

## **Sportsmanship**

**A Program of the USOC**

### To the athlete:

Thank you for participating in the USOC's educational program—Sportsmanship. With your outstanding background and stellar accomplishments, we know that your presentation will motivate and encourage your audience to consider their behavior both on and off the field of play, and we are confident that you will find your experience worthwhile. Please consider the age and makeup of your audience and take a few moments to review the following materials as you prepare:

### To the Host & Organization:

Thank you for participating in the USOC's educational program—Sportsmanship. We are confident the Olympian, Paralympian or elite athlete who will present at your event will motivate and encourage your participants to consider their behavior both on and off the field of play, and we are confident that you find this experience worthwhile. Please take a few moments to review the materials, and support the athlete's presentation as needed.

### To the athlete and host:

Olympians, Paralympians and hopefuls have varied degrees of public speaking proficiencies, and some athletes would prefer to have a discussion with a moderator and the audience rather than deliver a solo presentation. To assist those athletes preferring the discussion approach and to still provide a memorable appearance, the USOC created some standard questions the host can ask the athlete in a question and answer interview situation, still covering the topic of Sportsmanship and/or other topics of interest for the host organization and its constituents. For these questions, please go to page three.

If you have any questions about the program or presentation, please contact Adam Andrasko at 719-866-2270 or [Adam.Andrasko@usoc.org](mailto:Adam.Andrasko@usoc.org).

## PRESENTATION OUTLINE (30-40 minutes)

The event host and athlete/presenter should work together to set a mutually agreeable agenda for the event with appropriate time frames. The following is given as an example of a 30-40 minute presentation.

*Athlete arrives at event site 20 minutes early to meet contact person and be sure audio/visual equipment is set up and working properly.*

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)
  - a. Event host offers introduction.
  - b. Introduce yourself, even if event host initially introduces you.
  - c. Thank everyone for having you and give brief overview of why you are there, referencing the celebration of Olympic Day and to discuss Sportsmanship.
- II. Your Personal Experience (10 minutes)
  - a. Discuss how you became involved with your sport and how you ascended to the elite level. If necessary, give some background on your sport and the Olympic/Paralympic Movement.
  - b. Provide the audience with some of your highlighted accomplishments and discuss the honor that comes with representing the United States on the world's sport stages (Olympic/Paralympic Games, World Championships, etc.)
  - c. Express gratitude for the support of fellow Americans like those here today.
  - d. Encourage people to pursue their passion, dreams and goals in whatever they do, and show how you're an example of how those dreams can come true. *Transition to topic of Sportsmanship.*
- III. Highlights on Sportsmanship (10 minutes)
  - a. Explain that winning isn't everything, but having good sportsmanship says a lot about you as an individual and the team you represent.
  - b. Give your personal experience as it relates to the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, World Championships, etc. and what it means to you to display good sportsmanship.
  - c. If desired and if time permits, present other example os athletes who competed with respect (see pages 4-5).
    1. Dremiel Byers and Rulon Gardner
    2. Luz (pronounced Lootz) Long
- IV. Questions and Answers (10 minutes)
  - a. Repeat all questions so that everyone can hear.
  - b. Ask the event host to help you watch the time.
- V. Conclusion and flag presentation (10 minutes)
  - a. Discuss the impact of the Olympic Games on the world. Explain that for Americans to earn the respect of the world, they had to behave honorably on and off the field with good examples of sportsmanship. It is important for real athletes to compete fairly and drug free and treat each other, their competitors, and everyone they meet with respect and good sportsmanship. Be a good sport in *everything* you do.
  - b. Thank host and audience and present flag to host organization on behalf of the United States Olympic Committee and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Teams.

## QUESTION & ANSWER INTERVIEW FORMAT BETWEEN EVENT HOST & ATHLETE

The following questions may be asked of the athlete by the event host:

1. Please tell us a little about yourself, your sport and your sport accomplishments?
2. How did you get into your sport and what did it take to make you an elite athlete?
3. Why is the celebration of Olympic Day and the Olympic Movement important?
4. What does it feel like to represent the United States on the world's athletic stages? How does it feel to wear the USA on your uniform?
5. Why is the concept of sportsmanship such an important issue in sports today?
6. Have you ever experienced a situation where a teammate or competitor did not have good sportsmanship? What happened and how did that make you feel?
7. What are some of the best examples of sportsmanship that you have seen or know of? (Athlete can use some of the stories listed on pages 4-5)
8. How has competing with good sportsmanship helped you in life?
9. We always hear about athletes being caught doping, or using illegal substances to better their performances. Why do you think it's important to compete clean, and why it is such an important topic within the Olympic Movement and how does that relate to the topic of sportsmanship?
10. What recommendations would you have for those in the audience today when it comes to being a good sport, whether in sport, life, or whatever action they engage in?
11. If someone wants to become an Olympian or Paralympian, what do they need to do? What advice do you have for them?
12. Who was your role model/mentor growing up and why?
12. When are the next Olympic and Paralympic Games – Summer and Winter?  
*Answer: 2016 – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2018 – PyeongChang, South Korea*
13. How can we as Americans continue to support Team USA and the Olympic Movement?  
*Answer: There are a variety of things that you can find on [www.teamusa.org](http://www.teamusa.org)*
14. What's next for you?

*The event host can add their own questions and/or not ask all of the above questions. Following this interview between the host and athlete, please allow the audience to ask questions.*

## **ADDITIONAL EXAMPLE OF SPORTSMANSHIP BY ATHLETES**

### **Rulon Gardner and Dremiel Byers**

It all started four years before Rulon Gardner won the gold medal in Greco-Roman wrestling at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. (You may have recently seen Rulon on the Biggest Loser television show) Rulon pulled off one of the all-time great Olympic upsets—his opponent for the gold medal match had been unbeaten, and Rulon became one of the true worldwide heroes of the 2000 Games.

After Sydney, Rulon continued training in hopes of repeating his gold medal. But in 2002, he suffered severe frostbite in a snowmobile accident. He lost one toe and another toe had a metal pin implanted. Not good news for his hopes of repeating a gold medal.

In that year, Rulon's U.S. teammate, Dremiel Byers, won the world Greco-Roman title. All the while, Rulon pushed through rehab and training so he could compete again. Rulon made the 2003 world team by beating out Dremiel.

Fast forward to the 2004 Olympic Trials. Everyone knew the battle to represent the United States in Athens would be fierce between Rulon and Dremiel. But, Rulon came through by winning 2 out of 3 matches and claimed the Olympic team spot.

Now just ask yourself—how would you feel if you were Dremiel? Disappointed? Angry? Frustrated? Perhaps he was. But, what he did was a pretty amazing act of sportsmanship. The day after losing his Olympic chance, Dremiel called Rulon and offered to be Rulon's training partner for the Olympics. Every day. Every practice.

Rulon competed in Athens and didn't repeat as gold medalist, but he did win the bronze. What's also inspiring about Rulon's story is that he won the bronze medal with a slight disability – having lost some of his toes.

But the story doesn't end there. In Athens, Rulon famously left his shoes on the mat, the universal sign that a wrestler is retiring. But, Rulon didn't really leave the sport—he spent the next fall being a training partner for Dremiel, who was again the man to beat. Says Rulon, "I just want to help him succeed." Dremiel has now succeeded by competing at the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

Think about it—these two men were direct competitors at the absolute top of their sport. They could have become bitter rivals. Instead, they have supported each other and helped each other perform to their absolute peak potential.

## Jesse Owens

Another Olympian whose story shows the true meaning of sportsmanship is Jesse Owens. Who's heard of Jesse Owens? If you haven't, it might be because he competed a long time ago—1936. His story is amazing, though, even now.

First of all, Jesse was a black man at a time when it wasn't easy to be a person of color in some areas. Not only here in America, but particularly in Germany, the country hosting the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. At that time, the Nazis were coming into power, and part of what the Nazis stood for was a superior race. So you can see how it would have been extremely difficult for a black athlete to compete in that country at all.

But Jesse wasn't just another competitor—he was a star on the U.S. track & field team. Now, the Germans had a star track & field athlete as well, a man named Luz Long (*Pronounced Lootz Long*). The German government put a lot of pressure on Luz to win, not only for his country, but to show an overall superiority.

The first match up of the two stars was the long jump. In the preliminary round, Luz jumped to an Olympic record. Meanwhile, Jesse fouled on his first two attempts. Jesse had one last chance to make a qualifying jump—or he'd be out.

If Luz had only wanted to win, he would have kept to himself. But even with all the pressure on him to win, being a good sportsman was important to him. Luz saw a way for Jesse to make a clean jump, and he talked to him about it. To some, this was not much different than giving secrets to the enemy. But to Luz, it was simply the right thing to do.

Jesse took Luz's advice and not only qualified, he won the gold medal. And Luz—he came in second. As you can imagine, people were upset with Luz—he could have won the gold! But when Jesse won, Luz was the first to congratulate him. And Jesse credited Luz with helping him win. Now that's sportsmanship, and bravery too. It took guts for Luz to go against the pressure put on him by his country. And it was a real leap of faith for Jesse to have even listened. Jesse also showed his good sportsmanship by making sure to credit Luz with the help.

Jesse said something that sums up how both of them must have felt:

*"Awards become tarnished and diplomas fade. Championships are mythical things. They have no permanence. What is a gold medal? It is a trinket, a bauble. What counts, my friends, are the realities of life: the fact of competition and, yes, the great and good friends you make."*