

# PANATHLON INTERNATIONAL

N 1 2026



**SYMPOSIUM AND IA SPECIAL**  
**OLYMPICS SPECIAL**



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# Panathlon International going from strength to strength

by Giorgio Chinellato, President of Panathlon International

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The early months of 2026 were marked not only by Panathlon International's presence at the Milan-Cortina Olympics and Paralympics, but also by other important initiatives and events, which were a source of great satisfaction for the entire Movement.

Our regular activities began with our participation in the evening event organised by the Milan Club in honour of CONI President Luciano Buonfiglio.

Together with Simona and Monica, we attended the first meeting in Rome with participants in the Erasmus+ YOULEAD project, led by our friend Fabio Figueiras, a project in which Panathlon International is the lead partner.

A meeting was then organised for Governors and Club Presidents, both in person in Rapallo and remotely, to present the Training Project, which we consider fundamental for our future and our growth, and which had already been outlined to District Presidents last December.

It was an intense day's work, which I believe was both important and fruitful, as it provided an opportunity to exchange and share many ideas and projects, not only regarding training but also in view of the proposed amendments to the Statutes, with particular attention to the feedback received from Italian clubs and beyond. These contributions subsequently enabled the International Council to draw up the proposals that will be examined during the Extraordinary Assembly in Ghent.

Organising a meeting dedicated to our Italian leaders was a first, and I believe I can say that, not only for the International Council but also for all the participants—whom I thank—it was a pleasant opportunity to strengthen personal relationships, as well as to introduce them to and show them around our headquarters and the Secretariat staff.

And so we have reached the opening of the Milan-Cortina Olympics.

I believe, also with regard to the subsequent Paralympics, that in addition to the great sporting results—not only of the medallists—it was a success from every point of view.

The organisation received top marks, including for the facilities and logistics, demonstrating great organisational ability.

All this was 'spiced up' by the fact that the events took place against a unique backdrop, which left all those present – not just the foreign visitors – in awe and admiration.

Personally, I had the honour and pleasure of being admitted to the Olympic and Paralympic Family, and so I was able to experience many of these events live, 'on the ground', with the opportunity to have some important meetings with figures not only from the world of sport.

Among many others, I met Dr Stefano Domenicali and the top executives of CONI, and I was able to speak at an event organised by the CIFP, in the presence of President Sunil Sabharwal, H.S.H. Alberto of Monaco and the President of the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation, the Panathlete Ivo Ferriani, to celebrate and present the Fair Play Award in honour of the memory of the legendary Eugenio Monti.

Overall, it was a real pleasure to be present at these Games, appreciating the passion of fans and enthusiasts from all over the world, and being able to admire athletic feats of the highest calibre.

But these Games were also an important opportunity for many of our members, who worked as volunteers.

All these individuals, as far as I could see, were fundamental, in their various roles and duties, to the success of the Games.

On behalf of the whole of Panathlon International, I thank them for what they have done, with a true spirit of service and passion, as true Panathletes.

In this issue of the magazine, you will find some important testimonials.

And 12 February 2026 is a very important date, not just for Panathlon.

After months of hard work, overseen by our Past President Pierre Zappelli and the Secretariat, whom I thank, a project has come to fruition that we had conceived with three other partners as early as the Paris Olympics and which we were able to present to the IOC. The International Olympic Committee, having appreciated the idea and the chosen theme, designated Panathlon International as the main point of contact.

Together with ISOH, CIPC and CIFP, as guests of the Lombardy Region, we organised the Symposium dedicated to "Olympic Values & Artificial Intelligence".

The Symposium featured important presentations and a round table moderated by Mr. Zappelli, followed with great interest both in person and remotely, thanks also to a simultaneous interpretation system that we strongly advocated for and which will also be used during the Congress and Assemblies in Ghent.

With the Olympic phase concluded, we were invited to the District France Assembly in Nice.

As for me, in addition to the pleasure of spending time with our leaders, it was an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of Panathletic activities in France.

I would like to thank the President of the District France, Marc Rozenblat, and all those present for the warm welcome they gave me.

The work of the Chiesa Foundation also continued, with important decisions taken to improve and promote awareness of this cultural gem of ours which, I must unfortunately point out, not everyone is familiar with.

In addition to having taken part, thanks also to the courtesy and willingness of the International Board Members, who have often stood in for and represented me, in many social gatherings and at the Panathlon Ski event in Folgaria, and having received the offer and proposal from the Venice Club, the project and organisation of the Flambeau d'Or has begun, bearing in mind that this year we will be celebrating our 75th anniversary since our foundation, which took place in Venice on 12 June 1951. We will hold an initial celebration in Ghent but, as decided by the International Board, which welcomed the proposal from our Venetian friends, the highlight of the event will be the presentation of the Flambeau d'Or, precisely because this will be a special edition: for our 75th anniversary, because it is an Olympic year, and because of the proposed Venetian venue, which stands out as a highlight among the many options available in Venice.

The event is scheduled for Saturday 19 September.

Make a note of the date, as it will be not only significant but also enjoyable and interesting to attend, not least for the associated cultural initiatives.

Another important event during this period was the District Italy Assembly in Brescia.

I had the pleasure of attending with International Board Member Gerevini and Laganà, so that I could meet and talk with our leaders. It was not merely a matter of being present and offering a formal greeting.

Being able to focus on the topics discussed, including President Costa's report and the many interesting contributions, gave us the opportunity to share some decisions. Together with the International Board Members present, I hope that this meeting—which I consider positive—will enable us to strengthen relations between Panathlon International and the District Italy, just as we mutually hoped during my recent meeting with President Costa in Rapallo.

I was very pleased to welcome and meet, together with First Vice-President Giulieri, at our headquarters in Rapallo, the President of the District Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Peter Wütrich, along with a delegation from the District.

After introducing these friends to the Secretariat staff and our offices, we held a meeting to deepen our mutual understanding of the activities of the Switzerland District and those of Panathlon International. The day concluded with a formal exchange of intentions between the District Switzerland and the District Italy.

Throughout this period, we have held several meetings of the International Council and the President's Committee, both to oversee day-to-day operations and to promote new projects and organise the Congress and Assemblies in Ghent.

In this regard, I must thank the entire Culture, Research and Education Commission for their invaluable work in researching the topics to be addressed, for selecting the speakers, and for the exchange of ideas and projects aimed at organising and managing this important cultural event to the highest standard, as well as the Poster Project, which garnered the participation of no fewer than 47 Clubs, exceeding all expectations.

All this work will then be compiled into an e-book produced by the Chiesa Foundation.

Linked to all this, the overall organisation of the Ghent event was overseen: on the one hand, the significant initiative of the award dedicated to the memory of IOC Past President Jacques Rogge; on the other, the subsequent Ordinary and Extraordinary Assemblies, as well as the presentation of the Communication Award.

I was delighted to take part in the World Fair Play Day in Brussels, organised by Panathlon International, CIFP and EFPM, as well as by the District Belgium and the Panathlon Club Wallonie-Bruxelles.

I conclude this editorial, which may seem like a sort of 'shopping list', but I believe it is important to share with all Panathletes what happens and is achieved on a daily basis by our entire Movement.

In this regard, I would like to mention the valuable work being carried out and proposed by our American friends, led by Councillor Carlos De León.

And the results are clear to see.

Since the start of the year, we have opened three new Clubs in Brazil, with a fourth on the way, and the same is true in Mexico.

With the invaluable assistance of International Councillor Perin, we have opened new Clubs in Slovenia, in Ljubljana; then, with the support of Governor Ripanti, we opened the first Club in Hungary and are about to launch in Pula and Split, in Croatia. We will thus be present in two further countries.

The landscape of Junior Clubs also shows a positive trend.

Following the recent openings at the end of 2025 in Venice and the reopening of Crema, we have seen the launch of Junior Clubs in Vicenza and Trapani.

Let us all welcome these young people, on whom we must focus, involving them too in the activities of the Senior Clubs.

*Finally, I would like to dedicate a thought to a great man.*

*A world-class athlete who, through his story, his successes and his messages, will forever remain an example not only in the Paralympic world.*

*A friend of Panathlon International.*

*Farewell Alex, thank you for everything.*

*A warm embrace to your loved ones, who over the years have supported and accompanied you with affection and family love.*

Thank you for your attention and, after Ghent, we'll see you in Venice.



# THE OLYMPIC TRUCE, A FALSE MYTH

*In memory of Nelson Mandela, a Panathlon legacy*

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by Filippo Grassia, Editor-in-Chief of the Panathlon International Magazine

There are myths, passed down through the generations, that bear no relation to reality and are evoked without any knowledge of their origins or content. How many of us, referring to the wars taking place during the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics and Paralympics, have said: “In ancient Greece, wars ceased during the Games”. This was not the case, according to the historical account recounted by Giuseppe Zanetto in his book published a few months ago, entitled: “Polemos, War in Greece”. The Olympic truce, as we mistakenly believe, is a false myth. In his review of this work, Mauro Berruto writes: “Ancient Greece, the civilisation to which we attribute the concept of the Olympic truce, was by no means a society that exceptionally suspended war to celebrate sport. In those times and places, war represented a structural condition of existence. The poleis were founded to defend their own identity, grew through competition, and lived within an unstable equilibrium, made up of provisional alliances and latent or explicit hostilities.” And so the hoplite is not a professional soldier, but a citizen in arms. Peace is a parenthesis.”

We must therefore ascribe a different meaning to ekecheiria, one that goes beyond the etymological meaning of ‘let us keep our hands down’. It was not a pacifist manifesto, nor a desire to put an end to one or more conflicts, but a temporary suspension of ongoing wars. Zanetto’s book reveals a history that differs from the modernist interpretation. “What we call the Olympic truce was nothing more than a pass to ensure the smooth running of the Games, the safety of the athletes and the safe passage of spectators (roughly 40–50,000 per edition) travelling to Olympia. Wars continued; they did not stop, but were managed to safeguard the Games in their entirety and to respect the sacred space of Olympia, which in those times became a centre of diplomacy and was therefore not merely an area dedicated to sport. No war ever ceased, least of all the Peloponnesian War. And Sparta, which broke this civic and religious rule alike, was excluded from the Games of 420 BC.”

In another book, Mario Pescante, former president of CONI and a highly regarded IOC Minister of Foreign Affairs, wrote that the degenerative trends of today were also present back then: fan violence, the ultras of today, corruption among athletes, exorbitant prize money for winners—even houses—the use of performance-enhancing drugs, and cut-throat competition between cities to secure the best talent, much like the ruthless football transfer market. And in 354 BC, an incident occurred that seems to foreshadow what happened in 1972 in Munich with the Palestinian terrorist attack that resulted in the deaths of 11 Israeli athletes, 2 Germans and 5 terrorists. Back then, there was a bloody fight within the enclosure dedicated to Zeus. A sacrilege. With the distinction that the modern Olympics went ahead, whilst the ancient ones were halted, indeed cancelled. There is a lesson to be learnt from this choice. The value of sport remains as a moment of unity, but also of rivalry.

In this regard, it is worth recalling how Nelson Mandela – President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999 after spending 27 years in prison for fighting apartheid and advocating a multiracial democracy – regarded sport as the paradigm of a better world. The day he wore François Pienaar’s number 6 jersey, he made it clear to his nation that rugby was not just for white people. “Sport,” he loved to say, “has the power to change the world. It is the strongest bridge to unite peoples.” He, Nelson Mandela, was a true panathlete.

How can artificial intelligence be combined with the Olympic Movement?



The Symposium organised by the four IOC associations dedicated to ethics and culture Panathlon International, the Society of Olympic Historians, the Pierre de Coubertin Committee and the Fair Play Committee – was held in Milan

*by Vincenzo Martucci*

How can we manage the delicate relationship between artificial intelligence, ethics and the Olympic Movement? How can we use technology responsibly, whilst upholding education in Olympic values, yet harnessing AI for research, training and innovation in sport? How can we avoid the dangerous risks of an imbalance between humans and machines? How can we optimise AI's extraordinary analytical capabilities and speed of execution to safeguard Olympic values?

As part of the preparations for the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, the International Symposium **"Olympic Values and Artificial Intelligence"** raised these highly topical questions on 12 February 2026 in Milan, at Palazzo Lombardia. The event – also promoted by Panathlon International, represented by President Giorgio Chinellato, International Board Member Fabiano Gerevini, Past President Pierre Zappelli and the President of Panathlon Milan, Filippo Grassia – was jointly organised by other international bodies linked to sport and Olympic values: Society of Olympic Historians (ISOH), Pierre de Coubertin Committee (CIPC) and Fair Play Committee (CIFP).



## A ROYAL GATHERING

The day's programme, moderated by Gary Rhodes (California State University, Dominguez Hills), featured three thematic panels: Education in Olympic values and AI – with experts such as Hilla Davidov and Stephan Wassong; Ethical and responsible AI – with Emanuele Frontoni, Bianca Gama Pena and Pierre Zappelli; moderated by Izabella de Besseney; Preservation and dissemination of the Olympic heritage through AI – with Sabine Haller-Neumann and Christian Wacker on: education in Olympic values and ethical and responsible AI, and the preservation and dissemination of the Olympic heritage through intelligent tools.

## SECURITY

Among the most significant and thought-provoking contributions were those by Giuseppe Deleonardis, Head of Ethics and Compliance at the IOC, and Professor Emanuele Frontoni, Professor of Computer Science at the University of Macerata and Co-Director of the VRAI Vision Robotics & Artificial Intelligence Lab. Frontoni stated: “In the spirit of the Olympic movement, founded on the universal values of excellence, respect and friendship, technological innovation today represents a new frontier of shared progress. The integration of Artificial Intelligence into Olympic sports is not merely a tool for optimising athletic performance or advanced data analysis, but an enabling ecosystem that promotes competitive fairness, transparent decision-making and athlete safety. With computer vision systems, predictive models and biomechanical analysis platforms that help reduce the risk of injury, improve the accuracy of refereeing decisions and ensure ever-higher standards of safeguarding sporting integrity.”

## SPORT-LABORATORY

The utility of artificial intelligence is fundamental in modern sport. Professor Frontoni pointed out: “Solutions developed in the sporting context, characterised by high sensory precision, real-time monitoring capabilities and large-scale predictive analysis, generate significant benefits in the healthcare sector and social care services. Technologies designed for the analysis of athletic movement find application in motor rehabilitation, the monitoring of chronic conditions, the prevention of falls in the elderly, and smart home care systems.

Similarly, performance optimisation and management algorithms can support the planning of personalised treatment pathways and the efficient allocation of resources within welfare systems. From this perspective, the Olympic spirit is being revitalised as a paradigm of responsible innovation: sport becomes an advanced laboratory for technologies which, whilst respecting ethics and human dignity, contribute to improving quality of life, promoting health and strengthening social cohesion”.

## THE VOICE OF THE IOC

Giuseppe DeLeonardis, Head of Ethics and Compliance at the IOC, emphasised: “AI has become a defining force in global sport. But the real issue is ensuring that it strengthens – rather than weakens – fairness, transparency, accountability and the unpredictability of results. When competitions are authentic, trust flourishes; if results are manipulated or perceived as artificially influenced, trust is immediately lost.”

### Vulnerabilities and governance

Without ethical governance, AI can amplify vulnerabilities. The main concerns relate to:

- **Corruption:** AI helps identify irregularities, but it can also be exploited.
- **Competition manipulation:** intelligent systems monitor betting markets and anomalous patterns, shifting from reactive to preventive monitoring.
- **Refereeing integrity:** AI must remain supportive and explainable, never a substitute.
- **Protection of athletes:** AI can detect digital abuse, but always with due regard for privacy, transparency and proportionality.
- The IOC has adopted an Olympic Agenda on AI to ensure consistency with Olympic values, protect athletes and strengthen integrity. Conversational tools help staff navigate complex regulations, facilitating compliance without replacing human judgement.

Globally, through IPACS, federations, Olympic committees and governments share ethical practices and common standards.

The Integrity Betting Intelligence System (IBIS) monitors betting markets with AI support and in cooperation with INTERPOL, preventing manipulation. At the Paris 2024 Games, monitoring systems identified and flagged thousands of instances of offensive content targeting athletes and officials. Technology enhances vigilance, but decisions remain human.

## BRAZILIAN SPIRIT

Dr Bianca Gama Pena, a professor and researcher in sports innovation and management at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), also gave a highly engaging presentation, demonstrating how artificial intelligence can enhance gender equality, youth participation and inclusive sport, thereby reinforcing Olympic values. Key points included:

1. AI and Gender Equality in Sport. Physiological personalisation: AI processes data specific to female physiology for nutrition, recovery and injury prevention. Talent discovery: AI-driven scouting identifies promising female athletes overlooked by traditional networks. Media visibility: automatic highlights and content increase the online presence of women’s sports, attracting sponsors and boosting engagement.

2. Encouraging Youth Participation. Democratised coaching: AI apps offer professional technical feedback to children and young people in disadvantaged areas. Immersive engagement: AR/VR and platforms such as Roblox enable interactive virtual sporting experiences, such as the ‘Olympic World’ project for the Paris 2024 Games.

3. Promoting Inclusivity. Innovation in para-sport: AI optimises prosthetics and biomechanical analysis for adaptive athletes. Accessibility tools: real-time translations and audio descriptions make events inclusive for people with disabilities. Reducing bias: objective scoring systems improve fairness in competitions such as gymnastics and diving.

4. AI and Olympic Values. Excellence: AI helps every athlete reach their full potential. Fairness and respect: supports refereeing and anti-doping systems for a clean and fair playing field.

5. Future Developments. “Predictive League Office” to prevent fan disengagement and health issues. Autonomous refereeing for objective, real-time decisions. Digital twins: virtual models to simulate competitions and recovery without physical strain.

6. The Human Element at the Centre. AI in sport does not replace the athlete, but amplifies fairness, inclusion and personalisation, whilst always upholding the Olympic spirit: determination, emotion and human story. Even in sports such as football, the most realistic model will be hybrid: human referees supported by AI for objective decisions, preserving the soul of the game.

“AI in sport does not replace the athlete, but enhances fairness, inclusion and personalisation: from youth coaching to the visibility of women, right through to the optimisation of performance and Olympic values, always keeping the human element at the centre.”



# Artificial and Olympic Values Challenges and opportunities

**An interview by Antonio Palmieri, co-founder and president of the Fondazione Pensiero Solido, who served in the Chamber of Deputies for 21 years, with Pierre Zappelli, past president of Panathlon International**

Dear Antonio Palmieri, I congratulate you on your interest in sport and the values it embodies.”

With these words, Pierre Zappelli, a Frenchspeaking Swiss national and president of Panathlon International until 2024, accepted my invitation to discuss artificial intelligence and Olympic values.

**President Zappelli, on 12 February in the Lombardy Region, you organised the joint symposium ‘Olympic Values & Artificial Intelligence’. Where did the idea come from?**

*“We chose the theme of artificial intelligence in view of its growing impact on society and, more specifically, on sport, with particular attention to the implications for the ethical and educational values promoted by the Olympic Movement.”*



**What do you mean when you say “we”? I imagine it’s not the royal plural, and I believe you’re referring to the fact that it’s a joint symposium...**

*“In 2024, during the Paris Olympic Games, four organisations all recognised by the IOC – the International Fair Play Committee (CIFP), the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee (CICP), the International Society of Olympic Historians (ISOH) and Panathlon International (PI) – came together to get to know one another better and highlight their common objectives. The symposium is the first public outcome of this joint effort.”*

**What role do you see for artificial intelligence in the present and future of the Olympic Movement?  
“Allow me to make a general observation before answering this question...”**

**Please...**

*“Whenever a new technology emerges, it raises fears. The same is obviously true today for artificial intelligence.”*

**Are you more concerned or more curious?**

*“I prefer to believe that the advantages outweigh the potential disadvantages, which an ethical use of AI should help to avoid. It is a matter of studying – and this is already being done – how artificial intelligence can assist the Olympic Movement by facilitating access to knowledge and education on ethical values, as well as the prevention, identification and, if necessary, the suppression of behaviour contrary to the values of sport.*

*One of the reports from 12 February specifically examined the contribution of AI in the fight against corruption. We have understood whether and to what extent artificial intelligence can help us analyse, predict and correct behaviour contrary to the spirit of sport and the rules of Fair Play.”*

**First comes an awareness of who we are and what we want, and from this follows the proper use of technology. In this regard, if we could design an Olympic ecosystem from scratch that integrates AI, what would it look like, what rules would it establish first, and why?**

*“The fundamental principles of the Olympic Movement – the creation of a lifestyle based on the joy of physical exertion, the educational value of setting a good example, social responsibility, respect for fundamental universal ethical principles, and the absence of any form of discrimination or fraud – dictate the answer to this question.*

*The credibility of the Olympic Movement depends on strict adherence to these principles. This also applies to the use of artificial intelligence, which is a tool that comes second to respect for these values and must be placed at their service.”*

**Which Olympic values can AI reinforce, and which does it risk eroding?**

*“The proper use of artificial intelligence is, of course, fundamental to protecting privacy, personal autonomy, security, transparency and inclusion, and is obviously essential for promoting ethics in sport. Simul stabunt.”*

**On the subject of AI in elite sport. Does artificial intelligence risk turning sport into a data laboratory, or can it become an ally in restoring the centrality of the individual?**

*“There are already numerous examples of AI being used in top-level sport. Take, for example, its use in tennis, where artificial intelligence allows the trajectory of the ball to be determined, which represents an undeniable advance for umpires.*

*If AI allows us to eliminate, without wasting time, errors caused by human imperfection – for example, in refereeing – I can see nothing but advantages. It is obviously important that these advantages are accessible to all without discrimination.”*

**What is the difference between ‘training better’ thanks to AI and ‘becoming dependent’ on a system that decides what is best for us?**

*“When it comes to training, the final say must rest with the athlete, supported by their team, who makes the ultimate decision. AI cannot and must not ‘decide’. In sport as in other human activities. Artificial intelligence must not turn sport into a mere data laboratory but become an ally in restoring the centrality of the individual.”*

**A centrality that is the essence of every kind of sport.**

*“Exactly. It was so in the days of the ancient Greek Games, and it remains so in the age of artificial intelligence.”*

# Artificial Intelligence and Ethical Virtues in Sports

*Summary of Ian Robertson's opening address, PAIR – Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg*

There can be little doubt that AI and other data-driven technologies used in organised sports are helping athletes live up to the attributes of human excellence enshrined in the original tripartite Olympic motto, “Faster, higher, stronger”. An increasingly wide range of AI-based systems and applications are used to support sports practitioners, from data-driven performance analytics and predictive injury modelling to applications designed to optimise training regimes. Using such technologies, detailed models of opponents’ behaviours can be constructed. In addition, AI-based simulations offer athletes animated, interactive game environments in which they can practise techniques and explore alternative tactical strategies without risking injury. We are living in what many researchers are wont to refer to as the “age of AI”, and such technologies are transforming domains of human activity as diverse and important as science, law, and finance. Organised sports have shown to be no exception.

Nonetheless, there is a growing sentiment among the general public that the growing use of these transformative technologies threatens to rob sports (and particularly competitive sports) of something important—something related to their distinctively human nature. Often, such concerns are vague and unspecified. Even so, while it would be all too easy to write such concerns off as a misguided technophobia, doing so would surely betray an elitism unworthy of canonical statements of the Olympic values articulated by Coubertin and others: values that cast sports as a great equaliser belonging to us all. In my keynote address, I sought to take seriously these sentiments that AI threatens to rob sports of something importantly human.



Philosophers have recently been concerned with whether our dependence on AI technologies threatens to deskil experts—to rob them of important skills and abilities. There already seem to be cases where sports practitioners have lost skills that were once considered highly important. For example, some claim that catchers have, due to dependence on pitch selection models, diminished in their capacity to select effective pitching strategies. Deskilling is not always bad, of course. While our dependence on GPS technologies can lead to a loss of navigation skills, and dependence on chatbots can lead to a loss of creative writing capacities, technologies can also foster in us new, technologically augmented skills and abilities. In sports, cyclists likely develop a suite of skills around pacing tools, such as the capacity to stabilise their efforts in real time using numerical feedback. But when, in sports, is deskilling to be particularly avoided? I argued that, in broaching this question, we should consider the Olympic values of Coubertin. We should question whether certain forms of technological integration threaten to take from sports practitioners of skills that instantiate the virtues at the heart of the Olympic ideal – virtues like courage, humility, and practical judgement.

I pointed to several cases where one might worry AI systems are being used in sports in a way that does not align with core Olympic values and principles. For one thing, if elite sports are so dependent on data-driven, technologically supported strategies, then this threatens to create (in several ways) an unbridgeable divide between the very kind of games played by institutional sports and the forms of sporting practice available to the general public.

This, in turn, might exacerbate what Ankerson calls the Goldmine Effect: the elitist selection processes by which very young prospects deemed “natural talents” are channelled resources may only intensify. In addition, because AI systems deliver their results through highly complex operations, practitioners might need to depend on them uncritically, and in a way that is materially different from the way athletes in competitive sports currently devise strategies in consort with their coaches and teammates.

The Olympic mindset is a hard-earned achievement, and Coubertin would not want us to sacrifice it quickly. We must avoid a blanket technophobia but still be aware of the threat of being deskilled of Olympic values and virtues—at least if we do not want to radically revise what we take the Olympics to stand for.

We have reasons for optimism – but must maintain a firm eye on the Olympic virtues we seek to preserve.

# How the IOC Is Turning AI into Real Impact for Sport

by Alejandro Merino - Madrid - Head of AI Technology and Information Department (IOC)

Artificial intelligence is no longer a topic of the future for the International Olympic Committee. It is already in use as a practical tool to protect athletes, improve the delivery of the Olympic Games, support broadcasters in enhancing the viewing experience, and create more relevant engagement for fans around the world.

The Olympic AI Agenda is the IOC's roadmap for making this happen responsibly, and at scale. It is built around a simple idea: technology must serve sport, people and values – not the other way around.

The IOC's work on AI is structured across five focus areas: supporting athletes, competition, and sport; ensuring equal access to AI; optimising Games operations; engaging fans; and improving organisational efficiency.

The Olympic AI Agenda is not theoretical. It is already being implemented with tangible results across the Olympic ecosystem. Based on the framework presented in Milan in February, the IOC is acting as a pioneer, a catalyst and a guardian – building solutions, convening partners and ensuring AI remains aligned with Olympic values and principles.

One of the clearest examples of successful implementation is athlete safeguarding. The AI-powered cyber abuse protection service that was put in place during the Olympic Games Paris 2024, was the largest and most comprehensive service of its kind in sports history. The system detected online abuse at scale, analysing over 2.4 million posts and flagging over 152,000, to safeguard hundreds of athletes and officials from cyber abuse. This is where AI moves beyond convenience and becomes a tool for protection, fairness and wellbeing.

Another strong area of intent for the IOC, is ensuring equal access to the benefits of AI. In Senegal, an AI-enabled talent development initiative assessed more than 1,000 young athletes and identified 48 high performers, showing how technology can help uncover potential where traditional scouting systems may be limited. The promise is powerful: AI can help widen opportunity, not just concentrate advantage.

For the Games themselves, AI is also becoming an operational accelerator.

The IOC and its partners are using digital twinning that allows for better remote planning, energy management tools, planning models and intelligent assistants to support more efficient and more sustainable decision-making. This means reduced travel, better forecasting and smarter use of resources – all increasingly important as the Games grow in complexity.

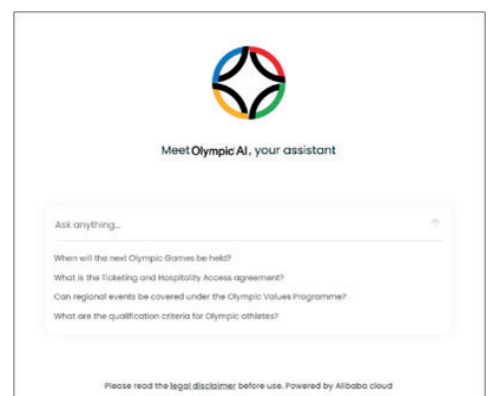
For fans and broadcasters, AI is opening a new chapter. At Milano Cortina 2026, Olympic Broadcasting Services introduced major breakthroughs in AI-enhanced capture and replays, including real-time 360-degree replay systems and stroboscopic visualisations rendered in seconds rather than hours. These AI-powered tools help explain performance, reveal technical details and bring audiences closer to the action.





This extends beyond broadcast, with AI assistants, multilingual services, smarter archive searches and new knowledge tools that are helping fans, media and Olympic stakeholders access trusted information faster and more intuitively.

The direction is clear: AI is a strategic and transformative programme at the International Olympic Committee. Coming next: scaling the solutions that are already delivering value, sharing benefits even more widely across the Olympic Movement, while keeping innovation grounded in the Olympic Values. As the Road to LA28 continues, the message is simple – the future of sport will be more intelligent, but it will also remain deeply human.



# Sparks of Olympism: Igniting the Future with Coubertin, AI, and Olympic Values Education

by Prof. Stephan Wassong, President, International Pierre de Coubertin Committee  
by Dr. Hilla Davidov, Board Member, International Pierre de Coubertin Committee

Prof. Wassong opened by calling to reignite Olympism's spark, not merely Coubertin's historical legacy, but as a living idea confronting AI and Olympic values education challenges. He positioned Olympism as forward-looking, evolving while preserving its educational core.

The International Pierre de Coubertin Committee (IPCC), founded in 1975 by Paul Martin and Jacques Guhl and recognized by the IOC in 1984, guards and interprets Coubertin's thought. Its mission translates his principles into 21st-century contexts: sport as a learning field for virtues such as achievement, confidence, honesty, fair play, tolerance, altruism and teamwork, and as a platform for transcultural understanding rooted in late-19th-century peace movements.

Olympism evolved from Coubertin's early "Olympic idea" to a mature framework now anchored in the Olympic Charter. Since 2007, the IOC has structured it around three umbrella values: excellence, friendship and respect under which responsibility, solidarity and democratic behavior are clustered, supported by an ecosystem of governance bodies, Olympic studies centers, academies, museums and networks such as the IPCC, ISOH, IFPC and Panathlon International. Traditional dissemination relied on lectures, OVEP materials, exhibitions and experiential programs, yet these tools were limited in reach and pace.



## IPCC Mission & Relevance

### Traditional Role

Historical and educational gatekeeper of Coubertin's profile and educational ideas

### Contemporary Mission

Strengthen modern, future-oriented approach to Olympism

*"To translate Pierre de Coubertin's educational leitmotifs into our times, in order to strengthen an objective identification with Coubertin as founder of the Olympic Movement and promoter of sport as an educational tool for character development, social change, and transcultural respect" (Statute of the IPCC)*



From this pivotal point, Dr. Davidov expanded on dissemination strategies. Coubertin, strategist as much as philosopher, deliberately used the leading media of his time: speeches, articles, institutions to spread Olympism. Today's digital epoch introduces artificial intelligence as a dominant medium, conceptualized as "The Silicon Torch": silicon-based, data-driven and algorithm powered, a potent carrier of values from generation to generation, yet inherently directionless without normative guidance. This is not a deviation from Olympism, but its natural evolution through each era's most effective transmission tools.

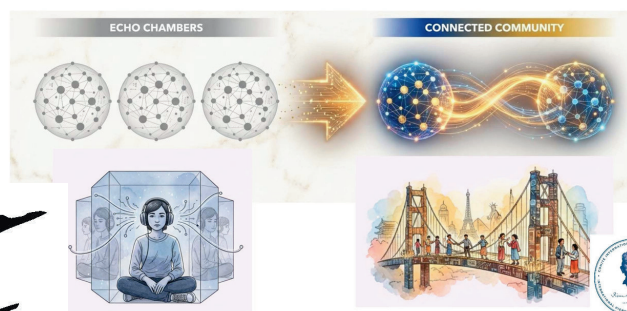
The three Olympic values provide AI's compass. Excellence, in Coubertin's sense of "joy of effort" rather than victory at all costs, requires AI to act as a Socratic coach, prompting deeper questions, targeted feedback and character growth, rather than eliminating the productive struggle essential to human formation. Friendship, understood as a doctrine of fraternity and mutual recognition, akin to Ubuntu's "I am because you are", challenges AI to become a bridge between cultures and perspectives instead of reinforcing digital echo chambers, enabling learners worldwide to encounter Olympic values in real time. Respect translates fair play and human dignity into concerns for algorithmic justice, privacy, transparency and accountability, so that AI becomes a ladder for all rather than a gatekeeper for a few.

Unchecked, AI risks fueling a "shortcut culture" that erodes critical thinking and the character-building power of effort. Used responsibly, it can expand access to high-quality, borderless Olympic values education. Traditional IPCC resources, Coubertin's writings, historical research, Olympic Studies Centre materials and OVEP programs should therefore inform AI systems, ensuring that technology serves pedagogy rather than overshadowing it.

Prof. Wassong concluded by outlining the IPCC's approach to AI: integrating it into the committee's educational profile to strengthen its modern visibility while remaining faithful to Coubertin's foundations. This requires synergies among the IOC and its foundations, Olympic academies and studies centers, national and international Coubertin committees, ISOH, IFPC and Panathlon International. Only collective stewardship can ensure that AI deepens, rather than dilutes, the living spirit of Olympism.

Ultimately, Olympism endures not despite technological evolution, but through value-directed adaptation. Artificial intelligence may provide a powerful torch, yet humans remain the torchbearers. The decisive question is therefore not how bright the flame burns, but where, and for whom it is made to shine.

#### AI: Bridge or Echo Chamber?



WE ARE THE TORCHBEARERS



AI is the torch. It has immense power, but no inherent direction. Our mission is to guide this change with vision, coaching AI to embody our values so it serves the 'harmonious development of humankind.'



# AI and Olympic Sports: Innovation from the Field to Human Health

*Presentation by Prof. Emanuele Frontoni, Professor of Computer Science at the University of Macerata and co-director of the VRAI Lab*



## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AS A PILLAR OF SUPPORT FOR MODERN SPORT

Olympic sport today represents one of the most advanced laboratories for the application of artificial intelligence. AI is no longer an accessory element, but an enabling factor that permeates every dimension of athletic preparation: from biomechanical analysis of technical movement, to real-time physiological monitoring, through to injury prevention and training load planning.

Computer vision systems, machine learning and predictive analytics are now integrated into the daily routines of elite athletes, allowing coaches and technical staff to make decisions based on objective data rather than subjective experience alone. The digitalisation of the body in motion – through wearable sensors, high-speed cameras and pose estimation algorithms – has opened up scenarios that were unthinkable just a few years ago.

## FROM SPORT TO HEALTH: A VIRTUOUS TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

The real challenge – and the real opportunity – lies in transferring these innovations to the world of healthcare. Experiments conducted in sport provide an extraordinary testing ground: athletes are highly monitored subjects, motivated, with rich and comparable longitudinal data. What works to optimise the performance of a sprinter or prevent the relapse of a football player can be re-engineered for the monitoring of chronic patients, post-surgical rehabilitation or the management of frail elderly people.

The path is clear: sport as incubator, health as destination. Algorithms originally designed to detect muscular fatigue in an Olympic athlete become tools for the early detection of movement disorders in neurological patients. Injury prediction models are transformed into fall-alert systems for the elderly. The AI that optimises post-competition recovery guides cardiac rehabilitation protocols.

## **THE CHALLENGE OF OPEN DATASETS: STIMULATING RESEARCH**

The central issue remains that of data. AI research applied to sport still suffers from significant fragmentation: existing datasets are often proprietary, collected in corporate or federational silos, unstandardized and barely accessible to the scientific community.

To accelerate innovation – and above all to ensure that it translates into concrete benefits for human health – it is essential to build an ecosystem of open datasets in the sports sector: movement, physiological, biomechanical and clinical data made available in an ethical and structured way to researchers, clinicians and developers. Only by multiplying open datasets will it become possible to train more robust and generalisable models, validate algorithms across diverse populations, foster the reproducibility of research and lower the barriers to entry for academic teams and innovative startups.

## **CONCLUSION**

The trajectory is set: AI in Olympic sport is not an end in itself, but an extraordinarily powerful means of better understanding the human body under extreme conditions, and of returning that knowledge to medicine and to the wellbeing of ordinary people. Continuing to stimulate research, opening up data, building bridges between the world of sport and that of healthcare: this is the direction in which the scientific community is called to work with urgency and vision.

# The role of AI in sports integrity initiatives

by Giuseppe Deleonardis, Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer, International Olympic Committee



Artificial Intelligence has become a defining force across the global sports ecosystem. It now influences everything from athlete preparation to media consumption, often invisibly. But among its many intersections with sport, none is more consequential than its relationship with integrity. For those tasked with safeguarding fair play, the question is no longer whether AI will impact sport: it already does.

The real issue is how we ensure that its deployment reinforces, rather than erodes, the foundational principles on which sport rests: fairness, transparency, accountability, and, critically, the unpredictability of results.

Uncertainty of outcome is the beating heart of sport. When competitions are genuine and unpredictable, trust thrives. When outcomes are manipulated, or even perceived to be shaped artificially, confidence is immediately lost. Recent controversies in other sport ecosystems that experimented with automated judging or opaque algorithmic decision tools have made this clear: technology can generate suspicion as quickly as it can generate innovation.

AI is without any doubt a powerful tool. But without ethical governance, it can amplify vulnerabilities as easily as it can strengthen protections. The challenge for sports governance is ensuring that AI serves fair play, never the reverse. AI does not fix matches, corrupt officials, or abuse athletes. Humans do. AI is a multiplier of good governance when used responsibly, and of risk when deployed without oversight. Integrity vulnerabilities typically emerge across four domains:

## a. Corruption Risk. Detecting Patterns or Hiding Them

AI has already shown its value in analysing procurement data and governance processes in many public-sector settings. These same methods can support sports organisations in identifying irregularities earlier than before. But AI can also be weaponised: synthetic documentation, sophisticated obfuscation in financial trails, or deep-generated communications can complicate investigations. Ultimately, it is governance and not technology that determines the outcome.

## **b. Competition Manipulation. Smarter Detection, Smarter Criminals**

Match-fixing and illegal betting remain among sport's most complex threats. Betting markets evolve quickly, and criminal groups adapt even faster. AI supports integrity units by spotting unusual betting patterns across thousands of events simultaneously. At recent major sporting events, machine-learning systems helped distinguish between suspicious spikes and legitimate surges tied to moments of national enthusiasm, shifting integrity work from reactive to preventative.

## **c. Refereeing and Judging Integrity. Assistance, Not Automation**

Several international sports federations have piloted AI-assisted judging tools in recent seasons, aiming to provide consistency across competitions. These pilots have shown a key lesson: technology must remain assistive, not decisive. Athletes and officials trust systems that are explainable and accountable. When algorithms become black boxes, trust collapses, no matter how accurate the output.

## **d. Athlete Protection. Managing the Digital Arena**

Athletes today face unprecedented digital exposure. AI-generated abuse, coordinated harassment campaigns, and synthetic videos pose real threats to athletes' mental well-being and competitive focus. At recent Olympic Games since Paris 2024, specialised monitoring flagged waves of abusive or threatening content within minutes, allowing platforms and authorities to intervene. AI can process volumes of content unmanageable for human teams alone. But such monitoring must respect strict ethical standards: proportionality, privacy, transparency, and due process. The lesson is universal: AI strengthens strong systems and weakens weak ones.

Recognising both the opportunities and the risks, the IOC has adopted its Olympic AI Agenda, a governance-driven framework ensuring that AI aligns with Olympic values, safeguards athletes, and strengthens integrity across the movement.

Two practical examples illustrate how this translates into action:

### **a. Using AI Internally to Strengthen Compliance**

With the IOC's extensive regulatory framework (covering ethics, competitions, Games operations, procurement, and more) AI now helps staff navigate complex obligations more efficiently.

For example, colleagues preparing for Games-time roles, or even working at the IOC administration, increasingly rely on AI-supported systems to locate and understand relevant policies, enhancing compliance without adding administrative burden. It also works very efficiently, through a chat-based interface where an AI-powered bot can provide useful assistance. AI does not replace judgment; it clarifies obligations so that human judgment can operate responsibly. It also makes it easier to be compliant.

### **b. Supporting Collective Governance Across the Olympic Movement**

The IOC encourages International Federations and National Olympic Committees to engage in structured dialogue on responsible AI use. Within the International Partnership Against Corruption in Sport (IPACS, [www.ipacs.sport](http://www.ipacs.sport)) sports organisations, governments, and inter-governmental organisations can dialogue and share good practices around anti-corruption efforts and can now collaborate on topics such as automated judging assistance, online abuse monitoring, and the ethical use of athlete data.

This coordination prevents fragmented approaches and ensures that global sport evolves with consistent and principled standards.

Competition manipulation remains one of the most serious threats to fair play. The IOC's Integrity Betting Intelligence System (IBIS) combines data from betting operators, regulators, and integrity partners into a single analytical platform. During Olympic Games-time, AI-powered systems continuously monitor betting markets worldwide. In previous editions of the Games, early alerts triggered by unusual patterns enabled integrity teams to intervene quickly, often ruling out manipulation within minutes.

Importantly, cooperation with INTERPOL ensures that any potential criminal activity is addressed through appropriate law-enforcement channels. Technology strengthens our vigilance. But humans retain decision-making authority. AI provides intelligence; governance provides judgment.

At the Olympic Games Paris 2024, AI-supported monitoring by external experts identified abusive posts targeting athletes and officials. Thousands of harmful messages were flagged to platforms, and in severe cases, escalated to national authorities. This is not merely a technological challenge; it is becoming more and more an obligation. Athlete protection requires balancing innovation with strict ethical safeguards, ensuring that monitoring remains proportionate, transparent, and legally grounded.

The principles guiding this work were cemented at the most recent International Forum for Sports Integrity, where governments, intergovernmental bodies, and sports organisations in October 2025 adopted the **Universal Declaration on Sports Integrity**. The message was clear: in an era of rapid technological transformation, safeguarding sport cannot be done in isolation. Cooperation is our strongest defence against manipulation, corruption, and technological misuse. Integrity is a shared responsibility and a shared global good.

Artificial Intelligence offers significant opportunities to protect fair play, but only when governed ethically, transparently, and with human oversight. Sport must avoid both extremes: uncritical enthusiasm and unnecessary fear. AI is neither a magic solution nor an existential threat. It is a powerful instrument, reflecting the values of those who wield it.

As guardians of integrity, our responsibility is clear: ensure that technology strengthens the principles that define sport: fairness, accountability, transparency, and the unpredictability that makes every competition worth watching.

If we get this right, AI will not disrupt the essence of sport. It will help preserve what matters most: **trust in the field of play**.

# Technological innovation and sporting values at the heart of a highly topical debate



*At the 'Olympic Values and Artificial Intelligence' event, organised by the International Olympic Committee, Panathlon International and the International Fair Play Committee, the relationship between technological innovation and sporting values was at the heart of a highly topical discussion.*

*Among the most significant contributions was that of Dr Bianca Gama Pena, a researcher in sports innovation and management, who offered a stimulating perspective on how artificial intelligence can become a concrete and tangible tool for promoting gender equality, empowering young people and fostering an increasingly inclusive sport.*

*Her presentation raised fundamental points for reflection on the role that institutions, organisations and professionals are called upon to play in this transformation.*

*In this interview, we delve deeper into her perspective, exploring the potential and challenges associated with integrating artificial intelligence into sport, with a keen eye on the future and the values that guide it.*

**How can Olympic values — such as respect, excellence and friendship — be applied in practice in everyday life, even outside the sporting context?**

*"The Olympic values do not belong solely to the podium; they are tools for social coexistence: in daily life, they translate into active listening, empathy towards differing opinions and respect for traffic rules or queues — recognising the 'other' as legitimate. Excellence: this does not mean being the 'best in the world', but giving one's best in every activity, whether it be study, work or a hobby, focusing on constant personal improvement. Friendship: this means acting with solidarity and team spirit, understanding that collective progress is more sustainable than isolated individual success. And above all, helping others to achieve their goals, pushing beyond one's own limits."*

**What role can organisations such as Panathlon International play in promoting Olympic values among young people and in contemporary society?**

*"Panathlon acts as an ethical bridge through its Ethics Watch, which functions as an observatory that reports breaches of conduct and promotes the 'Charter of Children's Rights in Sport'. Education: through the Fair Play Awards, the organisation shifts the focus from the result alone to exemplary behaviour, serving as a guiding light for young people in their formative years."*

**Looking to the future, what initiatives or projects do you consider essential for strengthening a sporting culture based on ethics and fair play?**

*"For the future, initiatives must be structural with the White Card: the systematic implementation of cards that reward positive actions, not just punish negative ones. Parental Education with compulsory workshops for parents in youth clubs, to combat toxic pressure on children. Ethical Certifications: A quality mark for clubs that demonstrate integrity programs and efforts to combat bullying and harassment."*

**In your speech, you spoke about the educational responsibility of sport: what are the main challenges in this area today?**

*"The pressure to professionalise children at an ever-earlier age, sacrificing play and mental health. When winning 'at all costs' replaces learning from defeat. The digital environment: the challenge of teaching values that used to be developed in person and now have to be conveyed digitally, overcoming the toxicity of social media."*

**In your experience, what are the most effective tools for promoting fair play in increasingly competitive sporting contexts?**

*"Mandatory time spent together between opponents after the match. Educational refereeing: referees who explain the rules and the reasons behind fouls, especially in youth categories, rather than simply punishing them. Conduct manuals: clear codes signed by athletes, coaches and family members at the start of the season."*

**How can events and conferences like this help to create a concrete network between institutions, schools and sports associations?**

*"Events and conferences as network builders. These gatherings act as the 'connective tissue' of sport: Sharing of best practices: they allow a small school to learn a successful methodology from a large federation. Cooperation protocols: they are ideal spaces for forging partnerships where universities provide the science and clubs provide the field for research. Political visibility: they put sport on the public agenda, exerting pressure to secure better funding policies and infrastructure."*

**What contribution can the world of sport make today to promote inclusion and equal opportunities?**

*"Sport, inclusion and equality. Sport is the most powerful universal language we have: Breaking down barriers: adapted sport projects that integrate people with disabilities, highlighting abilities rather than limitations. Gender equality: women in leadership roles and equal incentives for women's sports. Social inclusion: sport as a gateway for refugees and young people in vulnerable situations, offering a sense of belonging and a safe path."*

**Is there any particular episode from your career or personal experience that particularly embodies the Olympic values?**

*"Respect - as CEO, respect is demonstrated every day when I choose to actively listen to others and not make decisions based solely on my own perspective. Excellence - when I was still a PhD student, with no resources, I decided to sell my car to invest in the dream of creating the eMuseum of Sport, when no one else believed in it. This showed me how we must believe in ourselves and give our best, being the first investors in our dreams. Friendship: as a teacher, I don't see students merely as students, but as my responsibility to help them go further. This gives us a sense of purpose and we forge bonds of friendship and relationships that last a lifetime."*

# AI and the Olympic Archives: preserving and sharing a living legacy

*by Sabine Haller-Neumann, Head of Archives at the International Olympic Committee*

At the Milan event “Artificial Intelligence and Olympic Values”, Sabine Haller-Neumann, Head of Archives, presented the Images Sport AI programme, an initiative aimed at enhancing research, discovery and documentation activities relating to the IOC’s audiovisual heritage through the responsible use of artificial intelligence technologies.

The programme builds on the previous Strategic Images Project (2021–2024), which migrated the IOC’s image services from bespoke, on-premises systems to fully integrated cloud solutions, in line with the IOC’s IT strategy. This major transformation enabled the migration of large-scale collections – over 85,000 pieces of audiovisual content and 928,000 photos – along with comprehensive metadata. It has created a solid and scalable foundation for the implementation of AI-based services.

For end users, the Olympic Media Library (TOML) now offers visual similarity search, enabling faster and more intuitive content discovery. The ‘Search for similar images’ (in production from the second quarter of 2025) and ‘Search for similar videos’ (launched in the first quarter of 2026) features allow users to retrieve an exact match first, followed by visually related results. These tools support a wide range of use cases, including precise verification of assets, identification of specific sequences, exploration of creative alternatives, and the ability to initiate searches using uploaded files, URLs or existing TOML assets. The features are based on AI-powered vectorisation and visual pattern recognition and include rigorous security measures: any image or video submitted for search purposes is not stored and is deleted immediately once the search is complete.

In parallel, a Conversational Search feature is under development. This natural language interface, still in its early stages, aims to reduce barriers related to specialist terminology, multilingual queries and incomplete metadata. In addition to retrieving visual assets, the solution is designed to provide relevant factual context related to sport, trained exclusively on information sourced from the IOC.

On the back end, the programme introduces automatic tagging of photos and videos within the multimedia asset management environment. Using deep learning models, the system generates structured metadata relating to sport-specific actions and equipment, general actions, objects, logos/flags, camera angles, Olympic symbols and venues. With Milan-Cortina 2026 as a pilot project, a cross-functional task force is currently testing and refining an initial set of over 1,000 AI-generated metadata tags, whilst ensuring full compliance with legal, ethical and privacy requirements.

In this first version, the AI-generated tags are not yet published in TOML, and the system explicitly excludes any form of identification of individuals or teams, as well as emotion detection.



## THE IOC ARCHIVE'S MISSION

- 1. To acquire, preserve and promote** the IOC's written, audiovisual and photographic heritage.
- 2. To make Olympic heritage accessible** to key stakeholders: the IOC, the Olympic Family, Culture and Education institutions.

## *Panathlon International Position Papers: Sport, Ethics and Society*

*The new “Position Papers” section of the Panathlon International Magazine aims to promote relevant and accessible reflections on contemporary issues in sport, in line with the values of fair play, ethics, and inclusion. This space brings together contributions from experts and leaders, offering analyses that address current and future challenges of the sporting movement. By encouraging critical thinking and the exchange of experiences, the section seeks to strengthen the role of Panathlon International as a reference in promoting a more just, sustainable, and inclusive sporting culture worldwide.*

### From Coubertin (1894) to Coventry (2025): women, young people, innovation and artificial intelligence in the redefinition of the Olympic Movement

*Ana Miragaya (CBPC, Panathlon Rio and GPEO-UERJ), Bianca Gama Pena (CIFP, Panathlon Rio and coordinator of GPEO-UERJ) and Antonio Bramante (Chair of the Culture, Research and Education Commission of Panathlon International).*

*This manuscript has benefited from AI-assisted tools for its content.*

#### **Introduction**

The election of Kirsty Coventry as President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 2025 represents a historic turning point in the governance of world sport. After 131 years of male leadership, the Olympic Movement enters a new phase marked by female leadership, generational renewal, and growing demands for innovation, inclusion, and technological transformation. This position paper argues that Coventry’s presidency is not merely symbolic, but structural, signaling a reconfiguration of Olympic values aligned with gender equity, youth engagement, and strategic renovation, mostly, including artificial intelligence (AI). This moment unfolds within a global context characterized by geopolitical tensions, institutional legitimacy crises, and profound changes in cultural and communicational production, requiring new forms of governance, leadership, and social dialogue within the Olympic Movement (International Olympic Committee [IOC], 2021; UNESCO, 2023).

#### **1. From a Quasi-Exclusionary Origin to an Inclusive Imperative**

The International Olympic Committee was founded in a historical context marked by aristocratic, Eurocentric, and patriarchal values. The noninclusion of women in the early Olympic Games and in IOC decision-making structures reflected social norms widely disseminated at the turn of the 20th century. Throughout the 20th century, however, the expansion of women’s civil, political, and social rights generated continuous pressure on the Olympic Movement, leading to gradual advances in sports participation and institutional recognition. The recognition of sport as a fundamental human right, as established in UNESCO’s International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (1978), played a decisive role in shifting this exclusionary paradigm and consolidating inclusion as a normative principle. Gender parity achieved at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games represents a symbolic milestone in this process, although significant inequalities persist within decision-making spaces.

## 2. Female Leadership as Institutional Transformation

The election of Kirsty Coventry should be understood as part of a broader process of institutional innovation driven by reforms promoted by the IOC over recent decades. Olympic Agenda 2020 and Olympic Agenda 2020+5 consolidated commitments to sustainability, credibility, transparency, and gender equality as strategic pillars of the contemporary Olympic Movement (IOC, 2021). These reforms were further supported by internal reviews conducted by the IOC, which identified gender equality as a strategic priority for the credibility, legitimacy, and future sustainability of the Olympic Movement (International Olympic Committee [IOC], 2018). These commitments directly dialogue with the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and reports produced by UN Women, which recognize sport as a central tool for women's empowerment and gender equality.

Despite normative advances, recent data indicate that women still occupy less than 30% of executive positions in international sports federations, revealing a persistent gap between institutional discourse and effective practice (Sport Integrity Global Alliance [SIGA], 2024). In this context, Coventry's presidency assumes strategic relevance by combining symbolic representation with genuine potential for structural renovation. Similarly, civil society initiatives have contributed to translating global principles into applied normative frameworks. The Women's Rights in Sport Charter, developed by Panathlon International – Brazil District, systematizes fundamental rights related to equal opportunities, leadership representation, safe sporting environments, visibility, health, maternity, and women's political participation in sport.

Although national in scope, the Charter aligns with international frameworks such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Olympic Charter, and UNESCO documents by reaffirming gender equity as a structural principle of contemporary sports governance (Panathlon International – Brazil District).

## 3. Youth, Relevance and the Future of the Olympic Games

The renovation and sustainability of the Olympic Movement increasingly depend on its ability to maintain cultural and symbolic relevance among younger generations. Young athletes and audiences consume sport through digital platforms - mostly AI -, social media, and interactive format, challenging traditional communication and engagement models. The election of a young president reinforces the need to incorporate generational perspectives into IOC decision-making processes, expanding spaces for listening, participation, and youth leadership. This orientation aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 and UNESCO guidelines on education, youth, and global citizenship, which recognize sport as a privileged space for ethical, social, and cultural formation. This concern is explicitly reflected in the IOC's Youth Engagement Strategy, which recognizes young people as central actors in ensuring the long-term relevance and social legitimacy of the Olympic Games (IOC, 2020).

## 4. Innovation and Artificial Intelligence in Olympic Governance

The incorporation of artificial intelligence into high-performance sport and sports governance has intensified in recent years. AI systems are used in integration, performance analysis, injury prevention, officiating support, event management, and institutional communication.

From a governance perspective, these technologies offer opportunities to enhance efficiency, transparency, and values-led integrity, while simultaneously introducing risks related to algorithmic opacity, data protection, and the reproduction of structural inequalities. UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial

Intelligence (2021) provides a fundamental normative framework by advocating a human-centered approach grounded in human rights, diversity, and social responsibility. From the perspective of sports governance, these concerns resonate with the principles of integrity, transparency, and good governance promoted by the International Olympic Committee as essential values for managing innovation and digital transformation within sport (IOC, 2023).

## **5. Generative Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Governance in Olympic Sport**

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence adds a new layer of complexity to global sports governance. Tools capable of producing texts, images, videos, and simulations are already influencing sports media, athlete education, and public policy formulation. Studies on algorithmic governance indicate that unregulated systems tend to reproduce historical gender, racial, and geopolitical biases, disproportionately affecting women and athletes from the Global South (Rainey & Santos, 2022). Therefore, it is imperative that the IOC develop ethical guidelines and oversight mechanisms to ensure transparency, auditability, and institutional accountability, in line with Sustainable Development Goals 5, 9, 10, and 16.

## **6. Intersectionality: Women, Innovation and Power**

An intersectional perspective reveals that gender inequalities in sport are often intensified by technological and geopolitical asymmetries. The historical exclusion of women from decision-making spaces and technological domains underscores the need for institutional innovations that promote critical digital literacy, diversity, and female leadership. In this regard, Coventry's presidency may contribute to articulating gender equity and digital transformation as complementary axes of a more democratic and inclusive model of sports governance (UN Women, 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

## **7. Final Considerations**

Kirsty Coventry's presidency represents a historic inflection point that brings together gender, youth, and technology within the contemporary Olympic horizon. The future of the Olympic Movement will depend on the IOC's capacity to translate normative commitments into effective institutional practices, thereby strengthening its global legitimacy. For international organizations such as the IOC, UNESCO, and the United Nations, this moment offers a strategic opportunity to reaffirm sport as an instrument for inclusion, intercultural dialogue, and sustainable development in the 21st century.

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# WHAT ARE THE OLYMPICS?

by *Livio Guidolin, Master of Sport*

## They are: A RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION

Greek Olympus was populated by deities who, from the very beginning, challenged and fought one another to dominate and rule over both gods and men.

The human manifestation in honour of the gods (a religious cult) was the Competition, which became an expression of the anger and grief generated by the death of a relative. The intrinsic link between sporting competition and religion developed through rituals and sacred acts, evoking myths and traditional tales.

The religious rite was the thread that bound the Games together over the centuries. The most important were:

- The Olympic Games, in honour of Zeus, which began in 776 BC in Olympia
- The Isthmian Games, in honour of Poseidon, held in Corinth in 589 BC
- The Pythian Games, in honour of Apollo, which began in 586 BC at the Sanctuary of Delphi
- The Nemean Games, in honour of Hercules, which began in 572 BC at Cleone, a town between Corinth and Argos

Now, without liturgy but with hymns, without dogmas but with symbols, without temples but with stadiums, it is a global ceremony which, in the presence of a flame, unites all communities, embodying 'religious silence, anticipation, ritual, relationships and emotions that transcend all natural and logical explanations'.

## They are: THE ORIGIN OF ART and ARCHITECTURE

Evidence of sporting activity comes to us primarily from the world of art in its various forms: *painting, sculpture, engravings, frescoes, reliefs, poetry, song and music*.

All were inspired by the 'Agones' – contest, effort, exercise – a term that defined any kind of competition, not only of speed or physical strength but also in the realm of speech and reasoning, with poetic contests between authors.

The oldest Greek inscription is a *graffiti* from the 8th century BC. The competitive scene depicts a dance contest – a physical and intellectual activity linked to gymnastics and music – where the dancer would win not for physical dexterity but for the beauty of their performance.

'Kalokathia' – the balance between physical beauty and moral virtue – required that sports facilities – the stadium for running, the palaestra for wrestling and boxing, the gymnasium for general training, and the hippodrome – be situated within sacred sites.

With the construction of these sanctuaries, where athletic training was combined with religious worship, architecture also began – the discipline that organises the space in which human beings live.

### **They are: MODERN OLYMPICS**

The term 'Olympics' refers to a period of four consecutive years.

The Olympic cycle begins with the opening of one edition of the Games and ends with the opening of the following edition.

In 393 AD, the Roman Emperor Theodosius I abolished the Olympic Games, considering them a pagan event.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, through the development of the 'Religio Athletae'—which envisaged the liberation of the spirit, inner growth and the self-sacrifice involved in overcoming one's own limits—marked the end of the evolutionary period of Homo Ludens and the beginning of the cycle of Homo Olimpicus.

On 16 June 1894, De Coubertin and delegates from 12 nations, gathered at the Sorbonne in Paris, proclaimed the revival of the Olympic Games and established the IOC.

In 1896, the first Modern Olympic Games were held in Athens.

In 1920, the IOC adopted the white flag with the five rings, whose colours (blue – Europe, yellow – Asia, black – Africa, green – Oceania, red – America) were chosen because, together with the white background, they represented the colours found in the flags of all the nations of the world

### **They are: INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE**

The IOC is a non-governmental organisation.

Although it is democratic in the decisions taken by the Executive Board, its members – a maximum of 115 – are co-opted by the Board itself.

The Assembly or Session elects

- the President and the members of the Executive Board,
- the members of the various commissions, nominated by the Executive Board from among athletes, leaders of federations and international associations.
- The city that is to host the Games.
- Adopts or amends the Olympic Charter.
- It recognises the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and the International Sports Federations.

Under President Samaranch, the IOC gradually opened the Games to sponsors, the media and professional athletes.

The IOC's current funding comes from radio and television rights, sponsorship agreements and the rights to use the Olympic logos.

Less than 10% of resources are used to maintain the administrative and organisational structure.

### **They are: POLITICS**

In ancient times, the venues hosting the Games enjoyed a sort of extraterritorial status. The Olympic Truce, although applying exclusively to the sanctuary, the stadium and the access routes for participants, was recognised, celebrated and respected.

In modern times, the historic 'Olympic Truce' has never really been pursued or put into practice. The Olympic Games were cancelled due to the world wars in 1916, 1940 and 1944.

Subsequently, cancellation was superseded by boycott, a concerted action aimed at damaging the commercial interests associated with the Games by refusing to participate for political, social or religious reasons.

The main boycotts were:

1956 Melbourne for political reasons

1964 Tokyo and 1976 Montreal due to apartheid

1980 Moscow due to the Cold War

1984 Los Angeles in retaliation for the Moscow boycott 1988

Seoul due to Eastern Bloc policy

### **They are: TRADITION – KNOWLEDGE – SHARING**

The Olympic Flame burned throughout the duration of the ancient Games and was held in sacred esteem. It was regarded as a link between the human and the divine, having been stolen from the gods by Prometheus to be given as a gift to mankind.

Today, the Olympic Flame, in its symbolic relay from Greece to the host city, represents the exemplary link between different civilisations and the thread running through millennia of history.

The Flame, introduced at the 11th Games in Berlin in 1936 and lit for the 'auspicious Games of Peace', is the symbol of the ideals and values that must be passed down from athlete to athlete, from nation to nation.

The Olympic torch is the torch that carries the lit Flame to the sacred city of Olympia

The Oath, too, has ancient origins: athletes, their fathers, brothers and coaches, and the judges swore at the altar of Zeus that they had committed no fraud and would be impartial.

The first Oath of the Modern Olympics was taken in 1920 in Antwerp. Since 1972 in Sapporo, the Judges have taken the Oath, and since 2012 in London, the Coaches have done so as well.

Since the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, the oath has been taken on behalf of all participants jointly by an athlete, a judge and a coach.

The Games are currently the largest and most watched event on the planet.

### **They are: MEDICAL SCIENCE – RESEARCH and INVESTIGATION**

Initially, there was no consensus regarding the 'beneficial' effects of sporting activity; indeed, some expressed concern about the consequences of excessive physical activity. Among those in favour was the 'periodic' physician Icco of Taranto; Hippocrates criticised overuse and monitored occupational diseases.

'Modern' sports medicine – understood as the assessment of physical fitness, prevention and treatment – has been part of the Games since their inception in 1896.

Today, the sports medicine specialist is a qualified professional, the only one capable of providing an appropriate assessment of the athlete, as they study, analyse and monitor them both during their preparation and their performance.

Today's sports medicine draws on a wide range of professionals: psychologists, physiologists, anatomists, biomechanics experts, hygienists, traumatologists and nutritionists, to name but a few.

Research and investigation do not concern only the athlete's 'well-being' but are now very much focused on materials, clothing, aerodynamics...

### **They are: THE SEARCH FOR FREEDOM – THE WEARING DOWN OF CHIT-CHAT**

The sporting gesture could be seen as a 'waste' of energy. Indeed, a sporting gesture that is not performed for a utilitarian purpose can be considered a 'healthy' waste. It is the waste of play, the playful, recreational waste.

Humans have a physical and psychological need to play: engaging in play means being free – free from work, free from what is indispensable, necessary, obligatory. The need for movement translates into wellbeing: movement is the foundation of life. This freedom allows for physical improvement, a reduction in aggression, and the subjugation of brute force to intelligence and tactics.

When sporting activity ceases to be play practised first-hand and becomes a discourse on play—that is, a spectacle for others—we have a distortion of health.

Only sport as it is practised is a source of health, vitality and well-being.

Sport that is merely watched and talked about (at the pub) gives the illusion of being sporty. Chatter about sport becomes a parody of a political debate where only intellectual energies are expended on evaluations, analysis and controversy, whilst physical qualities are not at stake.

### **They are: MONEY – BUSINESS**

The sporting act could be experienced as a 'waste' of energy. In fact, the sporting act that is not performed for a utilitarian purpose can be considered a 'healthy' waste.

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### **They are: MACRO INFLUENCERS**

The collective and stereotypical image of the influencer generally identifies them as a person capable of guiding individuals' choices, as they are considered competent and/or authoritative in a particular field. However, it is possible to move beyond this reductive view and consider, in a broader and more original way, the influencer not merely as an individual, but as a genuine Entity.

From this perspective, the influencer becomes an authoritative, credible, competent and authentic Entity, capable of influencing individual behaviour through strong emotional engagement and social communication that can generate economic, cultural, educational and ethical benefits, thereby contributing to the holistic development of the person.

It is in this sense that sport and in particular the Olympics, can be interpreted as influencers: not simply as contexts in which individual athletes – already recognised as influencers – operate, but as autonomous systems, endowed with their own capacity to shape values, behaviours and collective imaginaries.

The so-called ‘vibe’ – understood as atmosphere, energy and emotional engagement – is the driving force behind this influence: it is what enables sport and the Olympics to foster powerful and pervasive communication, an essential element of any influential phenomenon.

This capacity is also reflected on a cognitive level. The latest neuroscientific research, including that of Leonardo Fogassi (University of Parma), highlights how movement is not merely a motor expression, but constitutes a fundamental component of cognitive processes: “our movement becomes cognition”.

It follows that sport not only communicates but actively contributes to the construction of knowledge and experience of the world.

In light of these considerations, the Olympics can be defined as a true macro-influencer, distinct from individual athletes but capable, as a system, of exerting an even broader and deeper influence on society.

### **These are: COMPETITION**

‘Agones’ referred to any kind of competition.

From the Greek root ‘agon’ derive ‘agonia’ (the extreme struggle between life and death) and ‘agonism’, which denotes both the contest and the defined arena where the ‘competition’ takes place.

‘Competition’ has a similar etymology, from the Latin ‘cum-petere’, to go together, to converge towards the same point. The religious and spiritual tension of the ‘Agones’ evolved over time into pure agonism, a competition aimed at bringing man closer to the ‘ideal form’ characteristic of the gods. The aim of Agonism is to measure oneself, to compare one’s own values. The winner excels and becomes a unit of measurement. They deserve prestige and glory, conceived as the goal and the prize. In modern times, the concept of the Agon has been expanded to include the Record.

The Greeks and Romans had a circular view of Time, that is, a cyclical Birth – Death, etc.

The Judeo-Christian conception of Time is linear, that is, a succession of distinctive, unique and unrepeatable moments. Thus arises the idea, the notion of Progress.

This different conception of time allows the athlete’s value to be linked to the progress that the human machine is capable of achieving. The competition becomes twofold: against the athlete and against time.

Today’s aspiration is to defeat Time, and thus the Record was established.

### **These are: COMPETITIONS**

**776 BC Olympia** – The first Games are held with a single event, the ‘stadion’. A 192.28-metre straightline race that remained the only competition for the first 13 editions

**1896 Athens** – First Modern Olympics with 245 athletes from 14 nations competing in 43 events.

The first medal was awarded on 25 April to the American James Connolly in the triple jump.

The Greek Louis Spyridon won the first marathon.

**1900 Paris** – First female participation. Charlotte Cooper won the tennis event

**1904, St Louis** – First participation by African athletes.

George Eyser was the first athlete to compete with a wooden prosthesis on his left leg.

**1924, Chamonix** – The first Winter Games are held from 25 January to 4 February. Seventeen nations take part. The events are speed skating, ice hockey, 50 km cross-country skiing, 18 km cross-country skiing, small hill ski jumping and Nordic combined. Demonstration events: curling and 25 km cross-country skiing for military patrols. On 2 February 1924, the FIS (International Ski Federation) was founded by 15 of the nations present at the Games. 1936 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. First participation by women in the downhill, slalom and Alpine combined events

**1960 – Rome:** First Paralympic Games. 400 athletes from 23 nations. Modern sport has undergone evolution and transformation; it has been renewed and innovated.

With a smile, we recall that in 1896 there was the rope climb, and in 1900 in Paris the standing long jump and triple jump. In Stockholm in 1912, the 'Poetic Art' event, where de Coubertin, under the pseudonym Georges Hohrod, won with the poem 'Ode to Sport'

### **They are: A DREAM**

I am a treasure trove of symbols. A collection of images, emotions and sensations.

I am a form of thought which, in continuity with unconscious processes, seeks ideals, explores aspirations, and pursues desires with imagination.

I am thoughts wrapped in hope and utopia that devise marvellous and resplendent plans.

The above

evokes the dream.

Dreams act as a form of therapy that helps the individual process events and situations.

It is a way to discover and fulfil our deepest desires, a process for positively processing emotions, consolidating memory and solving problems.

### **The Olympics are a Dream**

# At the Panathlon Club Ferrara, the Games are recounted by those who experienced them at work

The March social gathering was an important evening for the Panathlon Club Ferrara, both for the club's community life and for the calibre of the guests and the discussions, centred on the proposed theme: "The Olympic Spirit between past and present: MilanoCortina2026 meets Cortina '56". The gathering, which marked a return to the historic Duchessa Isabella venue, saw, from an organisational perspective, the 'passing of the baton' between the current Honorary President Luciana Boschetti Pareschi and the new President Massimiliano Bristot – a handover characterised by continuity, as confirmed by the board, with Angela Travagli retaining her role as Deputy Vice-President.

Presiding over this change is the President of Panathlon International, Giorgio Chinellato, visiting the Club for the first time, alongside the Councillor for Sport of the Municipality of Ferrara – European City of Sport 2027, Francesco Carità.

Also most welcome was the first visit by a representative of the Curia, Monsignor Michele Zecchin, delegated to represent His Excellency the Archbishop, Monsignor Gian Carlo Perego. And these are just the main names on a very long list of guests, many of whom were speaking at the event, such as Stefano Ripanti, Governor of Area 5 (Emilia-Romagna and Marche) of Panathlon International. This purely Panathlon-related part of the event concluded with the presentation to Davide Conti – fresh from his victory in the European Masters Silver medal in Jujitsu held in Crete – of an award in recognition of his 10 years' membership of the Club.

The social part of the evening began with the screening of a summary of *Vertigine Bianca*, the CONI documentary film on Cortina '56, directed by Giorgio Ferroni from Ferrara, with his great-grandson Giorgio Ferroni present in the hall. A leading figure in Ferrara's voluntary sector, he plays on the shared name with his great-grandfather and recounts his character traits, whilst Maurizio Villani, President of the FEDIC Ferrara Film Club, discusses the more strictly cinematic choices.

The evening continues with the host, Mirko Rimessi, in conversation with Federica Lodi, who analyses the contrast between the narrative of the 1956 Games, or even just those of 2012, as recounted by the Sky Sport journalist who this year covered the Livigno venue for the broadcaster – a concrete example of how to manage these widely broadcast Games from a communications perspective, including the specific moment of the Opening Ceremony and touching upon the differences between traditional coverage and that on social media.

Not forgetting the fundamental difference between 1956, when the Olympics were the main event, and today, where they are merely the first half, with the Paralympics keeping the flame alive, bringing a whole host of additional issues into play.

We then move on to the stories from MilanoCortina2026, described by Chinellato as "the real winners of the Games", with three very particular perspectives from the medical sector. We begin with Governor Stefano Ripanti, who worked as a doctor during the Paralympics, recounting his experience as a blend of his primary role—which brought him to the ski slopes—and the emotions of being a Panathlete in the front row at an event that celebrates all the values the movement promotes, including culture, sporting ethics and fair play. Next is Dr Gabriele Zazzarini, a physiotherapist from Senigallia and an 'Olympic' champion with no fewer than three gold medals to his name: two won by Francesca Lollobrigida and one by the men's long-track team.

With him, we are reminded how the Italian ice skating movement has strong roots in the 'street', and, just a stone's throw away, a mention of Piazza Ariostea is inevitable, before delving into the specifics of his work and recounting curious anecdotes, such as lending his skates to Francesca for the medal ceremonies, as she had left her designated 'podium' outfit in the village for good luck.

This section concludes with Dr Riccardo Tieghi from the Cranio-Maxillofacial Surgery Unit at the S. Anna University Hospital in Ferrara, who was in Milan specifically for his specialisation, to handle any operations resulting from collisions during hockey matches, a new specific request from the IOC to further bolster the medical team. Fortunately, Tieghi had little work to do, enabling him to describe a highly precise organisational machine, operating with great rigour and respect for professional ethics.

The evening concluded with a passionate account by Club member and councillor Rita Minarelli, who experienced the Games as a volunteer in Cortina, as evidenced by the special uniform she wore during the evening, from the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games at the Curling Stadium, where she served, all accompanied by photos and videos of this unforgettable experience.

A highly successful social gathering, as reiterated by the International President, who was entrusted with closing the event, which forms part of the long series of events marking the 75th anniversary of Panathlon's foundation in Venice. And now, for the Ferrara Club, it is time to turn our attention to the Panathlon 'Outstanding Athlete, Outstanding Student' Awards, which will shortly be officially launched with the call for applications for the finest talents in our region.



# Panathlon and the Paralympic spirit at Milan-Cortina 2026: strength beyond all limits

## *A message from Governor Stefano Ripanti*

The Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Paralympic Games are not merely a major international sporting event, but embody a universal message of inclusion, resilience, and human dignity. In this context, Panathlon International plays a consistent and powerful role, promoting the ethical values of sport and helping to foster a culture based on respect, fairness, and the empowerment of the individual. The Italian Paralympics, held from March 6 to 15, saw the participation of hundreds of athletes from around the world, competing in six disciplines and united by a common goal: turning adversity into opportunity.

### ***The strength of Paralympians: examples of resilience***

Among the iconic figures of this edition is Oksana Masters, one of the greatest multi-sport athletes in Paralympic history. Born in Ukraine with severe congenital malformations linked to the Chernobyl disaster, she faced a childhood marked by abandonment and hardship before finding a new life in the United States.

Despite over 20 surgeries and numerous physical complications, Masters has built an extraordinary career, winning medals in multiple disciplines, from rowing to cycling, to Nordic skiing and biathlon. Her story is not just about sports, but deeply human: a concrete example of how willpower can transform a disadvantaged situation into an extraordinary opportunity for redemption.

### ***A Message from Governor Stefano Ripanti***

The greatest expectation for a Panathlete like me was to be able to contribute, as a sports physician, to the success of an extraordinary event like this.

This was heightened by meeting a woman and champion as unique as Oksana Masters.

It is precisely in stories like Oksana Masters' that Panathlon recognizes the heart of its commitment: to promote a sport that is inclusive, educational, and capable of inspiring.

In an era when sport sometimes risks being reduced to spectacle or results, the Paralympic Games remind us of its most authentic value. Panathlon, through cultural initiatives, events, and educational projects, helps spread this message, especially among young people, so that sport becomes a vehicle for personal and social growth.

### ***Beyond Competition***

Milan-Cortina 2026 leaves behind a legacy far greater than a medal count. It leaves stories, faces, and emotions. It leaves the story of men and women who, through their tenacity, have redefined the very concept of limits



# A letter of gratitude to Italy

by Fabio Figueiras

Fate would have it that my first experience – not as a spectator, but as someone who experienced the Winter Olympic Games – took place in Italy, a country that welcomed me so warmly. Long live Italy! Long live the Italian people!

Long live Panathlon, which was born in this splendid country! Ubuntu! declared the first female President of the International Olympic Committee in her speech - her first Olympic Games as President - a word that resonates deeply within us, precisely because it embodies the values that, as a man of sport, have always guided me: humanity, respect and unity.

Always striving to ensure that sporting values take precedence over any other consideration. The first day – that of the opening ceremony – could only take place in Milan, a city that welcomed me during my Master’s degree in 2021. And the venue, San Siro, could not have been better chosen, as it brought to mind the many morning runs I did in this extraordinary place – now transformed into an even more significant symbol of this journey.

The second day, specifically Saturday, was dedicated to my journey to Livigno, where my Olympic experience truly began.

Over more than two intense weeks of work, I had the privilege of breathing in the spirit of the Olympics at every moment.

Of experiencing the essence of the Games up close – not only through the competitions, but above all through the people.

Athletes who embody effort and resilience, leaders committed to the development of sport, dignitaries aware of their role as agents of change and, perhaps above all, extraordinary teams and volunteers, whose dedication made every detail of this great celebration possible.

These have been days of continuous learning, sharing and inspiration. Days that have strengthened my conviction that sport remains one of the most powerful tools for uniting people, cultures and generations. I return with a deep sense of gratitude - towards Italy, towards the Olympic Movement and towards all those who have contributed to making this experience truly unforgettable. More than just an attendance, I take with me a life experience that will undoubtedly shape my personal and professional journey.

Because, ultimately, the Olympic Games are not just about competition.

They are about people, values and legacy.



# Panathlon Communication Award 2024–2025 The importance of promoting the values and activities of the Clubs

*by Giacomo Santini, Head of the Communication Award*



*“Doing without communicating is like not doing at all”.* A few years ago, this slogan inspired the relaunch of the Panathlon International Communication Award at a time when new forms of online information were exploding, along with social media, mobile phones that had become portable computers, and all those electronic devices that accompany us every day, at every moment of the day.

The International Council significantly simplified the previous format of the award, identifying three key areas for publicising club activities or exploring pan-athletic themes: coverage by radio and television broadcasters, articles in the print media, and the promotion of information via various social media channels.

A great many clubs took up the challenge, and the number of news items sent to the Rapallo press office to feed the weekly column – now widely followed across the globe – immediately multiplied. Some clubs began producing monthly online magazines featuring high-quality content, graphic design and photographic documentation.

Other clubs clearly stepped up their efforts to involve local media in their monthly social gatherings and public events, resulting in widely circulated articles and features on radio and television stations. The result of this renewed focus on the Communication Award was the submission of an extraordinary volume of material for the selection process for the awards.

Henrique Nicolini, the unforgettable promoter of Panathlon International in Brazil and South America, would be thrilled by this commitment to sports journalism, of which he was an outstanding exponent. It is no coincidence that the Award is named in his memory and in honour of his example.

Turning to the present, the winners of the **Henrique Nicolini Communication Award 2024/2025** have been officially announced, following the evaluation of the entries received by the General Secretariat within the deadlines set out in the Regulations.

The Award recognises the Clubs' commitment to promoting Panathlon through various communication tools and languages, capable of conveying initiatives, values and projects with effectiveness, creativity and a focus on the local community.

The selection process involved the Examination Committee, comprising **Giacomo Santini**, Head of the Communication Award; **Luigi Innocenzi**, Vice-President; **Carlos De Leon**, International Board Member; **Andrea Sbardellati**, member of the CRC; and **Filippo Grassia**, Head of Communications.

At the conclusion of its deliberations, the Committee identified the most deserving projects in the three competition categories: in the **Print and Print Media category**, the award was presented to **Panathlon Club Firenze**; in the **Internet/Social Media category**, the award went to **Panathlon Club Buenos Aires**; and in the **TV and Radio category**, the award was presented to **Panathlon Wallonie-Bruxelles**.

The selected projects stood out for their quality, communicative effectiveness and ability to fully embody the spirit of the Award, offering concrete examples of modern, incisive communication capable of making an impact. Through print, images, social media, video and audiovisual content, the winning Clubs have successfully conveyed the educational, ethical and social value of sport, contributing to the spread of Panathlon culture in diverse contexts yet united by a shared vision.

In the **TV and Radio category**, the award given to **Wallonie-Brussels** recognises video material of great promotional value for Panathlon International. The dynamism of the experiences, particularly those involving young people, is complemented by powerful slogans inspired by sporting ethics: "Fair play is everywhere and forever" and "Sport does not educate without fair play". The broadcast of the content on Belgian television networks, thanks also to the support of the National Lottery, has helped to give the Panathlon message wide visibility.

In the **Internet/Social Media category**, the award presented in **Buenos Aires** recognises lively and engaging communication that places young people and their active participation in sport at the centre. Football, judo and golf, with particular attention also paid to sports for people with disabilities, become tools for inclusion, growth and sharing. The submitted documentation reveals an atmosphere of celebration, enthusiasm and participation, in which every competition becomes an opportunity for people to come together and every award ceremony celebrates not only the result, but above all the commitment, fair play and the joy of being together, in keeping with the motto "Ludis lungit".

In the **Press and Print Media category**, the award to the **Panathlon Club Firenze** recognises the quality and consistency of its communication activities across the region. Articles, photographs and press clippings document the Club's prestige and its ability to highlight the initiatives undertaken, bringing visibility to the core themes of Panathlon International's commitment. Among the most significant topics are the book and conference marking the 70th anniversary of the Club's foundation, twinning arrangements with other Clubs, participation in marathons, the anniversaries of Florentine sports associations, and support for initiatives dedicated to sport for disadvantaged people, with powerful messages such as "Sport changes your life" and "Beyond the finish line: challenging prejudices".

The awards ceremony took place in Ghent at the start of the Gala Dinner, as part of the Extraordinary General Assembly and the Scientific Congress, and provided an opportunity for members to come together and share experiences, celebrating the achievements made and the value of the best practices in the field of communication.

All participating Clubs received warmest congratulations for their excellent work and for their contribution to fostering a culture of communication that is increasingly effective, innovative and faithful to Panathlon's values.

## Geographical areas of the planet now off limits

*Article-interview by Luca Ginetto with former motorcyclist Gregorio Lavilla, now head of Superbike, on the situation regarding major international events and the consequences of ongoing wars.*



Formula One Grand Prix races cancelled or rescheduled, ATP tennis tournaments reorganised, as has MotoGP. In short, geographical areas of the planet have now become off limits. International conflicts are beginning to have repercussions on the world of sport.

At the moment, the circuit least affected is the FIM WorldSBK; as confirmed by CEO Gregorio Lavilla – a former Spanish MotoGP rider – whom we met in Perugia on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of Perugia Timing “L. Burini”, the FICr timekeepers who manage the entire Superbike series.

*“Unfortunately, it’s a terrible situation. First and foremost because people are dying, and in the face of this tragedy, sport is certainly less important,” admits Lavilla, “but this is our job and we must try to keep doing it. Perhaps, however, this situation leads us to reflect and to commit ourselves more fully to using our high profile to convey those important values of respect and fair play; both to those who come to watch our competitions and to those who follow us from home.”*

**The world of motorsport, whether on two or four wheels, involves huge financial stakes. Does passion still manage to prevail over all this?**

*“I believe that can never be missing. Both for the protagonists, such as the drivers and teams, and for those who follow the competitions as spectators. Of course, for us it is a job. We are professionals who give our all. It is a tough job, full of sacrifices, and one that takes you around the world for most of the year. We’re not like those who clock eight hours in the office and then go home to their families. And to get through it all, we need to be driven by a strong passion. The same goes for the millions of fans and supporters. They dedicate their days off or their holidays to come and follow us, perhaps making long journeys at their own expense. You can’t get more passionate than that!”*

**At this level, sports rely on sponsors and media rights – no longer just television rights – for their livelihood. Is there still significant economic interest in Superbike?**

*“I must say that we are in good shape in this regard. For safety reasons during the races, we have a cap on the number of bikes in the various categories, but year after year we continue to receive entry requests from new teams. I believe this is because we are the last major showcase for the bikes and all the accessories that fans then find on the market. And this drives manufacturers to want to be part of our championship.”*

**Are you concerned about artificial intelligence, and how might it play a role?**

*“I think the teams and companies in our world are already using it, especially to create simulations of various situations and find solutions. The human element still prevails, but there’s no doubt we’re undergoing a major transition. So, I wouldn’t say I fear it. I think every revolution, even a technological one, should be seen as an opportunity.”*

**In all this, even the role of the traditional timekeeper has changed. Today, the Perugia Timing team, whom you have relied on for years, go beyond simply recording times and provide a range of important data for race directors and the teams themselves.**

*“It’s a role that’s been completely transformed compared to the past. Today, the Perugia team is at the forefront of the world. The transponders mounted on the bikes and connected to the control units transmit real-time data on the bike’s condition to the pits: engine temperature, tyre pressure, acceleration and deceleration, allowing us to immediately understand if a bike has gone off the track or the rider has crashed. Today, technological innovation allows us to have sector times and lap-by-lap data, as well as comparisons with other riders. Not to mention all the video graphics generated by Perugia Timing, which allow viewers to experience the unfolding of the races moment by moment. With the Perugia team, it is a continuous journey of growth; between us and them lies a shared desire to constantly experiment with something new in an atmosphere of great collaboration, respect and humanity.”*



# It's time for Panathlon International to reflect

by Paolo Pizzi[1] and Domenico Ubaldi[2]

In recent years, the number of Panathlon International members has seen a significant decline, particularly in Italy, which represents a significant part of the international movement.

Understanding the causes of this phenomenon is an essential step: without a clear diagnosis, it is not possible to devise effective strategies to reverse the trend and initiate a phase of renewed growth.

During Panathlon International's period of greatest expansion, the membership base came predominantly from the CONI sphere. Many members had gained formative and organisational experience from their teenage years onwards in parish youth clubs, Catholic Action and the Scouts, before entering the sporting world through amateur sports associations (ASAs), federations, promotional bodies and CONI itself. These were, for the most part, influential figures, recognised as qualified representatives of their respective disciplines. The Club provided a virtually unique forum for dialogue between different sports, at a time when Municipal Councils were either absent or marginal and was founded on a solid shared culture of association.

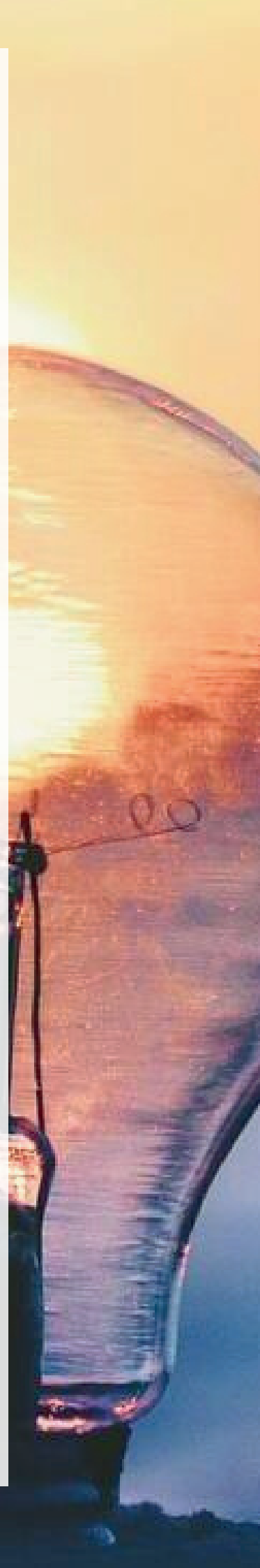
From the mid-1970s onwards, some of these key educational institutions gradually lost their influence. Sports managers trained during that period grew up in a different cultural context, one that was more individualistic and less oriented towards selfless volunteering. At the same time, society underwent profound transformations, initially slow and then increasingly rapid, with a growing focus on egocentrism and a generational divide accentuated by technological evolution, which has weakened the value of tradition and the transmission of knowledge, often confused with mere information.

The sporting world has also been affected by these changes. The gradual decline of the volunteer manager has encouraged the emergence of more professionalised models, giving rise to organisational structures that are profoundly different from those of the past. This is a transition that is still ongoing and has not yet reached a definitive form.

Meanwhile, the social perception of sport has also changed, shifting from a predominantly competitive and selective sphere to a phenomenon of social significance. The launch of Sport e Salute, the establishment of the Ministry of Sport and the inclusion of sport in the Constitution represent the culmination of a process that began in previous decades.

At the same time, these developments have triggered a comprehensive re-evaluation of sporting culture, which has not always been understood or welcomed.

In this context, CONI – Panathlon International's long-standing point of reference – has been restored to its most natural role as the guardian of the Olympic spirit, whilst new institutional bodies have taken on responsibilities relating to sports facilities, education, healthy lifestyles and the social value of sport.



Panathlon International Clubs have found themselves facing these changes almost independently: the transformation of club culture, the redefinition of leadership training, the loss of established points of reference and, more recently, the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic.

New members have joined a context characterised by a different sporting culture, interpreting the Club's rules, customs, ideals and aims in a more individual and less representative manner. In several cases, this has led to internal rifts and the departure of long-standing members, partly for generational reasons.

The result is a Panathlon perceived as less attractive than in the past and, at the same time, not fully in tune with the new demands of the sporting world and society.

This reflection provides the necessary framework for addressing the theme of the next three-year plan. If this analysis is correct, we are not facing a mere temporary difficulty, but a genuine systemic crisis.

The structure of Panathlon International mirrors that of well-known service clubs – Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Zonta, Soroptimist – whilst differing from them in terms of purpose and independence[3].

However, a central question remains unresolved: who is the 'ideal member' today? The sports executive, the former athlete, the journalist, the politician, the fan, those who practise sport for their wellbeing, or those who are merely media consumers?

Locally, Panathlon is often little known, and its credibility does not stem from the institution itself, but from the calibre of the members who make up the Clubs. It is therefore on the composition of the membership that attention must be focused. Equally uncertain are the operational guidelines: should the Club be a disseminator or a witness, a promoter or an implementer, a protagonist or a facilitator, oriented towards social issues or the values of competition?

Whilst respecting the autonomy of the clubs, it would be desirable to develop a guiding philosophy capable of shaping their local identity and planning. The organisational structure of the P.I. also appears, at present, to be out of step with the changes currently taking place.

Furthermore, there is a lack of systematic data on the age of Panathlons and on membership tenure, including those in leadership roles. A rejuvenation is necessary, but it is unlikely to be achieved solely through Panathlon Junior, whose status remains uncertain.

Finally, particular attention should be paid to developing a strong organisational culture, based on sharing and a clear distinction between role and person, avoiding co-optative tendencies that risk weakening the system.

In conclusion, it seems more appropriate than ever to initiate, at least within the Italian District, a structured and shared discussion on the causes of the decline recorded in recent years, with reference to Panathlon International's mission, the composition of the Clubs and the organisational structure of the Area and District. There is no shortage of expertise at national and international level: what is now needed is to define an analytical methodology capable of capturing the reality on the ground and devising a sustainable development strategy.

*[1] Promoter, founder and Honorary President of the Senigallia Club, football manager, President of an amateur fencing association, CONI Trustee, Municipal Sports Officer, author of the town's sporting history.*

*[2] Founder of the Fabiano and Senigallia Clubs, club president and regional/national table tennis manager, CONI trustee and delegate, President of the Senigallia Sports Council.*

*[3] The District Italy is a CONI 'Meritorious Association' on a par with the 'Italian National Fair Play Committee', the 'Italian Sport Against Drugs Committee', the 'Italian Sports Federation for Educational Institutions', 'Special Olympics Italia', etc.*



## Panathlon Club Perugia

It all came about thanks to a hotel porter. It was the autumn of 1954 when, during a work-related conversation, a receptionist at the Hotel Luna&Baglioni in Venice told his colleague from the Grand Hotel Brufani in Perugia that a new association, similar to Rotary, had been founded three years earlier, but one dedicated exclusively to sport. The diligent concierge from Perugia went to the owner of the prestigious hotel in the historic centre, Giorgio Bottelli, and informed him of this initiative. A few phone calls, some preliminary meetings with other sports-loving friends, and on 5 December 1955, Club No. 23 was established among the Italian Panathlons (for the International one, we had to wait until 1960). Right from the start, the Perugia Club attracted prominent local figures and took on a central role in the sports policies adopted by local institutions.



Bottelli was succeeded by Giuseppe Taticchi, Remo Coppini, Dante Magnini, Goliardo Canonico, Mario Provvidenza, Marcello Carattoli, Alessio Burini and Carla Spagnoli, leading up to the current presidency of Luca Ginetto (who previously led Venice's Club No. 1 for six years from 2014 to 2019).

Numerous initiatives and awards have been established over the years: the most notable include the 'Giovanni Carattoli Award' for promising young talent, the 'Giorgio Bottelli Award - Champions in Sport' and the 'Giorgio Bottelli Award - Fair Play in Sports Journalism', which over the years has seen the special plaque awarded to figures such as Sergio Zavoli, Nuccio Fava, Candido Cannavò, Paolo Valenti, Fabrizio Maffei and Marino Bartoletti, right up to the more recent recipients Riccardo Cucchi, Marco Franzelli, Ivana Vaccari and, in 2025, Franco Bragagna. To mark the 70th anniversary, the book "Panathlon Club Perugia - 70 Years of Sporting Culture" was published, written by President Ginetto.

The two highlight days that marked the celebrations were 5 December, featuring the gala ceremony for "Perugia Panathlon Day" at the prestigious Teatro del Pavone, and the subsequent gala dinner held right where it all began: at the Grand Hotel Brufani.

In attendance were International President Giorgio Chinellato, the President of the Italian District, Giorgio Costa, accompanied by three Board Members, five Governors and eight Club Presidents; as well as the delegate of the CONI President, the Honourable Elisabetta Lancellotta, the Regional Councillor for Sport, Simona Meloni, the Municipal Councillor for Sport, Pierluigi Vossi, and military authorities such as the Chief of Police of Perugia, Dario Sallustio, and General Francesco Mazzotta, Regional Commander of the Guardia di Finanza.

The following day saw a highly interesting national conference in the prestigious Sala dei Notari, organised in collaboration with the Umbria Chamber of Commerce, entitled "The Economic Value of Sports Volunteering", featuring prominent speakers such as Rossana Ciuffetti of Sport e Salute, Francesco de Nardo, National Vice-President of CSEN (National Educational Sports Centre), Alessandro Palazzotti, Founder and Vice-President of Special Olympics Italia, sports manager Andrea Vidotti (via video link), Fabio Pagliara, President of MSA Manageri Sportivi and Fondazione SportCity, and finally Rai commentator Franco Bragagna.

In short, the 70-year milestone has been reached; now new challenges await the Panathlon Club Perugia, and all thanks to that curious hotel doorman.



## Panathlon Club Padova – 70 years dedicated to the values of sport

24 January 2026 - The Panathlon Club Padova celebrated 70 years of activity at an official ceremony held at Palazzo Moroni, which looked back on the club’s main achievements in promoting the ethical and cultural values of sport.



Founded seven decades ago, the club has organised around 700 events over the years and hosted over 800 internationally renowned speakers to explore issues related to sport and its social role. Among the most significant initiatives are educational projects in schools, such as ‘1 hour for disabled athletes’ – subsequently recognised at European level – and the ‘Clean Sport Project’ for the prevention of doping and the correct use of dietary supplements, involving students and teachers. During the celebration, the importance of values such as fair play, respect, sporting ethics and inclusion was highlighted, pillars of the Panathletic mission that the Club continues to promote locally and beyond.

The guest of honour at the event was Paralympic swimming champion Francesco Bettella, who was present to bear witness to the commitment to inclusive sport.

## A “Panathlon Showcase” to mark the 70th anniversary of the Club Cremona

The “Panathlon Showcase” was unveiled at the Infopoint in the Town Hall, on Via Baldesio, to mark the 70th anniversary of the Panathlon Club Cremona. The initiative brought together members and former executives for a celebratory event dedicated to retracing the Club’s history, encompassing sport, culture and the values of fair play that have characterised its activities over seven decades.

The exhibition, open to the public, traced the Club’s journey from its foundation in 1955 to the present day through photographs, historical documents and commemorative materials. Also on display were the club flag and the Charters of the Rights of the Child in Sport and the Duties of the Parent, symbols of the principles of Panathlon International.

During 2025, the Club also organised various celebratory initiatives, including “Un Po di salute”, and published a book dedicated to its 70 years of activity, which chronicles the key milestones and awards presented to local athletes.

In collaboration with the Municipality of Cremona, the “Giocare gli Sport per Apprendere” project also continued, now in its tenth edition and aimed at young people, with the aim of promoting growth through sport.

The “Panathlon Showcase” offered citizens a journey through the history of a Club that, for seventy years, has been a benchmark for sport and its values.



## “Fair Play as a Way of Life”

*This is the theme of the journalism competition organised by the Panathlon Club Reggio Calabria in collaboration with the Panella Technical and Industrial Institute*

*An initiative to be replicated in every Club*

“Learning about fair play for fair play in schools, sport and society. With an educational project involving the third-year classes of the ‘Panella-Vallauri’ Technical and Industrial Institute – a total of 150 students – the Panathlon Club of Reggio Calabria has relaunched its campaign to promote sporting ideals and values.

The initiative, which coincides with the club’s 75th anniversary, is sponsored by CONI, ‘Sport e Salute’ and the Paralympic Committee. It was presented during a meeting held in the school’s main hall, with speeches by Area 8 Governor Ludovico Malorgio and International Board Member Antonio Laganà. In conjunction with the project, the ‘Journalist for a Day’ competition will be held for the second consecutive year, focusing on fair play as a philosophy of life, with its rules of civility that must occupy a central place within the school, the greatest educational institution, fundamental to the formation of thought.

Following a welcome address by Headteacher Teresa Marino, the importance of ethics in every sporting experience was highlighted in the speeches by the President of CONI Calabria, Tino Scopelliti; the Head of the Paralympic Committee, Antonello Scagliola; and the two athletes acting as ambassadors for the project: swimmer Aurora Esabotini and judoka-wrestler Iuric Raviliuc, introduced by Karate master Riccardo Partinico. The criteria and objectives of the journalism competition, which draw inspiration from the Panathlon International charter, were outlined by Club President Irene Pignata, Governor Ludovico Malorgio and former RAI correspondent (and past president) Tonino Raffa, who focused on the moral and cultural values of sports journalism, the specific nature of the language used, and the need for it to be characterised by clear, accessible reporting at all times.

For the writer too, in essence, fair play—with its rules of loyalty and respect for others—must serve as an indispensable compass. A way of thinking and always communicating the truth, distancing oneself from social media, which often becomes a breeding ground for insults, threats, vulgarity and provocation.

In the ensuing debate, fuelled by questions from the students, there was a celebration of Olympic values, in the wake of the extraordinary success of Milan-Cortina 2026.

Critical reading of newspapers, books and magazines was recommended, in the knowledge that keeping up to date can help to better combine the educational lessons of sport, overcome historical shortcomings and make up for methodological deficiencies. Entrants to the competition must submit their entries by the first ten days of May 2026.

The entries will be assessed by a special committee and the winners will be announced during a ceremony scheduled for the end of the school year.

*The President of the Panathlon Club of Reggio Calabria, Irene Pignata, explains the objectives of the Fair Play project to the students of the Panella Technical and Industrial Institute*



# The "Sandro Ciotti" Sports Literature Award

*Milan reaffirms its status as a sporting and cultural capital with the fifth edition of the Sports Literature Award dedicated to Sandro Ciotti, organised by the Panathlon Club Milano.*

In the historic Sala delle Colonne at the Banca Popolare di Milano, just a stone's throw from the Duomo, Lombardy's sporting world told its story through the pages of books, weaving together memory, identity and a vision of the future.

At the heart of the evening were three iconic figures from the sporting world: Giampaolo Ricci, captain of Olimpia Milano; Vito Cozzoli, CEO of Autostrade dello Stato; and Giuseppe Marotta, President of Inter and author of the foreword to Cozzoli's book.



*The Sala delle Colonne at Banco BPM, which hosted the "Sandro Ciotti Sports Literature Award"*

The **2025 Ciotti Prize** was awarded to *\*Volevo essere Robin.*

*Il mio viaggio fino a qui\** (De Agostini), an autobiography in which Ricci traces his personal and sporting journey: from the fragility of adolescence to his rise to the top of basketball and his time in the Italian national team.

Not a celebratory account, but a reflection on the value of the team. "I didn't expect to win out of the 44 books," said the Biancorossi captain. "I've always liked Robin because I realised that, in sport and in life, you don't just need stars, but also those who work a step behind." Words that capture the essence of the model: discipline, team spirit, shared responsibility.

Ricci embodies a quiet leadership, built on work ethic and consistency. His victory takes on a significance that goes beyond the court: it is the recognition of a sport that educates, that shapes character, that transforms individual experience into a collective heritage.

Alongside the autobiographical dimension, the evening highlighted the institutional and strategic role of contemporary sport. The Respect Award was presented to Vito Cozzoli, author of *\*L'anima sociale industriale dello sport\** (Piemme Edizione), a book that analyses the dual nature of sport: inclusion and cohesion on the one hand, industry and development on the other.

The foreword penned by Marotta, a central figure at the event, was pivotal. The Nerazzurri president reiterated that 'sport is a training ground for life', not just about goals and trophies but personal growth and educational responsibility.

A message consistent with the Lombard tradition of clubs as social and educational institutions. Marotta emphasised that sport must remain an accessible right, a widespread practice, and a tangible opportunity for all. A vision that combines sporting results and ethical values, managerial expertise and social function, in a balance that Milan knows well.



*Filippo Grassia and Beppe Marotta, president of Inter, present an award to Vito Cozzoli, winner of the Respect Award for his book "The Social and Industrial Soul of Sport"*

Also on the podium were Vertical. Il romanzo di Gigi Riva by Paolo Piras and The day after. Il Grande Torino dopo il Grande Torino by Vincenzo Savasta and Fabrizio Turco: works that confirm how sports fiction serves as a custodian of memory and a tool for civic analysis.

The Ciotti 2025 Award, promoted by the Panathlon Club Milano chaired by Filippo Grassia and now in its fifth edition, sends a clear message: sport is not just about competition.

It is a story of identity, an economic driver, an educational laboratory.

It is the voice of a captain who chooses to be 'Robin' and that of a president who calls for collective responsibility.

The evening took on an international dimension with the inclusion of books by foreign authors.



*From left: Sergio Giuntini, jury president; Livio Luraghi of Banco BPM; Giampaolo Ricci, winner of the Ciotti Prize; Filippo Grassia; Claudio Galli, world volleyball champion*

## **The spirit and ideals**

The Foundation was established in memory of Domenico Chiesa, on the initiative of his heirs Antonio, Italo and Maria. Domenico Chiesa, who in 1951 not only promoted the establishment of the first Panathlon club but also drafted its constitution, and who in 1960 was among the founders of Panathlon International, had expressed during his lifetime the wish though technically not binding on his heirs to allocate part of his estate to the periodic awarding of prizes for artistic works inspired by sport, as well as to cultural initiatives and publications aimed at the same objectives as Panathlon.

In the establishment of the Foundation, alongside the substantial contribution from the Chiesa heirs, it is worth noting the generous support of the entire Panathletic movement through a great many clubs and the personal involvement of many Panathletes, which succeeded in providing the Foundation with the necessary conditions to make a prestigious and striking debut in the world of visual art: the creation of an award in collaboration with one of the most prominent organisations at , La Biennale di Venezia

## **Domenico Chiesa Award**

On 24 September 2004, the Central Council of Panathlon International, having regard to the need to increase the Foundation's capital and to honour the memory of one of Panathlon's founding members and the inspiration behind the Foundation, as well as its first financial backer, resolved to establish the "Domenico Chiesa Award" to be awarded, upon the proposal of individual clubs and in accordance with specific regulations, to one or more Panathletes or non-member personalities who have embodied the Panathletic spirit.

In particular, to those who have dedicated themselves to upholding sporting ideals and who have made an exceptionally significant contribution:



**To the understanding and promotion of the values of Panathlon and the Foundation through cultural initiatives inspired by sport.**

**To the concept of friendship amongst all Panathletes and those involved in sporting life, thanks also to the regularity and quality of their participation in Panathlon activities; for members, and for nonmembers, the concept of friendship amongst all sporting communities, recognising Panathletic**

**ideals as a primary value in the educational development of young people**

**To a willingness to serve, thanks to the work carried out for the Club**

Chiesa Italo - P.C. Venezia 20/10/2004	Roberto Ghiretti - P.C.Parma 15/12/2011	Marini Gervasio - PC Latina 9/12/2019
Pizzetti Martino - P.C.Parma 15/12/2004	Fondazione Lanza P.C.Udine N.T. 17/12/2011	Pecci Claudio - PC Como 12/12/2019
Chiaruttini Paolo - P.C.Venezia 16/12/2004	Giuseppe Molteni - P.C. Varese 17/04/2012	Lucchesini Giorgio - PC Altavaldelsa 16/12/2019
Chiesa Italo - offerto Enrico Prandi 20/10/2004	Enrico Prandi Area 5 11/12/2012	Facchi Gianfranco - PC Crema 18/12/2019
Battistella Bruno P.C.Vittorio Veneto 27/05/2005	Sergio Allegrini - P.C.Udine N.T. 17/12/2012	Marani Matteo - PC Milano 28/01/2020
Ferdinandi Pierlugi - P.C.Latina 12/12/2005	Piccolo Gruppo Evolution - Polisp. OrgnanoA.D. P.C.Udine N.T. 17/12/2012	Ginetta Luca - Venezia 21/06/2020
Mariotti Gelasio - P.C.Vald.Inf 19/02/2006	Don Davide Larice - P.C.Udine N.T. 17/12/2012	Porcaro Angelo - Pavia 06/05/2021
Prando Sergio - P.C.Venezia 12/06/2006	Maurizio Monego - Area 1 31/10/2013	Landi Stefano - Reggio Emilia 10/05/2021
Zichi Massimo - P.C.Latina 06/11/2006	Henrique Nicolini - Area 1 Area 2 31/10/2013	Albanesi Aldo - La Malpensa 25/05/2021
Yves Vaan Auweele - P.C.Brussel 21/11/2006	Together onlus - P.C. Udine NT 30/11/2013	Dusi Ottavio - Brescia 21/06/2021
Viscardo Brunelli - P.C.Como 01/12/2006	Enzo Cainero - P.C. Udine NT 30/11/2013	Muzio Ugo - Biella 23/10/2021
Giampaolo Dallara - P.C. Parma 06/12/2006	Giuseppenicola Tota - Area 5 11/06/2014	Beneacquista Lucio - Latina 25/09/2021
Fabio Presca - I Distretto 15/02/2007	Renata Soliani - P.C. Como 12/06/2014	Migone Giorgio - Genova Levante 11/03/2022
Giulio Giuliani - P.C. Brescia 12/06/2007	Geo Balmelli - P.C. Lugano 12/06/2014	Romaneschi Sergio - Lugano 16/06/2022
Avio Vailati Venturi - P.C.Crema 13/06/2007	Baldassare Agnelli - P.C. Bergamo 30/10/2014	Pintus Patrizio - Como 16/06/2022
Luciano Canavese - P.C. Crema 13/06/2007	Sergio Campana - P.C. Bassano 09/12/2014	Sandro Giovanelli - Rieti 26/06/2022
Sergio Fabrizi - P.C.La Malpensa 19/09/2007	Fabiano Gerevini - P.C. Crema 13/11/2015	Grassia Filippo - Milano 29/06/2022
Cesare Vago - P.C. La Malpensa 19/09/2007	Dionigi Dionigio - Area 5 06/12/2015	Aschedamini Massimiliano - Crema 29/06/2022
Amedeo Marelli - P.C. La Malpensa 19/09/2007	Bruno Grandi - P.C. Forli 22/01/2016	Bernardinello Giovanni - La Malpensa 19/09/2022
Fernando Petrone - P.C. Latina 10/12/2007	Mara Pagella - P.C. Pavia 18/02/2016	Riguzzi Gianluca - Rimini 28/10/2022
Vittorio Adorni - P.C.Parma 16/01/2008	Giancaspro Antonio - P.C. Molfetta 26/11/2016	Regione Piemonte - Area 03 01/10/2022
Dora de Biase - P.C.Foggia 18/04/2008	Oreste Perri - Area 02 26/11/2016	Stefano Baldini - Reggio Emilia 15/12/2022
Albino Rossi - P.C.Pavia 12/06/2008	Giandua Giuseppe - P.C. La Malpensa 13/12/2016	De Angelis Mauro - Terni 17/12/2022
Giuseppe Zambon - P.C.Venezia 18/12/2008	Giovannni Ghezzi - P.C. Crema 14/12/2016	Mauro Miele - La Malpensa 21/03/2023
Maurizio Clerici - P.C.Latina 15/12/2008	Roberto Peretti - P.C. Genova levante 26/01/2017	Luciano Manelli - Brescia 22/05/2023
Silvio Valdameri - P.C.Crema 17/12/2008	Magi Carlo Alberto - Distretto Ita 31/03/2017	Adone Agostini - Venezia 02/06/2023
Enrico Ravasi - P.C.Varese 21/04/2009	Mantegazza Geo - PC Lugano 20/04/2017	Pierre Zappelli - Lausanne 14/06/2024
Attilio Bravi - P.C.Bra 25/05/2009	Palmieri Caterina - PC Varese 16/05/2017	Francesco Schillirò - Napoli 21/06/2024
Antonio Spallino - P.C.Como 30/05/2009	Paul De Broe - PC Brussels 28/01/2018	Luigi Ballani - Piacenza 21/11/2024
Gaio Camporesi offerto Enrico Prandi 21/11/2009	Vic De Donder - PC Brussels 28/01/2018	Alessandro Gaoso - Brescia 04/12/2024
Mons.Mazza - P.C.Parma 15/12/2009	Buzzella Mario - PC Crema 28/02/2018	Marco Villa - Crema 11/12/2024
Mario Macalli - P.C.Crema 22/12/2009	Balzarini Adriana - Distretto Italia 16/06/2018	Giuliano Razzoli - Reggio Emilia 18/12/2024
Livio Berruti - Area 3 19/11/2010	Di Pietro Giovanni - PC Latina 27/10/2018	Roberto Paulon - La Malpensa 23/09/2025
Gianni Marchiol - P.C.Udine N.T. 11/12/2010	Guccione Alù Gabriele - PC Palermo 09/11/2018	Stefano Giulieri - Lugano 16/12/2025
Mario Mangiarotti - P.C.Bergamo 16/12/2010	Speroni Carlo - PC La Malpensa 13/11/2018	Marco Riva - Crema 22/12/2025
Mario Sogno P.C.Biella 24/09/2011	Dainese Giorgio - Area 05 26/10/2019	Antonio Laganà - Reggio Calabria 18/02/2026
Mariuccia Lombardini - P.C.Reggio E. 19/11/2011	Bambozzi Gianni - Area 05 26/10/2019	Paul Standaert - Club Belgio 06/06/2026
Bernardino Morsani - P.C.Rieti 25/11/2011		



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