

## **Executive Summary**

In August 2020, the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) commissioned Team USA Council on Racial and Social Justice (the Council). The Council was formed when the U.S. and the global community witnessed increased calls for racial justice and systemic change. The long history of horrific murders of Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement reached a new high when George Floyd's murder was recorded and released for all to see. Racial injustice particularly resonated for our Team USA members who have expressed themselves, raised a fist, wore a t-shirt, knelt, and spoken about racial injustices - from Tommie Smith, Dr. John Carlos, Wyomia Tyus, and Loretta Claiborne to Gwen Berry, Brian Bell, Sam Mattis, Charley Nordin, and Race Imboden. In athlete town hall meetings, hosted by the USOPC CEO Sarah Hirshland, some members of Team USA expressed deep concern around the racial and social injustice inside and outside of the Olympic and Paralympic movements.

The USOPC charged the Council with addressing "the rules and systems in the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic movements that create barriers to progress" and with "working collaboratively to provide solutions and recommendations to eradicate social injustice and cultivate change through strengthened athlete voices."

From day one, the Council was committed to being athlete-led and collaborating with Team USA athletes, the Athletes' Advisory Council (AAC), USOPC, U.S. Olympians & Paralympians Association (USOPA), National Governing Bodies (NGBs), U.S. Olympians & Paralympians Association, and academic and industry thought leaders for recommended solutions. The Council focused on four areas: (a) right to protests and demonstrations; (b) athlete expression and advocacy; (c) institutional awareness and cultural change, and (d) acts of racism and discrimination. The Core Council met to develop strategies for forming steering committees dedicated to each of the four focus areas. The steering committee experts stemmed from athletes and academics, athletics administrators, and sport apparel executives. Upon receiving a recommendation, discussions with the steering committee were developed to finalize a draft before getting feedback from Chief Executive Officer Sarah Hirshland, NGB representatives, and athlete representatives. Each recommendation was completed after the feedback loop and then released to the public.

The process was necessarily iterative; each recommendation went through multiple revisions until there was consensus among the Core and respective Steering Committee. The Council worked for 13 months, had 50+ Core meetings, 10+ Steering Committee meetings, ad hoc meetings with the USOPC executive director and Board of Directors, relevant staff persons, athletes, the AAC leadership, and attended community ambassador meetings. In addition to meetings, the Council sent out two surveys. In large part, the Council's work was having conversations about how white supremacy operated in sport. Having these conversations came with challenges. Athletes needed to know the USOPC and NGBs would support and advocate for all Team USA athletes. Raising awareness, the USOPC needed to hear what athletes have faced/are facing and how they have felt betrayed, neglected, exploited, and discriminated against by the USOPC, NGBs, and other sport governing bodies. Athletes were vulnerable and yet, they engaged because they supported the Council's work and have great hope for change. More than once, the magnitude of racial and social justice in the Olympic and Paralympic movements sparked questions and weakened trust. Athletes

asked what changes would happen and would they be real? The process of going back and forth with athletes, subject matter experts, USOPC staff, and NGB representatives enabled the Council to work out concerns and doubts, hear and collaborate, and cultivate a new relationship that included and empowered athletes, especially those from historically excluded, marginalized or minoritized groups.

Following its charge, the Council has published [recommendations on IOC Rule 50/IPC Section 2.2](#) on December 10, 2020, calling on the IOC/IPC, USOPC, and NGBs to no longer sanction athletes demonstrating for racial and social justice as well as to provide institutional support for athletes' leadership in driving positive social change. On May 19, 2021, the Council shared its [recommendations on athlete expression and advocacy](#) to center "athlete expression in all decision-making, support services, procedures, practices, and policies of the organizations that help govern the athlete experience." On October 7, 2021 the Council released its [third set of recommendations](#), focused on "increasing institutional awareness about racial and social injustice; promoting cultural change; and creating more opportunities for athletes to advocate for and work toward implementing impactful change." And, on November 4, 2021, the Council's work concluded with the [fourth set of recommendations](#) to promote antiracism and prevent acts of racism and discrimination across the movements.

Referencing the Olympic Charter's, 2nd, 4th and 5th fundamental principles, as well as core tenets of the mission of the Paralympic Handbook, the Council's approach focused on every person's human right to participate in sport and the universal demand for anti-discrimination.

“The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.” *The Olympic Charter Fundamental Principle 2*

"The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind, and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity, and fair play. Independent sports organizations must control the organization, administration, and management of sport." *The Olympic Charter Fundamental Principle 4*

“Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on the grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement.” *The Olympic Charter Fundamental Principle 5*

“To develop opportunities for female athletes and athletes with high support needs in sport at all levels and in all structures.” *IPC Handbook, Paralympic Mission*

“To ensure that in sport practiced within the Paralympic Movement the spirit of fair play prevails, violence is banned, the health risk of the athletes is managed and fundamental ethical principles are upheld.” *IPC Handbook, Paralympic Mission*

“To promote Paralympic sport without discrimination for political, religious, economic, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or race reasons.” *IPC Handbook, Paralympic Mission*

The Council stayed grounded in these principles throughout and sought to change the world.

## **Need for Change**

Mandela famously described the power of sport at the inaugural Laureus World Sports Awards (2000): "Sport can change the world. It can inspire. It can unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination." After Ahmaud Aubery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd's murders, among others, Team USA athletes responded using [social media](#). Black Team USA athletes wrote about being tired of Black lives being taken, no recourse, and the struggle to be heard. The USOPC responded in kind and [chartered the Council](#).

USOPC CEO Sarah Hirshland talked about the desire to make change with Team USA athletes: "We are grateful to this group of athletes and thought leaders who have joined the Council, lending their perspective and dedication to helping us confront the issues of racism and discrimination in sport and society. We must continue this work of elevating athlete voices and addressing limitations within our Olympic and Paralympic communities. This past week, we witnessed athletes across the country demand change through both words and actions – showing they are a powerful force in the community. We look forward to coming together as one Team USA to reflect and identify solutions toward meaningful change."

Han Xiao, then chair, USOPC Athletes' Advisory Council, felt the pain for Team USA teammates: "Over the past year, it has been heartbreaking to hear how many of our athletes have been deeply affected by racism and discrimination both on and off the field of play,"

The Council imagined redesigning the Olympic and Paralympic movements to improve access, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Athletes would lead the Paralympic and Olympic movements. And athletes, regardless of race or ethnicity, gender identity and expression, ability or disability, young and old, and of various religious and class backgrounds would be represented at the proverbial "table" that controls access to resources and power. The USOPC and NGBs would provide comprehensive and long-term support to athletes. USOPC and NGB staff would include former athletes, with racial and social justice as part of the strategic plan. A focus would be making and maintaining every person's access to fair, beneficial sporting opportunities. And, athletes would benefit more from the profits created by their sports participation.

## **The Council**

The Council had a total of forty-four volunteer members, twenty-three Team USA athletes (current and past), five Team USA alumni representatives, five NGB representatives, five USOPC liaisons, and six external consultants and thought leaders. Thirty-six members were a part of the four steering committees dedicated to addressing areas of focus. A Core committee, made up of eight members, managed the workflow and drafted and revised the recommendations under the guidance of internationally-recognized experts on racial and social justice. In addition, the Council was aided by a different group of community ambassadors featuring twenty-six Team USA athletes, alumni, and USOPC and NGB/HPMO representatives. Others were included as needed.

The Core committee had two members step down in January 2021, and two members were added. Below is the list of Core committee members. The steering committees, community ambassadors, and other thought leaders are listed in the Appendix.

## **Core Committee**

Moushaumi Robinson, athlete, track and field, Council chair

Jason Pryor, athlete, fencing, Council co-chair

Greta Neimanas, athlete, Para-cycling

Iris Zimmermann, USOPA, fencing

Max Siegel, NGB/HPMO, track and field - *retired*

Dr. Kelley Humphries, NGB/HPMO, Para powerlifting – *member added to replace Siegel*

Dr. Judith B. Clarke, Vice President of Equity & Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer at Stony Brook University/track and field – *external expert, retired athlete*

Dr. Yannick Kluch, Assistant Professor & Director of Inclusive Excellence, Center for Sport Leadership, Virginia Commonwealth University – *external expert, member added to replace Dr. Clarke*

Dr. Scott N. Brooks, Associate Professor, Director of Research for the Global Sport Institute at Arizona State University – *external expert and scribe*

## **Key Terms**

As the Council worked, it became necessary to share working definitions of key terms. Below we list the key terms and how they translated into action that the Council used in the recommendations. For context, the Council often returned to why it was created - structural racism manifested in Black people being killed. Still, the Council agreed and maintained that the opportunity to achieve racial and social justice was an opportunity to improve the lives of all people who are historically minoritized.

### **Racial Justice**

Racial justice is an action taken to eliminate forms of race-based inequities and promote the advancement of groups that have been historically and systematically disadvantaged. Racial justice requires awareness of structural racism embedded in shared beliefs and practices, regardless of intention. Next, racism must be acknowledged publicly, and a plan must be developed with specific metrics. The plan should be integrated with an organization's strategic plan and implemented as other goals are implemented. Implementation will include changes to and the enforcement of policies, beliefs, practices, attitudes, and actions which lead to equitable opportunity and treatment for all persons. Racial justice must be ongoing and a new priority- not a temporary phase or initiative. After implementation, progress must be measured and continuously monitored to ensure real sustainable change.

### **Social Justice**

Social justice is actions or a set of actions that facilitate and create equal political, economic, and social outcomes for all persons. Social justice imagines a just society and advocates for the change needed to create a just society. Social justice "expands the pie" and seeks to create more opportunities, rather than accepting that some individuals must suffer for others to do well.

### **Equity**

Equity is not equality. Rather than treating everyone the same, equity is treating people/groups according to what is necessary to succeed, recognizing each individual or group has different challenges, needs, and histories. Equity focuses on outcomes and not simply opportunity.

### **Inclusion**

Inclusion is an environment that creates and maintains an appreciation for all, so each person feels like they belong within the group and organization. Inclusion is a space that nurtures individuals' authentic and empowered participation based on feelings of belonging and mutual appreciation for diversity beyond quantitative representation.

### **Intersectionality**

The acknowledgment that multiple power dynamics and "isms" are operating simultaneously — often in complex and compounding ways. There are multiple forms of privilege and oppression based on race, gender, class, sexuality, age, ability, religion, citizenship or immigration status, etc. These social hierarchies are products of our social, cultural, political, economic, and legal environment. They drive disparities and divisions that help those in power maintain and expand their influence. There is a danger in falsely equating different dynamics (e.g., racism and sexism) or comparing different systems to each other (sometimes referred to as the "oppression

Olympics"). It is essential to give each dynamic, distinct, specific, and sufficient attention. Every person is privileged in some areas and disadvantaged in other areas. Intersectionality must be considered to understand oppression and ways to transform it completely.

### Structural Racism

Structural racism is an overarching system of racial bias that impacts a whole society. As a system, it shapes the overall relationships, agreements, policies, and dynamics that structure human lives.

### Antiracism

Antiracism is a set of acts or actions that are deliberately intended to stop racism and promote anti-White supremacy. The acts or actions vary based on positionality. For Whites, antiracism centers on awareness and acknowledgement of White supremacy and privilege and driving intentional, individual and collective action against ideas and policies that suggest natural hierarchies of difference, that subordinate and marginalize other racial and ethnic groups. For people of Color, antiracism centers on awareness of internalized racism and coalition building.

- a. Antiracist leadership acknowledges that no institutional policy, practice, or procedure is neutral. Rather, existing policies, procedures, and practices either promote or deflect efforts for racial and social justice. Therefore, we use Ibram X. Kendi's definition of antiracism as "supporting an antiracist policy through [one's] actions or expressing an antiracist idea."
- b. An antiracist policy is "any measure that produces or sustains racial equity between racial groups," while an antiracist idea refers to "any idea that suggests the racial groups are equals ... that there is nothing right or wrong with any racial group." These definitions can be extended to other forms of systemic injustice and discrimination, including ableism, sexism, heterosexism, and other persistent social ills. Thus, while focused on racism and the experiences of Black athletes here, it is important to note that the Council explicitly and consistently considered equity for all minoritized athletes.

## **Research**

The Council conducted two surveys. The survey results were not representative of all Team USA athletes. There were definite limitations that the Council could not control: the total Team USA athlete population (active and retired) is unknown and upwards of 4500 athletes; the total number of active athletes is not easily determined due to a lack of central records of all athletes, across sports; and even identifying just those competing for the Games varied due to the Trials, injuries, withdrawals, and suspensions. This said, the Council could not determine what a good response rate would be. Beyond knowing the true sample size, athletes were surveyed a lot by the USOPC and NGBs, particularly because it was a Games year, potentially creating survey fatigue. And the topic deterred some: we know racial and social justice is not wholly accepted by all Americans. Thus, we used this survey data to gather qualitative information about what athletes knew about rules and policies, had experienced or witnessed, and their feelings and suggestions, rather than quantitative information – regardless of whether those who responded represented a significant number of total athletes. We expected responses to come from those athletes who were most interested and/or impacted by racial and social injustice. This was justified because the Council's focus was largely on athletes who are both numerical minorities on Team USA and structurally and historically minoritized in our country. The surveys were an attempt to empower and give voice to these members of Team USA.

One hundred ninety-nine athletes completed the first survey in October/November 2020, 94% of whom were actively competing. The first survey aimed to gauge athletes' awareness of Rule 50 of the IOC Rule 50 and IPC Handbook Section 1 Chapter 3 subsection 2.2. It was important to learn the athletes' perceptions of protests and demonstrations and assess how much they supported athletes being disciplined by the IOC and IPC, USOPC, and NGBs for making expressions and demonstrating. Athletes were split in their awareness; some were clear on the rule, that changes had been made, and the consequences, while most acknowledged more athlete education was needed to ensure athletes understood the rules and consequences. In addition, athletes asked for agreement across governing bodies and levels - IOC/IPC, USOPC, and the NGBs. By a slight margin, athletes supported athletes' right to protest and overwhelmingly recommended the USOPC and NGBs to support athletes' actions. Most athletes felt action should be allowed or had no strong opinion. Those who felt actions should be allowed averaged 46% of all respondents across forms of movement and spaces to act. Those who did not have a strong opinion were consistently around 15% of all respondents. 20% believed all actions should be prohibited. When asked about specific locations - if certain spaces were considered more "sacred" than others, the greatest feelings of prohibition centered around the podium/ceremonies and displaying "propaganda" on uniforms. Most athletes did not want to offend their athletes from other countries at/during podium ceremonies while others' national anthems were playing. The athletes were against using the uniform in their actions. Regardless of their level of support around actions, the majority did not believe athletes should be punished for expressing their views on matters of racial and social justice. Athletes also felt strongly about being included in the rules-making process and in determining consequences.

The purpose of the second survey was to identify athletes' awareness, interest in racial and social justice, and their lived experiences with discrimination of various forms (racism, sexism,

ableism, heterosexism, and homophobia) in the Olympic and Paralympic movements. Two hundred, sixty-nine athletes completed this survey in late February/early March 2021. Over half were active/current athletes, and a little more than one-third were retired athletes. The second survey revealed athletes shared a strong sense of responsibility to move the social justice needle while also feeling they would be punished. When asked for their perceptions regarding social justice, 80% of athletes chose one of these two statements in favor of equality and equity: "we need to be sure that each person has what they need, even if that means that some will get more than others" or "we need to be sure that everyone has the same thing." The other choices were "don't care," "don't know," and "the courts should handle social justice." The survey asked athletes to rate their level of awareness, support of social justice, and concern about retaliation. 92% of the athletes had an understanding of racism and social justice (from aware to somewhat aware and fully aware), and 67% of the athletes agreed with the statement, "using my voice to support a social justice cause in a public way is important to me." At the same time, 67% of the athletes expressed some fear of retaliation. Even more troubling, 45% of the athletes experienced some frequency of sexism, 27% experienced some amount of racism, and 20% experienced some amount of ableism and homophobia.<sup>1</sup> A near majority witnessed some amount of homophobia and racism, respectively 42% and 48%, and a majority, 52%, had witnessed sexism. 58% of the athletes who reported incidents "felt completely unsupported, unprotected, and devalued after" or "felt that the minimum was done." Athletes think USOPC and NGBs are more aware than responsive to athletes' experiences with racism and other social justice issues. Taken together, responsiveness, fear for retaliation, and dissatisfaction with results may help to explain why many athletes expressed skepticism with regards to reporting microaggressions and did seek it as a first option.

In addition to surveys, the Council has made observations throughout its work and had conversations covering several themes.

- All Team USA athletes (developing, active, and retired) must be treated as whole persons, as more than athletes.
- Grassroots programs need critical care, because the youngest and most vulnerable have to be protected from sexual and physical abuse, racial discrimination, and inequitable access to sports and training resources.
- There is an inequity between athletes with disabilities and athletes without disabilities. More than fixing problems, a change is needed to include athletes with disabilities and ensure belonging.
- The economic relationship between the USOPC and Team USA athletes is grossly unequal, and more revenue should be directed to support services for Team USA athletes.
- More athletes, and specifically athletes of Color and athletes with disabilities should be involved at all levels in the Olympic and Paralympic Movements.
- The USOPC is rebuilding its relationship with many athletes. The work done by the Council can go a long way towards athletes feeling like they have the USOPC's support.
- While the work must be done across the Olympic and Paralympic Movements, the USOPC's ongoing development of an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is essential.

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<sup>1</sup> A majority of respondents did not respond to experiencing some frequency of racism, sexism, and ableism, except for "sexism;" sexism is more prevalent, which makes sense since there are more women than there are athletes of Color, athletes with disabilities, LGBTQ (2S) who could potentially experience sexism.

- Athlete representatives should be involved in all decision making affecting their experience across the movements.
- Create a racial and social justice advisory board.

## **Four Areas of Focus**

### **1. Rule 50/IPC 2.2**

According to the IOC and IPC, IOC Rule 50/IPC Section 2.2 were written and have been modified to: (a) preserve the neutrality of the Games, and (b) be in alignment with the majority of athletes, who the IOC and IPC say support IOC Rule 50/IPC Section 2.2 and do not view specific spaces – such as the podium or field of play – as appropriate avenues for social commentary and protests or demonstrations. The Council was adamant in its rejection of these two lines of thinking because the rules, including their modifications, work against a commitment to (or understanding of) human rights violations and, in extension, the perseverance of the human dignity of athletes.

The IOC and IPC's changes to Rule 50 and the IPC Section 2.2. added "raising a fist" and "kneeling" to their examples of disallowed protests or demonstrations. In the last several years, Colin Kaepernick, Gwen Berry, and Race Imboden raised their fists and knelt to raise awareness of racial injustices in the U.S. In this way, the changes to the rules were discriminatory as they targeted Black, particularly American athletes. If enforced, the rules would limit freedom of expression as a fundamental human right and wrongly mark Black athletes as political and rule-breakers. The USOPC and Council's first recommendations questioned the erroneous link that the IOC and IPC made in identifying social justice protests and demonstrations as political, religious, or racial propaganda and suggested a reframing of social justice protests and demonstrations as expressions made under the Fundamental Principle 2 of the Olympic Charter: expressions that raise awareness of social injustices and push for "harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity."

The Council also questioned the IOC and IPC's use of athletes' data to say a collective athlete voice opposed amending IOC Rule 50/IPC Section 2.2. The Council did so on three grounds. First, the Council wondered about inclusion - were athletes of Color fairly represented. Second, the Council found it difficult to believe a human rights expert would support IOC Rule 50/IPC Section 2.2 because it restricts freedom of speech and is discriminatory. Lastly, representativeness in a sample is vital towards learning from members of all groups. The goal of representativeness is to hear from people across groups (ingroups and outgroups). For topics like racial and social justice, the necessary representation is not the majority, but rather the voices of those affected disproportionately, members of groups that have historically been excluded and minoritized.

The Council released its first recommendation on December 10, 2020 (International Human Rights Day, a date that was chosen strategically given the line of argumentation outlined in the recommendation), the USOPC Board of Directors announced it will follow the Council's recommendation to no longer sanction athletes protesting in support of racial and social justice and human rights. The announcement represented a historic shift in the organization's stance on athlete protests.

### **2. Expressions**

This workflow began as protests and demonstrations. The goal was to get a new policy ready before U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Trials and the Games. The recommendation took a lot of

time. The Council lost two members (Dr. Clark and Max Seigel) and replaced them with two new members (Drs. Yannick Kluch and Kelly Humphries, respectively). As the primary author of the first recommendation, Dr. Kluch's inclusion was critical and brought continuity to our recommendation writing. The Council focused on how the USOPC could support athletes who want to express themselves or demonstrate. It recommended ways for the USOPC to center athlete expression in the structural make-up of the USOPC and NGBs, be more inclusive, increase athletes' sense of belonging, and offer education, counseling, and other support mechanisms to empower athletes with the knowledge and confidence to express themselves freely and safely.

The result of the recommendation was immediate. The USOPC worked simultaneously on outlining new rules. The rules began by drawing a clear distinction between actions that advanced and did not advance human rights. Demonstrations that expressed concern for human rights and were focused on anti-racism were named Race and Social justice demonstrations (R&S) and the USOPC implemented their first recommendation - athletes would NOT be sanctioned by the USOPC for engaging in an R&S demonstration at the Trials. In addition to this clear statement of support from the USOPC, enforcement and appeal processes were developed. Athletes' who engaged in an R&S demonstration were allowed to continue and compete. During this time, a decision would be made by a review panel regarding if demonstrations by athletes' actions fell within the definition of R & S demonstrations. The appeal process included athlete representatives and an outside DEI expert (someone not from the USOPC or NGBs) on the appeal panel.

### 3. [Institutional Awareness and Cultural Change](#)

The workflow, institutional awareness and cultural change, was eagerly anticipated by athletes because this would cover all levels of the athlete experience to remove barriers to access, diversity, equity, and inclusion. It was essential to consider the grassroots level where young athletes face systemic forms of access-blocking. The Council adopted an antiracist perspective. The myth of the neutrality of sport has served as a powerful tool to silence athlete expression and disrupt global racial and social justice movements. We want to make unmistakably transparent neutrality reinforces inequity – as such, no policy, practice, or procedure is ever *neutral*. Instead, existing policies, procedures, and practices have either promoted or deflected racial and social justice efforts. being deliberate and intentional in efforts to correct old policy, practice, and procedure and adopt new ones that center human rights for all and acknowledge and remain vigilant against racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia, and ageism.

We invited all to focus on access, diversity, equity, and inclusion within and beyond their organizations. The Council outlined four ways to make an impactful change: equip the Office of DEI; champion an approach to DEI that includes athletes' voices, be intersectional in its coverage of historically marginalized and silenced athletes, and elevate the needs of athletes with disabilities; improve accountability processes; NGBs and the USOPC must work cooperatively, understand the different resources, conditions, and capacities to incorporate DEI initiatives; and make multilayered investments that include financial, social, technological, and human resources and support.

#### 4. [Acts of Racism and Discrimination](#)

This recommendation outlines how the USOPC and NGBs can serve as collaborative leaders in eradicating systemic injustices, including structural racism, that lead to acts of discrimination. Racism continues to silence and demean people of Color and reinforces the various inequities faced by historically minoritized racial and ethnic groups such as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), and Latina/o/x individuals. More specifically, such groups often face microaggressions, neglect, lack of consideration, harassment, hyper-surveillance, tokenization, exploitation, and disparate treatment by fellow participants, their fans, coaches, officials, and administrators. The Council's recommendations call for anchoring a commitment to antiracism in the Olympic and Paralympic movements. The recommendation outlines five actions for significantly reducing racism and acts of discrimination: acknowledge the organization's role in perpetuating racial inequities and make amends; counteract the dehumanization and exploitation of BIPOC and all minoritized members of the Olympic and Paralympic communities; increase protections for minoritized populations; create cultures of accountability and transparency, and provide structural support for antiracist efforts. We reiterate again, while the primary focus of the Council has been on racism and the experiences of Black athletes here, it is essential to note that the Council explicitly and consistently considered equity for all minoritized athletes.

## Impact

In most cases, there is a lag between implementing change and seeing the impact of change. Fortunately, the Council and the world were able to see the impact within a few months. The Games Trials happened in June, and the USOPC's new stance and rules for Racial and Social Justice demonstrations were applied immediately. Below is a list of athletes who participated in R&S demonstrations at the Trials and the Games. There may have been other protests or demonstrations by Team USA athletes, but these are the ones that were captured by the USOPC.

1. At Swimming Trials, the following items were worn by different athletes:
  - a. A peace/justice shirt
  - b. A rainbow on their swim cap
  - c. A shirt to promote mental health
  - d. A shirt to protest a pipeline and to support freeing Palestine
2. During the U.S. Paralympic Team Trials, one person wore an RSJ message on their prosthetic leg.
3. During the USATF Trials
  - a. Noah Lyles – demonstrated during the start of a race
  - b. Gwen Berry – revealed “activist athlete” shirt during her preliminary introduction and during the awards ceremony
  - c. Five athletes per day wore the approved stickers provided by USATF (e.g., Equality, Unity, Together, etc.)  
and
  - d. Three per day wore other shirts, hats, headbands, etc., stating other approved messages.
4. During the Olympic Games
  - a. Race Imboden – wore a drawn "X" symbol on his hand during the competition and the medal ceremony.
  - b. Gwen Berry – wore a drawn "X" symbol on her hand during the competition.
  - c. Raven Saunders – made an "X" symbol with her arms during the photoshoot after her medal ceremony.
  - d. Sam Mattis – raised his right fist into the air during his introduction for the men's discus final and wore a drawn "X" symbol on his hand during the competition.
  - e. Women’s Soccer Team – knelt before Tokyo opener
5. During Paralympic Games:
  - a. Charley Nordin – wore and displayed a "Justice for Oscar Grant" shirt after the medal ceremony

## **Conclusion**

*A special thanks is due to our volunteer athlete representatives who exhibited true heroism, working with passion to make changes for younger generations of athletes: Moushaumi Robinson, Jason Pryor, Greta Neimanas, and Iris Zimmermann.*

The Council originally planned to work for six to eight months, but its work went on for over a year during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council never met in person and most were strangers. The Council was athlete-led, and athletes' opinions guided our direction. Athletes determined the goals and worked well together, sharing the leadership load. The Core committee was diverse in terms of racial and ethnic backgrounds, gender, sexuality, and abilities. The mix of roles and backgrounds was beneficial too. Amid meetings, different groups could be called upon to weigh in: from athletes to subject matter experts to NGB reps to USOPC staff. The diversity made the work richer and more efficient.

What also worked was having two Core members primarily in charge of shepherding the writing of the recommendations, as Drs. Yannick Kluch and Scott N. Brooks shared the duty of drafting and revising recommendations. In the first recommendation to the USOPC Board, addressing IOC Rule 50 and IPC Sec 2.2, Dr. Kluch, then as a steering committee member (i.e., the topic expert), drafted and set the format and tone for the rest of the recommendations. Dr. Kluch passed the draft to Dr. Brooks to make revisions before sharing it with the Core. The feedback from the Core and Steering committees provided additional perspective and refinements. The Drs. working together throughout provided excellent continuity to all of the recommendations and sped the writing process.

We learned several things from our council members outside of the Core. First, we must give equal attention to issues of access for athletes with disabilities. Until Fall 2018, our Para athletes received lesser rewards than athletes without disabilities for winning a medal. Second, athletes would like more shared governance via athlete representation throughout the Olympic and Paralympic Movements. Third, in light of recent crimes and abuses harming athletes, a greater focus on safety is critical to protecting all athletes, especially youth, in grassroots programs. Fourth, and related to the third point, more help is needed to ensure that NGBs can carry out the USOPC's goals towards advancing access, diversity, education, inclusion, and belonging. Fifth, education and training must be made available to the whole Olympic and Paralympic communities. Sixth, protective services, such as SafeSport, need to expand their scope to include racial injustices, improve tracking of incident reporting and time to resolution, and make the appeal process transparent. Seventh, multiple of the steering committees stressed the need for structures that strengthen accountability and transparency across the movements. Finally, support services, including post-sport education and guidance, mental health, and legal support, are needed to assist Team USA athletes with career development, including internship and work opportunities with USOPC and NGB business partners in and for their whole lives.

Implementing and improving access, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is challenging, especially when marginalization has been historical and ongoing. Many Team USA athletes questioned the past treatment by the USOPC and their NGBs and were not comfortable trusting that sustainable and significant change would occur. There were moments of trust wins and trust

losses, which had to be discussed and worked on for the Council to continue. The Council's athletes had to be allowed the space to talk amongst themselves, question the USOPC's highest executives, and be heard. The Core's co-chairs and athletes were fantastic at celebrating and reminding the Core about its achievements. The USOPC showed a solid commitment to being athlete-led and earning trust. Together the entire Council, Community Ambassadors, NGB representatives, and USOPC staff changed the Games - The USOPC will not punish for racial and social justice demonstrations! And, the USOPC is poised through the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to continue to be transformative and world-leading.

## **Appendix -Steering Committees, Thought Leaders, and Community Ambassadors**

### **Steering Committee: Protests and Demonstrations**

Race Imboden, athlete, fencing

Manteo Mitchell, athlete, track and field

Grace Latz, athlete, rowing

Kelsey Erickson, NGB/HPMO, cycling

Colleen Quigley, athlete, track and field

John Carlos, USOPA, alumni

Noah White, athlete, track and field

Guiselle Torres, USOPC, associate general counsel

### **Steering Committee: Athlete Voice and Advocacy**

Anthony Ervin, athlete, swimming

Katie Uhlaender, athlete, skeleton

Alyssa Fencil, athlete, para taekwondo

Suzy Sanchez, NGB/HPMO, weightlifting

Jamal Hill, athlete, para swimming

Carol Lewis, USOPA, alumni

Cassandra Shaffer, athlete, swimming

Amanda McGrory, USOPC archivist and athlete

### **Steering Committee: Institutional Awareness and Cultural Change**

Tyler Carter, athlete, para alpine skiing

Alexander Young, athlete, track and field

Rachael Flatt, athlete, figure skating

John Abdou, NGB/HPMO, water polo

Dawn Harper-Nelson, athlete, track and field

Candace Cable, USOPA, alumni

Anna Johannes, athlete, para-swimming

Adam Wood, USOPC, collegiate partnerships

## **Steering Committee: Racism and Acts of Discrimination**

Tianna Bartoletta, athlete, track and field

Stephanie Zundel, athlete, para cycling

Ben Bratton, athlete, fencing

Whitney Frye, NGB/HPMO, basketball

Nzingha Prescod, athlete, fencing

Jan Palchikoff, USOPA, alumni

Mystique Ro, athlete, skeleton

Whitney Carter, USOPC, sport performer

## **Thought leaders**

Tiffini Grimes, Deputy Athletics Director,  
Chief Diversity Officer, University of  
Alabama

Kenneth Shropshire, Adidas Distinguished  
Professor of Global Sport and CEO of  
Global Sport Institute at Arizona State  
University

Dr. Yannick Kluch, Assistant Professor &  
Director of Inclusive Excellence, Center for  
Sport Leadership, Virginia Commonwealth  
University (*later appointed to Core Team*)

Dr. Amy Wilson, Managing Director of  
Inclusion, NCAA

## **Working Group Keynote Speakers**

Gwen Berry, athlete, track and field

Noah Kennedy White, athlete, track and  
field

Dr. John Carlos, athlete, track and field

Chris Mosier, athlete, track and field,  
Founder, TransAthlete.com

Sydney Colson, WNBA Athlete, Chicago  
Sky

Jarvis Sam, Nike, VP-Global Diversity and  
Inclusion

Curtis Granderson, Retired MLB Athlete,  
The Players' Alliance, and Grand Kids  
Foundation

Tiger Shaw, Vice Chair, NGB Council;  
Former CEO, US Ski and Snowboard  
Association

Han Xiao, athlete, Chair, Athletes' Advisory  
Council

## **Community Ambassadors**

Terris Tiller, USOPC Community  
Ambassador Lead, USOPC Athlete Services

Alex Shibutani, athlete, figure skating

Allison Wagner, athlete, swimming

Ariel Simmons, athlete, fencing

Cheta Emba, athlete, rugby

Erin Cafero, athlete, rowing

Farrah Hall, athlete, sailing

Isis Washington, athlete, fencing

Joe Delagrave, athlete, wheelchair rugby

Kate Grace, athlete, athletics

Kristen Rose Morse, athlete, road racing

Maia Shibutani, athlete, figure skating

Rachel Schnieder, athlete, athletics

Sam Mattis, athlete, athletics

Sarah Bolfinger, athlete, para swimming

Shannon Stier, athlete, athletics

Sharon Ann Jewell, athlete, taekwondo

Stephanie Bruce, athlete, athletics

Kendall Coyne, Athlete, Ice Hockey

Sebastian DeFrance, athlete, table tennis

Cara Heads Slaughter, athlete, weightlifting

Brandon Dyett, NGB/HPMO, fencing

Kelley Humphries, NGB/HPMO, para  
power lifting

Kelly Fox, NGB/HPMO, fiving

Kyra Condie, NGB/HPMO, swimming

Mariejo Truex, NGB/HPMO, swimming

Megan Ritch, NGB/HPMO, triathlon

Melissa Zhang, NGB/HPMO, team handball

Nancy Atufunwa, NGB/HPMO, water polo

Sara Studebaker-Hill, NGB/HPMO, biathlon

Bernie MacLean, NGB/HPMO, volleyball

Kassidi Gilgenast, NGB/HPMO, volleyball

Barbara Reichert, NGB/HPMO, figure  
skating

Ellen Adams, NGB/HPMO, ski and  
snowboard

Laura Carlton, NGB/HPMO, ski and  
snowboard

## **Support Staff**

Chad Sunderland, USOPC, VP-Strategy & Business Consulting

Kelly Stone, USOPC, Sr. Business Consultant

Julia Clukey, USOPC, Sr. Director-Athlete Development and Engagement

Terris Tiller, USOPC, Manager-Athlete Development and Engagement

Nitra Rucker, USOPC, Director-Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Olivia Truby, USOPC, Manager-Media Relations

Jon Mason, USOPC, Sr. Director-Communications

Kate Hartman, USOPC, Chief Communications Officer

Veronica Day, USOPC, Coordinator-Athlete Outreach and Engagement

Bahati Van Pelt, USOPC, Chief of Athlete Services

Katie Bynum, USOPC, Chief of Strategy and Growth

Holly Shick, USOPC, Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer

Lorelei Wall, USOPC, VP-Marketing

Elizabeth Ramsey, Athletes' Advisory Council, Executive Director

Stacey Flores, Arizona State University, Graduate Research Assistant

Nicole Deal, USOPC, athlete safety and security

Nitra Rucker, USOPC, Director, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - *joined October 2020*