



A NEW MANAGEMENT OF SPORTS RIGHTS

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First of all, I sincerely appreciate the IOC giving me the opportunity today to contribute to the continuous enhancement of the Olympic Movement.

The theme “Management of sports rights in the Digital Revolution” seems at first glance to be of a purely technical nature. However, experts in this area have already provided us with many valuable ideas and innovative new directions. As both President of the International Boxing Association (AIBA) and a member of the IOC Culture and Olympic Education Commission, I believe it is important for me to address some of the impacts and concerns related to the rapid development of digital technology within the Olympic Movement as a whole.

I believe the adoption of digital technology in our daily sporting lives will have a considerable impact on:

- the internal education of the sports family;
- the promotion of sport using various tools;
- the media marketing of sports rights;
- educational aspects affecting the younger generation; and
- equal opportunities for all beneficiaries, particularly for those in emerging countries.

As the concept of “digital evolution” is not familiar to all leaders, administrators, coaches and officials in my own sport, I have recently formed a group within the AIBA to develop ways of communicating our new coaching and judging training methods via digital technology. This project is called “Digital Enhancement in the Sport of Boxing”. Our organisation believes it is essential to develop the sport of boxing by adopting fast and widespread digitalised means of communication, so that we become experts in managing any type of digital-related issue, and so that we are ready to manage any programmes related to this type of technology in the future.

I also believe and agree that all sporting bodies should concentrate on maximising the potential of digital technology to increase awareness of sport and generate more interest among the public, especially the

younger generation. However, we also need to ask ourselves whether digital technology can help all sports using the same principles? Since the demographics in each sport are quite different, I would suggest we consider adapting this evolution by working with new-media innovators to develop phase-by-phase methods, according to the characteristics, popularity and demographics of each sport.

With regard to managing sports rights with enhanced digital technology, I am in favour of a concept that creates an attractive rights package to attract new media consumers. However, I also believe that we must protect and respect the wide transfer capacity of terrestrial television to reach as great an audience as possible regardless of background. I would therefore recommend developing proper and customised rights content and media-marketing methods according to the sport, country and culture of the target audience.

This brings me to another important aspect of this issue. We have always striven to develop the Olympic and sports movements so that contact with sportsmen and women in their daily lives will enhance their educational experiences and expand their knowledge. However, as digital technology has mainly attracted the younger generation, it is imperative to consider all educational aspects in order to protect their right to be guided in the best way during their involvement in sport and the Olympic Movement. The development of highly technical equipment can be costly for the younger generation, while video games can cause serious social conflict among parents, educators and young consumers. It is often a matter of debate as to which is in the best interests of the younger generation: indirect experience via technical media or direct involvement in the sports themselves. I am a great believer in bringing youth into the actual sports arena. It is so valuable for them to understand the true attributes of sport and the joyful characteristics of the Olympic Movement. Let us develop better digital technology at sports venues, so that they can enjoy the experience of being directly involved in sports, while at the same time using digital technology to communicate with the outside world and with other sportsmen and women.

Dear colleagues, have you ever thought that technology is advancing so fast that it gives us no time to catch up with it? I wonder how many of us, including the young consumer group, can keep up with the complexity and speed of the digital technology revolution. I truly believe it is a small percentage of innovative young minds that demand continuously new and different means of competing among themselves. Clearly our sport fans are ready for this, now, but many of us are not. Let us consider how much of an effort we make to help people in emerging markets participate in this digital movement. We are far too slow in developing better means of communication to reach these people who also have the right to share the rich experiences of sport and the Olympic Movement. It is our responsibility not to disregard one of the core Olympic Ideals, namely sharing our experiences and benefits with them.

We shall therefore continue to manage our sports rights in the best interests of the athletes, public, the media, our commercial partners and ourselves. In addition, our organisation, and I, will continue to explore ways of supporting new-media and digital companies in order to enhance our sport, while finding ways to embrace distant friends and the younger generation, so that they may share the benefits we are enjoying today.

With these things in mind, I would also like to propose the formation of a “Digital Sports Evolution Body” that all 26 Olympic International



Sports Federations invest and participate in with the support of the IOC, to develop new media, policies and guidance for managing sports rights in the interests of each sport. I would also invite the participation of a group of experts who can assess the impact that the digital revolution in sport will have on our daily lives. I firmly believe this body will also give us opportunities to educate ourselves in order to manage our sports and our organisations better.

I have truly enjoyed hearing and collecting valuable information on this theme, which will greatly benefit our sport. Once again, I give my sincere thanks to all of you for listening to my speech and to the IOC for the opportunity to be here today.