

International Olympic Committee (IOC)

Chair Letter

DEAR DELEGATES:

Welcome to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at CYNMUN 2027! As debate over the Olympics rises due to the Olympics coming to the United States for the first time since 2002, it becomes increasingly interesting to understand the interworking of the IOC. We look forward to seeing engaged and active discussion about the issues at hand within the IOC. These issues are current and legitimate problems that the IOC is facing. Chairing the International Olympic Committee will be Hudson Shute and Dilem Eroglu.

ABOUT THE CHAIRS:

Hudson is a junior at Fayetteville-Manlius High School. This is his third year in MUN and his first year chairing. Outside of MUN, Hudson enjoys spending time outside playing sports such as baseball or golf. Hudson also loves ultimate frisbee.

Dilem is a junior at Fayetteville-Manlius High School. This is her third year in MUN, and she is looking forward to chairing for the first time. Outside of MUN, she enjoys solving puzzles, playing tennis, and travelling. While at her brother's home, she is typically playing video games with them or beating them in darts.

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE:

The Olympics have been around since the 8th century BCE, with the first recorded Olympics occurring in 776 BCE in Ancient Greece. Although the purpose behind their creation is debated, most historians agree that they were created to bring harmony to the Hellenistic world, which was fragmented during that time period. The Games were later removed by Roman Emperor Theodosius I in his efforts to reduce the rise of paganism within the empire.

With the renaissance occurring and stirring interest in Ancient Greek and Roman culture, Pierre de Coubertin recommended reviving the Olympics and adding the games back into the international world. The IOC was later created in 1894 after 79 delegates unanimously voted for its establishment.[1] From there on, the International Olympic committee was treated as the supreme governing power over the Olympics. Currently there are 106 members in the IOC, while the maximum number of members is 115. The IOC split into three governing organs: the session, the executive board and the president.[2] The International Olympic Committee's job is to oversee and protect the Olympic games. This can be anything from selecting a host city, to revenue distribution, to creating rules and regulations, etc. Along with the Olympics games they also oversee the paralympic games. The International Olympic fights for fairness and to promote inclusion.

The IOC is made up of individuals, not countries. This means that delegates should use personal pronouns in committee because they represent people and not nations.

Your Topics for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at CNYMUN 2027 will be:

1. Reducing Environmental and Economic Impacts of Hosting the Olympic Games
2. Reforming Policies on National Suspensions

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:

Following CNYMUN tradition, the debate will be conducted in Harvard style, meaning delegates will not be allowed to use pre-written clauses and/or resolutions during the committee. Doing so will make a delegate ineligible for awards.

To be eligible for awards, delegates must submit a position paper via email that addresses both topics before the start of the conference. Position papers should be 2-3 pages with each topic covering about a page. Position papers should outline the stance of your delegation and display an understanding of the topics, demonstrating research and knowledge of your organization's goals. When deciding on awards, the chairs will look favorably upon delegates who have put significant effort towards research/preparation, collaborate with other delegates during committee sessions, stay within their nation's policies, and get their voice heard without being overbearing.

[1] International Olympic Committee. "IOC Executive Board." *Olympics*, www.olympics.com/ioc/executive-board. Accessed 11 Sept. 2026.

[2] Olympedia. "International Olympic Committee." *Olympedia*, www.olympedia.org/definitions/86. Accessed 11 Sept. 2026.

Furthermore, CNYMUN has implemented a tiered structure of committees to ensure similar experience levels for all committee members. IOC is designated as an **intermediate** committee, as such all delegates in this committee should have some Model UN experience and have previously attended a conference. Debate should also reflect the more complex nature of this committee. In turn, the 'Best New Delegate' award will not be offered to any delegates in this committee.

The special features of mini crisis and head-to-head debate will be used throughout the committee.

For the first time ever CNYMUN will have online delegate training sessions prior to the conference. These sessions will help delegates new and experienced learn about MUN and prepare for the nuances of CNYMUN. The schedule for these sessions and steps to participate can be found on our website, www.cnymun.org. We highly recommend all delegates regardless of experience join.

Please share position papers before the conference begins. Our emails are listed below for you to contact your chairs about any research, position papers, committee inquiries, or other questions. We also encourage you to scan our lengthy delegate preparation resources and award structure on www.cnymun.org. We wish you luck and look forward to what CNYMUN 2027 will bring.

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TOPIC 1: REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF HOSTING THE OLYMPIC GAMES

As awareness of climate change grows world wide, more organizations are pledging increased environmental awareness. This rise in activism has led to the IOC making a push to go green.[3] This move came as a consequence of the Paris agreement.[4] The Olympics is also a very expensive event to host with the most recent summer event, Paris 2024, coming in at 8.7 billion dollars.[5] This price tag makes hosting the Olympics out of the question for many smaller countries that simply don't have the economic means available. Another problem with the large cost is that many facilities lie unused and rot away after being built for the Olympics.[6] Some examples of this would be the Deodoro Aquatics Stadium that was built for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro

Previous hosts have already felt the environmental effects. Pyeongchang, who hosted the Olympics in 2018, had to cut down thousands of trees and displace several protected animals to accommodate the ski events. This, along with the constant use of artificial snow (which uses lots of water and energy), led to severe climate effects such as forced displacement of locals and destruction of 32 homes.[7] Even worse from an environmental standpoint was the 2014 Olympics held in Sochi, Russia. The large amount of construction needed in Sochi led to illegal dumping into conserved water areas. This led to migration paths of animals such as brown bears being blocked and limited accessibility of usable water to natives of the area.[8]

Along with being environmentally taxing, the Olympics have been historically very expensive. Some countries that host the Olympics are unable to pay back their debt until years later. Case in point is Montreal 1976 in which the city was unable to pay back their debts until 30 years later in 2006.[9] This negatively affected Montreal because they had to levy more taxes to raise revenue to pay off this debt. This debt seems to correlate with the tendency of the International Olympic Committee to underestimate how much the Olympics will cost. Since 1988, every single Olympics has overrun their budget, and some years, like 2014, have overrun by over 275%.[10] This overrun is often caused by an increased amount of infrastructure that needs to be built, construction of the Olympic Village and massive security costs. For example, in Sochi 2014, 85% of the 50 billion dollar budget went to building infrastructure that wasn't even sports related such as regional transport, energy grid, and real estate.[11] Although some of this infrastructure was beneficial to the local community like public transportation, much of this money was dumped into white elephant stadiums.[12]

Recently, the situation has improved. The most recent summer Olympics, Paris 2024, was more green than previous Olympics. One way they accomplished this was by using pre-existing infrastructure instead of

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[3] UNEP. "The Olympics Are Part of a Push to 'Green' Sports. Here's Why That's Important." *UNEP*, 2 Aug. 2024, www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/olympics-are-part-push-green-sports-heres-why-thats-important. Accessed 9 July 2026.

[4] Britannica Editors. "Paris Agreement." Encyclopedia Britannica, 26 Sep. 2026 https://www.britannica.com/topic/Paris-Agreement-2015. Accessed 5 October 2026.

[5] McBride, James, and Noah Berman. "The Economics of Hosting the Olympic Games." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 Feb. 2026, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/economics-hosting-olympic-games. Accessed 9 July 2026.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Aguilera, Antonio. "The Environmental Impact of Hosting the Olympic Games." *Fordham University Environmental Law Review*, 14 Sept. 2022, fordhamlawelr.org/?p=1607. Accessed 9 July 2026.

[8] Dai, Mona. "Sochi 2014: Why the Sustainability Record Matters." *Duke*, 25 Feb. 2014, sites.nicholas.duke.edu/loribennear/2014/02/25/sochi-2014-why-the-sustainability-record-matters/. Accessed 11 July 2026.

[9] McBride, James, and Noah Berman. "The Economics of Hosting the Olympic Games." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 Feb. 2026, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/economics-hosting-olympic-games. Accessed 9 July 2026

[10] Ibid.

[11] Baumann, Robert, and Victor Matheson. "Infrastructure Investments and Mega-Sports Events: Comparing the Experience of Developing and Industrialized Countries." *Holy Cross*, Aug. 2013, hcapps.holycross.edu/hcs/RePEc/hcx/HC1305-Baumann-Matheson_MegaEventsDeveloping.pdf. Accessed 16 July 2026.

[12] Walker, Shaun. "The Sochi Olympics Legacy: 'The city now feels like a ghost town.'" *The Guardian*, 17 Dec. 2014, www.theguardian.com/sport/2014/dec/17/sochi-olympics-legacy-city-feels-like-a-ghost-town. Accessed 5 Oct. 2026.

building them completely new. 95% of the venues utilize existing or temporary structures for the games, which is the highest percentage ever. This infrastructure includes the Stade de France which was originally built for the World cup and was updated by adding a technologically advanced track for the Olympics.[13] Another reason for Paris' success was its ability to reduce energy consumption. During the games, 100% of the energy used was renewable and no diesel powered generators were used. Paris 2024 was also able to cut the carbon footprint of the meals they served by 50%.[14]All of these efforts, along with a reduction of single use plastic, led to a more sustainable Olympic games than ever before.[15]

All the improvements in the environment come at a hefty price. Paris 2024 ended up costing $8.7 billion and Milano Cortina 2026 cost $6.1 billion. Both of these follow the trend of the Olympic games going over their estimated budget supplied by the IOC.[16] That being said, both of these Olympics ran far less over budget than less environmentally aware Olympics like Sochi. Paris 2024 went 115% over budget, whereas Sochi went 289% over.[17] Sochi went so over budget due to them having to build 85% of the infrastructure from scratch.[18] Employment spikes, around and during the Olympics due to a massive short term need for labor, allowed the games to run smoothly. Over 150,000 jobs were created during the Olympics. That being said, no significant increase in employment was recorded.[19] Broadcasting revenue for the Olympics was higher than ever. The IOC keeps around 60% of this revenue.[20] Milan Cortina 2026 was the highest grossing winter Olympics ever, raking in $1.2 billion. Paris 2024 also was in the billions for ad revenue ending at $3.2 billion.[21]

Prominent organizations such as the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee have taken action on the challenges of reducing the environmental and economic impact of the Olympic Games. One example of this is the sports for action framework. This framework, which was overseen by the United Nations and the IOC, required major sports organizations to significantly reduce their carbon footprint mostly by prioritizing the use of pre-existing infrastructure.[22] The IOC itself has also committed to a sustainability strategy that will contribute to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[23] This commitment includes reducing its own carbon emissions by 50% by 2030. The IOC plans to accomplish this by promoting public transit, maintaining high green standards, and planting native trees to counteract

[13] Dienst, Jennifer N. "Game Changer: Paris 2024 Olympics Takes Bold Strides toward Sustainability." *PCMA*, www.pcma.org/paris-2024-olympic-games-takes-bold-strides-toward-sustainability/. Accessed 24 July 2026.

[14] Kanno, Sophia Lin. "Sustainable Spirit: The Paris Olympics' Green Legacy." *Access*, 9 Aug. 2024, www.accessdmc.com/blog-posts/sustainable-spirit-the-paris-olympics-green-legacy. Accessed 24 July 2026.

[15] International Olympic Committee. "Environmental Benefits of Hosting the Olympic Games." *Olympics*, www.olympics.com/ioc/becoming-an-olympic-games-host/environmental-benefits-of-hosting-the-olympic-games. Accessed 9 July 2026.

[16] Stabli. "2026 Winter Olympics: How Much Did They Cost?" *Stabli*, 17 Feb. 2026, stabil.az/en/news/2026-winter-olympics-how-much-did-they-cost. Accessed 27 July 2026.

[17] *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 Feb. 2026, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/economics-hosting-olympic-games. Accessed 9 July 2026.

[18] Troyansky, Vladimir. "The Mistake That Is Sochi." *Open Democracy*, 7 Feb. 2014, www.opendemocracy.net/en/mistake-that-is-sochi/. Accessed 7 Oct. 2026.

[19] OECD. "The Legacy of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games." *OECD*, 19 Sept. 2025, www.oecd.org/en/publications/the-legacy-of-the-paris-2024-olympic-and-paralympic-games_d7938b7f-en/full-report/international-learnings-and-recommendations_c7983e52.html. Accessed 27 July 2026.

[20] Lisa, Andrew. "Where Does Olympic Funding Come From?" *Yahoo*, 9 Feb. 2022, finance.yahoo.com/news/where-does-olympic-funding-come-210011250.html. Accessed 5 Oct. 2026.

[21] McBride, James, and Noah Berman. "The Economics of Hosting the Olympic Games." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 Feb. 2026, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/economics-hosting-olympic-games. Accessed 9 July 2026.

[22] Lovelock, Thomas. "INTERVIEW: Olympic 'Game Changer' Boosts Sustainability in Sport." *United Nations News*, United Nations, 3 Apr. 2023, news.un.org/en/story/2023/04/1135202. Accessed 8 Aug. 2026.

[23] International Olympic Committee. "Environmental Benefits of Hosting the Olympic Games." *Olympics*, www.olympics.com/ioc/becoming-an-olympic-games-host/environmental-benefits-of-hosting-the-olympic-games. Accessed 9 July 2026

deforestation.[24] The IOC wants 70% of transportation to be electric or by rails, and they want to plant 400,00 trees across Mali and Senegal to combat desertification. [25]

There are some negative effects of the attempts at increased environmental friendliness which tend to come at the expense of the athletes. One example of this is the decreased use of air conditioning in Paris. In an attempt to reduce their carbon emissions Paris 2024 decided to significantly reduce the use of air conditioning, this lead to many athletes feeling suffocated by the record high temperatures or just completely ignoring these policies and bringing their own cooling systems.[26] Milan Cortina 2026 enforced the first ever ban on PFA/forever chemicals in skis and snowboards. This new rule forced some athletes to get banned for failing these new 'wax checks'.[27]

On the economic side, it's mostly the job of the IOC to worry about the financial impacts of the Olympics on the host city. A recent surge in data supports the fact that the Olympics are not as profitable as they may seem. In 2019, to counteract a significant decrease in bids for the Olympics due to increased financial risk and skyrocketing budgets, the IOC adopted a policy that would make bidding less expensive, more geographically available, and allow multiple cities within the same country to co-host the Olympics.[28] This plan has worked for the IOC as the Olympics following it, Paris 2024, were the cheapest Olympics in years, Milan Cortina 2026 was the first Olympics to have a co-hosted Olympics between two cities and bids for future Olympics have gone up.[29] Milan hosted the indoor events like ice hockey and Cortina hosted the sliding events like the bobsled.[30] The splitting of the events based on what type they are helps make the games more practical. By having the outdoor events in the mountainous region of Cortina and the indoor events in the major urban center of Milan, they were able to adjust the Olympics to the cities. The IOC also commits itself to a significant contribution of cash and other services to help the success of the Olympics games.[31] By far the largest service that the IOC provides for the host is fully paying for television and broadcasting related infrastructure.[32] This contribution was listed at 880 million dollars for the Beijing winter Olympics and is estimated to go into the billions for Los Angeles 2028 and Brisbane 2032. [33] With Beijing's budget being around 3.9 Billion dollars, this contribution ended up being around 22.5% of their budget.

Several countries have already well established their support for the International Olympic Committee's push to make their games greener. It should come as no surprise that countries that have recently held the Olympics, such as France and Italy, are on board with the Olympic's push for green.[34] There are several

[24] International Olympic Committee. "Environmental and Social Responsibility: Report Overview." *Olympics*, https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/International-Olympic-Committee/Documents/Reports/IOC-Environmental-and-Social-Responsibility-Report-Overview.pdf?displayAsWebViewdark=true%3FdisplayAsWebViewdark%3Dtrue%3FdisplayAsWebViewdark%3Dtrue%3FdisplayA. Accessed 13 09 2026.

[25] Ibid

[26] The Times Editorial Board. "Editorial: No A/C for Olympic athletes in Paris? Good intention, but bad idea." *LA Times*, 27 July 2024, https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2024-07-27/editorial-no-air-conditioning-paris-olympics-unfair-to-athletes. Accessed 7 October 2026.

[27] Amarelo, Monica. "These Olympics Are First to Feature a Ban on 'Forever Chemicals' in Ski and Snowboard Wax." *EWG*, 12 Feb. 2026, www.ewg.org/news-insights/news/2026/02/these-olympics-are-first-feature-ban-forever-chemicals-ski-and-snowboard. Accessed 7 Oct. 2026.

[28] McBride, James, and Noah Berman. "The Economics of Hosting the Olympic Games." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 Feb. 2026, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/economics-hosting-olympic-games. Accessed 9 July 2026.

[29] McBride, James, and Noah Berman. "The Economics of Hosting the Olympic Games." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 Feb. 2026, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/economics-hosting-olympic-games. Accessed 9 July 2026.

[30] Weir, Susanna. "Milestones at Milan Cortina: How the 2026 Winter Olympics Will Reach New Heights." *NBC*, 05 February 2026, https://www.nbcolympics.com/news/milestones-milan-cortina-how-2026-winter-olympics-will-reach-new-heights. Accessed 9 15 2026.

[31] International Olympic Committee. "Economic Benefits of Hosting the Olympic Games." *Olympics*, www.olympics.com/ioc/becoming-an-olympic-games-host/economic-benefits-of-hosting-the-olympic-games. Accessed 9 July 2026.

[32] Lisa, Andrew. "Where Does Olympic Funding Come From?" *Yahoo*, 9 Feb. 2022, finance.yahoo.com/news/where-does-olympic-funding-come-210011250.html. Accessed 15 Sept. 2026.

[33] Ibid

[34] International Olympic Committee. "Milano Cortina 2026 Advances Sustainability through Venue Reuse, Clean Energy and Circularity." *Olympics*, 13 Feb. 2026,

countries that have their skepticism manifest as a deserted bid. Countries like Austria deserted a bid for the 2026 winter Olympics due to concerns over the carbon footprint.[35] These countries believe that the International Olympic committee should be more environmentally green.

Even more countries have deserted their bid due to financial reasons. Countries such as Norway in 2014 have cited economic reasons as the main reason they have deserted their bids.[36] Hungary was forced to desert their bid for the 2024 summer Olympics for economic reasons after a referendum. This is a recurring pattern as other cities like Calgary, Boston and Vienna all gave up their bids for similar reasons.[37] Critics of the bid cited that the estimated cost outweighed the estimated revenue by one billion.[38] Debts from the Olympics usually fall on taxpayers. This is problematic because it diverts taxpayer money away from other projects like schools and healthcare. These reasons directly contribute to countries withdrawing their bids.

Some groups like the aforementioned Austria are in agreement with the International Olympic Committee and their changes to make the Olympics more green. Other groups like the previously mentioned Canadians might still remember the disaster of Montreal and believe that the Olympics should be easier to host for countries that don't necessarily have the financial means, and others that think it is fine as it is.

Delegates must consider the tradeoffs that come with making possible solutions. Often, being more environmentally positive means spending more money. An example would be an increased price tag on low carbon concrete and bio managed wood used in the 2024 Paris Olympics.[39]

Economically, a way to reduce the financial impact of hosting the Olympics would be to spread them across multiple cities, but this would lead to decentralization of tourism.[40] Both economics and the environment affect each other, making it hard to reduce both economic and environmental impacts at the same time. Delegates should consider the effects that saving money would have on the environment, and vice versa.

www.olympics.com/ioc/news/milano-cortina-2026-advances-sustainability-through-venue-reuse-clean-energy-and-circularity. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

[35] Bradley, Simon. "Climate Concerns Cast Doubt over the Future of Winter Olympics." *Swiss Info*, 16 Feb. 2026, www.swissinfo.ch/eng/climate-adaptation/climate-concerns-cast-doubt-over-the-future-of-winter-olympics/90931884. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

[36] Manfred, Tony. "The Bidding for the 2022 Olympics Is a Disaster Because Everyone Figured out that Hosting Is a Total Waste." *Business Insider*, 1 Oct. 2014, www.businessinsider.com/2022-olympics-host-bidding-2014-10. Accessed 21 Aug. 2026.

[37] "Calgary Votes against Winter Olympics Bid." *BBC*, 14 Nov. 2018, www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-46205694.

[38] Sports Illustrated Staff. "City Referendum on Budapest 2024 Olympic Bid Abandoned." *Sports Illustrated*, 29 Nov. 2016, www.si.com/olympics/2016/11/29/ap-oly-budapest-2024-bid. Accessed 21 Aug. 2026.

[39] OECD. "The Legacy of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games." *OECD*, 19 Sept. 2025, www.oecd.org/en/publications/the-legacy-of-the-paris-2024-olympic-and-paralympic-games_d7938b7f-en/full-report/international-learnings-and-recommendations_c7983e52.html. Accessed 27 July 2026.

[40] McBride, James, and Noah Berman. "The Economics of Hosting the Olympic Games." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 Feb. 2026, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/economics-hosting-olympic-games. Accessed 9 July 2026.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How does reducing the environmental impact of the Olympics affect the impact of the economics of the Olympics, and vice versa?
2. How have steps taken by the IOC to reduce the impact of the environment/economics on the Olympic games helped or hindered the games themselves?
3. Is it worth making changes to the games that would help environmentally/economically, but would harm the games themselves?
4. How could the International Olympic Committee reduce the financial risk of the Olympics for countries who bid?

HELPFUL SOURCES:

"The Economics of Hosting the Olympic Games"
https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/economics-hosting-olympic-games

"Environmental Benefits of Hosting the Olympic Games"
https://www.olympics.com/ioc/becoming-an-olympic-games-host/environmental-benefits-of-hosting-the-olympic-games

"Not So Golden: The Economic Realities of Hosting the Olympics"
https://stanfordeconreview.com/2024/06/20/commentary-not-so-golden-the-economic-realities-of-hosting-the-olympics/

"The Environmental Impact of Hosting the Olympic Games"
https://fordhamlawelr.org/?p=1607

TOPIC 2: REFORMING POLICIES ON NATIONAL SUSPENSIONS

As the political climate has become increasingly tense, international sporting events have become a forum for political statements to be made, causing the public to scrutinize the IOC's policies of national suspensions. National suspensions within the Olympics are defined as sanctions against the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of a country, not the government of that nation. These suspensions are placed after the NOC violates the rules or charter of the IOC, and carry heavy penalties for the affected nation.[41] These penalties are decided by the IOC depending upon the infraction that the NOC has committed, but some may include the nation's Olympic Committee no longer being able to act as an NOC, Olympic funding being cut off, and the national flag not being displayed during events.[42] The fundamental challenge with these suspensions lies in balancing punishing the NOC for violating the IOC's policies while protecting the opportunities and autonomy of athletes. To combat this imbalance, the IOC still holds the right to accept athletes from the suspended nation as individual neutral athletes, though there is a limited number of athletes who are permitted to compete, and they have strict eligibility requirements, one of which is that these athletes should not be supporting their nation's violations of the Olympic Charter.

The Olympics have been used as a method of political expression for a long time, though the IOC has continuously expressed their belief that the Olympics are not meant to be political in nature and emphasize the importance of neutrality in the Games, which is reflected in Fundamental Principle 5 of the Olympic Charter and rule 50.2[43], which prohibits political, religious, and racial demonstrations or propaganda at Olympic venues. Athletes and governments have used the Olympic platform to stage boycotts and protests to bring more attention to their chosen issue. One of the earliest examples of political protest on the Olympic stage occurred in 1906 Intercalated Games when Irish athlete Peter O'Connor won the silver medal in track and field, while being classified as a British competitor. In protest of this label, O'Connor climbed a pole and replaced the British flag, waving the Irish flag in its place.[44] His act of public protest paved the way for more political expression to be present within the Olympics. Later on, during the 1968 Olympics in Mexico, which occurred at the height of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, two African-American athletes used the platform to protest against racial discrimination. They had come to the competition wearing beads and scarves to oppose the lyching happening within the United States during this time, representing the victims of these crimes. Then, during their medal ceremony, they wore black gloves and raised their fists while the national anthem was playing.[45] Both players were suspended from the American team and sent back to the United States. The US Olympic committee banned them from national and international competitions.[46] This situation demonstrates how the Olympics platform can be used to spread political messages, but also the consequences that could accompany these actions.

Another political controversy surrounding the Olympics happened when the IOC allowed the 1936 Olympic Games to take place in Nazi Germany despite the human rights violations happening within the region. The IOC had originally awarded the 1936 Olympic Games to Germany in 1931 before Hitler and the Nazi Party were in power. After the Nazi

[41] International Olympic Committee. "Regulations and Legislation." Olympics.com, www.olympics.com/ioc/prevention-competition-manipulation/regulations-legislation.

[42] International Olympic Committee. "Strict Eligibility Conditions in Place as IOC EB Approves Individual Neutral Athletes (AINs) for the Olympic Games Paris 2024." Olympics.com, 8 Dec. 2023, www.olympics.com/ioc/news/strict-eligibility-conditions-in-place-as-ioc-eb-approves-individual-neutral-athletes-ains-for-the-olympic-games-paris-2024.

[43] International Olympic Committee. Olympic Charter. International Olympic Committee, 2025, https://library.olympics.com/

[44] Council on Foreign Relations. "Politics and Protest at the Olympics." Council on Foreign Relations, updated 23 July 2024, https://www.cfr.org/articles/olympics-boycott-protest-politics-history

[45] Nittle, Nadra Kareem. "Why Black American Athletes Raised Their Fists at the 1968 Olympics." HISTORY, 25 May 2021, https://www.history.com/articles/black-athletes-raise-fists-1968-olympics

[46] Burke, Myles. "In History: How Tommie Smith and John Carlos's Protest at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics Shook the World." BBC Culture, 16 Oct. 2023, https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20231011-in-history-how-tommie-smith-and-john-carloss-protest-at-the-1968-mexico-city-olympics-shook-the-world

regime came into power, various groups attempted to boycott the Games and many others brought up human rights concerns within the region, but the boycott was ultimately a failure and the Games continued despite the concerns. The President of the IOC received reassurance from Hitler and the Nazi Party that no discrimination would happen to athletes while competing and all Olympic rules would be followed, and thus, the IOC allowed the Games to be hosted in Nazi Germany. During these Games, the Nazi regime used the opportunity to spread propaganda and presented the country as united and peaceful to the rest of the world, hiding the mass mistreatment of Jewish people and other groups.[47] This event displayed the IOC's desire to separate politics and sports, alongside the difficulty of balancing international neutrality with this desire.

Another example of the Olympics being used for political attention was during the 1980 Olympics in the Soviet Union. These Olympics took place during the Cold War and after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, resulting in the United States and its allies boycotting the Olympics and the Soviet Union hosting. Ultimately, 65 nations refused to participate in the Games and around 15 other nations refrained from waving their national flag in protest of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.[48] Similarly, during the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, South Africa was not invited due to the ongoing apartheid within the nation. The apartheid in South Africa was a systematic discrimination mechanism that segregated white and black Africans, forcing black Africans into horrible situations and violating their human rights. As resistance groups began bringing the situation to international attention, pressure grew for the IOC to take action against South Africa, which resulted in the barring of the country from the Olympics for over two decades.[49] The events that transpired showcased that countries could use the Olympics to respond to wider international tensions, despite the IOC's desire to separate itself from politics.

For example, the 1920 Olympics in Belgium were focused on honoring those killed during the first world war and 1918 flu epidemic, connecting with the larger political sphere of the world. During the opening ceremony of the Games, the Olympic oath was taken for the first time by an athlete on behalf of all the competitors, the Olympics flag with 5 rings was flown for the first time to emphasize the connection of the five continents, and doves were released as a symbol of peace after the war, which was later made into an Olympic tradition.[50] These traditions were created to emphasize the peace ideals of the Olympics. However, this contradicts with the exclusion of countries that were on the losing side of World War I from the Games, which reflected the political tensions during that time period despite the Olympics wanting to be separate from international politics.

With their desire to separate from politics, the Olympics have always pushed the Olympic Truce, which is meant to discourage countries from being involved in international conflict for the duration of the Games. The tradition of the Olympic Truce dates back to the 9th century in Greece, when three Kings signed a treaty in order to ensure the safe passage of all the participants of the Olympic games, including athletes and audience members. The Truce was needed because of the constant state of conflict plaguing the region during this time period and the prospect of individuals getting injured in the crossfires of these conflicts. This truce was revitalized in the 1990s to protect the rights of athletes and use the large Olympic platform to promote peace and prosperity. The Truce requires nations to implement several activities to promote peace and community-building through sport. [51]

Although this truce is the forefront of principles for the Olympics, Russia has been accused of violating

[47] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936." Holocaust Encyclopedia, 7 Apr. 2025, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-nazi-olympics-berlin-1936.

[48] CFR Editors. "Politics and Protest at the Olympics." Council on Foreign Relations, 23 July 2024, www.cfr.org/articles/olympics-boycott-protest-politics-history.

[49] "Why South Africa Was Barred from the Olympics: Apartheid." Olympics, 26 July 2018, https://www.olympics.com/en/news/why-south-africa-barred-from-the-olympics-apartheid.

[50] International Olympic Committee. "Antwerp 1920." Olympics.com, https://www.olympics.com/en/olympic-games/antwerp-1920

[51] International Olympic Committee. "Olympic Truce." Olympics.com, https://www.olympics.com/ioc/olympic-truce

this Truce three times in the last 20 years.[52] After their latest accusation during invasion of Ukraine in 2022, their national sporting organizations began infringing upon the Ukraine Olympic Committee's jurisdiction, resulting in the Russian Olympic Committee being officially suspended by the IOC for breaches of territorial integrity. Their athletes are not able to play in the Olympics under their national flag, instead having to qualify as neutral individual athletes and compete without a national identity. Moreover, being able to qualify as a neutral individual athlete is extremely difficult, which can be seen from the decrease of more than 300 Russian athletes competing during the Tokyo Olympics to 15 Russian athletes competing during the Paris Olympics.[53] According to the IOC, individual athletes have to be invited by the IOC and only a very limited number will qualify through the existing systems, making it rare for athletes to be accepted as neutral.[54] They also face heavy criticism from their home country and spectators for their decisions to compete as an individual athlete, putting extreme pressure on these people. Russian politicians such as Elena Välbe have gone as far as saying that athletes willing to participate in the Paris Olympics are traitors of the nation.[55] Some Ukrainian activists are trying to find anything that disqualifies Russian neutral athletes from competing in the Games, searching through their social media and flagging any posts they perceive as supporting the war. Athletes are continuously worried about making any sort of mistake and have to watch their words very carefully in order to avoid being questioned about their stance. For example, Russian tennis player, Diana Shnaider, had been flagged for two of her posts for suspected support for the war. When questioned about these during a press interview, Shnaider refused to answer anything about politics. [56] These circumstances can create increased mental distress within athletes, raising questions about whether athletes should be held accountable for the actions of their nation.

However, Israel has been permitted to play in the Olympics despite their continued military attacks on Palestine. Israel is a UN member who participated in the UN General Assembly and co-sponsored the resolution for the adoption of the Olympic Truce, and passed the resolution determining that the Games should embody peace and not conflict. Nevertheless, during the 2024 Summer Games, Israel was actively conducting military attacks on Palestine and their National Olympic Committee did not face a ban. The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry in Palestine[57] concluded that Israel's actions violated the international humanitarian law, with Israel's action meeting four of the five genocidal acts,[58] meaning its actions directly contrasted with the values of the Olympic Truce. Israel has rejected these conclusions and continues to claim that their actions do not align with any of these requirements. The IOC has also stated in response that their exclusion of Russia lies in protecting Ukrainian athletes and allowing them to properly prepare for their sport. However, athletes in Palestine also lack access to training facilities due to Israeli attacks that have destroyed sporting infrastructure. [59]The perceived lack of consistency and differing reactions to Russia

[52] Bertoli, Andrew. "The Politics behind Olympic Bans." IE Insights, 23 July 2024, www.ie.edu/insights/articles/the-politics-behind-olympic-bans/.

[53] Associated Press. "Russian 'Neutrals' at Paris Olympics Are Politically Isolated and Rarely in the Spotlight." Voice of America, 4 Aug. 2024, https://www.voanews.com/a/russian-neutrals-at-paris-olympics-are-politically-isolated-and-rarely-in-the-spotlight-/7729583.html

[54] Dev, S. "What Is 'AIN' in the Olympics? Why Russian and Belarusian Athletes Can't Represent Their Countries." CBS News, 2 Aug. 2024, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/what-is-ain-olympics-russia-belarus/

[55] Vitkine, Benoît. "Paris 2024: The Russian Sports Community Is Split over Olympics Participation." Le Monde, 12 Apr. 2024, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/sports/article/2024/04/12/paris-2024-the-russian-sports-community-is-split-over-olympics-participation_6668215_9.html

[56] "Russian Athletes Face Backlash as 'Neutral' Competitors in Paris Olympics." Euronews, 8 Aug. 2024, https://www.euronews.com/2024/08/08/15-russian-neutrals-at-olympics-are-politically-isolated-rarely-in-spotlight

[57] United Nations Human Rights Council, Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. Legal Analysis of the Conduct of Israel in Gaza Pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. United Nations, 16 Sept. 2025, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/commission-of-inquiry-report-genocide-in-gaza-a-hrc-60-crp-3/

[58] United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. "Israel Has Committed Genocide in the Gaza Strip, UN Commission of Inquiry Finds." United Nations, 16 Sept. 2025, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/israel-has-committed-genocide-in-the-gaza-strip-un-commission-finds-16sep25/

[59] Khaled, Hatem. "As Bombs Shatter Gaza, Boxing Coach Emboldens Girls." Reuters, 13 July 2024, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/bombs-shatter-gaza-boxing-coach-emboldens-girls-2024-07-12/

and Israel have raised questions about the ways in which the IOC determines suspensions.

In July of 2026, the IOC made the decision of provisionally rescinding the suspension on Russia, allowing for the potential return in the 2028 Summer Olympics.[60] The provisional reinstatement means that the suspension on the ROC has been lifted conditionally, but the IOC will still continue to closely watch Russian actions and has the power to put restrictions on the ROC if deemed necessary. Russian athletes still have to go through doping procedures to be eligible for the Olympics, and the ROC has to not conduct any activities in the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Olympic Committee. If these conditions are violated in any manner, the IOC has the right to reinstate the suspension. However, Russia still remains ineligible for becoming the host of any future Olympic games for now and their government officials will not be invited to the Olympics. The decision for their national anthem and flag representation remains unclear. This decision comes after the IOC has determined that the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) is no longer infringing upon the Ukrainian Olympic Committee and removing their sporting organizations in Ukrainian territory, and the ROC has confirmed that it will not conduct activities in the areas under the jurisdiction of Ukraine. [61]

The announcement received a mixed response internationally, especially from Ukraine and its allies. Ukraine has condemned the IOC decision, claiming that the decision was premature and the IOC did not properly verify that Russia is no longer violating the Olympic Charter.[62] The Ukrainian Olympic Committee has appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against the IOC's decision, pointing out that CAS confirmed the legitimacy of the Russian suspension in 2024. Nine other EU nations including Sweden, Estonia, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Finland and Denmark have called for the EU to cut funding for the Olympics following the IOC's decision.[63] Though the EU does not provide direct funding for the IOC, it does support and encourage the participation of nations in the Olympics, which is essential in the bidding of Olympic hosts and it funds the IOC indirectly through other organizations such as Erasmus+ programs.[64] Therefore, the IOC would lose essential financial funding and it would reduce other resources as well, such as commercial interests. The sanction would have much wider political effects by showing that the IOC has lost the backing of many European nations. These consequences would threaten the international position and reputation of the IOC while potentially encouraging other sponsors and partners of the IOC to rethink their decision. Other International Sporting Organizations have followed the IOC's decision and eased suspensions on Russian athletes, however, others such as International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) have kept their sanction on Russia, but are considering easing it while some organizations such as Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) currently have no intention to rescind them, leaving the international sports stage divided in how to handle this situation.

For example, an amendment strengthening the political neutrality of the IOC was adopted in June 2026 after being supported by the IOC executive board and the IOC president, Kirsty Coventry. This amendment strengthened the requirement that NOC stay isolated from the any external pressures including political and governmental pressures[65]. A

[60] International Olympic Committee. "IOC Provisionally Lifts Suspension of Russian Olympic Committee: Recommendations to IFs with Regard to Russian Athletes' Participation No Longer Applicable." Olympics.com, 7 July 2026, www.olympics.com/ioc/news/ioc-provisionally-lifts-suspension-of-russian-olympic-committee-recommendations-to-ifs-with-regard-to-russian-athletes-participation-no-longer-applicable.

[61] International Olympic Committee. "IOC Provisionally Lifts Suspension of Russian Olympic Committee: Recommendations to IFs with Regard to Russian Athletes' Participation No Longer Applicable." Olympics, 7 July 2026, https://www.olympics.com/ioc/news/ioc-provisionally-lifts-suspension-of-russian-olympic-committee-recommendations-to-ifs-with-regard-to-russian-athletes-participation-no-longer-applicable

[62] Botcherby, Elizabeth. "Ukraine appeals IOC Decision to Reinstate Russia." BBC Sport, 29 July 2026, www.bbc.com/sport/olympics/articles/c5yvpwk1033o.

[63] "Russia's Return to Sports Competitions Ignites Outrage in Ukraine." POLITICO Europe, www.politico.eu/article/russia-athlete-ban-help-vladimir-putin-ukraine-international-olympic-committee-ioc/.

[64] Carro, Javier. "Brussels Addresses Sport Federation's Funding after ROC Return." Inside the Games, 16 July 2026, https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/brussels-to-review-federation-funding-after-russia-return

[65] Le Poidevin, Olivia. "IOC Accepts Charter Changes on Sports Neutrality and Olympic Programme." Reuters, 24 June 2026, https://www.reuters.com/sports/ioc-consider-olympic-charter-neutrality-changes-with-russia-focus-2026-06-24/

year earlier, in June of 2025, there was a proposed amendment to rule 50 of the Olympic Charter by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which would clarify that the rule did not prevent athletes from condemning human rights violations or supporting peace. PACE also proposed the creation of a monitoring program for human rights violations within the IOC.[66] Additional amendments to the Olympic Charter could create clearer guidelines for the IOC to follow, giving nations explicit standards to abide by. A similar arrangement would be able to ease tensions between nations by enabling them to easily see whether other countries were in violation of any policies, fostering more consistency within the IOC and their decisions. However, if these amendments are made too strictly, they would reduce the decision-making of the IOC, which could limit its status within the international world and its autonomy in the Olympics. If these amendments are made too vaguely, they could lead to nations interpreting regulations in differing ways and producing more controversy. New regulations could affect the way that Russian athletes are emitted to participate within future games, and the distinction between nations and their athletes. These changes could also lead to potential boycotts within the Olympics, leading to some nations not sending delegations to the Olympic games

Another plausible solution could be creating a standardized process that determines how NOC are suspended and the consequences that are imposed. Standardizing this process would lessen feelings of unfairness between nations and enable the IOC to create better guidelines for Individual Neutral Athletes, ensuring that their opportunities are protected, while their NOC is being sanctioned. Countries such as Lithuanian, Estonia, Latvia, and Romania, which have publicly advocated their desire for harsher restrictions on Russia would likely back larger consequences for the NOCs of nations and stricter regulations for determining if their athletes are eligible for competition. Although a standardized process would improve consistency within the IOC, it also does not allow room for nuance between the situations of nations, which could create tension internationally. For example, when Kuwait was suspended from the IOC in 2015 due to government interference in national sporting events after a law was passed that was not compatible with the basic principles of the Olympics. While reinstating the Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC) into the IOC, the IOC president, Thomas Bach did so by creating a roadmap to reinstatement, which required Kuwait to amend the sporting laws, reform sporting organizations, and conduct elections before the final reinstatement of the KOC[67].

A system could include restrictions being determined by the severity of each violation, and conditions that go along with the reinstatement of each NOC after they violate specific rules. This system would be highly debated within the committee as members such as Sebastain Coe from the United Kingdom publicly sustained the restrictions on the ROC despite the IOC decisions to ease their attitude towards the ROC. The World Athletics Council, which Coe is the head of, maintained restrictions on Russia after the IOC decision, which prevented them from competing in international athletics competitions.[68] Members with similar views would back continued restrictions on NOC of nations after they've violated the IOC and their rules. On the other hand, other members of the IOC such as Kirsty Coventry have expressed their desire for increased neutrality within the Olympics and supported the relaxed restrictions on the ROC and their athletes.[69] These members would emphasize the importance of separating athletes from their nation's action and giving these athletes more opportunities within the Olympics.

Ukraine and several of its allies are against the incorporation of Russia back into the international

[66] Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. "The Olympic Movement and Peacekeeping: Is Sport Neutrality Serving Sport Values?" Resolution 2608 (2025), Council of Europe, 25 June 2025, https://pace.coe.int/en/files/34494/html

[67] Association of National Olympic Committees. "IOC Lifts Suspension of Kuwait Olympic Committee." ANOC, 5 July 2019, https://www.anocolympic.org/olympic-movement/ioc-lifts-suspension-of-kuwait-olympic-committee/

[68] World Athletics. "Decisions Made at 241st World Athletics Council Meeting." World Athletics, 3 July 2026, https://worldathletics.org/news/press-releases/decisions-made-241st-council-meeting

[69] "IOC President Gives Clearest Signal So Far That Russia Could Be at 2028 Olympics." The Guardian, 3 Feb. 2026, https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2026/feb/03/ioc-president-kirsty-coventry-russia-2028-olympics-ukraine-sports-minister-fifa-gianni-infantino

sporting stage, arguing that Russia's actions are still in violation of the Olympic Charter and policies and concerns that allowing Russia to participate would strengthen their international position and hence legitimize their actions in the Russo-Ukrainian war. However, many nations supporting the Russian suspension are against the suspension of Israel for its actions against Palestine, claiming that Israel's actions are different from Russian acts of aggression and should not be judged in the same manner. These diverse responses have caused fragmentation within the international atmosphere and debate over the consistency of the IOC's regulations and policies.

Some officials from Russia have stated a position of neutrality within sports, maintaining that sports should remain separate from politics.[70] Members such as Shamil Tarpishchev may share these views and be in favor of separating athletes from their nation's actions, not allowing them to be punished for something that they did not do.

Delegates should debate whether nations should be held to the same standards despite differing situations, taking into consideration the regulations that should be put in place to guide these decisions. Delegates should focus on creating regulations that allow countries to take accountability for their actions alongside protecting the competitive opportunities and autonomy of athletes and deciding how this balance should work.

[70] Russian Olympic Committee. "The International Olympic Committee Has Decided to Reinstate the Rights of the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC)." Russian Olympic Committee, 9 July 2026, en.olympic.ru/press/the-international-olympic-committee-has-decided-to-reinstate-the-rights-of-the-russian-olympic-commi/.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How should athletes be treated when their National Olympic Committee has been suspended?
2. Should the actions of a nation be separated from sporting events?
3. What measures should be taken to standardize suspensions and create more consistency within the Olympics?
4. How should the international political atmosphere affect the progression of the Olympics?

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

"Politics and Protest at the Olympics"
https://www.cfr.org/articles/olympics-boycott-protest-politics-history

"The Politics Behind Olympic Bans"
https://www.ie.edu/insights/articles/the-politics-behind-olympic-bans/

"Paris 2024: Geopolitics and the Olympics"
https://global.usc.edu/paris-2024-geopolitics-and-the-olympics/

"Strict eligibility conditions in place as IOC EB approves Individual Neutral Athletes (AINs) for the Olympic Games Paris 2024
https://www.olympics.com/ioc/news/strict-eligibility-conditions-in-place-as-ioc-eb-approves-individual-neutral-athletes-ains-for-the-olympic-games-paris-2024