



# GoodSport NEWS

S R I L A N K A O L Y M P I C W E E K L Y N E W S B U L L E T I N



## IS SAFE SPORT HERE TO STAY?

**H**uman Rights is a universal moral obligation that encompasses every human that dwells upon this earth and, it reaches and touches the very heart of governance in any part of the globe. Unhindered living is a right of every citizen and ensuring that right is preserved, is the moral obligation of every governing body.

Unconstrained right of living could be divided in minute portions and the segment we call 'right to play', or in a more sophisticated manner of explaining it as "Safe Sports", is another important segment of the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka takes very seriously.

Though it is a malady that had crept into sport through the generations, it is only now that we have awakened -

to open our eyes and also speak loud against discriminations that occur on this part of the track.

It seems under the present circumstances, especially in a Lankan context, majority of the population knows or aware of Human rights, but sadly the safe sport is filtered from that and they are either oblivious or they have put into the oblivion through sheer ignorance. As a result, athletes who could climb the ladder of excellence or even stardom are fallen by the wayside of the sports track. Ironically, majority of the cases involves female athletes.

Speaking of Safe Sport and NOC's part in the safe play in this exchange, former Rugby and now a legal luminary Jivan Gunatilleke, possesses an in-depth knowledge of the subject.

With that in mind, we inquired about his views on the subject. Jivan explained, "Generally it all comes within the framework of trying to improve our sports in Sri Lanka.

"There are two aspects to it. One is that from an international perspective you look at from the Olympic Committee and the charter.

"There was a shift; it was more of a gender based domination of male teams.

"This has been acted upon by the international forum - the Olympic Committee and also the member states and the Associations or the co-group involved with the Olympic charter, decided to work closely with the women's teams."

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“Because the women’s teams were getting neglected, they wanted to make more parity between men and women where equal treatment is given.

“There were only male teams and the women’s teams were always getting step-motherly treatment. If you look at International sport on the whole women’s teams were treated as inferior, but, now they call it the Men’s Cricket World Cup and the Women’s Cricket World Cup and parity is given.

He said that in Sri Lanka also, there is a pressing need to show that they are in line with the main Olympic charter.

We have to now ensure that we recognise women on the same scale. You have to give the same parity that you give male teams.

Jivan emphasized, “That is one aspect of it.

“The other aspect of it is – Obviously the common goal is to develop our sports.

“There were a lot of issues when it came to opportunity; how they were treated and how their grievances were met. Because Sri Lanka is small, Colombo is even smaller. But, if you look at most of our athletes, there are tremendous potential from outstation and other places that are basically they are not in the public eye.

“Ofcourse there are people like Susanthika who came to a certain level but, there are so many athletes with potential who have fallen by the wayside for whatever reasons other than sports.



“In fact, there is large scale argument where payment for athletes should be on an equal footing.

“It is said it should be on the same scale, but it is not the case still; as in certain countries, there is still argument that why women’s sports should be scaled differently.”

“Development of sport sometimes is misconstrued as – you have to put more money into the sport or improve our stadiums, gyms etc., but at the same time we have neglected the other side of it. Why are we neglecting certain areas and what deters people from continuing sports, especially from a female athlete perspective?

“One of the areas here that we have identified is abuse. Basically there is no regulation so they are deterred from continuing in athletics.

“They are harassed; sexually or otherwise, but they did not have a proper mechanism to address that grievance.”

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“In fact, no one even bothered about it. Perhaps they did not bother to look at it or preferred ignoring it.”

Jivan pointed out - where would have their redress? The thing called sexual harassment and abuse; anywhere in Sri Lanka, there is no prevention mechanism to that.

He explained “Even in the penal code, it came only in 1995 as an offense.

“Even if you take a work place, if you look at industrial relations, it is not really looked at. In its implementation, we are lagging behind time.

“In other countries, the concept is taken very seriously; but not in Sri Lanka. Even when it came to general legal frame work, how many people have been prosecuted successfully? Maybe less than ten a-year!

“At the same in Sri Lanka, there is a real stigma on it. Athletes are hesitant to go and complain.

“Most of these cases get dragged along. At the same time, society also looks at the complainant differently and you are victimized. Relying on the general law was wholly insufficient.

“We realized to meet both these requirements, we need to really have a robust system in place - A place where we instil confidence in athletes.

“It is not only confined to female athletes, it is open to male athletes as well. We now say that there is a forum and a mechanism here that is actually here to helping the athlete - it instils confidence in the entire system.

“That is why we in the NOC SL Women’s Committee developed this. What we have here is a mechanism that is apart from the law, where the NOC SL itself has a system and a place where you can place an athlete’s grievance.

“Looking at the cultural issue and the practicalities of the situation, there is a two tier system. It is adopted in other countries as well - where you have to protect the individual. You have to give the athlete assurance that there is not going to be a backlash and the athlete can safely make a complaint.



“We have made it easier to make a complaint; not everybody has a computer or it is not everybody that could get into a bus and travel to Colombo or it is not everybody who could speak English.

“These are all drawbacks which deter people from taking action.

“They suffer in silence or they drop out from the sport entirely”

“Initially we called it the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse Policy. In that we produced a two tier structure - we have a Complaints Committee and then you have a Hearing Committee.

“The Complaints Committee is where you lodge a complaint; it can be an email or you can give it in writing and that is processed very confidentially.

“Your identity is covered and the Complaints Committee - it is a very flexible body that will do the fact finding.

“The committees contain some respectable and erudite persons in society such as Lawyers, Psychologists, Women’s Rights Activists, etc. So then they will speak to witnesses and accused parties and get statements. Afterwards, at that point, if necessary, they can come up with a solution.

“However, if it’s a grievous issue or something that needs to go into further inquiry, then that entire docket with whatever information is gathered so far is referred to the Hearing Committee. The Hearing Committee is more legalistic and plays a more inquisitorial role.

“Finally they make certain determinations and a final report and submit it to the NOC SL, where they root it back to the accused party’s sport’s national association and inquire about their prevention mechanisms itself.”

“Already they have completed one complaint successfully and have made several recommendations to the respective people involved.

“So now we have broadened our horizons and we have come up with 'Safe Sports'.

“With that, it doesn’t have to be confined to sexual harassment or abuse, even in an instance where there is discrimination or gender bias, is covered by Safe Sports.”

# DATES FOR DAKAR YOG 2026 APPROVED BY IOC EXECUTIVE BOARD



The dates for the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) Dakar 2026 have been decided. The first Olympic event to be held on the African continent will officially start on 31 October 2026, with an Opening Ceremony on the first day of competition, and will last until 13 November.

Following the decision to postpone the Youth Olympic Games in Dakar from 2022 to 2026, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee (YOGOC) and -

all concerned stakeholders evaluated the potential Games dates.

The 14-day YOG period was proposed to the IOC EB following an extensive assessment factoring in school and university times to best suit the athletes' school curriculum, meteorological conditions and other international sports events and celebrations. Dakar 2026 will coincide with Africa Youth Day (1 November), which is an important celebration in Senegal allowing school pupils more time to participate in and contribute to the YOG.

Further work and analysis of the YOG schedule will be done in relation to the capacity of the YOG Villages and the Athlete Education Programme.

Work on optimising the sports programme is also underway, for which consultations have been taking place with the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) and the International Sports Federations (IFs).

# IOC WARNS AFGHANISTAN OVER WOMEN'S SPORTS AND OLYMPICS

*The International Olympic Committee has warned that it could stop working with Afghanistan ahead of the next Olympics in 2024 if women are not allowed to play sports under Taliban rule*

The International Olympic Committee on Tuesday warned that it could stop working with Afghanistan ahead of the next Olympics in 2024 if women are not allowed to play sports under Taliban rule.

The IOC said its support for Afghanistan's National Olympic Committee will depend on conditions including women being allowed to play sports with "safe and inclusive access" and to take part in sports administration.

Afghanistan's teams for international events must include female athletes who live in the country and not only those based abroad.

The IOC board said it "expressed its serious concern and strongly condemned the latest restrictions imposed by the Afghan authorities on women and young girls in Afghanistan, which prevent them from practicing sport in the country."

Afghanistan's participation and "the representation, or not, of the country" in the next Summer Olympics in Paris in 2024 "will depend on the progress made in relation to the fundamental issue of safe access to sport for women and young girls in the country," the IOC said.

It was not immediately clear how soon the IOC might implement the measures.



The IOC said it will continue direct support for individual athletes from Afghanistan who aim to compete at the Olympics.

Afghanistan had a team of four men and one woman at the last Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

Human Rights Watch called on the IOC on Monday to suspend Afghanistan from taking part in sports events immediately and to halt its funding.

The IOC suspended the Afghanistan NOC in 1999 during the previous period of Taliban rule.

Also at the IOC executive board meeting Tuesday, a long-running standoff between the IOC and the International Boxing Association continued.

The IOC said the boxing body had not achieved the "drastic change of culture" that the IOC had demanded. The IOC has long criticized how IBA is run, its finances and a history of disputes over refereeing and judging Olympic fights.

The IOC suspended the IBA, then known as AIBA, in 2019 and excluded its officials from running the boxing tournament at the Tokyo Olympics last year.

The IOC is already planning to stage the qualifying competitions for boxing in Paris in 2024 without the IBA. The dispute means boxing is not yet on the program for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles, though it could be added at a later date, with or without the IBA in charge.

# PARIS 2024 XXXIII OLYMPIAD - PRESS ACCREDITATION



The Games Organizing Committee of Paris 2024 has provided information on the registration process of the written press and photographers to the NOCs.

The guidelines for the registration process have been prepared by Paris 2024 in collaboration with the International Olympic Committee.

The number of accreditations available to each NOC for allocation was determined by the IOC Press Allocation Working Group based on the number of athletes and media representatives in attendance at previous editions of the Games, the number of medals won, geographic proximity to the host country and the size and structure of the media industry in the NOC's territory.

Please note applicants with prior participation in more than four Olympic Games will not be considered for the next Olympic Games.

The press accreditation quota allocated for the NOC Sri Lanka is limited.

We are in the process of accepting applications to register the press for the games.

We need you to nominate and send us the application/s under the organization's official letterhead and the applicant/s' CVs to the NOC Sri Lanka via email - [games@olympic.lk](mailto:games@olympic.lk) on or before 12.00 p.m. on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023, if you are interested in sending press and photographers to cover Paris 2024.

It is mandatory for the press and the photographers to comply with requirements requested by the NOC Sri Lanka before, during, and after the games.

You can share the documents below with who you nominate for the games.

- Press Accommodation Guide
- Press Rate Card
- Press Arrival & Departure Guide
- Press Transportation Guide

Press guidelines can be found via <https://olympic.lk/nocnews/410>.

**Maxwell de Silva**  
Secretary General  
NOC Sri Lanka