



INTERNATIONAL
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COMMITTEE

Press release

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Place: Lausanne

IOC extends opportunities for athlete expression during the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020

2 July 2021 – As part of the implementation of the IOC Athletes' Commission's [recommendations](#), the Executive Board (EB) of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has approved the Rule 50.2 Guidelines for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

These Guidelines, which were presented to the EB by Kirsty Coventry, Chair of the IOC Athletes' Commission (IOC AC), provide athletes and other Games participants with guidance on the implementation of Rule 50.2 of the Olympic Charter, which is aimed at preserving the protection of the neutrality of sport at the Olympic Games and the neutrality of the Games themselves.

The new version of the IOC Guidelines provides further clarity and guidance to athletes competing in Tokyo this summer on the wide range of opportunities available to them to express their views, including on the Field of Play prior to the start of the competition. The guidelines say:

“During the Olympic Games, athletes also have the opportunity to express their views, including:

- In the mixed zones, including when speaking to the media
- In the International Broadcasting Centre (IBC) or the Main Media Centre (MMC), including when speaking to the media
- During press conferences in the venue or in the MMC
- During interviews
- At team meetings
- In traditional media or digital media
- Through social media channels
- On the field of play prior to the start of the competition (i.e. after leaving the “call room” (or similar area) or during the introduction of the individual athlete or team) provided that the expression (for example, gesture) is:
 - (i) consistent with the Fundamental Principles of Olympism;
 - (ii) not targeted, directly or indirectly, against people, countries, organisations and/or their dignity;



- (iii) not disruptive (by way of example only, the following expressions are considered disruptive: expressions during another athlete's or team's national anthem and/or introduction, as this may interfere with such other athlete's or team's concentration on and/or preparation for the competition; physical interference with the introduction of another athlete or team or the protocol itself (for example by unfurling a flag, a banner etc.); causing (or assuming the risk of causing) physical harm to persons or property, etc.); and
- (iv) not prohibited or otherwise limited by the rules of the relevant National Olympic Committee (NOC) and/or the competition regulations of the relevant International Federation (IF)."

The guidelines further state that: "When expressing their views, athletes are expected to respect the applicable laws, the Olympic values and their fellow athletes. It should be recognised that any behaviour and/or expression that constitutes or signals discrimination, hatred, hostility or the potential for violence on any basis whatsoever is contrary to the Fundamental Principles of Olympism."

Additionally, the Guidelines describe the disciplinary procedure that would apply in the event that the conditions stated above were not to be respected. The evaluation of cases and the determination of potential disciplinary consequences will be handled by the IOC in full transparency.

"The new guidelines are a result of our extensive consultation with the global athletes' community," said IOC AC Chair Kirsty Coventry. "While the guidelines offer new opportunities for athletes to express themselves prior to the competition, they preserve the competitions on the Field of Play, the ceremonies, the victory ceremonies and the Olympic Village. This was the wish of a big majority of athletes in our global consultation."

In April this year, following the IOC AC consultation on athlete expression and Rule 50.2 of the [Olympic Charter](#), the IOC EB approved [a set of recommendations proposed by the IOC AC](#). The recommendations were the result of an extensive qualitative and quantitative consultation process implemented by the IOC AC, which started in June 2020 and involved over 3,500 athletes representing 185 different NOCs and all 41 Olympic sports, and ensured fully gender-equal representation. The consultation was supported by the NOC Continental Associations' Athletes' Commissions and the World Olympians Association.

[The full document can be found here.](#)

Rule 50.2 of the Olympic Charter provides for the protection of the neutrality of sport at the Olympic Games and the neutrality of the Games themselves. It states that, "No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas."

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