

Who is ...?

Gerhard Heiberg



Biography

Gerhard Heiberg started his Olympic career as the Chairman, President and CEO in 1989 for the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympic Games and for the Lillehammer Paralympic Games. He was elected member of the IOC after the success of the Lillehammer Games in September 1994. He has been member of several Coordination Commissions and the Sport and Environment Commission as well as other IOC Commissions. He was also the Chairman of the Evaluation Commission for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Since 2001 Mr. Heiberg has been the Chairman of the IOC Marketing Commission and since 2010 Chairman of the Philately, Numismatic and Memorabilia Commission. He was elected member of the Executive Board in 2003, re-elected in 2007 and his term will expire in 2011.



Mr. Heiberg has been a member of the Executive Board of the Norwegian Olympic Committee since 1994.

His sports have been among other cross country skiing, tennis and athletics.

Before he got involved in the Olympics, he worked 16 years as the CEO of a large industrial group in Norway, Norcem AS and after a merger, Aker AS. He has had several Board memberships, among others Chairman of the biggest bank in Norway from 1995-2000 and Chairman of the Norwegian Trade Council from 1977 for two periods.

Gerhard Heiberg was born in Oslo in 1939, is married, and is a father to 3 children.

A full list of current and past positions can be found on the ELS website <http://www.el-sports.org>.

Interview

Currently the Chairman of the IOC Marketing Commission, Gerhard Heiberg took time out of his busy schedule to be interviewed by EL Sports. The following is an excerpt of the interview.

Mr. Heiberg, you were President of the *Lillehammer Olympic Organizing Committee* from 1989 to 1994, Olympics that are still remembered fondly by many as being the best ever. Can you say a few words about your experiences there and about your impressions about the importance of the Olympic Movement?

As you can imagine, it was a great experience to have the honour of being the President of the Winter Games in Lillehammer. We managed to ignite the whole Norwegian nation and show the rest of the world fantastic pictures from the event in Lillehammer. The basis for all of this was the ideals and the values of the Olympic Charter. I think we managed to show the world that we believe in the Olympic Charter and this gave everybody a very nice picture of using the values and ideals in practice.

Who is ...? Gerhard Heiberg



Sports are more than just competition – as reflected in the Olympic values *Excellence, Respect and Friendship* – but it is also without a doubt big business. Can you reflect on how the sports business might be different compared to other sectors of the economy in terms of influence and setting an example?

To do business based on the Olympic Charter is interesting and very rewarding. We want to associate with companies having the same ideals and values and the companies interested want to use the Olympic logo in the same way. Thus it is not only a question of money, but also of principles and beliefs.

Organized crime has long been involved in major sports, an example being the “*Black Sox Scandal*” in American baseball where the Chicago White Sox conspired with gamblers to lose the 1919 World Series – a scandal that both shocked America and had a lasting impact on its culture. The sports world risks this type of scandal even now. Do you have any comments about what organized sport can do to be vigilant against this threat?

To us the principle of “zero tolerance” is a very important one. Thus we try to fight corruption, bribery, doping in sports and illegal betting as much as we can. I think the IOC has a special responsibility here and we take this extremely seriously.

Different sports organizations are active in this vigilance against the threat of organized crime, as the IOC that held an anti-corruption summit in March and set up a task force to fight back against illegal gambling. Do you believe that an *International Anti-Corruption Unit* can be a solution to battling this problem?

To be able to fight organized crime we have to be in a team with politicians in most countries in the world. For this reason, I also think that an international anti-corruption unit can be a good tool in this battle.

Can you reflect a bit about your several decades of involvement in the highest level of the *Olympic Movement* – has the Movement gained momentum over the past 20 years?

In my opinion, the five rings have never been stronger than they are today. All the values people all over the world associate with the Olympics are very, very positive. Zero tolerance, as mentioned, makes a great impression since we try very hard to follow up our own principles. We need to continue this policy and also hopefully organize Olympic Games the best possible way.

On a final note, several questions related to Norway. Can we expect your native country of Norway to qualify for the *2012 European Football Championships*? And do you see Norway applying to be the host for the Winter Olympics anytime in the near future?

Norway is trying very hard to qualify for the 2012 European Football Championships. I really hope we succeed in our efforts!

I am quite certain that Norway will soon apply for the World Olympics again. First, I hope we can be awarded the 2016 Youth Olympic Winter Games and then some years after start, applying for the Winter Games.

Contact

Please ask the ELS office for contact details (info@el-sports.org).