



International
Olympic
Committee

IOC GENDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CHAMPIONS 2023

WORLD WINNER:	Katrina Adams (USA)
WINNER FOR AFRICA:	Irene Limika (Kenya)
WINNER FOR THE AMERICAS:	Marialoreto González Jaque (Chile)
WINNER FOR ASIA:	Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala (Sri Lanka)
WINNER FOR EUROPE:	Aurélie Bresson (France)
WINNER FOR OCEANIA:	Patrick Johnson (Australia)

PROFILES OF THE WINNERS

WORLD WINNER – KATRINA ADAMS, USA

A tennis executive and former professional tennis player, Katrina Adams is a global speaker, author and renowned leader.

Katrina was the first African-American and first former professional tennis player to serve as the United States Tennis Association’s Chairman of the Board and President, and the first to serve two consecutive terms. She also served as the Chair of the US Open for four years, from 2015 to 2018. In those four years, she championed diversity and inclusion by spearheading the Hispanic Initiative, leading to an immediate growth of 15% in the Latinx population of tennis players in America.

Katrina, a former International Tennis Federation (ITF) Vice President (2015-23), was appointed Chair of its Women in Sport Committee in 2015, later named the Gender Equality in Tennis Committee in 2018. For the next five years, she spearheaded the gender-equality strategy for the ITF, which has delivered great results during her leadership. She also spearheaded the development of the Advantage All strategy,



which resulted in millions of dollars being invested into providing young women with the opportunity to compete and progress as professional tennis players. She also developed gender-balanced programmes under five key pillars:

Empower – the development and implementation of a women’s leadership programme for a group of 120 women identified and supported as potential future leaders. Beneficiaries of the Advantage All programme have since successfully stood for election or stepped forward to be appointed to and elected at national, regional and ITF levels – on commissions, committees and boards.

Balance – thanks to Advantage All, the ITF leadership has invested millions of dollars into closing the gap in unequal competitive playing opportunities for young women. Back in 2018, young talented female players who had chosen to turn professional with the aspiration of becoming world champion tennis players and Olympic medal hopefuls could compete in only half the number of tournaments that were open to men. In 2023, the number of tournaments at this entry level of professional tennis, the World Tennis Tour, was equal for women and men (195:195).

In early 2024, the ITF proudly announced that, for the first time, there would be an equal number of women and men appointed as officials for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic tennis events. This is a direct result of the Advantage All programme.

Culture – Katrina’s unrelenting work and advocacy contributed to reform of the ITF Constitution, which was amended in 2022 to introduce a quota of a minimum of five women and five men (four elected, one appointed) to the ITF Board of Directors from 2027.

Value – as a former player, closing the pay gap on court has been a particular area of focus. Since 2022, in alignment with the Advantage All values, the ITF has introduced equivalent prize money for women and men at the highest level of its international team world cup/championships – the women’s Billie Jean King Cup Finals and men’s Davis Cup Finals. Both events are the backbone for Olympic qualification in tennis.

Due to her leadership, the ITF secured a sponsor, the Tory Burch Foundation, and jointly launched a Sports Fellowship, with a grant and programme to support female entrepreneurs in the sports sector, and this is now in its second year.

Voice – Katrina continues to mentor large groups and individuals as the figurehead for the women’s leadership development programme. She has since authored a book on the topic, *Own The Arena*, and continues to mentor the women on the Advantage All programme.



WINNER FOR AFRICA – IRENE LIMIKA, KENYA

A former professional athletics athlete, certified World Athletics coach and a member of the Sports & Active Society Commission of the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Kenya. Founder of Arrows for Peace, Kenya and a Gender Equality Champion.

Participation: Irena Limika pioneered the visionary “Arrows for Peace” initiative, aimed at empowering women in traditionally marginalised pastoralist communities across East Africa through the sport of archery. By breaking down societal barriers and providing access to sports, she has ignited a powerful movement of inclusion, and today 30% of archery teams across Kenya are women’s teams. Beyond mere participation, she has facilitated educational scholarships abroad, unlocking doors to personal growth and societal change for countless women who were previously sidelined from the sporting arena.

Leadership: As a certified World Athletics coach and esteemed member of the Sports & Active Society Commission at the NOC of Kenya, she has been at the forefront of championing gender equality in coaching and leadership roles in sports organisations. Through her mentorship of over 120 young female coaches annually through the Train the Trainer (ToT) programme, she has not only transferred skills, but also empowered a new generation of female leaders poised to shatter glass ceilings and drive meaningful change. She tirelessly champions policy reforms and organisational strategies that embed gender equality and diversity at the heart of sporting communities, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable future.

Safe Sport: Recognising the critical importance of safety and respect in sport, she has spearheaded initiatives to combat gender-based violence, fostering a culture of zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment. Through targeted educational programmes and impactful awareness campaigns, she uses sport as a powerful tool to dismantle systemic barriers and empower individuals to stand up to injustice, ensuring that every athlete can compete in a safe and supportive environment.

WINNER FOR THE AMERICAS – MARIALORETO GONZALEZ JAQUE, CHILE

A former athlete, lawyer, President of the Chilean Judo Federation and Chair of the Chilean NOC Safe Sport Office. Marialoreto Gonzalez is the creator and promoter of the “Office for Respect in Sports”, which is a unit of the Chilean Olympic Committee that began its operations in March 2019. Its purpose is to educate and address issues related to safe sport and gender equality, as well as topics linked to children and adolescents participating in sports activities and high performance. Prior to the creation of the office in 2018, she collaborated in the parliamentary discussion of Law 21.197 (a law that issues sanctions for sexual harassment, sexual abuse and discrimination in Chilean sports). This law was promoted by her and the Ministry of Sports of Chile, and was approved in September 2020.



Safeguarding: Marialoreto has promoted safe sport throughout South and Central America, actively collaborating in the creation of Safe Sports units in other NOCs in the region. A clear example of this is the Panama NOC, which has worked closely with Marialoreto. Similar to the case of Chile, they jointly promoted a law (Law 720) for Safe Sports in Panama. This law was approved in 2023, making Panama the second country in the Americas to have a Safe Sports unit as an integral part of its NOC, and to have a law that backs and safeguards the work carried out by the NOC and provides tools and resources for athletes in relation to this issue.

Marialoreto has also collaborated with the NOC of Paraguay on plans to establish a Safe Sports office, and the NOC is currently working on this project, guided by her. She also works with the NOCs of Costa Rica, Colombia and Bolivia, encouraging the creation of initiatives that promote Safe Sports at various levels. Specifically with Costa Rica, she is involved in the modification of sports laws to include Safe Sport.

Inclusion: Marialoreto has been supporting Chilean national sports federations, sports clubs, university leagues and their sports teams to design and establish policies on the inclusion of transgender athletes. During this work, she has worked on developing protocols that regulate and allow the participation of trans athletes.

WINNER FOR ASIA – JAYANTHI KURU-UTUMPALA, SRI LANKA

A renowned mountaineer and gender equality activist, Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala is a role model for many women and girls in Asia. In 2016, Jayanthi became the first Sri Lankan to scale Mount Everest, making Sri Lanka only the fourth country in the world for which a woman has summited Everest before a man.

Safe Sport: As the inaugural Chairperson of the Complaints Committee of the Safe Sports Policy in Sri Lanka, Jayanthi actively combats gender-based violence in sport, ensuring a safe environment for athletes. She is also the co-creator of “Delete Nothing” – a local web-based initiative aimed at addressing online gender-based violence in Sri Lanka. She was a panellist at the Safe Sports event hosted by the Singapore NOC’s “Women in Sport Committee’s Webinar Series” in 2021. Click [here](#) for the agenda and [here](#) for a media article reporting on this event.

Portrayal: Her #ClimbLikeAGirl campaign challenges stereotypes, and as a panellist at global forums, including the IWG World Conference, she addresses discrimination and inclusion. She uses her voice via various media, conferences and workshops to foster gender equality and to speak against gender-based violence.

Jayanthi has been involved in campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes and push women and girls to reach their full potential. These campaigns include the aforementioned [#ClimbLikeAGirl campaign](#) around her most recent, successful ascent of the Matterhorn to challenge the notion that playing sports “like a girl” is something to be ashamed of; the [campaign](#) by Sri Lankan non-profit Hashtag Generation to



challenge ideas of gender determining one's career choices; and the [#SheTakesOnTheWorld campaign](#) by Cosmopolitan Sri Lanka to encourage young girls to not be held back by stereotypical gender norms.

In March 2019, she was selected by the Sri Lankan Parliament as one of the [12 "Women Change Makers of Sri Lanka"](#) (Sports category), as part of a campaign initiated by the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Women and Gender and USAID's Governance and Accountability project.

Leadership: As rock climbing is still a relatively new sport in Sri Lanka, Jayanthi has provided leadership in building awareness of the sport among the public, as evidenced in her own social media profiles, encouraging young women to engage in the sport, and in establishing new rock climbing routes where possible.

Participation: She collaborates closely with *ClimbLanka* to run rock climbing workshops for women and girls, providing a safe space for skills development and fostering inclusivity. This involves training girls and women with all body types, while encouraging body positivity and fitness for all.

WINNER FOR EUROPE - AURÉLIE BRESSON, FRANCE

General Manager of *Les Sportives* media group and President of the *Alice Milliat Foundation*. A determined sportswoman (gymnastics and rowing), Aurélie Bresson received the Sport Manager Award in 2019.

- *Les Sportives* is a media group (press and online media, podcasts) showcasing the plurality of women's sports practices. With 150,000 views per month, it contributes to the fight against gender stereotyping.
- The Alice Milliat Foundation is the first European foundation for women's sports, supported by the French Sports Foundation and aimed at advancing gender equality in sport, most notably by pooling resources. The Foundation has the public endorsement of the French ministries of Sports, Culture and Gender Equality and the National Agency of Sport and the Paris 2024 OCOG.

During her studies, Aurélie realised that female athletes did not have the same media coverage as their male counterparts. In 2016, she created and developed *Les Sportives*, out of passion and conviction, and with her own funds. *Les Sportives* is the first and only media and publishing group dedicated to women's sport in France. In parallel with *Les Sportives*, the Alice Milliat Foundation was co-created in 2016 with other actors with a common mission to advance the place of women and gender equality in the field of sport through various types of action.

Today, Aurélie is General Manager of Sports Media and has been President of the Alice Milliat Foundation since September 2020. Both entities have contributed to gender equality and inclusion in and through



sport by focusing on the representation of sportswomen in the media, combating gender-based discrimination, sexual and gender-based violence in sport, promoting role models and leaders, as well as supporting initiatives through the expertise of the structures.

WINNER FOR OCEANIA – PATRICK JOHNSON, AUSTRALIA

Olympian in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay athletics events at the Olympic Games Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004, and a Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Board member. Patrick Johnson's journey didn't stop at the finish line. He has continued to demonstrate significant leadership in the inclusion of Australia's First Nations people in and through sport. As a leader for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Patrick is a strong advocate and ally for gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

Leadership: In his role as Chair of the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC)'s Indigenous Advisory Committee, and Champion of the AOC Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), Patrick has been a driving force in leading gender equality and inclusion, advocating equal representation of female members on key decision-making committees, commissions and groups at the AOC. So much so, that it is now engrained as actions and deliverables in the AOC's Innovate RAP (see action 22 p.42 in the [AOC RAP](#)). His efforts have led to the achievement of 50% female representation of Indigenous members on the AOC's Athletes' Commission, 40% female members on the AOC's Indigenous Advisory Committee, and 50% female representation on the AOC's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.

Participation: His work has been pivotal in ensuring programmes foster the growth and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Olympic sports. Take, for example, his significant involvement in the Australian Olympic Indigenous Coaching Scholarship (AOICS) programme, funded by the Toyota Foundation.

Resource Allocation: In the role of Safety and Culture Adviser, he provides strategic advice to Sports and Integrity Australia (SIA) and other sporting organisations in Australia in the areas of diversity and inclusion, with the aim of developing an agency that is culturally capable, respectful and engaging. This role helps educational resources to be shared among all levels of sport in Australia. Patrick is also a member of the Executive Sponsor Group, which has overseen the development of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC)'s 2032+ Australia's High-Performance Strategy. This work will help ensure that there is a First Nations lens in the delivery of activities supporting diverse high-performance athletes. Patrick spent a decade in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and over two decades dedicated to advocating equal rights for all Australians in the fields of health, education and well-being.