this more kid friendly and more appropriate. And then, you've got to be prepared to compromise and also understand what the consequences of your compromises are.

For us, developmentally we know that cross-ice hockey, which for those that don't understand what I'm talking about, we have a big push at our youngest ages, one of our big pushes, is to modify the playing surface to fit the size of the kids. We know that for an NHL player the length of the ice, okay, 200 feet, it's 15 to 17 strides. For a little kid that's 8 years old to skate sideboards to sideboards, cross-ice is 14 to 16 strides. The difference is attributable to limb length. It's the same size playing surface, just a more, better developmental situation for our kids. It's easier for them. They're more involved in the play. All kinds of great developmental things that I think most sports get. Downsize your playing surface environment to fit the kids.

Not us. We're going to put the 6-year-olds on the same surface as the LA Kings and the Anaheim Ducks. So one of our big pushes was that cross-ice playing surface, and we know that kids really should be playing on that modified ice surface until at least 10 for their development, but we also knew that in our culture, in our sport, it was going to be an insurmountable job. We'd have gotten stopped in our tracks coming right out the door with the amount of pushback that we got, because if you look at our registration almost half of the players that play in our sport, at least at that particular time, were in those 10-and-under categories.

So, we said, "All right, we're going to compromise. We're going to get the kids in. We'll at least get them started off right." We went around and promoted cross-ice hockey at 8-and-under. Well, that's gone pretty good. We have our battles, but we're making a lot of progress. The pushback we get is because we made the compromise. Now everyone's saying, "Well, why can't it just be 7-and-under that plays? Not 8, 7. How about 6-and-under? We'll do it at 6-and-under, but not 8-and-under." Whereas if we would've come out and been a little smarter, let's do it for the 10-year-old and then compromised at 8, we would've gotten what we wanted a lot quicker.

It's almost like we joke on our staff that if we would've come out and told everybody that our ADM program was only for

the super elite quadruple A, you know, whatever 8-year-olds, everyone would've bought in unfortunately. And, then you have to understand and learn from the people that are on the ground, in the field, that are in the local venues, and heed their advice. Call this one the Chelsea Experiment.

There's a local association in Chelsea, Michigan. Their hockey director and I were friends. We got in a big argument because I'm saying, "Look, to get this going the only way you're going to get this put in place and for us to really make progress, you've just got to do it. You just got to do it, 8-and-under, cross-ice. That's all. You're going to do. Do it."

And, he was like, "No, Ken. We're on board. We're going to play cross-ice. We're going to get that started, but I want our families to have a few full-ice games at the end of the year because they will instantly see the difference in how absurd that is." And, he was right. The first time they played full ice with their 8-and-unders the parents were like, "What the – do we have to play the other three games like this?" And, they got the whole association on board. So, bad on me for not paying attention to the people that are on the ground and learning from their better experience because they know their people better than I do.

Then the view after four years [PowerPoint slide: "I am not hardline on much anymore."]. Joe Doyle is one of our regional managers, not hardline on much anymore because we came out saying, "This is what we're going to do. This is the plan." We kind of figured out that if we could get everybody 85 percent of the way there, that's a whole lot better than zero for the kids. So, let's get everybody 85 percent of the way there and then we'll chip away at the rest of it, but I'm not hardline. Be flexible is really the lesson learned. Be flexible.

The last part is just do it. Nike's got a nice term there, "Just do it." A lot of people give lip service to development and change. The one thing I'm proud of from our organization is that just like Ann Arbor we decided we needed to do something. We're going to spend the resources. Let's just go out and do it. So, what did we do? Well, we knew for us some great things. We have mandatory coach education in our sport.

Every coach, the 50,000 youth coaches that we have within USA Hockey, all have to go to at least some basic youth sport education through our coaching education program. They have to do an in-person clinic and then they have to take an

online module depending on – it's about six hours in length – depending on the age that they're coaching. So, if they're coaching 8-and-unders, they get the 8-and-under module; 10-and-under, 12-and-under, and all the way up.

We know it's pretty good because, for example, the Los Angeles Kings in the National Hockey League ... Ty and I were just over to their association last night and their director of player development for the LA Kings, pretty good hockey guy ... He's got a kid in the game and he called me about a year ago and said, "Ken, I thought it was a little b.s. that me as the director of player development for the Los Angeles Kings, Stanley Cup champions, have to go online and take this educational model. But, I've got to tell you, it was fantastic. Going on the ice with my little kids, dealing with 8-and-unders it's like herding cats." So, he goes, "I learned it's so different than what I do with my day-to-day job dealing with elite professional players. I learned a lot, and anybody out there that says that they don't need to do this, you have them call me."

We know that the material is good. It's of value. We still have pushback from people taking it, but we have a mechanism in place that says everyone's got to go through some baseline coach education. What it's done for us, those modules, it's helped us nationally create a common language. Now when we put things out as an organization, people at least have a clue as to what we're talking about, which is hugely important because getting people in Massachusetts to agree with people in Minnesota to agree with people in California in a country like ours doesn't always go well. That common language has been a good platform.

And then, we've provided our youth coaches with very, very simple tools to at least make them more effective. We're not making them great coaches. We're not claiming any of that, but we're making the job easier for them to implement the type of programming that we're looking for, for our kids.

Then you got to include all the stakeholders, the coaches, the parents, and in our case we're facilities driven sport. One of the great things about us, from 1990 to about 2001 we doubled in size, huge growth in our sport because we had facilities being built in all these warm weather climate areas where pro hockey evolved.

California. California is now a producer of elite players for us. We have Olympians, ice hockey players from California.

We have Nashville-born and raised players, played for the Nashville Predators in the NHL. We've got L.A.-born and -raised players that have played for the LA Kings at the top pro level. So, all great, but the facilities were hugely important. We didn't do a good job initially of going around and educating our facilities and our facility owners on how this is good for your business. What we're doing is good.

There's lots of entrepreneurs in our youth sport culture just like there is in others. Part of our deal is we have to go around and show youth sport entrepreneurs how they can still survive and do what they do. We're not against people making money on youth sport. It's just provide what you say you're supposed to provide. If you can provide a great quality experience that's age appropriate, okay, but in our culture at least in ice hockey they're not doing that, or haven't been doing that.

Completing the circle for us are three major legislative changes internally. We moved our body checking, initial body checking age up not just for player safety but for player development. It used to be at 11 years of age kids could body check. With concussions and the other things that go on in youth sports we upped it. It's just body contact or no contact at the younger levels. We moved it up to our 14-and-under category.

The interesting thing is two years after we implemented this rule, Hockey Canada has come along and implemented it also. Their take on this is, "Thank God you guys did it because we would never be able in our culture to go out and make those changes." They're kind of rooting for us to continue on the path that we're going on because they know that it helps them.

We eliminated 12-and-under nationals because it would be very, very hypocritical of an organization like us that's out promoting what we're promoting to then go around and run the most high-profile youth event that you can possibly imagine at an age that is just meaningless. Then modifying the playing surface for our kids because that dictates what goes on in practice. If kids are going to play full ice at that young age, well then the coaches are going to start in with the systems ... and they get away from individual skills. They get away from a fun, enjoyable environment. They start to over-coach and do things like that. So, that competition structure is hugely important.

Know what your boss's boss expects because change isn't easy and they're going to get bombarded with difficult questions.

Difficult people are going to put them in bad positions. You have to have strong leadership, which we do within our organization. We're really fortunate. Have belief in your mission statement, but understand our American culture that competition will arise. You know for us right now it's AAU. They really weren't around in ice hockey, but they are now because the minute we started out doing this they're going to run ice hockey at the young ages. They're going to have full-body checking at little kid hockey, 8-and-under. They ran their first eight-and-under national championship this year.

Thank God we at least have never run an 8-and-under national championship, but that's how they make money. So, understand that competition is going to creep in. Understand that people are going to sell against you, and that's okay. Competition is fine. What we've discovered is that 90 percent of the parents that are out there, you always have the 10 percent that are a little off and bent, but 90 percent of the parents kind of look at youth sport and they look at what's going on and they say, "Huh. I know in my gut something's not right." Something's not right with what we're doing, but no one's running around telling me that it should be different. It's the coach that's going to run around and recruit the super team. That's the only one that's telling them anything.

Finally, as an organization, we're actually giving our parents some ammunition and saying, "Look, you don't need to do that. It's not necessarily good for your kid." Instinctively our parents know and we're now at least providing the right information. And you know what? Competition? Those people? It's the Island of Misfit Toys, you know? Go on. Go. Move right on out of our organization. We're going to continue to do what we do because we know it's the right thing.

At the end score the goal. Is it working? Is it worth it? Well, for us, more success on the ice. We're seeing better youth players from our youngest age groups than ever before. Some of our early adopters that started off three, four, five years ago, their kids now ... For example, our home local association in Colorado Springs was an early adopter because our staff is involved, but they're now state champs at multiple levels in Colorado hockey, youth hockey, strictly because they're doing the right things.

The success on the scoreboard is coming because they were patient with their kids. They gave everybody an opportunity. All the right things are coming to pass, so it's becoming a

self-fulfilling prophecy for us. Those that are out doing it right are getting rewarded. Adopters, 43 percent more likely to retain players than non-adopters. Nationally over the last five years gone from 52 percent to 63 percent who are making the transition from U-8 to U-9. That's huge because in our sport from U-9 on it's like 80 percent retention, 90 percent. Retention jumps way up. For us that translates to thousands more kids sticking with our sport, thousands more, and it's really hard to be an Olympian if you quit at 9.

For us, that's big. We know that we're going to have more – for every 1,000 hockey players that we have, that's another NHL player for sure. It's another player in our player pool for our elite teams. It's like I said, a self-fulfilling prophecy. More players, more teams, better chances, and it's all from doing things the right way with kids. I'm going to leave you with a short video because all of you are leaders in sport and it's going to take all of us to get the job done, to change youth sport culture for the good. So three minutes and this is how we get it done. Here you go.

[Video plays]

None of this is easy. It's changing youth sport culture and like I said, what's great about where we're at as a nation right now is we're not all in our little silos. We're kind of breaking down the barriers and it is one big Team USA across all of our sports. We're at an exciting time. I appreciate you all for allowing me to come and present on behalf of our organization. If we can help in any way let us know. Like I said, I do appreciate the support we've got from the other presenters, Tom and what he's doing and, and Kristen and Wade. We're all looking at the same stuff. You know we got a fight on our hands, but we'll win the battle in the end, so thank you.

Ken Martel: One quick question in the back, back row over there. Here comes the microphone.

Audience Member: I have a daughter [inaudible] team and she's been in youth sport. She's 6'4" and is a volleyball player and so just during this information I sent her a little text. She's been playing volleyball kind of year-round. Freshman year she made varsity at high school and that started like August 1st. They won state and the next day was club tryouts. She's been doing club ever since and started to get some college notices, so she was supposed to go to camps all summer and blah, blah, blah. So, I just sent her a text and said "Hey Honey, what would it feel like if you took the summer, the month of July

off after nationals and just played and had some fun?" and she wrote back, texted back, she's like, "I can't do that, can I?" I said, "Yeah, why don't you try it? It could be really fun. You could just take, you know, just one month off." She said, "Mom, where are you getting your information?"

I told her where I was and she's like, "Okay. Good to know." A little bit of time and then she came back and I said, "Okay, so it's your job to plan what would be really fun for one month for you to rest and recover and, you know, have a good time." She thought a little bit and she sent back and said, "Should I put a little bit of volleyball in there?" and I said "No, you'll be okay." And, she goes, "Check your information." We've got a big battle ahead of us.

Audience Member: Let me ask a quick question. Would these changes still be on the books if USA Hockey had won every gold medal for the last 20 years?

Ken Martel: From those of us that are involved watching – again you have to be critical of your own sport and self-evaluate. Look, the numbers that we have we should be winning those medals. If we were at the pointy edge of this, at the high performance end, change is the only constant. If you're doing the same thing at the high performance level, what you were doing 10 years ago, well then a whole lot of people have passed you by. So, I would hope that as an organization, we would continue to do what we're doing and embrace change because that's the only way you're going to be successful over the long run.

DOTSIE BAUSCH, *Olympian, Cycling*
BRENDA VILLA, *Olympian, Water Polo*
JARRYD WALLACE, *Paralympian, Track & Field*
MODERATOR, ALAN ABRAHAMSON, *University of Southern California*

U.S. Olympic Academy



“I think that my path to becoming an Olympian has to do with opportunity and a little bit of luck.”

BRENDA VILLA

Alan Abrahamson:

Thanks everybody. Okay, this is a conversation. I invite your questions. I do not have a monopoly on good ideas. I would invite them. Feel free to interrupt me. It’s a pleasure and a privilege to be here with all of you.

It’s been my privilege to have covered a lot of water polo games in which Brenda’s played. The water polo journey has been magnificent. One of the things we like to say, I’m sure a lot of you have said it, is that athletes are at the core of everything the United States Olympic program is about. What we’d like to explore today is whether that is in fact true or whether in fact that is so much lip service. True or not so much true. And if not so much true, what can we be doing better? So, left to right, right to left, ladies or gentlemen. What should we do?

Brenda Villa: Right to left.

Alan Abrahamson: Why don’t you start Jarryd? Talk about how you got to be a championship athlete.

Jarryd Wallace: Well, I always was a runner. I was born with two legs. Recently ... It’s been almost four years ago, I lost my leg. My senior year of high school I got diagnosed with something called chronic exertional compartment syndrome, basically a fancy term for saying you have pressure built up in your calves. Went in to have the release done and the surgery and ended up having complications in that surgery. I spent the next 2 ½ years ... I had 10 reconstructive surgeries and –

Alan Abrahamson: Ten.

Jarryd Wallace: Ten reconstructive. Yeah, and basically to a point where a doctor looked at me and said, “It’s not a matter of if you lose your leg, but a matter of when you lose your leg.” He said, “You have an 80-year-old leg on a 20-year-old’s body.”

Alan Abrahamson: And, how did you feel about that?

Jarryd Wallace: It was hard to hear, but I had this just weird, weird peace. Really weird peace about my calling, my purpose in life. And, left that doctor’s office with the knowledge in making the decision that I was going to have my leg electively amputated. I went and Googled, “Paralympic track and field” because I’d heard about it before and I was just like, “You know what? If I’m getting my leg taken off then we’ll see what’s out there.” I pull up the world record list and call my parents in the room and I point to the screen. I said, “I want my name to be on this list. It’s not

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why I'm having my leg amputated, but if I'm going to do this I'm going to go after something."

And, so it started even before I had my leg amputated. And, this journey that I've been on over the past 3½ years has been a blessing. It hasn't been easy, but it definitely has a lot to do with the mindset of setting goals and going after them. Even at a time when I'm about to have my leg amputated and looking at a world record it's potentially a little unattainable at that moment. It's okay to set unattainable goals because it gives you something to go after. I can sit here confidently in front of you right now saying that my name is on that list. And, and I did achieve that goal.

Alan Abrahamson: What were the first steps like? Learning to walk all over again.

Jarryd Wallace: It's funny. I had a deformed limb for 2½ years. I couldn't feel the bottom of my foot. Walking was very painful. I joked with people and was like, "You know, getting my leg cut off and having a prosthetic was really an upgrade to what I had before." It was surreal. It was everything that the doctor told me it would be. It was the first step on a new journey.

Alan Abrahamson: And, then learning to run again.

Jarryd Wallace: That was a little bit trickier, but it still happened fairly quickly. It was 12 weeks from my amputation date that I ran again for the first time.

Alan Abrahamson: Twelve weeks.

Jarryd Wallace: Twelve weeks. I had made my mind up that I was going to go after that world record and sitting on the couch didn't seem like it was going help me do it.

Alan Abrahamson: Where did you run? Around the neighborhood, around a track? Where'd you do it?

Jarryd Wallace: I ran outside my prosthetic company down the middle of the street, which sounds kind of dangerous now that I'm saying that. But, there were no cars. That was the first run. And then I took my leg home and went on about a 4½-minute run with my dad, which was a really special moment for us to be able to do together. The reason it was only 4½ minutes is because I could not pick up my leg anymore after 4½ minutes, not being able to be physically

active for a long time. I had to spend a lot of time doing rehabilitation and getting my body back strong enough to compete again at a high level.

Alan Abrahamson: Did you have a series of quiet moments or quiet rocky moments? Or did you have like, "Okay, this is going just like I thought and this is going to happen?"

Jarryd Wallace: It ... Definitely lots of ups and downs. I'd say more downs before the amputation. Just trying to figure out losing the sport I loved, running. Ultimately, for about a year and a half I ran from God. I was angry. I was mad at my circumstances, at the situation that I was in and losing my leg. I finally got to a place where I realized it wasn't my purpose or plan anymore, but His. Once I got there was when things really started to kind of come together. It doesn't mean it was always easy after the amputation. There was a lot of ... I think the word that we like to use a lot is "process." I had to dive into the process. There were days where I couldn't train. There were six week periods where I couldn't wear my leg cause it wouldn't fit or I had issues with certain things. Or, I'd go out to the track and get ready for a workout and my running leg is at the house and I have to drive back home and pick up my running leg. Or, the running leg breaks and I have to go for an hour to my prosthetic place.

So there just different obstacles that come along with it, but all just a part of the story and the journey.

Alan Abrahamson: Awesome. Brenda, I've written some of these stories so I know them a little bit, but better your words than mine. You started playing water polo not really far from here. Why don't you pick it up? You played with the boys cause that was the only way to play.

Brenda Villa: I think that my path to becoming an Olympian has to do with opportunity and a little bit of luck. I think I was lucky to grow up in the City of Commerce, which is eight miles down the street. I say luck because that city offers free youth programming for anybody that's a resident. And, most of you know that water polo is a very expensive sport and not very accessible. So, for someone like me – my parents immigrated from Mexico and my mom doesn't know how to swim, was afraid of water. I was lucky to grow up across the street from a swimming pool in a park. So, we took advantage of those opportunities. She signed me up for swim lessons and swim lessons turned into the swim team. Swim team turned into the water polo team.

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And, I guess listening to everyone speak today I was lucky that I was a multi-sport athlete. I tried softball. I tried everything that was offered across the street. I think that helped me in the water. When I was a water polo player and I was entering high school, by that time I knew that I wanted to play water polo in college. I knew that that was another opportunity for me. I knew my parents could not afford to pay for college and I was lucky to be born at the right time to take advantage of Title IX. A lot of colleges were going varsity, offering scholarships. So, I wanted to be one of those girls to have the ability to get one of those scholarships.

The first day of high school, actually summertime before my freshman year of high school, I have to try out for the boy's team. Luckily for me I had grown up playing on a co-ed 12-and-under team and co-ed 10-and-under team. So, all my future teammates were my lifelong friends. They just saw me as an athlete. So, it was really easy for me to try out for the water polo team at my high school. I made the varsity team as a freshman. I was one of the few girls playing high school boys water polo in Southern California at that time. But, I was grateful that my teammates just saw me as an athlete.

That allowed me to, I think, develop into a pretty good international water polo player because if you noticed, I am only five-four. And, in the international scene that's very small. So, having to play on the boys team in high school allowed me to develop this good game sense because I had to be faster – not faster - I had to be smarter than the boys because they were faster and bigger than me. I wasn't going to beat them in a strength competition. That kind of allowed me to excel. By the time I was in high school I went through the USA Water Polo pipeline. I was on the youth team. I was on the junior national team. I was, in high school; I had made the national team. It was all tryout, invitation at that point. Water polo is still, unfortunately, relatively small. We want to change that. But, back then it was smaller. So, it was easy for me to get identified at an early age.

I also was lucky enough to put myself in a position to get into Stanford University, which is one of my biggest life goals. Even now when someone asks me, now that I have become an Olympic champion with, along with my team, they ask me what my biggest accomplishment is, and to me it's still that degree from Stanford University. My Olympic gold medal comes second. Those are two of the goals that I had set for myself at a really young age.

I think growing up in the City of Commerce with access to training and taking away that financial barrier helped me get to where I am today.

Alan Abrahamson: So, how many of you have actually seen the complex in Commerce? For those of you who have not, can you describe it a little bit please, Brenda?

Brenda Villa: Well, the one that I grew up in was built in 1960, but even that one was kind of state of the art. It was an indoor pool in Southern California, which is kind of unheard of. But it was an amazing facility. And in 2000 they –

Alan Abrahamson: Let's back up a little bit. Does anyone – everyone know where Commerce is geographically? I mean it's like a highway city basically. I mean –

Brenda Villa: Between the 5 and the 710. Yes.

Between the 5 and the 710. I mean there's the casino there. I mean you have to say it like it is and there's almost no reason for this incredible facility to be there. Truly. But, this facility is, I don't want to say it's world class, but it's national class facility for sure. Okay. Back to you.

Brenda Villa: In 2000 they redid the facility to make it – back then it was a shallow deep end pool. And, now it's an Olympic sized pool, so it's 30 meters. We could ... They could host world-class events there if they choose to. And, it's still indoors and there's a gym there that's offered to the residents for free. The city does an amazing, amazing job producing a lot of resources for their residents.

Alan Abrahamson: What percentage of the population in Commerce now is Latino? Do you know?

Brenda Villa: Ninety percent.

Alan Abrahamson: Ninety percent. So, it's an incredible opportunity for the local residents to have this facility there. Absolutely magnificent. Right?

Brenda Villa: Yes. Someone earlier touched on homegrown, and that is what I am. It doesn't happen often, even in the sport of water polo. Kids go to other cities, to other super clubs and want to play for a better team. But, I was lucky to grow up and play with the kids that lived down the street from

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me. It really is a community-driven team where, you know, families carpool and we make it happen for each other. It's a really special place.

Alan Abrahamson: And, Brenda made the team in 2008.

Brenda Villa: Two thousand – or Patty [Cardenas] you mean.

Alan Abrahamson: Patty, I mean. Sorry. Patty.

Brenda Villa: Oh, yes. Patty, a Commerce teammate of mine, also was on the 2008 Olympic team. So, Commerce has maybe 13,000 residents. In 2008 we had two Olympic water polo players on a team and a boxer actually.

Alan Abrahamson: And a boxer.

Female: What's Patty's last name?

[Cross Talk] Cardenas.

Alan Abrahamson: Crazy. I mean this teeny tiny little town. Your turn.

Dotsie Bausch: Okay. I did not grow up as an athlete at all. I grew up in Louisville, Kentucky. Went to high school there and left there to go to college Villanova University. And, became very sick, almost lost my life to an eating disorder towards the end of college and after. As one of my vehicles to healing towards the very end of my therapy road, my therapist suggested that I might try, not necessarily a sport, but it could be a sport, something that would give me an outlet to move my body in a healthy way and that didn't have negative connotations connected to it because my eating disorder was anorexia. Over-exercise a lot of times can be a component to that.

So, I chose cycling because I'd never really ridden a bike before. You know, maybe a couple times when I was really little in my neighborhood or something. But, I chose cycling and I'm really glad I did. I was 25 at the time and I just kept doing it. I mean I just I loved it. I loved the way that it made me feel. It was an awesome pathway to the end of my recovery road. I was doing 100 percent well physically and emotionally and mentally from the illness. So, I just decided to try a race. I tried a race when I was 26. And, I literally just didn't stop. I tried the next race and the next race. And then, oddly enough, like two years later the road national

team kind of recognized me, and I was blessed enough to be able to travel with them in Europe and race. I ended up racing on the road professionally for about 10 years. And then, I was like, "I've got to get back to real life. What am I doing?" So, I'm 36 and then I just literally kind of on a whim went with my teammate and two-time Olympian, seven-time world champion on the track. She is ... Her name is Sarah Hammer. And she's like, "Come try it out."

And, I just fell madly passionately in love with it immediately. I think one of the reasons why, and to this day why I love it so much is it scares the living bleepies out of me, every time I'm on it. I miss it now. I think if I decide to come back for Rio, really that is because I'm missing being scared. And, I think if you're scared once every day or once every week or just sometime in, you know, three, four times within a month you really stay alive. I'm challenged now, but I'm not scared daily. I'm missing the track for that. So ...

Alan Abrahamson: Awesome. We'll have a group therapy session here.

Dotsie Bausch: Yes, we can do that later.

Alan Abrahamson: As everyone knows there's a cultural difference between the road cyclists and the track cyclists. Do you want to speak a little bit about that Dotsie and how the road cyclists are set up and the track cyclists are set up, especially going back to the premise of this all, the conversation here, which is, Are athletes at the center of everything we do? And, what are the preparations for getting the two camps ready in particular for an Olympic Games?

Dotsie Bausch: Well, the road side ... Having been part of that for a long time, I think that our governing body – not I think – I know our governing body understands the road cycling route better.

Alan Abrahamson: Does everyone understand the difference between road cycling and track cycling? Just –

Dotsie Bausch: If you take a track and field, I always do this because people go, "Oh, yeah."

Alan Abrahamson: I believe in making sure everybody understands exactly what we're talking about. Road cycling is out on the roads. Track is, you know, inside a building. Okay.

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Dotsie Bausch: And, the training for it could be compared to the marathon. Then, you have like in track and field – you also have endurance track and sprint track. We have the same thing in track cycling in the velodrome: an endurance side, which is the side that I'm on, and then the sprint side, which these guys were on. Adam Duvendek went to the Olympics in the sprint side of track cycling.

But, our governing body just put a lot more time and money and support and knowledge into the, the road side of things because I think that's where their roots are and where they understand it better. So, our sport of track cycling hasn't gotten the real support behind it that it's needed over the years, really in all of the 2000s. So, '96 was the last time they really put a big push into track cycling.

Alan Abrahamson: I don't want to use the word miracle in any way, shape or form, but would you say that your medal is a significant accomplishment? Any Olympic medal is a significant accomplishment, but for you to have achieved that ... What I'm looking for are the details. What did you have to rise above? Just daily-training wise were there times where, I don't want to say you lived in the back of a car or anything like that, but what did you have to do? Did you ever find yourself wanting for things?

Dotsie Bausch: Well ...

Alan Abrahamson: Not that I'm asking a leading question or anything.

Dotsie Bausch: No. Oh, gosh, yeah. I'll try to make this a short answer because it's – phew – quite the journey. But, we didn't really have ... I would say we had almost zero support. I think what really our governing body highly underestimated was the athletes that were part of this and the families and the friends and the volunteers and the people that were really willing to stand behind us and believed in our dream and believed that we could do what we said that we wanted to, 3 years out, 2½ to 3 years out.

So, we just didn't have anybody. We had one coach. And, the coach that they hired was the men's U-23 junior development road coach. They were like, "Oh, these girls are like medaling at World Cup, so could you go help them?" Literally. So, that's who they hired. That's all we had besides, yes, the financial backing to go to the World Cups. Like we didn't

have to, you know, get our own plane tickets and, and things like that. So, that was it.

Alan Abrahamson: Did you have a sports psychologist? A sports physiologist? A sports this or that or any of those things?

Dotsie Bausch: Everything else that we wanted to bring into our training regimen we went and got ourselves through the USOC. And, the USOC was an awesome support. I had a sports psychologist through the USOC and she was amazing. I worked with her for two years and couldn't have done it without her. So, everything was through the USOC that we went and sought out as athletes, having medaled at World Cups and world championships, as you know that becomes available to you.

Alan Abrahamson: Let me ask Brenda. The level of support that the women of the U.S. Water Polo team had along your journey, how would you describe it?

Brenda Villa: I think it's been very supportive. I think USA Water Polo and the USOC I think since 2000, since the first time women's water polo was in the Olympic program we've had pretty great support. I think the only time we probably were not favored to win a medal was 2000, but we did it anyways. Since then we've had pretty great support. Since [CEO] Chris [Ramsey] has been on board, I mean I've been asked my opinion on a lot of things. Of course, not everything happens, but we understand that it's a process with anything. I think we've had pretty open dialogue.

Alan Abrahamson: Does everyone understand how close the U.S. women came in Sydney to winning the gold medal? Does everyone not know the story? How many seconds away were you from winning the gold medal, Brenda?

Brenda Villa: Well, we were like 1.3 away from going into overtime.

Alan Abrahamson: So, they were basically 1.2 away from winning the gold medal. That's how close they were. This has been Brenda's journey for the last 12 years until she finally won this gold medal in London. Twelve years.

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I tell you I was there with her. Not with her, but there with her in Sydney. It was a bronze medal in Athens, is that right? And then, in Beijing, how close? Twenty-six seconds. Twenty-seven seconds, a 9 to 8 game, wasn't it?

Brenda Villa: Yeah. Slow start but we fought our way back in and the Dutch won 9-8, yes.

Alan Abrahamson: Twenty-seven seconds, 26, 27 seconds away from winning gold and then finally over the hump.

Brenda Villa: Yes.

Alan Abrahamson: In London.

Brenda Villa: But, I mean I'm very proud of the silvers and the bronze.

Alan Abrahamson: For sure.

Brenda Villa: And, I think – I mean – we talk about American culture and gold or bust it seems, but I think any time we can make it to the podium it's a great achievement.

Alan Abrahamson: If I could ask Chris to come up here for a second. This is important I think because ...

Chris Ramsey: Is this a trap?

Alan Abrahamson: It is. You're the funder or the executive in charge of doing all this. How do you sustain and maintain this commitment to excellence over a run that lasts for years and years and years and years like that? Given what we know is the American [attitude of] win or not. When, as Brenda has so eloquently describe and I've written about lots of times, it's not win or else.

Chris Ramsey: Well, two things pop into my mind, and this is unrehearsed. The first is I think that we try to fairly evaluate and reward performance. That's been one of the things I've tried to do since I've been here, never to play favorites, to try to get as much data as possible and to try to act objectively on that data and give everyone a fair chance based on their performance. I think that's definitely benefited the women's program tremendously because they work very hard and they've had tremendous results. And I've tried to reward that by investing in it.

The second thing is maybe a larger picture, and it sort of fits into what a lot of people have talked about today in one way or another. And I think that's just a holistic approach to the sport. I think that you can't have healthy Olympic teams without healthy young people playing the sport. We've, we have a dual mission. When I first came a lot of people said it was contradictory because our mission is to grow our sport and to medal in international competition. But, I think they're complementary. I think that Brenda's experience at Commerce, I think what Brenda's doing now, by the way, which is going out and doing clinics for young kids, trying to start up a lower-income programs in East Palo Alto ... Believe it, there are lower incomes in East Palo Alto ... Things like that are critically important.

What it really comes down to is making it about the sport and not just about the money and not just about the glory – Brenda would say making it about the journey – and also realizing that we're all in it together. We all have a role in what we do. One of the things I really value about Brenda is that she gets that big picture. I'll never ... We have this, the largest water polo tournament in the world called Junior Olympics. And, I think it was after Beijing we were having a Junior Olympics the following year. I happened to note – I happened to have reported to me – that Brenda came to Junior Olympics. Well, you know having an Olympic athlete come to Junior Olympics is a very special thing. She bought a ticket to get in.

Alan Abrahamson: Thank you, Chris. Jarryd, your journey, have you felt supported along the way or not?

Jarryd Wallace: Yeah, there's definitely been levels of support and resources that have been available. Paralympics being as – I want to say – new as it is, it's starting to really get recognition and be on the map a little bit more within the Olympic committee. The resources and funding are starting to be there. I think, though, my story's probably a little bit different. I've been really blessed to have a father who works at a university, at the University of Georgia, as a coach there. So, I've had access to great facilities, great resources, great strength coaches, great track coaches that have really opened up their time and energy, and invested in allowing me to achieve and become an elite level athlete.

If I look at the rest of my teammates in Paralympic teams, I would say that the resources are 50/50, maybe, maybe 40/60, there to not there. It just depends on what area you're in, what

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resources are because of the area you're in. Right now from just a strictly track and field standpoint, I think we had about 200 people at the Paralympic trials in 2012. Of those people only about eight or 10 are able to train full time at the Olympic Training Center, housed and have things taken care of, which is about 3 to 5 percent of the people that are competing. So, I think that there are resources and things that can be done better from the Paralympic standpoint because you know ultimately it's not a lack of talent. At the end of day it, it can become and be a lack of resources.

Case in point, really good example, one of my teammates and buddies, David Brown, has been competing for about five or six years. He has been floating around 11.3 [seconds], 11.4. 11.5. Just not quite making that big drop under 11.0. He finally had an opportunity to go and move out to the Olympic Training Center and get proper training and proper coaching and have the right guides that guide and run with him and that have the knowledge to, guide a blind athlete in a 100-meter race. And, he opened up his season this past week and ran his first sub-11.0 100. So, it can be done. He's been fighting and competing and trying to bridge that gap for a couple years, and as soon as he got the resources, he was able to do it. So, I definitely think that there are ... Like I said, in my case I've, I've been extremely blessed to just to have a huge team come around me and support me from a home base. But, there are people out there that, that don't necessarily have those resources that if given the opportunity could achieve great, great things.

One of my passions is to grow that awareness and resources for Paralympic athletes, yes, specifically for track because that's where my knowledge base and heart is. But, it's not by any means to say the USOC's not doing anything. From 2012 to now they've made some great changes and are continuing to do so, but I really think that it can be better, and I think that it will be better.

Alan Abrahamson: So, that's a segue into my next question. And, after this question I'm going to invite questions from the audience. If the three of you were given a magic wand, what one, two or three changes would you make in your own routine or the program as you've seen it or seen it or wish it could be? Anybody.

Brenda Villa: I think one of the things we lack, but I don't know how we would change this, is how to retain players after college, or how to create opportunities in the U.S. to compete

at a high level in the U.S. A lot of us go over to Europe to do that. I think that is amazing and I wouldn't change that experience, but I think it also hurts us post-Olympic careers. When you talk about the real world and transitioning into the workforce, when you're in Europe it's hard to get ... I mean you're not going to go to school or you're not going to get a job there. You're there to play. If you're here in the U.S., I think maybe there would be a way to start transitioning into the real workforce or getting an internship or kind of planning for life after the Olympics.

Alan Abrahamson: Basically since 2000 haven't you gone to Europe almost every single year?

Brenda Villa: Since I graduated from Stanford, yes. I've had to. If I wanted to stay at the top of my game and earn my spot on the Olympic team, you have to play games. You've got to play at a high level.

Alan Abrahamson: That's how many years in a row?

Brenda Villa: A lot of years except Olympic years. Maybe like five or six.

Alan Abrahamson: Yeah.

Dotsie Bausch: I was thinking about what Ken [Martel] was saying in his talk on hockey. In order to be able to grow and advance you have to be able to change and you have to be able to be right on the cutting edge. Our program could really use a ... That needs to be infused into what track cycling is doing. I think they've got it and are doing, really honestly, a phenomenal job on the road, but not on the track side. We need that technical aspect to be brought in and that change to be made within our governing body so that we can be on the cutting edge of what's happening out there, specifically in the training module for endurance and sprint track cycling.

And then, for the women, development. We have no development program. That's an obvious need in any sport. We don't have that.

Alan Abrahamson: Go ahead Jarryd, and then I'm going to ask you another question. Sorry.

Jarryd Wallace: Yeah, I would say probably just having the resources to train. Ultimately if – I think there's a lot of training sites. I think the USOC and Paralympics do a

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great job of hosting training camps for athletes, but as all athletes know, you can go for a camp for 10 days and leave the camp and go back home for four months and you kind of took a little bit back, but you don't really remember – if it was mechanical work – Was he telling me to do this or was it that? Camps are great, but if you can't have consistency in training, if you can't have consistency in coaching, then it's really hard to fully develop. It's only when those athletes get that consistency where change and development really occurs and happens.

So, at the end of the day I think you can have the greatest facility in the world, but if you don't have the right people in working consistently with athletes, then it really just is kind of pointless.

Alan Abrahamson: Does all that get back to what is always the, the bottom line here in our country, which is always money? You know our country is the only country in the world that is not an arm of the state government. The Olympic program is not an arm of the state government. So, it's always on the United States Olympic Committee to develop funds. All of these things, a development program, a resource, all that takes, takes money. I know Alan [Ashley] is in the audience; Anita [DeFrantz] is in the audience. Is this always a function of somebody to develop money so they can direct these programs to you guys? The United States Olympic Committee's budget is not even the University of Texas' or Ohio State's annual budget. It's just not. It's amazing, for instance, that the swim team can win 31 medals or the track team can win 29 or you can produce a silver or you can produce gold. Frankly, it is a miracle that these NGBs and the United States Olympic Committee working in conjunction with each other can win the medals count. Ladies and gentlemen, it is nothing short of a miracle, frankly. This is not – these are not government dollars.

If the United States was ever serious about winning Olympic medals, the United States could win a lot of Olympic medals.

Audience Member: That was very nice of you. I just wanted to mention – hi, I'm Alicia McConnell. I'm with the U.S. Olympic Committee. Some of the things you're talking about ... We actually have Olympic and Paralympic training sites all over the country. I want to thank some of our representatives here – Mike Knopp from Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation. Katrina Shaklee from University of Central Oklahoma. It's Olympic and Paralympic rowing and

canoe, kayak. The home of sit volleyball at UCO. And, at the velodrome, another Olympic and Paralympic training site.

What we do is work with, with the NGBs, the USOC we create these partnerships with communities and world-class facilities to add resources for the athletes and NGBs so athletes can train. And, the community gets behind those athletes and NGBs and helps with housing, meals, science, medicine, all of those things. So, I just wanted to let you all know that we do work in partnership with the NGBs to create more opportunities for athletes to achieve their dreams and wanted to thank you guys for that.

Audience Member: One of the curious things I've learned is that some sports have got it together. I would say skiing and the program that they have for following their athletes, they, they've figured out how to follow athletes individually. The movie [Personal Gold] that was produced by Tamara and Sky Christopherson on Dotsie and her track team is just frightening. What they were able to do ... Friends got together and did a lot. Without those friends I don't know what the outcome would have been. It was just incredible. You should see this movie. See this movie.

But, the USOC has the capability, the people who want to help the USOC, but the NGBs seem to have some challenges with figuring out how to ... I mean what Dotsie said, they sent a junior training coach to work with the elite-level Olympic team. What was that about? And, you were expected to go with the plan that was designed for random athletes, I guess, but certainly not for the four of you who were training.

Dotsie Bausch: It was focused on us pretending like we were all the same type of athlete, which in the sport I did is a team event, 3,000 meters. I think that would work if you were in a country where it was a deep-seated track cycling program, with years and years of research and study, like maybe Australia, Great Britain. They have deep-seated track programs. And, you would get athletes that would start in that program from maybe 12, 13, 14, 15. So, they are similar. We just came from such diverse backgrounds that we were so different. In order to achieve that goal for that medal in 2012, [starting] in 2009 and a half we couldn't be treated as the same type of athletes. So, the training had to vary immensely for us to be able to come together on that day and produce that medal. That's what we were fighting against and, you know, eventually we just wrote the training ourselves.

DOTSIE BAUSCH, *Olympian, Cycling*

BRENDA VILLA, *Olympian, Water Polo*

JARRYD WALLACE, *Paralympian, Track & Field*

MODERATOR, ALAN ABRAHAMSON, *University of Southern California*

U.S. Olympic Academy

Audience Member: Yeah, but we have the technology. We just don't have the NGBs that have the determination always to do the best, which is a challenge. We do have a tradition where the athletes speak up. I hope that we can have athletes speaking up and helping the NGBs because that's really what has to happen. Everybody has good will. They want to. Sometimes they're not able to do the right thing.

Dotsie Bausch: Right. Right.

Audience Member: I think ... I have to believe that there is goodwill. And, and keeping – I mean you guys were four. Then you have the water polo team, which is how many on the water polo team?

Brenda Villa: Thirteen.

Audience Member: Thirteen. Imagine keeping 13 women together over a period of time and how do you do that and make it livable so that they can see their future in their present? I know, I was in an eight and at one point the coach realized that we needed to spend time as far away from each other as possible. So, it's not easy. I hope that we can use the technology and the understanding that we have because we have a tremendous amount of capability in this country, but it's not always focused to support the athletes the way it could be. See the movie.

Dotsie Bausch: That's my new agent. Thank you.

Alan Abrahamson: John, you have a question?

Audience Member: Thank you. Thank you, Alan. Well, Dotsie, Brenda, Jarryd, listening to your stories, listening to your life, I would say that you represent two of the basic values of Olympism, which is the joy of effort and pursuit of excellence. I mean for me I'm a servant of the Olympic Movement far away. Back there in ancient Olympia. You are role models. And, apart from this, the two values, that you represent I wanted to ask you have you met other Olympic values in your career that are in your mind and in your heart? I would be really very interested to hear if you have one or two small stories to tell us about these values that really marked your career. You saw something, you heard something, you lived something that proves that the Olympic values are always behind athletes. That's very important for all of us.

Dotsie Bausch: I mean the obvious ones like you said, pursuit of excellence and and striving towards a big goal. Yes. Those, those play out because they're ingrained in your personality and who you are and who you become really through that Olympic process. But, for me the journey is always so much bigger and louder than that final result. For me going through that the couple things that I learned was one, flexibility – really being able to be flexible and resilient in just everything that you do. If you have that and you do that in your life and work afterwards and with people in your experiences, it's just so much more rewarding. Those aren't the ones that are maybe so exciting to hear, but those are the two that stood out for me that I learned in that journey.

Brenda Villa: I would say I agree with yours, of course. But, the two that I probably learned about the last journey was probably passion and love. I think love for your teammates, love for your sport, love for your country. Being a four-time Olympian – at the end of that career it tests you in so many ways. You have to evolve as a person, as a teammate. And, I think if I wasn't having fun – someone earlier talked about fun – there is no way that I would have enjoyed this journey or this process or anything that has to do with the Olympic values. So, I think just passion and love and fun.

Jarryd Wallace: I think something that's probably not related to many athletes, but patience and the ability to look at failures as an opportunity to learn versus a defeat. I think are the two biggest things. I think those go together. Those have been something that I've really seen on my journey.

Audience Member: Quick question, Dotsie. How would your career be different had you discovered cycling at age 10?

Dotsie Bausch: I have no idea. Well, I don't know. Probably I wouldn't have done it because I was crazy there in the early 20s and, yeah, I might have have left it. But, I'm glad I found it when I did. It's been fun doing it as a more mature athlete, especially the whole Olympic journey and the perspective that I was able to have because I was a little bit more of a mature athlete. So, who knows? Only God knows. But I'm glad I found it when I did.

Audience Member: And, Brenda, people asked me after I quit swimming, are you going to be a coach? You're now coaching kids in the sport of water polo. What's it like when you run into kids that are not nearly as ambitious or don't want it as much as you did?

DOTSIE BAUSCH, *Olympian, Cycling*

BRENDA VILLA, *Olympian, Water Polo*

JARRYD WALLACE, *Paralympian, Track & Field*

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U.S. Olympic Academy

Brenda Villa: I've learned a lot in the last two years. From elite training to development, patience is something that I didn't really have that I'm learning to deal with quickly. But, even now people that watch me coach tell me that I'm not strict enough with the kids. To me it's like I'm coaching and teaching kids that have never been a part of any aquatic programming. I want them to fall in love with the sport that I fell in love with. Now it's a lot of fun. And, I think in a couple years when they have more under their belt, the stricter Brenda will come out. But, I think anybody that is starting out a sport like water polo or trying out aquatics for the first time I think they just need to really fall in love with it.

Audience Member: And, real quickly, Jarryd, your sport, you don't have an NGB. The U.S. Olympic Committee has to run all of your ... And, on the video or on the slides we saw you don't get any money if it takes money away from Olympic medal winning sports. How does that make you feel?

Jarryd Wallace: You know, I think we just have to continue to move forward with the movement. And, at the end of the day we are elite athletes. At the end of the day we're on the track to run as fast as we possibly can from the time the gun goes off to the time we cross the line, whatever distance that is. That's what keeps us moving. That's why we do what we do. And, ultimately we hope that people will find joys in our joys and that we can continue to grow awareness of the Paralympic Movement and hope that the resources are going to come and be there.

Audience Member: My name is Peggine Tellez. I'm with USA Racquetball. You touched on an important point as Paralympic athlete. Do you feel that the Paralympic athletes in their own categories of sports should have their own NGBs, or should they be more fully embraced by the existing NGBs?

Jarryd Wallace: You know, I think it depends as we've been kind of joking about, it depends on what NGB's running it. Yeah. You know outside of that I think makes a huge difference. I think that –

Alan Abrahamson: U.S. Ski or Team Handball? You have your choice.

Jarryd Wallace: I think at the end of the day you look at the big picture and you know what it takes to become elite athlete. You know what resources the athletes need to do that. All kidding aside, finding and providing those resources just the

bare ABC. You don't have to get all, you know political about it, but you get the resources, you get the coaching, you get the facilities and you give them the opportunity. Let the rest take care of itself.

Audience Member: Katrina Shaklee with the University of Central Oklahoma. As Alicia mentioned, we are a Paralympic and Olympic training site. A lot of the sports are with the NGBs. So, it really depends on the sport. But, my question is more for Brenda. Coming from a team sport and a women's team sport that we deal with, USA Sitting Volleyball, we always have problems with women after the Paralympic Games wanting to leave to go have a family and have babies and things like that. And, we've had conversations about how do we keep them together and how do we keep them coming back when men don't have those same issues. So, being in your sport for that long, did you experience that with any of your teammates or yourself? And, and how was that handled? Because that's an ongoing concern we have of keeping those women. We have them bring children to practices and we try to provide some babysitting and things like that just to keep them involved so they don't feel like they have to leave, they have to pick.

Brenda Villa: I think in the last quad we had three teammates get married. It's something that I think there is ... I have another teammate, Heather Petri and I, we're both four-time Olympians. We put our lives on hold for a really long time to be able to say that we're Olympic champions. We look to USA Soccer. They have a lot of their athletes that have kids and they bring their kids on the road. And, we're hoping that that's a direction USA Water Polo goes into eventually, or that we could do the same thing.

We chose to put motherhood and all of that on hold, but I mean now it's something that we do think about often. But, I mean it is a personal choice. I'm hoping that we can somehow find the resources for the women that want to continue and want to do both because it is possible. We have seen it done by others. So, I'm just hoping that by us sticking around long enough others will want to do it and then hopefully we can help them find the resources to make it happen.

Alan Abrahamson: One more question. Thanks.

Audience Member: Not sure if this is really a question. I was a member of the AAC back a ways. And, I remember going to the first meeting. I had no idea what I was getting involved

DOTSIE BAUSCH, *Olympian, Cycling*

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U.S. Olympic Academy

in. I was a representative for volleyball. At that time – so this was about 1976 – I thought the Volleyball Federation was the most screwed up, messed up federation that could exist. And after sitting in that room with athletes from every national governing body and listening to all the stories coming from team handball and from water polo and from all these different sports I thought, “Oh, my God. We’re not so bad.” So, my point is that just listening to you three and your different experiences and the opportunity that we have here at this Olympic Academy, I’m not sure what the future of this is going to be or how it’s going to evolve, but the resource that you have to impact each other and to go back to your own sports and the things that you’ve learned is, I think, really invaluable. So, I just want to say thanks to LA84 for having us and getting this rolling. And, hopefully it’ll continue.



Our goal today was to examine the important issues of athlete development through the lens of Olympism. We hope that you've learned a lot about athlete development from a technical perspective. In addition, we hope we've highlighted the point that athlete development involves more than just putting skilled athletes on the field of play. We hope that you'll have a greater appreciation of the inseparable connection between athlete development and the ethical and personal issues that Olympism requires us to confront.

My father was a management consultant and efficiency expert and he would write a report to deliver to each of his clients, and the first page of every report said exactly the same thing, my favorite quote. It says, "Your system is ideally engineered to produce the results you're getting now." If you don't like the results you're getting now, it's a good idea that we might want to tweak something. What we heard today was a wide number of suggestions of ways we can individually or corporately tweak our system and hopefully for the betterment of sport.

As the 2014 Olympic Academy comes to a close I say thank you all for participating with us in this journey. Thank you [Dr. Gangas] for making the journey all the way from Greece. We hope you take back our great appreciation for what you've done. Thank you one and all.

ALAN ABRAHAMSON

*Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism
University of Southern California*

Alan Abrahamson teaches about sport, the Olympic Movement and journalism at the University of Southern California. He is an award-winning sportswriter, best-selling author and in-demand television analyst.

Abrahamson launched his own website, 3 Wire Sports, in 2010. From 2006 until 2010 he was a columnist at NBC's online destinations: NBCOlympics.com, NBCSports.com and UniversalSports.com. With Abrahamson as lead columnist at the 2008 Beijing Games, NBCOlympics.com won the Sports Emmy for "outstanding new approaches [in] sports event coverage." Before joining NBC, he spent 17 years as a staff writer at the *Los Angeles Times*, including eight years focusing on the Olympic Movement

Abrahamson has covered eight Olympics, Summer and Winter; he serves on the IOC's press commission. He has co-written two New York Times best-sellers: Michael Phelps' *No Limits: The Will to Succeed*, and Apolo Ohno's *Zero Regrets: Be Greater than Yesterday*. A member (inactive) of the State Bar of California, Abrahamson taught journalism and new media reporting as part of the IOC's "Young Reporters" initiative at the 2010 Youth Olympic Games in Singapore.

ALAN ASHLEY

Chief of Sport Performance, USOC

Alan Ashley was named chief of sport performance for the United States Olympic Committee in September 2010, after previously serving as managing director of sport performance since January 2010. Prior to that, Ashley served as a team leader in the sport performance division beginning in December 2006. In his current role, Ashley oversees the USOC divisions tasked with providing targeted resources and support to the National Governing Bodies, athletes and coaches in pursuit of sustained competitive excellence. These areas include coaching and sport science, sports medicine, international games and sport partnerships. Sport performance is also responsible for the preparation and execution of all Team USA activities related to the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Ashley joined the USOC after spending 16 years with the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association. He was a key contributor to the rise of the U.S. ski and snowboard teams, helping to manage the coaching, training and organizational structure for 170 elite athletes, 125 elite coaches and administrative staff, 320 USSA clubs, 3,000 club coaches and 16,000 member athletes.

DOTSIE BAUSCH

Olympian, Cycling

A 2012 Olympic silver medalist, a seven-time U.S. National Champion and a two-time Pan American gold medal winner, Dotsie Bausch is in her fifteenth year of racing.

In 2007, Bausch tried track cycling for the first time and amazingly rode to two national track titles that same year. Bausch became an Olympian in 2012, competing on the track in the London Olympic Games where she

won a silver medal alongside teammates Jennie Reed, Lauren Tamayo and Sarah Hammer in the women's team pursuit.

While Bausch has scored major victories on the bike, perhaps her greatest victory was resurrecting her own life from the depths of severe eating disorders, which threatened to take her life over a decade ago after a promising modeling career in New York City. It was during her recovery that she discovered her passion for cycling. Bausch's makes herself available to support women and men around the world in their battle to return to healthy eating and living habits.

SCOTT BLACKMUN

Chief Executive Officer, USOC

Scott Blackmun became chief executive officer of the United States Olympic Committee in January 2010. He is an ex-officio member of the USOC's board of directors, and also serves on the International Olympic Committee's Marketing Commission – a post that he assumed by IOC appointment on March 10, 2011. Under Blackmun's direction, the USOC supported Team USA in topping the gold and overall medal counts at the London 2012 Olympic Games, and at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games, in winning the most medals ever (28) at a Winter Games outside of North America. The USOC nearly doubled net philanthropic support in 2009-12 from the previous quad and developed its first joint sales effort with NBC. Blackmun also led the organization in negotiating a revenue-sharing agreement with the IOC, which restructured how worldwide Olympic sponsorship and U.S. television revenues are shared, and elevated the USOC's international standing. In recognition of the organization's overall performance in 2012, the USOC was named Sports League of the Year and Blackmun was named Sports Executive of the Year by *SportsBusiness Journal*. Blackmun previously served the USOC, as acting chief executive officer (2001), senior managing director of sport (2000) and general counsel (1999).

ANITA L. DeFRANTZ

President, LA84 Foundation & IOC Member

Anita L. DeFrantz, an attorney and member of the International Olympic Committee Executive Board and 1976 and 1980 U.S. Olympic teams, is the president and a director of the LA84 Foundation, which manages Southern California's endowment from the 1984 Olympic Games.

She won an Olympic bronze medal in rowing as a member of the U.S. women's eight. DeFrantz, who competed on every national team from 1975 to 1980, won a silver medal in the 1978 World Championships in rowing, was a finalist in the World Championships four times and won six National Championships.

DeFrantz was a vice president of FISA, the international rowing federation, from 1993 to 2013, and is the past chair of the IOC Commission on Women in Sport. DeFrantz serves on the board of directors of the U.S. Olympic Committee and as a member of the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics.

The IOC awarded DeFrantz the Bronze Medal of the Olympic Order for her leadership role in fighting the U.S. government-led boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow.

KRISTEN DIEFFENBACH, Ph.D.

*Associate Professor, College of Physical Activity & Sport Sciences
West Virginia University*

Dr. Kristen Dieffenbach earned her Ph.D. in exercise science. Her areas of research and consultation include coaching education, performance enhancement, professional issues in coaching, ethics in coaching, athlete talent development, and understanding and preventing underrecovery. She has worked on numerous grants, projects, and consultations in these areas for the United States Olympic Committee, U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, United States Tennis Association, USA Cycling, USA Triathlon, U.S. Paralympics, USA Water Polo and Peaks Coaching Group.

Dieffenbach has published research articles in scientific journals, authored and co-authored numerous book chapters, and has written for applied publications such as *Olympic Coach* and *VeloNews*. As a coach she holds an elite level USA Cycling license and has earned a Level II endurance specialization from USA Track and Field. Dieffenbach has coached cross country, track and field, and cycling at every level from recreational to elite, and runs a regional mountain biking camp for USA Cycling.

She is the president-elect for the National Council for the Accreditation of Coaching Education.

TOM FARREY

Executive Director, Aspen Institute's Sports and Society Program

Farrey founded and created the vision for the Aspen Institute's Sports & Society Program, whose mission is to convene leaders, facilitate dialogue and inspire solutions that help sport serve the public interest, with a focus on the development of healthy children and communities. In 2011, the program launched The Aspen Institute's Project Play, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine youth sports in America that will deliver a plan of action at the end of 2014.

Farrey is also an ESPN enterprise journalist whose work has been recognized among the nation's best. His stories on youth football safety were honored with the 2014 Alfred I. duPont/Columbia University Award and 2013 Edward R. Murrow Award, and he has two Sports Journalism Emmy Awards for his *Outside the Lines* reports. His stories have also appeared on *SportsCenter*, *E:60*, ABC's *World News Tonight* and *This Week with George Stephanopolous*, ESPN.com, and in *ESPN The Magazine*, *Business Week*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *Washington Post*.

He is the author of *Game On: The All-American Race to Make Champions of Our Children* (2008, ESPN Books), an investigative work on modern youth sports used as a text at more than a dozen college campuses.

BENITA FITZGERALD MOSLEY

Chief of Organizational Excellence, USOC

Benita Fitzgerald Mosley assumed the position of chief of organizational excellence for the United States Olympic Committee in August 2013. Fitzgerald Mosley oversees athlete career programs, the athlete ombudsman's office, diversity and inclusion, human resources, facilities, NGB organizational development, security and strategic planning. She

previously worked in a variety of roles for the USOC from 1995 to 2001, including director of the Chula Vista Olympic Training Center (1995-97), director of U.S. Olympic Training Centers (1997-2000) and director of public relations programs (2000-01). From 2009-2013, she was the chief of sport performance for USA Track & Field. During her tenure, the U.S. track & field team won 29 medals at the 2012 Olympic Games, the highest medal count for the U.S. in 20 years. Fitzgerald Mosley won a gold medal in the 1984 Olympic Games in the 100-meter hurdles. She serves on the International Olympic Committee Women and Sport Commission, is a member of the University of Tennessee Alumni board of directors, a past chair of the Women's Sports Foundations Board of Trustees and a former member of the USOC board of directors and Athletes' Advisory Council.

DR. DIONYSSIS GANGAS

Director, International Olympic Academy

Dr. Dionyssidis Gangas is the director of the International Olympic Academy. The IOA, located in Olympia, Greece, is the only international center recognized by name by the Olympic Charter responsible for the propagation internationally of Olympic values and Olympic education. The center studies and implements the educational and social principles of Olympism, and consolidates the scientific basis of the Olympic Ideal in conformity with the principles laid down by the ancient Greeks and the revivers of the contemporary Olympic Movement, through Baron de Coubertin's initiative.

Gangas, who earned his doctorate in International Law at Panteion University, practiced criminal, labor and sports law as a member of the Athens Bar and was a professor of International Humanitarian Law for more than 35 years. He headed the International Relations Departments of the ATHENS 2004 Bid Committee and the ATHENS 2004 Organising Committee for the Olympic Games. He also served as a member and secretary general of the Hellenic Olympic Committee and an executive board member of the European Olympic Committees.

In 2004, IOC President Jacques Rogge awarded Gangas the Olympic Order for outstanding service to the Olympic Movement.

WADE GILBERT, Ph.D.

*Professor, Department of Kinesiology
California State University, Fresno*

Dr. Wade Gilbert is a professor in the Department of Kinesiology at California State University, Fresno. He holds degrees in Physical Education, Human Kinetics, and Education from the University of Ottawa. After completing his doctorate, he was selected for a post-doctoral fellowship in UCLA's International Center for Talent Development.

Gilbert's areas of expertise include coaching science, talent development, sport and exercise psychology, physical education and youth sport. He has over 20 years of experience conducting applied research with partners around the world, spanning sports and settings from local youth leagues to national soccer teams preparing for the World Cup. He is widely published and frequently is invited to be a featured speaker at national and international events. He is co-editor for the *International Sports Coaching Journal* and the *Routledge Handbook of Sports Coaching*. Gilbert has served

as a scientific advisor to organizations ranging from school districts, collegiate teams, Olympic organizations and the United Nations. He is the chief scientific advisor to BeLikeCoach, a national non-profit dedicated to improving the quality of youth sports.

KEN MARTEL

*Technical Director, American Development Plan
USA Hockey*

With 20 years of experience in player development, coaching and administration, Ken Martel was named technical director of USA Hockey's American Development Model in 2009. He is charged with helping provide a blueprint for associations nationwide to follow for optimal athlete development.

Previously, Martel was with USA Hockey's National Team Development Program as an assistant coach for eight years. Martel made appearances behind the bench of nine U.S. men's and women's teams that competed in International Ice Hockey Federation World Championships. He was part of two gold medal-winning teams, including the first-ever U.S. gold medals in the IIHF Men's World Under-18 Championship (2002) and the IIHF World Junior Championship (2004).

Martel's collegiate coaching experience includes assistant coaching positions at the U.S. Air Force Academy and Michigan Tech University, plus one year as a graduate assistant at St. Cloud State University. Martel played as a defenseman at Lake Superior State University, where he helped the Lakers to the school's first-ever NCAA national title in 1988.

JOHN NABER

*Olympian, Swimming
Broadcaster, Writer & Motivational Speaker*

John Naber, the Master of Ceremonies at the 2014 U.S. Olympic Academy, is one of America's most successful Olympic champions. He was the most highly decorated United States Olympian at the 1976 Games in Montreal, earning four gold medals in swimming, each in world record time. Naber became the first swimmer in history to earn two individual medals on the same day of Olympic competition, and earned the Sullivan Award as America's top amateur athlete of 1977. As a collegiate swimmer, Naber helped lead the University of Southern California to four consecutive NCAA Men's Swimming and Diving Championships. He is enshrined in several Halls of Fame and is one of America's top Olympic ambassadors.

Following his swimming career, Naber worked as a sports broadcaster, motivational speaker and professional writer. He has worked in television for over 25 years, covering over 35 different sports and eight Olympic Games for television and radio. His work has aired on all the major networks and various cable outlets in different capacities.

BRENDA VILLA

*Olympian, Water Polo
Co-Founder, Project 2020*

Brenda Villa is a four-time Olympian in water polo. She and her teammates won the Olympic gold medal in London in 2012. She also has won an Olympic bronze medal and two silver medals, and has been a member of world, Pan American and NCAA championship teams. Villa began playing water polo at age eight in Commerce, California. At Bell Gardens High School, which did not have a girls' team, she played for the boys' team earning 1st team All-League, 1st team All-C.I.F. and All-American honors in every season. A star player on U.S. national teams for over 16 years, she also played professionally in Italy for several seasons.

Villa, a graduate of Stanford University, is the head water polo coach at Castilleja High School, a girls' school in Palo Alto. She is the co-founder of Project 2020, a non-profit that provides young people access to aquatic sports.

In 2010 FINA Aquatics World Magazine named Villa as the Female Water Polo Player of the Decade.

JARRYD WALLACE

*2012 Paralympian
President, A Leg in Faith Foundation*

Jarryd Wallace represented the United States as a sprinter at the 2012 London Paralympic Games. At the 2013 IPC Athletics World Championships in Lyon, France, he won gold medals in the T-44 200 meters and T-42—T-46 4 x 100-meter relay, setting a world record in each event. Wallace also was a gold medalist at the 2011 Parapan American Games in the 100 meters. Wallace began training as a parathlete in 2010 following the amputation of his lower right leg as a result of compartment syndrome, a condition caused by insufficient blood supply to muscles and nerves. Within a year, Wallace won a bronze medal in the T-44 100 meters at the 2011 national championships. Prior to having his leg amputated, Wallace was a standout high school runner in Georgia, winning the 2007 state championship at 800 and 1,600 meters.

Wallace is the president and founder of A Leg in Faith Foundation, which makes grants to amputees who compete in track and field.

John Abdou

*High Performance Director
USA Water Polo*

Alan Abrahamson

*Lecturer
University of Southern California*

Rafael Acosta

*Regional Director
LAUSD Beyond the Bell Branch*

Jennifer Alban

*Program Director
SCGA Youth on Course*

John Amneus

*Community Youth Coaching
Program Coordinator
LA84 Foundation*

Valerie Arioto

*AAC Representative for USA
Softball
Amateur Softball Association/USA*

Alan Ashley

*Chief of Sport Performance
USOC*

Rebecca Atchley

*Graduate Student
California State University, Fresno*

Nick Badel

*Golf Outreach Manager
Tiger Woods Foundation*

Aaron Bauer

*Editorial Assistant
Around the Rings*

Dotsie Bausch

Olympian, Cycling

Marcellus Baird

*Head Coach
John C. Argue Swim Team*

Bernadine Bednarz

*Director, Ready, Set, Gold!
Southern California Committee for the
Olympic Games*

John Benton

*National Team Coach
USA Curling*

Cody Bickley

*National Teams High Performance Manager
USA Wrestling*

Scott Blackmun

*CEO
USOC*

Laurel Brassey Iversen

*Past President
IOAPA*

Tony Brown

*Executive Director
Heart of Los Angeles*

John Chavez

*Board of Directors
LA84 Foundation*

Sky Christopherson

Athlete & Entrepreneur – Track Cycling

Tamara Christopherson

*President
SoCal Olympians & Paralympians*

Katie Closson

*Coordinator, Communication
USOC*

Gordon Crawford

*Chairman
U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Foundation*

Craig Cress

*Executive Director
Amateur Softball Association of America/USA
Softball*

Allyson Davis

*Senior Vice President, Marketing
Universal Sports Network*

Anita DeFrantz

*President
LA84 Foundation*

Edward Derse

*Senior Vice President, Digital Media and
Strategic Partnerships
Universal Sports Network*

Pilar Diaz

*Program Officer
LA84 Foundation*

Kristen Dieffenbach

*Assistant Professor
West Virginia University*

Debra Duncan

*Board of Directors
LA84 Foundation*

Adam Duvendeck

*Director - VELO Sports
Center/Amgen Tour of California AEG*

Jack Elder

*President
Oregon Sports Action, Inc*

Kevin Ellis

*Recreation Supervisor
City of Downey*

Patrick Escobar

*VP, Grants & Programs
LA84 Foundation*

Roberta Estes

*Advisory Committee
CIF Girls' Volleyball*

Tom Farrey

*Executive Director
Aspen Institute's Sports & Society Program*

Mike Favatella

*Video Production
USOC*

Benita Fitzgerald Mosley

*Chief of Organizational Excellence
USOC*

Dionyssis Gangas

*Director
International Olympic Academy*

Kevin Gigax

*Executive Director
SCGA Youth on Course*

Wade Gilbert

*Professor
California State University, Fresno*

Scott Gimple

*Director of Player Development
American Youth Soccer Organization*

John Gleaves

*Assistant Professor
California State University Fullerton*

Andrew Goyne

*Manager, Video Production
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Scott Hallenbeck

*Executive Director
USA Football*

Tim Hamel

*Lecturer, Pedagogy/Sport Psychology
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Elizabeth Hanley

*Professor Emerita, Kinesiology
Penn State University*

Jalal Hazzard

*Sr. Program Officer
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Teri Hedgpeth

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