

## **Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter: What you need to know as an athlete**

The Olympic Games have more diversity and bring together more people from more places than any other sporting event anywhere in the world. Competitors and spectators at the Games come from very different backgrounds, with different languages, different cultures, different traditions, different religions and different political views. The magic of the Games is their ability to promote unity and harmony amid all this diversity.

The Games are about sport, and the IOC feels a special obligation both to ensure that the focus is on the athletes and their competition without being drawn into political controversies, and to provide a Games environment that lets athletes compete without distractions from divisive and emotional issues outside the world of sport. Rule 50 helps to achieve this objective.

Rule 50 has four main goals:

- First, to protect athletes
- Second, to prevent the over-commercialisation of the Games and to keep the Olympic venues – (i.e. the field of play) free from advertising. This is known as the “clean venue” policy.
- Third, to prevent the Games from being used as a platform for protests, demonstrations or the promotion of political, religious or racial propaganda.
- Fourth, to define the rules for manufacturers’ identifications and other identifying features on sports uniforms and equipment, to prevent unauthorised commercial, political, religious or racial propaganda.

We hope that this document can give you the answers to some of the questions you may have, and to explain why we have Rule 50.

### **What is the Olympic Charter?**

The Olympic Charter is the guiding document for the entire Olympic Movement. It defines the mission and role of the International Olympic Committee, National Olympic Committees and other Olympic entities. It also provides rules for the organisation and administration of the Olympic Games, as well as guidance on disciplinary procedures and other governance issues. The Charter calls on the IOC “to oppose any political or commercial abuse of sport and athletes”.

### **When does Rule 50 apply and to whom does it apply?**

Rule 50, which is in place during Games time, applies to all the athletes, officials and other people accredited within Olympic Games venues and sites. Games spectators are also expected to comply.

### **How can I express myself under Rule 50?**

As an athlete, you are of course free to express your opinions. During the Games you should in particular feel free to answer questions, but only if you wish to, if asked in a press conference or mixed zone, in a media interview or on social media.

Rule 50 is not intended to stifle public debate on any topic. However, the IOC believes that the Olympic Village and the other Games venues and sites should focus on sport and remain free from advertising/publicity or any kind of demonstrations or political, religious and racial propaganda.

### **What can I say on social media?**

Subject to any additional restrictions which your own NOC may impose, Rule 50 applies only within Olympic sites and venues and not to the internet and social media activities of athletes and other accredited persons, who are encouraged to post, blog and tweet their experiences from the Olympic Games.

However, participants should make sure that their postings, blogs and tweets conform to the Olympic spirit, are dignified and in good taste, and not discriminatory, offensive, hateful, defamatory or otherwise illegal. For further information on this question, please refer to the "IOC Social Media, Blogging and Internet Guidelines" for participants and other accredited persons at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games.

### **What I can wear on the field of play or during ceremonies?**

There are specific guidelines regarding what can be worn on the field of play and during the Opening, Closing and Victory ceremonies. Athletes should only wear their official uniforms on the field of play. If you have any questions about whether something is permissible, you should consult with your NOC's Chef de Mission. Olympic venues and sites are not the place for proactive protests, demonstrations or displays of commercial messages.

Your NOC is fully aware of these guidelines and can reply to any questions you may have in this regard ahead of the Games. Once you arrive in Sochi, you will see that all venues will display self-explanatory posters.

### **What happens if I breach Rule 50?**

If the IOC is made aware of a potential breach of Rule 50, it will treat each case individually depending on what is said or done.

### **Can I contact the IOC directly if I have questions or comments on Rule 50?**

The IOC Athletes' Commission is reachable for any athlete-related questions, advice and information at [athletes@olympic.org](mailto:athletes@olympic.org).