

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH SCOTT BLACKMUN

SUBJECT: SCOTT BLACKMUN, WHO HAS SERVED AS THE USOC'S TOP OFFICER SINCE 2010, IS SUBSTITUTING FOR BOB BOWLSBY, THE COMMISSIONER OF THE BIG 12 CONFERENCE, WHO HAD TO CANCEL HIS NPC APPEARANCE BECAUSE OF A MINOR HEALTH ISSUE THAT IS PREVENTING HIM FROM TRAVELING.

MODERATOR: MYRON BELKIND, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

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MYRON BELKIND: (Sounds gavel.) Good afternoon, and welcome. My name is Myron Belkind. I'm an adjunct professor at the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs, a former international bureau chief with the Associated Press, and the 107th President of the National Press Club. The National Press Club is the world's leading professional organization for journalists committed to our profession's future through our programming with events such as this while fostering a free press worldwide. For more information about the National Press Club, please visit our website at press.org.

On behalf of our members worldwide, I'd like to welcome our speaker and those of you attending our lunch today. Our head table includes guests of our speaker as well as working journalists who are Club members. And so if you hear applause in our audience, I'd note that members of the general public are attending, so it's not necessarily evidence of a lack of journalistic objectivity. I'd also like to welcome our C-SPAN and Public Radio audiences. You can follow the action on Twitter using the hashtag NPCLunch. After our guest's speech concludes, we'll have a question and answer period. I will ask as many questions as time permits.

Now it's time to introduce our head table guests. I'd like each of you to stand briefly as your name is announced. From the audience's right, Quinn Woodward Pu, Brightline Interactive. Tyler Crowe, THIS for Diplomats. Gedalia Vera, Inside Look

Television. Chris Del Conte, athletic director at Texas Christian University and a guest of our speaker. Lauren Stenzel, WTTG. Sheahon Zenger, athletic director at the University of Kansas and a guest of our speaker. Mark Hamrick, Washington Bureau Chief for Bank Rate, Chairman of the NPC Broadcast Committee, and a former President of the National Press Club.

Skipping over our guest of honor for a moment, Amy Morris of WNEW, 99.1 FM. Ursula Lauriston, Capitol Standard Magazine, and Anna Medeiros Miller, Health and Wellness Reporter for U.S. News and World Report.

[applause]

A year ago, Scott Blackmun received a four year contract extension as CEO of the U.S. Olympic Committee, which he headed since 2010. This degree of stability is rare for the Olympic Committee. Blackmun's two predecessors lasted less than a year. And the Olympic Committee has had seven CEOs in the last 14 years. When Blackmun took the reins, the Committee had been embarrassed by Chicago's failure to land a 2016 Olympic Games. In fact, Chicago finished dead last among the competitors.

The organization was criticized for not knowing how to deal with the International Olympic Committee. And it was set by layoffs and low morales. Blackmun is credited with helping restore the financial health of the Committee. USOC operates Olympic training centers, where aspiring Olympians train for international competition. Unlike what happens in many countries, the USOC receives no government funding and is largely dependent on corporate sponsorships.

During Blackmun's tenure, revenue has increased. But there have been a few bumps along the way. The USOC was silent in the immediate aftermath of soccer star Hope Solo's arrest for domestic violence. Last month it did speak out against abuse, calling the charges disturbing, and promising to take actions if the allegations are true.

Blackmun successfully navigated the U.S. Olympic Team to refrain from any demonstrations or political speech during the Winter Olympics in Sochi. Many were upset with what they considered Russia's anti-gay laws. Today, Mr. Blackmun will discuss the state of college athletics and how it impacts the U.S. Olympic Team. The USOC has a strong interest in college athletics because so many Olympians are college athletes. At the London games two years ago, for example, 65 American Olympians had participated in college athletics.

Ladies and gentlemen, here to tell us more about this is Scott Blackmun. Please join me in welcoming him to the National Press Club.

[applause]

SCOTT BLACKMUN: Thank you, Myron. And thanks to all of you for being here today. It's an honor for us to be here. I know that you all signed up to hear Bob

Bowlsby. And thanks to the Big 12 for hosting us. If truth be told, I would have loved to hear from Bob today. And I was planning on being here. Bob's been a member of our Board of Directors at the USOC for eight years. And I know firsthand what a great thinker and speaker that he is. Bob, you're probably watching. I wish you a very speedy recovery.

As Myron said, the theme today is college athletics. You all know the stakes for the universities and for the athletes. But it's also an incredibly important topic, more important than you probably know, for the success of the United States at the Olympic Games. But, before I talk about that, I want to start by giving you just a very brief introduction about the USOC, who we are, what we do, how we came to be.

We've been around, in one form or another, since the late 1800s. During most of our history, things were relatively confusing. There was outright conflict for a long period of time between the USOC and the AAU. While there was consensus that we didn't want to fund our Olympic Team with federal dollars, there wasn't a way that we could bring it all together.

That all changed with Senator Ted Stevens from Alaska, who was the author of The Amateur Sports Act, which was later named The Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act. And the Act did a number of things. It congressionally chartered the USOC. So it may surprise you to learn that we're a 501C3 organization. We do accept donations. The donations are tax deductible. We're not a government organization.

We were given complete responsibility for Olympic sport in the United States. And shortly thereafter, Paralympic Sport. We were given the authority to certify a national governing body for each sport. I think we now have, if I'm not mistaken, 48 national governing bodies, 39 of which are in Olympic sports. And each of those national governing bodies, or as we call them NGBs, is a separate nonprofit organization, responsible for the administration of their sport, from the grassroots level all the way up to elite competition.

What that means is we have to work hand-in-glove with each of those 48, or each of those 39 Olympic sport NGBs, to fund their programs. Not such an easy task. And candidly, until 2004, I think the USOC tried to be too many things to too many people. We substantially focused our mission in 2004. We used to have a Board of Directors of 125 people. We now have a Board of Directors of 16 people. We used to have an Executive Committee of 25 people. And now we have no Executive Committee at all.

Importantly, we also focused our mission. Our mission is to help U.S. Olympic and Paralympic athletes achieve sustained competitive excellence. For us, it's all about medals. How do we help American athletes get medals put around their necks at the Olympic and Paralympic games? And we have a line of sight between every decision that we make today and what's the impact of that decision going to be on how many Americans can wear Olympic and Paralympic medals.

Interestingly, the Act also gives us exclusive control of our trademarks. These cookies are a problem. They didn't ask us-- [laughter]-- if they could put the Olympic symbol on the cookies. So we're going to have to confiscate those. Patrick, who's a former football player, will know what to do with them, I'm sure.

But we have a special law to protect our trademarks. And the reason is that they're extremely, extremely valuable. Senator Stevens, I think, saw that before anybody else. He saw it as a way to give American athletes the same opportunities that athletes that we compete with around the world get. We don't have the same budget that other countries have. But the word "Olympic," the word "Paralympic," the rings, are all things that you can't use except, you know, under journalistic conditions, without our consent. And it's that consent that we provide to our sponsors and our licensees. And that's what drives our budget.

Our budget's about \$200 million dollars. But, in terms of our success, that \$200 million dollars really pales in comparison to the amounts spent by our colleges and our universities. We are-- we, the United States of America, when it comes to our Olympic and Paralympic athletes, only as strong as the collegiate system today. Sixty-five percent of the U.S. Olympic team in London participated in college sports. Students and alumni of the PAC 12 had 88 medalists and 50 gold medals at the 2012 Games. The SEC and the Big Ten combined had 88 medals also. And the SEC, the Big Ten and the Big 12 had 50 gold medals. We ended up with 104 medals in London. So, as you can see, it was just an unbelievable contribution that collegiate sports and collegiate athletes make to our Olympic team.

A third of the team in Sochi this past winter, including 31 medalists, participated in college sports. So, if there's one primary message for today, it's this. As countries like China and Russia spend billions of dollars on their athletic programs, and our government has chosen not to, which we, by the way, fully support, we cannot maintain our position at the top of the medal table unless we find a way to preserve Olympic sport programs at colleges and universities throughout the United States.

The so-called non-revenue programs are beginning to disappear. In 1981, we had 59 men's gymnastics programs. Today there are 16. Women's gymnastics programs have dropped from 99 to 62 over the same timeframe. Today we have 77 wrestling programs, down from 146 35 years ago. And that list goes on.

As somebody who knows about this recently said to me, no college athletic director has ever been fired for terminating an Olympic sport program. And so our concern, stated very bluntly, is that the inevitable reallocation of resources in college athletics will make it even more difficult for Olympic sport programs to survive. The call to action today from the Olympic and Paralympic family is urgent. It goes beyond eligibility rules and is focused on the very survival of Olympic sport in our country.

I think about Gwen Jorgenson. Gwen is currently the number one ranked female tri-athlete in the world. She attended the University of Wisconsin, where she swam and

ran for the Badgers. She earned her Master's Degree in accounting, passed the CPA exam, and went to work for a big accounting firm. Gwen was well on her way to using the education she got as a student athlete to be a professional in something other than sports, like so many of her peers. But she discovered the sport of triathlon, became USA Triathlon's Rookie of the Year in 2010, made the Olympic team in 2012. And in 2014, she placed first in four consecutive World Triathlon Series races, something that no other female has done.

I can't emphasize this enough. The United States owes much of its Olympic success to collegiate institutions, to the coaches, to the programs, and to the facilities. And we can't expect the colleges and universities to continue to support us out of the goodness of their hearts. We have to build partnerships that benefit them in addition to us.

We want to work with the coaches and the donors. We want to work with the athletic directors and the conference commissioners like Bob. Anyone interested in maintaining and strengthening collegiate sports programs to build partnerships that not only support Olympic sport programs, but help build strong athletic departments at institutions that believe in the balanced human being and the power of sport to enrich lives and enhance achievement. And, indeed, to make the world a better place.

It's not just about Team USA and whether we win or lose. I know, as well as anyone, the role that collegiate programs play in developing us as human beings-- I went to Dartmouth a long time ago. I played soccer. I grew up in Chicago, suburb of Chicago. And I was a goalie. So there was only one goalie on the team at a time. I was-- I thought I was pretty hot stuff. It was 1974. I was All-State. And the coach called me. I hadn't heard of Dartmouth. I think I was heading to Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

And he convinced me to go to Dartmouth. And about a week before I arrived, he told me that he had recruited another goalie my same age and year from literally the town next to me, who I hadn't heard of. And I frankly wasn't too worried about it. We arrive on campus, and this is a young man who his name is Lyman Missimer[?]. Tremendous, tremendous athlete.

And, to make a really long story short, my whole identity was wrapped up in being a soccer player. And, when I got to Dartmouth, he ended up starting most of the four years. And I didn't. I started, I think, one year out of the four. And it had a huge impact on me, because I kind of had to reframe what I wanted to do with my life, how I looked at myself. I knew I was never going to be a professional soccer player. But that four years of going into a situation thinking that that's how you're defined, and then having to kind of retool and figure out what you're all about, had a huge impact on me.

So fast-forward, I joined the USOC as General Counsel in 1999. I got promoted quickly to run our sports group. We basically have a sports group and a marketing group. I ran the sports group for about eight months. And then I got promoted to deputy executive director. And then I got promoted to interim executive director while we did a

search. And I was strongly encouraged to stay. I did stay. At the end of that search process, they picked somebody else. And for reasons that are probably too long to go into now, I decided not to stay.

And that experience in college really helped me think through, what am I going to do? I was a recovering lawyer. I had practiced law for 20-plus years, but had been out of the practice of law for five years. And it's really tough to go back. It's really tough to find your clients again. So it ended up being the best thing that could have ever happened to me, because I got to go to Los Angeles and be the chief operating officer of a company called Anschutz Entertainment Group. We owned six professional soccer teams. We owned Staples Center. And I learned so, so much.

So the truth is, that you know, my experience in college athletics is not at all unique. There are thousands of young athletes who had life-changing experiences and who are better people, more successful people, because of their participation in college sports. And it's not just football players and basketball players. And it's not just the Gwen Jorgensens of the world who represent our great country at the games. And that, by the way, is one of the reasons that Americans love the Olympic Games so much, is because we love being Americans. We love overcoming. We love seeing that American flag when we walk into our schools and our places of work. So, you know, being American is a really important part of why we get so much support from the American public.

The other reason we get so much support is because we're about much more than competition. We're about much more than winning and losing. It's about how we win and how we lose. It's about being the best that you can be. One of my-- One of my greatest mentors, and I've met him only once, he was a mentor only in the sense that I read what he wrote and watched him speak, was John Wooden. And he defined success as the peace of mind that comes from knowing you did the very, very best that you could.

And that's what the Olympic Games are about. It's about the joy found in effort. And it's that that makes us different from any other professional sport in the United States. But it's also that which makes us very, very similar to collegiate athletics, because collegiate athletics is based on a value system. It's based on a balance of mind, body and spirit. It's based on broadening people's experiences.

And so that's why this relationship that we have with the NCAA institutions is so, so important to us. So, what can we do to make that relationship better? Since 2011, the USOC and our national governing bodies have partnered with the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics, or NACDA, to create the U.S. Olympic Achievement Award. That award recognizes colleges and universities whose student athletes and coaches have won Olympic medals. The U.S. Olympic Achievement Award was a step in the right direction. And we will continue to publicly recognize the importance of our collegiate sports to our success at the Olympic Games. But we need to do more.

Can we help create endowments for Olympic sport programs, or endowments for Olympic sport coaches, or endowments for Olympic sport scholarships? Can we use our

great Olympic brand or the event experience of our national governing bodies to build revenue-generating properties with conferences and schools? Can we find a way to allow colleges and universities to use their Olympic identities and their Olympic success to recruit athletes and recruit coaches, and perhaps to build facilities? Can our national governing bodies work with the NCAA to host conference championships and national championships in their sports?

USA Triathlon is already doing this. And who knows. Maybe Gwen would have been number one much sooner if we had been able to do that. Can we encourage our broadcast partner NBC to promote the university backgrounds of our Olympic team? Can we host the Olympic and Paralympic games? We believe that the United States needs to host the Olympic Games again. We haven't hosted the Summer Olympic Games since 1996. What that means is that there's a whole generation of Americans who haven't seen the Olympic Games on American soil.

We believe that hosting the Olympic Games can inspire a whole new generation of athletes, athletes who will attend collegiate institutions. That doesn't mean that we've made a final decision to bid. But we're very, very seriously considering it. We've got four great cities, Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington. We're going to make our decision probably by the end of the January, maybe earlier than that.

We have met one-on-one with a number of athletic directors from some of the schools that we depend upon the most. We've talked about many of the ideas that I just mentioned, things that we can do for them, for their schools, for their programs, for their athletes, for their coaches. But we also want to form a working group to look at opportunities that can benefit college sports across the board. And to jumpstart that discussion, we have a \$5 million dollar donor that's prepared to invest in the preservation of Olympic sports at college institutions.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we also need to have a partnership with college institutions about the role we each have to play in creating a safe environment for sport. There is no agency, no commission today responsible for the safety and wellbeing of young athletes. And our best estimates suggest that one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused by the time that they're 18. And yes, it happens in sports, if not more than society at large.

This summer, the USOC's Board of Directors, which includes Bob Bowsby, played a key role by unanimously supporting the establishment of a new independent entity to create and sustain safe environments for sport. The USOC is investing \$5 million dollars for the five-year pilot program. And all of our NGBs collectively are investing another \$5 million dollars. It's a \$25 million dollar pilot. So we're in the process of trying to raise an additional \$15 million dollars to get this organization off the ground. And we think there are enough people and enough organizations who believe in us, believe in what we're trying to achieve here, that we're going to get it done.

And this entity is going to have two primary functions: education and awareness on the one hand, and then for our Olympic sports, investigation. One of the greatest challenges that we have, so many of our NGBs have budgets of less than a million dollars. They don't have the expertise to go investigate these claims. With this independent entity, we're going to have the ability, for the first time, to provide that resource to them so that we can-- we can do this.

The USOC Safe Sport Program will help raise awareness about misconduct, will promote open dialogue, and will provide training and resources. It's a big problem that nobody is addressing on a national level. We're going to try to fill that vacuum. But it's not cheap. And we would very much like to partner with as many of our college and university partners as we can.

Let me close by simply saying that I'm grateful for the opportunity to be here today, and to tell you a little bit about the U.S. Olympic Committee, about Team USA, and about why college sports really matter to us. The state of college sports in this great nation is in a state of great flux. And you all, much more than I, know what direction that's likely to head. But if athletes like Gwen Jorgensen are going to continue to reap the benefits, the rewards of college athletics, and if our country is going to continue to enjoy its spot at the top of the podium, both on and off the field of play, and in board rooms and at the Olympic Games, we have to support all of our student athletes and the programs that support them.

We understand that there immense challenges facing college administrators. We understand there isn't a single college administrator in the country who wants to shut an Olympic sport program. So we want to work with all of you to be a part of that solution. So thank you so much for coming and hearing about the USOC. We very much appreciate the opportunity.

[applause]

MYRON BELKIND: You outlined the professional successes you had after not being elected to the CEO position of the USOC in 2001. So what drove you to come back to the USOC after you lost that vote?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: So I'll have to go back a little bit in time. I joined the USOC in '99. And it was the fall of 1998 when I realized the thing I liked best, at that time in my life, was going home and mowing the lawn on Friday afternoon, because I get home, and I'd look over my shoulder, and I could see that I made the world a better place. It was a really small piece of the world, but it made me feel really good about the fact that I had done something that was tangible and had improved some state of affairs somewhere. As a lawyer, I didn't often feel that way.

So when I was back practicing law in Colorado in 2009, and I got the phone call asking if I would be interested in coming back, it was a dream come true, and something that I honestly never expected. I wasn't going to apply for the job. I had more or less

assumed that they had moved on from me, because they had had a lot of turnover. But the more I got to see the impact that the 2004 reorganization had on the USOC, the more that I got to see the tremendous leadership that we get from our Board of Directors, we have a wonderful group of people, six people who are independent and have no relationship to Olympic Sport, generally three people elected by our national governing bodies, three people elected by active athletes. For the first time in the history of the USOC, coming to the table, trying to do what's in the best interest of the USOC and its athletes, as opposed to acting in the best interests of the constituent that happened to send them.

So I came back because I believe in the power of sport to make the world a better place. And you know, my lawn hadn't gotten any bigger. So I wasn't-- you know, I wasn't getting as much enjoyment from that as I used to.

MYRON BELKIND: And one more semi-personal question before we go into some substantive questions and other topics. And how has your life changed after becoming CEO?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: Lots of travel. I'm on the road about 150 days a year. That probably seems like a fairly low number to those of you who are directors of athletics out there. But a lot of travel. And I'm an empty-nester as of a year ago. So the good news is, that many times now, I can bring my wife.

But the most important change is the time that I get to spend at our training centers and at competitions, seeing our young men and women, most of whom don't get the big dollars that the professional athletes get. They're there because they love competing. They love being the best that they can be. They really love representing their nation. And it's just inspiring to be around them.

MYRON BELKIND: You spoke about the importance of the college sports programs. Certain college athletes, particularly high profile football players, generate millions of dollars for their schools. Why shouldn't they receive a portion of that revenue?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: This is when it would have been really good to have Bob here. [laughter] Because Bob knows the answer to that question, and I'm not sure I do. We think our athletes create great value, both monetarily and in terms of the inspiration in what they do. We also know that our colleges and universities have jobs that go way, way beyond athletics. So I know that I'm probably being overly non-controversial here, but it's a really complicated question.

And the people that should answer that question are the people who are involved in the business of college sport. We need college sport. We need to figure this out in a way that doesn't cause us to lose college sports on the Olympic side. But I don't know what the answer is to that question, because obviously, those athletes create a heck of a lot of value. And I'm not sure we've adequately answered the question. Not necessarily why don't we give them all of that money, but why haven't we done more for them.

MYRON BELKIND: If there is one thing you could change about the Olympics for the 21st century, what would it be?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: You know, that's a great question. I think the IOC is meeting now in Europe to talk about that question. They're talking about what changes do we want to make as a part of a project that they call Agenda 2020. If you look at how we select the cities for the Olympic Games, rightly or wrongly, it's very different than the way a business organization would make that selection. The Olympic Games are obviously a multi-billion dollar program, a multi-billion dollar value. And the selection is made based on whatever cities sign up to be hosts of the Olympic Games. And then there's a competition and a vote among those cities. It would be great if we could find a way to strategically make that selection in a way that helped build the Olympic brand around the world.

MYRON BELKIND: The United States has not hosted an Olympics since the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. What would it take, do you think, for the IOC to approve a U.S. bid for the 2024 Olympics?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: Based on our discussions with the IOC, I think they are very open to coming back to the United States. I think you pointed out in your remarks that we've made a sincere effort to become much more active and engaged in the global Olympic movement. I think we've tried to be at the table when decisions get made and contributions have to be-- have to be made to various projects and events.

So I think the time is right for the U.S. to compete to host the Olympic Games. For us, we want to make sure that there's a compelling reason that the IOC would look at our bid and say, "That bid is going to make the Olympic movement better." We also need to be able to look at it and say that it's going to make the city that hosts the games better. And it's so important that we not spend huge amounts of money that wouldn't otherwise be spent on the Olympic Games.

It's one thing to spend \$10 billion dollars on infrastructure if you're going to spend \$10 billion dollars of infrastructure because it's in the city's best interest, because they need a new airport, new railroad, new streets, a new arena, and things like that. But what we can't do is put ourselves in a situation where the citizens of any city are paying to host an event, and paying expenses that wouldn't otherwise be spent on their city anyway.

So for us, one of the greatest challenges is, how do we make it affordable? How do we make it a value-added proposition for the citizens of whichever city is going to host.

MYRON BELKIND: So here we are in Washington, D.C. And we have a few questions related to Washington. What do you think of D.C.'s 2024 bid?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: I think Washington's bid is tremendous. I think Russ Ramsey is doing a great job. I think this is an iconic American city, a city that represents our nation. And I think our other three cities are equally as good and great. So they're all great. [laughter]

MYRON BELKIND: You've touched on this in your remarks to an earlier question. But why should D.C. residents want and pay for the 2024 Olympics?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: I think the Olympic Games are especially important to us now. We as a nation seem especially divided. I think the Olympic Games cross all lines. They cross all religious lines. They cross all political lines. They cross all economic lines. They're about coming together to do something, you know, other than focus on your disagreements. It's something that focuses everybody's attention on what we have in common, as opposed to what-- as opposed to what makes us different.

So there's healthy competition, but it's in the spirit of all of us, you know, every country, every 204 countries that comes to compete, being the very, very best that we can be, and moving forward after that competition. So I think the great benefit for any city hosting the games is that they can be a part, again, of making the world a better place, be a part of something that's much, much bigger than just a sport competition or a broadcast event.

MYRON BELKIND: What are we doing to set ourselves apart as Olympics hosts compared to other countries?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: I think it's too early to be able to answer that one. We don't know if we're going to submit a bid to host 2024, although it certainly looks to me like we're headed in that direction. And we don't know who we're going to be competing against yet. So we're at a phase, now, where we're really just evaluating, is this the right thing for the United States? And, if so, who should our bid city partner be?

For us, I think one of the things that any city that we would pick would offer, is some reliability, access to great technology, access to great infrastructure. I think that the United States has historically done a fantastic job of hosting the games. Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, Lake Placid, Squaw Valley, we have a very rich tradition of doing it well. And I think the IOC would look at a bid from the United States and feel, you know, fairly comfortable that we're going to be able to do it in a way that's going to create a great experience for the fans, for the athletes, for the guests, for the sponsors.

MYRON BELKIND: A recent article in the *Atlantic Monthly* asked, what if democracies refused to pay for the Olympic Games again? And this was response to a lack of enthusiasm on the part of western nations to host the 2022 Winter Olympics. Can you comment on this phenomenon? And what, if anything, the IOC and the USOC can do to encourage more cities to make bids?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: I think that's a fantastic question. And I think if a democracy were to spend as much as Sochi spent on the Winter Olympic Games, I think it would be a problem. We, as a democracy, have the responsibility to be fiscally responsible to our citizens. And so, if we can't look at, you know, a P & L for the Olympic Games that doesn't have an adverse effect on whatever city is hosting, we will make the decision not to host. When Russia spends \$51 billion dollars, that sends a message that the games are expensive. But you have to remember, most of that was for bridges and roads and railroads and venues that didn't exist. And in most cases associated with the United States bid or, frankly, a bid from a lot of other nations, those kinds of expenditures aren't going to be necessary.

So I think the IOC is headed in exactly the right direction, by asking these questions and by trying to focus everybody's attention on the fact that it doesn't cost \$50 billion dollars to run the Olympic Games. It costs \$3 or \$4 billion dollars, plus whatever you need in the way of infrastructure that is otherwise good for your city.

MYRON BELKIND: Some of our questioners anticipated the flow of your comments. So this is coming along in the order that I wanted to make this a good discussion. Many countries that the U.S. competes against receive direct and generous support from their governments, as you pointed out in your remarks. The United States does not. Should the United States Olympic Committee receive government funding?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: I think as time goes on, we're going to have to increase the amount of resources that we can make available to our athletes if we're going to stay competitive with China, Russia and others. But I'm not at all convinced that the best route to that is government support. When I started in 2010, we were raising less than a million dollars a year in major gift philanthropy. This year, we should be over \$20 million dollars in gross major gift philanthropy.

That's the opportunity for us. We have to figure out a way to make Americans realize that we're the only developed nation in the world that isn't funded by its government. And I think if most Americans realized that, I think we could substantially increase not only our major gift philanthropy, but our gifts from Americans who were in a position to give \$25 and \$50 and \$100 dollars. So that's the direction that we want to go.

We are not considering, actively or otherwise, approaching the government to change the rule that's been in place. It's hard to say that we should. We won the medal count in Vancouver on the winter side. We've won the medal count in every summer games since 1996 in Atlanta, or maybe even 1992 in Barcelona, I think Atlanta. So we're okay now. But we need to keep laser-focused on how we increase those resources. And we are not, for the time being, going to consider going to the government.

MYRON BELKIND: What do you think of the balance between professional and amateur athletes in the Olympics? Shouldn't baseball, without professional players, be an Olympic sport?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: I think that's a great question. Baseball is a universal sport. It's played all over the world. I think the challenge that the IOC faced is that they wanted the athletes competing in the Olympic Games to be the best athletes in the world. It doesn't make much sense to have an Olympic Games and the value of the Olympic Games is going to be impacted over the long term if the best athletes in the world aren't competing.

So I understand why the IOC is where it is on baseball, because the best players in the world are much more focused on winning a World Series title than they are on winning an Olympic medal. With that said, I think it's a great tragedy that women's softball, that doesn't have its World Series, is not in the Olympic Games. And we've been working really fervently to try to support women's softball in getting in the Olympic Games. The IOC, you know, is not so sure that's the best move, because they want parity. They don't want to add men's sports without women's sports or women's sports without men's sports.

So we haven't figured that one out. But from the United States Olympic Committee standpoint, we would very much like to see women's softball in the games, because they don't have the World Series. They don't have that premiere championship that young women athletes can aspire to after their NCAA championships. So I think that's a great question. But I think the IOC has decided, for the time being, they want the best athletes in the world coming to the Olympic Games, not something else. And in baseball, that wouldn't happen.

MYRON BELKIND: A brief follow-up question that was submitted in advance, coincidentally. And it points out, you have been involved in the rescue of women's softball and wrestling as an Olympic sports. Wrestling made it, but softball did not. Why do you think the Olympics Committee doesn't want to consider softball? And what are your thoughts about this? I realize you just touched on it, but you might want to elaborate.

SCOTT BLACKMUN: I think the IOC does want to consider softball. In that context, they could only consider-- they could only add one sport. They had to pick between wrestling and softball. And that was a very, very difficult choice. I played squash for a long, long time. I'd love to see squash in the games. I'd love to see women's softball in the games. I can't imagine the games without wrestling.

So they have to make some tough choices. I think they need to ask themselves, what can we do to continue to make the Olympic Games relevant to younger audiences? If you look at what happened in the Winter Games, they did a beautiful job when they added snowboarding. The ratings went up. Interest went up. Snowboarding is a big, big part of the Winter Olympic Games now.

We need to start asking that same question more regularly about the Summer Games. Skateboarding, for instance, how do we get skateboarding in the games? If you

look at the X Games and the popularity of skateboarding, there are kids all over the world who are doing this. And, if we really want to connect with younger generations, we have to find ways to make sure that the sports that they're active in are the sports that are being competed in the program on the Olympic Games.

MYRON BELKIND: After all the controversy over domestic violence and other issues plaguing the NFL, you spoke out last month about the domestic charges filed against Hope Solo the U.S. soccer goalkeeper. Still, she's on the team. No punishment levied against her as she awaits trial. Also, Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps has pleaded guilty to DUI and is suspended. Are there any specific rules about punishing Olympians charged with a crime? Do you see a culture shift in the sports world when it comes to addressing violent behavior against athletes?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: So let me answer your last question first. I do see a culture shift. I think, for whatever reason, it doesn't seem acceptable just to say to wait and see what happens in the trial. There seems to be more and more pressure on sports to take action when an athlete is charged with a behavior as opposed to when an athlete is actually found to have committed the behavior.

You probably know better than I do what's driving that. But I know that a lot of our national governing bodies are feeling the pressure. Because in all truth, so many of them aren't equipped to do meaningful investigations when an allegation of misconduct is made. And that's one of the reasons the Safe Sport Initiative is so important, even though it only covers one small slice of abuse, and it covers a really important part of abuse, one that needs to be addressed. And we do need to bring that resource to bear.

On the Hope Solo situation, and the Michael Phelps situation, you know, both of those cases are pending. And it would be, I think, inappropriate for us to comment on what may have happened or what should happen, until we have a version of the facts that either has been determined by a third party, or that all of the parties have acknowledged are the case.

MYRON BELKIND: Do you expect morals clauses in future contracts with athletes in the wake of Michael Phelps' recent transgressions?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: Now this is my recovering lawyer self coming out. Now I know morals clauses have been a part of those contracts for a long, long time. We have a code of conduct that we ask each of our athletes to sign. And they do sign. And, you know, the truth is that, if you look at our delegation in London, they were almost, without exception-- we had one tiny, tiny incident-- but almost, without exception, you know, the American athletes comported themselves in a way that made us all proud to be Americans.

So one of the things that we're trying to do is focus the athlete's attention on it in advance, as opposed to after the fact. So we ask each of our athletes to participate in what we call an ambassadors' program. We gather them together for half a day, with their team

somewhere. We have famous athletes come in and explain what a great opportunity this is for them to be an American, to help sell themselves and, importantly, how easy it is, in today's world, to screw up and impair your long-term value.

And I honestly believe that that program which is operated out of the USOC is invaluable in making our athletes kind of think about consequences in advance. We really haven't had any significant issues in the last few games. And, knock on wood, I hope we can keep doing that.

MYRON BELKIND: And so how often does your law background come into play when promoting the Olympic Games or being CEO of the U.S. Olympic Committee?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: You know, I have three kids, all of whom are either just out of college or in college. And, you know, when we talk about law school, what I tell them is that I think law school is tremendous. It teaches you critical thinking skills that are unbelievable valuable to you throughout your life. And I use those-- I don't know if you'd call them skills, but I use that way of thinking in everything that I do.

Being a lawyer is a different question than being able to take advantage of the great training that you get in law school. And I'm grateful for that training. And I do use it all more stringently than any other athletes in the world, or certainly among the top one percent of athletes in the world.

We externalized our drug testing USADA was created in or around the year 2000. The USOC used to do its own drug testing and adjudication. And what we realized is that, you know, we were the fox guarding the hen house. Our job is to win medals. And if we're also responsible for catching and adjudicating the cases against the dopers, that's a conflict of interest. So we moved it outside of our \$200 million dollar budget, more than \$3 ½ million dollars of that every year goes to support the United States Anti-Doping Agency. We're proud of the fact that we have one of the-- one of the strongest anti-doping regimes in the world.

But no, sport is not drug-free, by any means at all. The cheaters have an advantage, because they're thinking of new ways to cheat before we can think of new ways to test them for cheating. So we have to continue to invest. We have to continue to do research. And it's very, very important, to us in a context, where we're not just about the outcome. We're not just about winning and losing. We have a value system that underlies everything that we try to sell to our sponsors, to our broadcast partner, to our donors. And, if we don't invest heavily in that, it's going to have a huge impact on our brand, long-term.

MYRON BELKIND: The 2022 World Cup is being hosted in one of the hottest regions on earth, Qatar in the Middle East, causing concern over the health of both the athletes and construction workers, building venues, the like. How do you foresee global

sporting events like the Olympics being affected by global climate change and extreme weather conditions?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: I think it's fantastic that we have a number of countries like Qatar who are rising up and wanting to invest their substantial resources in sport. I think that's a wonderful thing. I think we have to rely on the IOC and the International Sport Federations to make sure that those investments are appropriate. And hopefully, through the oversight of the IOC and the International Federations, when competitions are held in places that are hot, it won't be at the expense of our athletes. Because that's critically, critically important.

So we're very supportive of the-- I guess the arrival at the party of places like Qatar. But we are looking to the IOC and to the international federations to make sure that those competitions are held under conditions and circumstances that promote athletics as opposed to the opposite.

MYRON BELKIND: A couple of marketing questions. How has new media affect the marketing of the Olympic movement?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: The audience that people are really striving to connect with is not people my age. I think the average viewer for the Sochi Olympics was 50 years, plus, average age. So the question for NBC and others is, how do we make the Olympics relevant to those younger audiences? And the answer is, digital media. It's social media.

So we've made an investment. We're very engaged with Facebook and Twitter. We believe in it. I'm not on Facebook. I don't do Twitter. Patrick, our communications person, doesn't let me, for very good-- for very good reasons. But we have to be very relevant in that space. And I think-- I know it's a priority for NBC.

And interestingly, coming out of Vancouver, they did some research. And what they found was that people watching on digital media actually enhanced their viewership. It increased their numbers on television. It didn't hurt them. So I think NBC is all in, in this proposition too.

MYRON BELKIND: Related question. We are the Press Club, of course. The Olympics have traditionally been a television-only event, streaming on the internet is accelerating. What will be the media mix in the future?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: I think it's going to be incumbent on us and incumbent on NBC to have the widest possible mix. At the end of the day, different people are accessing through different platforms. And what NBC wants, what any rights holder would want, is the ability to exploit their rights across all platforms. So personally, I'm going to continue to watch on television when I'm not on the games. But I guarantee you, my three children will not. And I think we just have to make sure that we have the widest possible access across all platforms.

MYRON BELKIND: And how do you think social media engagement will drive the country's bid for hosting a future Olympics?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: You know, I think one of the most important factors that we look at, as we select a city, is what kind of support does the bid leadership have in their cities? And if they want the support of young people, they're not going to be able to get it in the traditional ways. They're not going to be able to get it through newspapers and television as much. A lot of it is going to be driven by social media.

So all four of our bid cities are thinking through what is our social media plan going to be. And that social media plan will have a great deal to do with their ability to demonstrate to us that their city really wants to host the games in the United States. So it's going to have, you know, an extremely important impact on our assessment of what kind of public support does each of these cities have.

MYRON BELKIND: When you walk into your office at the USOC, what is usually your main goal for the day?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: You know, it's funny. That's changed since I first started in 1999. I literally started work in 1999 three days after the Salt Lake City bid scandal erupted. So I got to work on that commission with Senator Mitchell and Don Fear. It was a lot of crisis management. And frankly, when I started in 2010, it was all about Vancouver for the first two weeks. I started about a week before the Vancouver games. We obviously had just a glorious success there.

But, when I got back, we were facing some really serious issues with the IOC. And we began our revenue sharing negotiations. And we began trying to rebuild those international relationships. Now, it feels like we're on a fairly stable course. We're headed in the right direction. And we have the opportunity to be more opportunistic and be more strategic. And as opposed to trying to put our finger in the dike, we're trying to figure out, okay, how can we create more resources to support our athletes?

We only are able to support about one half of the national team athletes in the United States. So if you take our 48 national governing bodies, there are-- there are young men and women who are good enough to be on their sports national team, who are not receiving support from us. And the athletes who get support from us get less than \$2,000 dollars a month from us on average. So it's really not even enough to live on.

So, you know, our job now is to figure out how can we be creative in enhancing the resources that we can make available to our athletes, so that we can fund all of our national team members?

MYRON BELKIND: We're leading up to the conclusion of this, I must say, very informative Q & A session, preceded by your remarks. So a general question. What

are the major priorities for the U.S. Olympic Committee through 2020? And how is the organization tackling them?

SCOTT BLACKMUN: So I would say we have a handful of overriding priorities. One is, continue to build out our major gift program. We started a new foundation last year. It was called The United States Olympic and Paralympic Foundation. We're raising \$20 million dollars a year now in gross major gifts. We should be at \$50 million dollars plus at some point in the future. We have to continue building that out. So that is clearly a priority.

Finding a way that we can host the Olympic Games on U.S. soil is a priority. We're not going to do it if it doesn't make economic sense. But we are going to work really, really hard to try to find a way that it does make economic sense. Safe sport is a priority for us. We've got to get this done. And we've got to raise this money. We've got to launch this pilot program.

Our athlete careers and education, transition of their careers, is I would say, a fourth priority for us. So many of our athletes leave the system in their mid 20s and late 20s because they want to get going with the rest of their lives. And they're not actively engaged in considering, what am I going to do after I compete? And if we can create more meaningful programs for them, where they're looking at education and career decisions in their teens and in their 20s while they're still competing, so that they can compete with the confidence that they have a much better sense than they do now about what they're going to be doing with the rest of their lives, I think it would help them immensely.

MYRON BELKIND: Thank you so much. We are almost out of time. But before asking the last question, we have a couple of housekeeping matters to take care of. First of all, I would like to remind you about an upcoming luncheon, which is on November 7th, with Robert MacDonald, the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs. N

Next, I'd like to present our traditional National Press Club mug to our guest. And it is, as I mentioned to the Labor Secretary yesterday, who is rumored to be maybe moving offices, although not confirmed or announced, but this is light enough that you can easily pack it in your bag and travel with it around the world, and show the [00:57:38] of the National Press Club.

SCOTT BLACKMUN: Thank you very much.

[applause]

MYRON BELKIND: And for our last question, what is your favorite Olympic sport, and why? [laughter]

SCOTT BLACKMUN: I have so many. Let me tell you about some great Olympic moments. One of my favorite moments, and my team gets a little angry with me

at times when I say this, but when Derek Redmond's father came out on the track, I think it was during the Barcelona Games, he was running a race. He, I think, pulled a hamstring with about 100 yards to go. And he fell down. His dad came out of the stands. I think he was English, and helped him across the finish line. It's moments like that, that make you realize it's not the winning. It's the trying, that really, really matters.

So, you know, you think about that. You think about Lake Placid in 1980 and those young men that won that gold medal under unbelievable circumstances. You look at the great performances over time of our athletes, like Carl Lewis. There are so many, many things that cause me to be so grateful for having what I think is the best job in the United States of America.

I get to-- I get to see these young men and women almost every day. I get to see them do what they do. They're very humble. They're not in it for anything other than a desire to be the best that they can be. And so a lot of those moments are created for me just every day on the job. I can't thank you all enough for being here. It was a real pleasure. Thank you.

MYRON BELKIND: Thank you.

[applause]

MYRON BELKIND: Thank you all for coming today. I'd also like to thank National Press Club staff, including its Journalism Institute and Broadcast Center for helping to organize and facilitate today's event. And finally, here is a final reminder that you can find more information about the National Press Club on our website. And if you'd like a copy of today's program, please check out our website at press.org. Thank you all. Thank you very much. We are adjourned. (gavel)

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