

Disillusioned with the Games

Where are the Bread Not Circuses crazies when you really need them?

You remember these folks, don't you? They're the ones who helped scuttle Toronto's bid for the Olympic Games a few years ago, but now that T.O. has made it to the final five for the 2008 Games, the let's-protest-everything faction has gone deafeningly silent.

It's not that I'm a supporter of groups like Bread Not Circuses, because I'm not. Those squawkers are fooling themselves if they think the plight of the homeless in Toronto will be improved if the weightlifters have to go somewhere else to clean and jerk.

The homeless problem could be solved tomorrow if the politicians, various levels of governments, business community and private citizens *wanted* to solve it. Instead of spending gazillions of dollars on winning and staging the Olympics, they could pump that cash into affordable housing, support services, etc. and wipe out homelessness like that. But, for Joe Businessman, a front row seat at the Olympic 100 metres race is better than the warm, fuzzy feeling he'd get knowing he's put a roof over someone's head.

I've been on the fence about Toronto getting the Olympics until this week, but what helped me make up my mind was watching the Sydney Games. The way I see it, there are three major problems with the Olympics, and it has nothing to do with how many medals we've won. Frankly, with the amount of money we don't pump into amateur athletics, we should be happy we've won any medals.

Problem 1: Doping

There are athletes on cocaine, steroids and other drugs but only some are banned from competing and the chances of that decrease greatly if you're an American.

Then there's the case of Canadian horseman Eric Lamaze who takes cocaine, gets suspended for life, gets reinstated, gets suspended for life for taking a banned dietary

THIS
'N
THAT



John McGhie

substance, takes more cocaine, gets reinstated because the dietary substance was improperly labeled and is finally told to stay home. This whiner somehow loses sight of the fact that he's a cokehead who is setting a less-than-sparkling example for kids.

The question nowadays isn't *if* an Olympic athlete will be caught and forced to give back their medal, but *how many*.

Problem 2: TV coverage

I like CBC's Brian Williams, but when did he get his own show? I watch the Olympics for sporting events, not sickeningly sweet profiles of athletes who have had to overcome the heartbreak of having dandruff as a teen.

I also want to see a variety of action, but every time I turned on the TV last week Peru was playing Germany in women's volleyball (zzzzzzzzzz). I swear the same match lasted three days.

Problem 3: The sports

Beach volleyball is something you do at Wasaga Beach on a July weekend. Ditto for trampoline. And if ballroom dancing is a sport, why not lawn darts or Nintendo?

If the modern Games are trying to reflect 21st century activities then why do they still have fencing? When was the last time you saw someone walking down the street carrying a sword?

Perhaps Games officials, if they wish to be progressive, should consider combining sports like biathlon and synchronized swimming where the goofy noseplug set get to use each other as targets.

Now that would be an Olympic Games worth watching.

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