



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SPORT CLIMBING

Olympic Games Paris 2024 - President's speech

04-08-2024: National Federations Call at the foot of the Olympic Wall

Dear President, dear National Federations leaders, dear Climbers, dear Friends of Climbing, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the Games of the Thirty-third Olympiad, welcome to the Ville Lumière, welcome to the City of Lights, welcome to Paris.

Three years have passed, and we are again at the foot of the Climbing Walls at the Olympic Games on the eve of the sport climbing event. 6000 (six thousand miles) or 10000 (ten thousand) kilometers from the Aomi Urban Park in Tokyo, where our Olympic journey began in 2021.

We still have vivid memories of what it was...

First of all, I must say: thank you, Tokyo, thank you Japan, for what you have done in 2020 and in 2021.

Your resilience, your determination, your strength made possible the impossible, overcoming huge and unprecedented obstacles and difficulties.

In the Covid days, those Olympic Games were an Act of Faith in the future.

Today we are at Le Bourget Olympic venue. In Tokyo at the bottom of the wall in Aomi Urban Park, I was with the IFSC Secretary General Debbie Gawrych and our Vice-President Kobinata Toru and the IFSC Team.

Climbing was sold out months in advance, but we were alone in front of the empty tribunes, ready for thousands of spectators, who would never come.

I said some words about Solidarity. If and how the strongest - and richest - national federations would have supported the IFSC development plans in those countries in need, might have become an important test ground in the coming months.

While we started an excellent and fruitful collaboration with the IOC Olympic Solidarity, we haven't seen much of these good resolutions into practice, but I still hope for the best.

The IFSC Executive Board is here with me today, Secretary General Debbie Gawrych, Vice President Kobinata Toru, who as IFSC Delegate was in charge of the preparation of the Games, Treasurer Pierre You, Continental Council Presidents Naomi Cleary, George Stainton, Pan American representative Willy Montenegro and Renée Sepulveda, Athletes' Representatives Shauna Coxsey and Sean McColl. Shauna



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is the Eurosport commentator. Both Shauna and Sean were competing in Tokyo. Vice President Wolfgang Wabel will arrive this afternoon as well as Tijn Smits. Li Zhixin unfortunately was not able to travel.

The whole IFSC Team is present in support, led by General Director Piero Rebaudengo.

NAME	ROLE
Hae Sol Han	IF Delegate
Silvia Verdolini	IF Staff – Sport & Event
Alessandro Di Cato	IF Staff – Sport & Event
Federico Ferro	IF Staff – Sport & Event
Fabrizio Rossini	IF Head of Media
Marco Vettoretti	Sport-Specific Journalist
Richard Aspland	IF Staff – Media & Communication
Samuel Turi	IF Staff – Media & Communication
Francesca Jengo	IF Senior Staff – Administration & IF Services
Simona De Mari	IF Staff – Administration & IF Services
Erica Ricci	IF Senior Staff – General Affairs & Institutional
Pietro Gianoglio	IF Staff – General Affairs & Institutional
Stanley Yeo	Technical Official
Tim Hatch	Technical Official
François Leonardon	Technical Official
Karalyn Aronow	Technical Official



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Nelson Lam	Technical Official
Garrett Gregor	Technical Official
Remi Samyn	Technical Official
Tsukasa Mizugushi	Technical Official
Olga Niemiec	Technical Official
Martin Hammerer	Technical Official
Brad Weaver	Technical Official
Jan Zbranek	Technical Official
Adam Pustelnik	Technical Official
Sergio Verdasco	Technical Official
Tomasz Oleksy	Technical Official
Akito Matsushima	Technical Official
Jan Virt	Photographer
Magda Drapella	Photographer
Caleb Timmermans	Photo editing
Jérôme Meyer	
Professor Naama Constantini	Medical Officer



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With Professor Constantini we were able to run RedS screenings here at the Olympics. Another step forward, in the IFSC fight against the unhealthy culture of winning at any cost.

I also want to mention the perfect and fruitful collaboration over the last four years with Paris 2024 Team, led by Vincent Caussé, with Emilie Gheux and Christophe Billon.

Last but not least, all the volunteers, who always welcome us with a smile and share the passion we and the athletes bring into the venue.

All Climbing sessions are sold out since months, not a surprise. Today, we are again in front of the empty stands, but we know that this time thousands of fans will come and fill the place.

We have 6300 seats here in the venue. It will be noisy, it will be big, it will be unforgettable.

We are proud to be here in Le Bourget, to celebrate our sport in our stand-alone venue.

Four years ago, President Emmanuel Macron declared that “Les Jeux doivent faire plus pour la banlieue” - The Games must do more for the suburbs.

Following France Head of State statement, climbing moved from downtown to Seine-Saint Denis department, the 93, in the region of Ile-de-France. Because climbing is popular, climbing is social. Climbing is for the people, for each and everyone. Climbing is inclusion.

The Olympic Climbing changed the whole area, giving to this sport complex new life. It looked forgotten and abandoned when we visited it for the first time, it is now clean and ready to welcome future generations of students and sport lovers. And for the future generation of climbers too, because the training venue will remain.

The gymnase Marie Paradis will be a permanent legacy of our Olympic journey at Le Bourget, a new climbing gym in Ile-de-France.

By the way, Marie Paradis made history when she – first female – reached the summit of Mont Blanc, on July 14th, 1808.

The story of Marie Paradis reminds me that Paris 2024 is the first edition of the Olympic Games with full gender parity in terms of athlete participation.

Imagine that in Paris Olympics 1924, a hundred years ago, women were 4%, and only in sport considered suitable for them, such as swimming and tennis.

Well, we did not have to wait so long in climbing, as gender equality is in our DNA.



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But Le-Bourget is also the place where in 2015 the countries of the world met for the United Nations climate change conference, the Conference of the Parties, COP 21.

In that occasion, a landmark agreement was reached by almost 200 countries to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future. As such, it charted a new course in the global climate effort.

Planet Earth does not need us. We, human beings, we need the planet.

Planet Earth is our house, and if our house is uninhabitable, we will perish. All.

About us and doing our part: we must do more to popularize the climate movement, inspire and take environmental actions.

Therefore, I decided to have this year the Climbing Summit online: we travelled to Chile for our General Assembly, we travelled to Paris for the Olympics...we have our events around the Globe: wasn't it the time to give a sign?

I arrived in Paris on July 22. I attended a historical IOC session, when the E-sport Olympic Games have been created. During the Session, two Winter Olympic Games were also awarded, to the French Alps in 2030 and to Salt Lake City 2034: congratulations to both! We and our athletes are quite familiar with these places. Our last world cup event before the Olympics took place in Briançon three weeks ago, and since many years we regularly go to the Utah capital.

While we are enjoying incredible Olympic Games in a magically transformed city, here we are also building our future.

We are finally part of the Olympic Family, and the Olympic Family is welcoming us: I felt great expectations for our event.

We are ambassadors of a new wave that is redrawing many lines inside the Olympic World. We witness the need of a change in many aspects of this world. We are ready to make our part.

The Games of the thirty-third Olympiad Paris 2024 began under the rain, occasionally very heavy, that accompanied the entire Opening Ceremony.

An unconventional Opening Ceremony driven by a complex symbolism. It was designed all along the river Seine, for centuries the very heart of the city.

Through the first week we enjoyed the passion for sport, the celebration of the athletes, the iconic sites and excitement, growing every day.



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In these days of sport at its best, my thoughts also go to our sisters and brothers, the athletes with a disability, the paraclimbers.

In Tokyo, from our venue, I said: Be strong and be sure: your time will come!
Since then, things have changed, for the better...

I kept the promise: in four-year time, in Los Angeles 2028, we will celebrate our Olympic dream together, climbers and paraclimbers, we are family, one family.

Tomorrow, we hand over to the athletes. Let's be prepared to welcome them on stage. That stage just behind me, that you see in the background.

The climbing walls seem to come from a fairy-tale. But they are real. They are real like the dream we are living.

In these turbulent times, in a divisive world, let us enjoy together the spirit climbing is bringing to the Olympic Games, the values of inclusion, respect, determination, resilience.

We will climb...higher, stronger, and faster, together.

Let me say, as a ritual, the words I used in Tokyo...

Climbers without a disability and climbers with a disability. The elders and the young ones, females and males, those who climb 5.6 or IV+, and those who flash 5.14 or 8c.

The climbers who climb the mountains.

From sea to summit, all the climbing world, united.

Let us give the best we can be.

Dear Friends,

Le jour de gloire est arrivé

Ici c'est Paris

Vive les Jeux Olympique, vive l'Escalade

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Marco Maria Sclaris

IFSC President