

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

## STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

America has a special interest in its representation in the Olympic Games and other international athletic competitions. As we mark our Bicentennial, nothing would be more fitting to our celebrations than to be represented by our finest amateur athletes on the Olympic fields.

The Federal government has never attempted to direct amateur athletics in this country, nor should it. However, the government does have a role in helping to promote United States competition in international sporting events.

America's best amateur athletes can represent us in the Olympics only if the Federally-chartered United States Olympic Committee and related organizations are sufficiently organized to recruit, screen and develop the athletes on our teams. In the past, rivalries among amateur sports organizations have sometimes fragmented our international sports efforts, hindered opportunity for our athletes to develop their skills fully, and restrained voluntary financial support for our Olympic teams as well as other amateur sports teams engaged in international competitions.

In an effort to address the particular problem of each sport, the private sector has created multitudinous sports organizations and federations. Now the jurisdictional boundaries of each has become so complicated that it has become virtually impossible to address a particular problem without internecine disputes. It is through the Commission which I am establishing today that we hope to find direction in this quagmire. It is desirable and appropriate that a Commission of outstanding, knowledgeable Americans, representing the President of the United States, undertake an immediate study of our Nation's problems in Olympic Sports.

Today, by Executive Order, I am establishing the President's Commission on Olympic Sports. The Commission shall determine what factors impede or prevent the United States from fielding its best amateur athletes for participation in the Olympic Games and other international amateur sporting events. The Commission will study methods of financing our athletic teams which compete in Olympic sports. Special emphasis will be placed on organizational structure of Olympic sports including the U.S. Olympic Committee and the individual sports federations.

Because many members of Congress have shown great interest in the problems confronting amateur athletics, I have asked the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate to appoint two members each who have a special interest in this matter to serve as members of the Commission. In the same spirit, I urge that the Congress defer action on related legislation until the Commission findings are available.

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I ask members of Congress, members of the sports federations, athletes and the American public to lend their full support to the Commission so that our Olympic efforts can reflect our country's pride in its Bicentennial representation in the approaching 1976 Olympiad, and all future international competitions.

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