

THE OLYMPIC GAMES (1)

The 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing China—Boycott or Not!



As each Olympics approaches it always seems that there are various world groups that call for a boycott of the Games. This time the issue seems to be human and civil rights violations in Tibet by China, a political situation that has existed dating back to the thirteenth century. Is the threat of a boycott proper treatment for the organizers in Beijing, China who are hosting the 2008 Olympic Games August 8th through August 23rd? Would the cancelation of the 2008 Olympic Games be a fair and just outcome for the Olympic athletes of the world's nations who have been training and competed diligently in their specific sports venue for what might be each athlete's single opportunity to become an Olympic champion or medalist while representing their country?

Should each approaching Olympic Games be singled out for a boycott every four years for a current political gripe or a humanitarian cause? The modern Olympic Games were resurrected to help bring mankind and nations together; not to create displays of active discourse over a political conflict or humanitarian cause. Instead picking on the Olympic Games to boycott, why not instead threaten a boycott of other major world sporting events such the Wimbledon tennis tournament, the Indianapolis 500 auto race, The Masters golf tournament or the World Cup soccer tournament? Better still why not boycott other international events which are not athletic in nature. I am sure we can all think of some world events that merit consideration for boycott. Why pick on the Olympic Games as the “regularly designated patsy” for a threatened boycott or a political protest?

Past disruptions of the Modern Olympic Games

Consider that the modern Olympic Games were canceled three times due to World War I and II (1916, 1940 & 1944). The Olympic Games survived and continued after boycotts by a significant number of nations in 1976, 1980 & 1984 producing a host of “forgotten Olympians.” The Olympic Games continued to be conducted during and after the siege and then murder of eleven Israeli athletes by Palestinian terrorists during the 1972 Munich Games. The Olympic Games were still held after numerous student riots preceded the Mexico City Games in 1968. The Olympic Games continued to be conducted after Hitler tried to manipulate the 1936 Olympics in Berlin to his personal agenda for the glorification of the “Arian race.” The Olympic Games were conducted when most of the world community was in a state of financial depression prior and during the 1932 Los Angeles Games. The Olympic Games continued to be held following the 1908 Olympics in London after dishonest officiating and judging was carried out by biased British officials. The Olympic Games continued to be awarded and held after World Fair partnerships failed in the 1900 Games in Paris and in the 1904 Games in St. Louis.

The Introduction of Professionalism and the escalating cost of conducting the Olympic Games

Athlete professionalism was endorsed and allowed by the International Olympic Committee for the first time in Olympic Games history for the 1992 Games in Barcelona, Spain. Prior to Barcelona only amateurs were allowed to compete in the Olympic Games. The IOC bid system to select a host for the Olympic Games has continued to escalate the financial cost of conducting each Olympic Games since the first in 1896. This increase in cost has continued to escalate even more substantially since the 1992 Olympics. The number of participants in Olympic competition continues to increase. Sports venues have sometimes been removed, discontinued or added for various reasons that are not always clear to those who follow the Olympic Games. Can the IOC continue to manage an effective administration of the Olympic Games? The IOC has been plagued by serious and numerous financial scandals involving committee members as the stakes for hosting the Olympic Games have moved higher?

A review of the history of the ancient Olympic Games and the founding of the modern Olympic Games from one Olympic Games to the next may help you decide whether a boycott of the Olympic Games is appropriate or not!

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