

Rebooting the Original Olympic Sport

Cary Depel – Chair

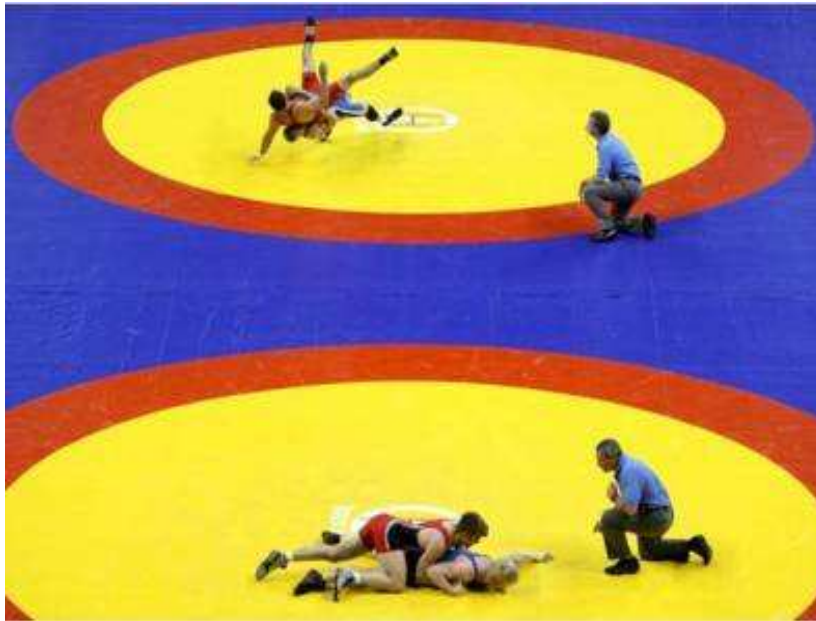
Colin Nicholson – Chief Executive

Steve Cooke – Commercial Director

Sophie Dickens – Wrestling Artist



Order of Proceedings



Presentation: Colin

History

Art

Olympics Exclusion/Re-inclusion

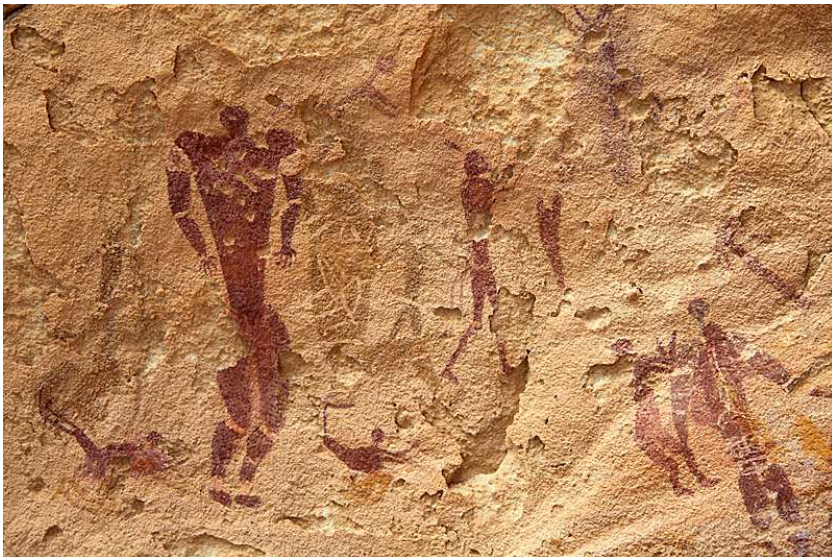
The reboot

Q&A Panel: Colin, Cary, Steve

Sculptures and Pictures - Sophie

Roots and history of Olympic wrestling

- Wrestling is recognised as the world's oldest competitive sport (with the possible exception of athletics)
- The original wrestling was highly valued as a form of military exercise without weapons. It ended only when one of the contestants admitted defeat



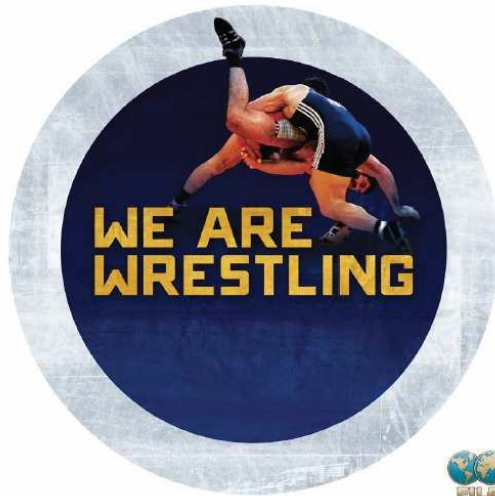
- First traces of wrestling date back to the Sumerians, 5000 years ago

Painting of men in the Cave of the Swimmers, Wadi Sura, Gilf Kebir, Western Desert, Egypt



What is Olympic wrestling?

- **Grappling type techniques:** e.g. clinch fighting, throws & takedowns, pins & other grappling holds
- **3x Disciplines:**
 - **Greco-Roman:** The current Greco-Roman style originates from France during the Napoleonic Wars in the mid-1800's
 - **Freestyle:** Developed in GB/US under the name of catch-as-catch-can and became the favourite attraction in fairs and popular celebrations during the 1800's
 - **Women's Wrestling:** largely as Freestyle



- **Greco-Roman 'v' Freestyle:** It is strictly forbidden to grasp the opponent below the belt line, or to trip him/her or to use the legs actively on the opponent to perform any action
- **Competitive winner – No ropes**

<http://youtu.be/WuBt2b-oGVg?t=7m32s>



Wrestling and art (a)

- Ancient Times: Sculptures and low reliefs reveal the first refereed competitions that were accompanied by music
- 3000BC: Cave drawings of wrestlers have been found in French Babylonian and Egyptian reliefs
- 2000BC: Many historical and archaeological traces of wrestling in Ancient Egypt such as drawings discovered in the tombs of Beni-Hassan representing 400 couples of wrestlers
- 1700BC: Epic of Gilgamesh written in cuneiform features wrestling



Heracles whose father Zeus won possession of the universe through a wrestling match, is depicted here wrestling with the Libyan giant Antaeus

Wrestling and art (b)

- 700BC:
 - Greeks, wrestling was a science and a divine art, and it represented the most important training for young men
 - Greeks believed that it was originated by Theseus when he defeated the fierce Minotaur in the labyrinth
- 1000-1500AD: Middle Ages and Renaissance: Numerous painters and writers celebrated wrestling and encouraged its practice: Caravaggio, Poussin, Rembrandt, Courbet, Rabelais, Rousseau, Montaigne, Locke, etc.



- 1512 AD: The first wrestling manual was printed, in colour, by German artist Albrecht Dürer, just 12 years after the first book was printed
- 21st century: Sophie Dickens continues this fine tradition



Wrestling & Professionalism

- 1830: Professional wrestling began in France with troupes travelling the countryside showing their talent.
- 1830+: French influence extended to the Austrian Hungarian Empire, Italy, Denmark & Russia leading to creation of Greco-Roman wrestling
- 1900: Pro-wrestling was the most “in vogue” “sport” (or entertainment) in Europe but then popularity began to degrade, because knowledge spread of pre-arranged matches, false victories and false nationalities of the competitors



But Pro-Wrestling gained recognition for its ability to advertise, to fix matches and to reward wrestlers

Wrestling & Professionalism

Different roads in the UK

- Professional “Wrestling” becomes entertainment
 - driven by people who need to make a living, so a major split in the 1950’s
 - with “Faces,” “Heels” and fixed outcomes
- “Wrestling” (entertainment)
 - immortalised for a generation by ITV’s World of Sport during 1960’s/70’s
- Said to have been axed by then controller Greg Dyke (currently chair of FA) for combination of not being sport and plateauing audiences



Pro-wrestling evolved from deceit to body building and muscle-size. Amateurs cannot make any use of drug / steroid support.



The UK Amateur story

- Wrestling was popular within local communities, always seen as poor person's sport, associated with the pits etc.
- Until 1960's: Participation and membership high, e.g. Midland Open Competition, 8 weight categories x20 competitors
- Participation reduced with a combination of:
 - Changing fashion
 - More other sports emerge as options
 - Wrestling seen as too technical, strength – a “hard” sport requiring **D**etermination, **D**edication, **D**iscipline
 - ITV World of Sport gave massive publicity to “Pro” variant
- Is there a chance of Pro-Wrestling and Amateur Wrestling working together in the future?
 - No! Say some amateurs!
 - Possibility of Pro-Wrestling clubs teaching young wrestlers Freestyle need to choose



Wrestling & Olympic Games (a)

- 776 BC: 1st Ancient Olympics
- 708 BC: Wrestling added to the programme
 - **5 sports:** Wrestling was the decisive Pentathlon discipline (+ discus; javelin; long jump; foot race)
 - Type of wrestling of that time was Pankration , a primitive form of martial art combining wrestling and boxing
 - Wrestling considered to be one of the toughest sports



- 1896: First modern Olympics:
 - **10 sports:** Wrestling + athletics; rowing; cycling; fencing; gymnastics; weightlifting; swimming; shooting; tennis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dNS0MjYml8&feature=youtu.be&t=9s>



Wrestling & Olympic Games (b)

- 1900: The one occasion when Wrestling was not in the modern Olympics
- 2004: Women's wrestling entered Olympics
- 2004: All athletes required to meet FILA/IOC qualification standards
- Most famous of all Olympic wrestlers: Milon of Croton (student of the philosopher Pythagoras)
 - 6x Olympic champion (540-516 BC)
 - 10x winner of the Isthmic Games
 - 9x winner of the Nemean Games
 - 5x winner of the Pythic Games
- Longest match: 11 hrs 40 mins registered in Guinness Book of Records (1912)



Wrestling, International Federations and the IOC

- 1905 Precursor 1: combined with Weight Lifting
- 1912 Precursor 2: International Wrestlers' Union
- 1913 Precursor 3: International Union of Heavy Athletics, combining boxing, weightlifting, rope wrestling & weight throwing
- 1920 Precursor 4: International Amateur Wrestling Federation. One International Federation per sport
- 1952 Renaming to FILA (International Federation of Associated Wrestling Styles)



- Leading the way - FILA:
 - **1965** 1st IF to make its HQ in Lausanne
 - **1967** Leads creation of GAISF (General Association of International Sports Federations)



Olympic Wrestling and the IOC Challenge - 2013

- IOC already committed to dropping 1 from 26 core summer sports enabling space for new sports - “to ensure Olympic Games remain relevant to sports fans of all generations,”
 - e.g. Golf, Rugby Sevens already signed as additional sports
- After each Olympics, IOC Programme Commission requires sports to complete 39 point review, including a strategic planning process



- Wrestling’s first submission thought inadequate. A revised draft improved, but seeds of doubt sown
- Previous Wrestling publications to IOC had laboured the past e.g. an original Olympic sport with sepia pictures of wrestling imagery on Greek urns & not portrayal of dynamic sport grasping the future

IOC Exec Board - February 2013

- Favourites for exclusion: Pentathlon; Taekwondo
- But 5x Sports in last round of IOC Exec Board voting: Hockey; Canoeing; Pentathlon; Taekwondo; Wrestling
- Wrestling dropped because:-



- Rules that confused spectators
- Perceived irregularities in Refereeing
- Non-equality of for women
- No athletes' commission
- FILA
 - lack of awareness that exclusion vote happening in February
 - overall complacency and reliance on history
 - lack of lobbying

Why should wrestling be kept in the Olympics? (a)



- The Big Picture
 - How could you argue with 3000 years of history, 1st sport etc
 - Too many major players in support: US, Iran, Japan, Russia
- The Sport
 - The hardest sport in the world (even acknowledged by Judo)
 - Superbly fit, wrestling to exhaustion
 - One-against-one
 - No kit, no excuses, on your own
 - Accessible: shoes & singlet only, e.g. no expensive court
 - Great for athletes and spectators as requires/demonstrates
 - *the components of fitness:* Strength, Speed, Power, Flexibility
 - *the skill factors of fitness:* Agility, Balance, Coordination, Reaction Time, Timing



Why should wrestling be kept in the Olympics? (b)

- The Dimensions



- “Everyone does it” - 177 countries
- National sport: Iran, Turkey, Mongolia. A main sport of India
- Diverse: 71 countries at London 2012, 29 medalled
- 6th biggest sport in US Colleges, ahead of Swimming and Tennis. Half a dozen American presidents practised it: George Washington, Zachary Taylor, Ulysses Grant, Andrew Johnson, Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln

- The opposition

- Baseball & Softball forced to merge federations to bid
- Baseball/Softball has professional league competing for players during Olympic period
- Squash - narrow profile of high-performing countries



What changed May-Sept? (a)

- Within the sport:
 - 3xIOC areas of major concern addressed
 - New rules: both exciting and understandable
 - Governance:
 - Change in IF leadership at emergency congress
 - Athletes and females included on the international governing body
 - Athletes Commission instituted
 - Referee commission separated from main governance



- Gender Equity:
 - Number of medals equalised across each discipline, mens' & womens'



- Plus improved the format for television

What changed May-Sept? (b)



- Outside the sport: Massively increased interaction with the Olympic Family and international media
- Awareness of PR and spectaculars

- Feb-Sep: Putin; Rumsfeld; Ahmadinejad speak with one voice
- Feb: Committee for the Preservation of Olympic Wrestling (CPOW) formed in US within a week of IOC decision
- May 15: US-Russia-Iran compete at New York's Grand Central Station, with first ever joint press conference at UN



- May 31: Female wrestlers from the United States, Canada and the Ukraine meet at Niagara Falls
- Jul: Greek Wrestling tournament at Olympia
- Sep: The video that helped get the sport of Wrestling back in the Olympics was recently honored as a winner in the 35th Annual Telly Awards



Action in the UK



Membership dismayed - action required.

- **Communications:** Requirement to bring together disparate information & present a single authoritative source
- **Affect the IOC Main Session vote:** Lobbying of 4x UK-based members out of 105 votes
 - Sir Craig Reedie (IOC VP, Chair Programme Commission)
 - Adam Pengilly (Athletes Commission)
 - Sir Phillip Craven (President Int. Paralympics Committee)
 - HRH Princess Anne
- **Lobby FILA:** Pass back BWA/IOC member comments
- **Manage media interest:** BBC 5-Live/Worldservice/Breakfast; BBC Radio Manchester/Derby/Merseyside; LBC; local press



IOC Voting - 2013

- Feb: IOC Exec Board (15members) excludes Wrestling as one of the 25 “core sports”
- May: IOC Exec Board
 - Shortlists Wrestling, Baseball/Softball and Squash
 - From choice of 8 sports, others: Karate, Wushu, Wakeboarding, Roller Sports, Sport Climbing
- Sept: 125th Session of the IOC (105 members) Wrestling to be included as additional sport for 2020/24



Votes

- 49 Wrestling
- 24 Baseball/Softball
- 22 Squash

<http://youtu.be/WuBt2b-oGVg?t=19m08s>

Olympic Impact?

... If Wrestling hadn't won...

- International:
 - Significant blow to morale & ambition of sport/ participants – wrestlers look to Olympics as their ultimate goal
 - Disrupt the medal table significantly (52medals)
 - Loss of significant Olympic funding to the sport worldwide
 - A name change? Olympic Games to World Games?

- UK:



- Olympic participation: Not huge impact - challenge to even qualify for the Olympics. But a massive interruption to the long job of getting the UK up to this level
- Wrestling is privileged to be in 2014/18/22 Commonwealth Games. CWG balances high profile with realistic chance of Wrestling success
- Potential impact to state funding



How good are we in the UK?

- Last GB Olympic medal - 1984 Los Angeles Games Noel Loban earned Bronze



*Olga Butkevych
World Championship Bronze
Edmonton, Canada 27th Sept 2012*

Current athletes

- Leon Rattigan (Bristol)
 - 7th in Europeans ('09)
- Olga Butkevych
 - 3rd in Worlds ('12)
 - 3rd in Europeans ('14)
- Yana Stadnik
 - 2nd in Europeans ('10 and '13)

- **Commonwealth Games**

- Delhi 2010: 1x Gold 1x Silver 2x Bronze
- Glasgow 2014: England: 3+medals; Scotland: 2 (expectations)

"The last five years we have 107 medals from international competition. We have two medals from the European championships."
Nikolai - Dec 2011



British Wrestling Funding

- **Lottery/Government Support:** A Home Olympics has been critical for funding. All Olympic sports funded by
 - UK Sport 2006-13: support for a credible performance
 - Sport England 2009-present: support for grassroots development
 - Both at risk if excluded from Olympics
 - Commonwealth Games England/SE funding for Glasgow
- **Membership size/income:** partly dependent on profile and publicity of being an Olympic sport
- **Sponsorship/Private donations:** Challenging area, but easier if can claim Olympic



British Wrestling Reboot

- Fixing issues common with the International Federation
 - Governance/Transparency
 - New Memorandum, Articles, Board
 - New constitutions, policies, selection criteria/panels
 - Gender equality – Board and athletes – unprecedented opportunity for women to do well in Commonwealth Games
- Putting in place a new structure on which to base growth
 - 1st4Sport-endorsed UKCC coaching certificates
 - Athlete Awards (along the lines of Judo's)
 - Talent Pathway
 - Club development programme
- Operational: greater transparency, improved communication, better marketing/fundraising, interaction with clubs
- Grow participation:
 - improved retention at existing clubs
 - new clubs
 - partnerships - other clubs (rugby), schools

