

On the Ball and Off the Wall: Tokyo Olympics – Down and Dirty (and Deadly?)



This column is for non-sports fans who would like some enlightenment and hopefully humor beyond being sports fanatics.

Anybody want to buy 160,000 condoms, cheap?

If so, contact the International Olympics Committee in Tokyo, where they plan to hand out that stockpile of rubbers to the 11,000 athletes who will be competing in these audience-free events because they would probably like to get them off their hands ASAP. (That sound you hear is Olympic Games founder Baron Pierre de Coubertin spinning in his grave like an industrial lathe.)

Since 1988 at the Games in Seoul, the IOC has been handing out condoms to Olympic athletes by the pantload. This was in recognition of the fact that when you put thousands of athletes, most in the prime of their young lives and fitter than any fiddle you'll ever hear, into the confines of the Olympic Village sites, primal urges are going to hit them like a tsunami.

How profoundly does this intensity, desire and hot blood affect these sports people? Former U.S. Women's National Team soccer goaltender and two-time Olympic gold medalist Hope Solo (great name, eh?) told the *New York Post*, "There's a lot of sex going on. I've seen people having sex right out in the open. On the grass, between the buildings, people are getting down and dirty."

Never mind the number who have some sense of discretion, dignity and couth who are going at it behind closed doors in their Village apartments. And like the sporting events, we are sure performance does indeed matter.

But here's the hummer in Tokyo. The IOC plans to hand out the condoms *after* the Games end so there's no appearance of encouraging fraternizing during a pandemic. The IOC further explains that this show of STD stifling and pregnancy prevention largesse will be used by the athletes to spread awareness of HIV and AIDS when they return home. Oh, right.

This kind of idiocy is just part of the twisted thinking that is surrounding the bedeviled Tokyo Games. While imagining another victory via the Trojans, the IOC is showing how desperate it is to avoid having a real discussion about the coronavirus. The virus is spiking in Japan right now, and what better way to show fear of a mass outbreak than to slap together athletes side-by-side in their residences and on their field, court, pool or whatever then push ahead as though the reality of the virus is nonexistent. Right now only 22% of the Japanese public support their holding of the Games (versus 52% of Americans surveyed). Scaredy cats.

To suggest that daily COVID tests of the athletes will absolutely, positively guarantee no one will come down with the disease is nonsense. If five New York Yankees can test positive for it (as they did recently) despite all of America's National Pastime's protective measures, please don't suggest the shot putters from Poland or table tennis players from China are immune once they hit the ground in Tokyo.

So while the IOC stubbornly soldiers on, blind to a frightening disease but eyes wide open as to whose what is where when and how in the Olympic Villages, "deadly" becomes added to that down and dirty recipe for how the Games should play out.

But it is much more fun to find humor in the sexual side than COVID-19.

If I were smarter, I would have checked the stocks of the top producers of condoms everywhere and anywhere once the athletes and public found out about the *post facto* distribution of condoms. Surely no problem for the athletes to sneak these into their luggage underneath their all-purpose, logo-shouting track suits.

One remembers growing up in an American sports culture where, once you were old enough, you were told you should absolutely never, ever have sex the night before a game, lest you end up the next day a shivering piece of worthless, talentless crap who betrayed your teammates for a quickie. They don't keep statistics for it, but since 1988, it would have been fun to ask all the Olympic medalists whether or not they had gotten some on the eve of their finals event.

If they had an over/under bet on that stat, I'll take the "over" every day of the week. One hundred and sixty thousand condoms can't be wrong.