

Olympic Newsletter 365

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Olympism Program in the Druze Community of the Golan Heights

As part of the Olympism Program in the Druze community of the Golan Heights, participants continue to gain valuable sporting experiences and deepen their exposure to the world of elite sport. Marking the program's first year, members of the cross-country cycling group, together with their coaches Amjad Abu Salah and Tomer Beeri, attended the Israeli Cross-Country Cycling Championships, where they watched the country's top riders in action, learned about racing techniques, and met Olympic cyclist Tomer Zaltsman and cyclist Mohammad Masarwa, who shared their personal journeys and inspired the young athletes.

At the same time, the athletics group took part in its first official competition – the Cherry Race in Mas'ade. Accompanied by coach Wasim Rabah, twelve young athletes competed in the 2 km race, experiencing the excitement of competition for the very first time. Every participant successfully completed the race, marking an important milestone in their athletic development. The Olympism Program in the Golan Heights identifies, develops, and supports young talent from the Druze community, using sport as a tool for education, empowerment, and the pursuit of excellence.



Sport Is in My Soul

The Olympic Committee of Israel and the “Ze B’Nafshi” (It’s in My Soul) organization held a special event at the Olympic Experience to conclude another year of their joint program with adolescents from the psychiatric inpatient unit at Merhavim – the Mental Health Medical Centre in Ness Ziona. Paralympic champion Moran Samuel and Olympic fencer Yuval Freilich took part in the activity, using experiential sport and personal storytelling to inspire participants and demonstrate how determination, perseverance, and self-belief can help overcome life’s challenges and transform obstacles into opportunities.

Now in its fourth year, the partnership reflects the shared commitment of both organizations to strengthening young people's mental resilience through the values of sport, while raising awareness and helping reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.



Olympic Stars Shine Bright

As part of a monthly volunteering initiative, Olympic athletes continue to meet with children at the Children and Youth Sports and Wellness Centre at Meir Medical Centre. This month, Olympic windsurfer Maayan Davidovich and Olympic triple jumper Hanna Minenko joined the activity, bringing with them their personal experiences, sporting spirit, and inspiring stories.

The children participated in a variety of sporting activities before engaging in open conversations with the athletes, who shared their journeys to the Olympic stage and the values that have guided them throughout their careers. These direct encounters with Olympic role

models continue to strengthen the children's confidence, encourage perseverance, and provide meaningful and empowering sporting experiences.



Young Olympic Ambassadors at the International Olympic Academy

The 66th International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors of the International Olympic Academy was held this year in Olympia, Greece, bringing together 158 participants from 95 National Olympic Committees. This year's session focused on promoting inclusion, integrity, and responsibility in sport while fostering a safe and fair environment for every athlete.

Israel was represented by Paris 2024 Olympic silver medallist Ofir Shaham and Ariel Ben Naim, an outstanding education student from the Levinsky-Wingate Academic Institute. Since the Olympic Committee of Israel joined the educational activities of the International Olympic Academy in 1962, 133 Israeli representatives have participated in this prestigious international program.



Preparing for the Future: Sport Participation Under Heat Stress

In response to the growing impact of climate change and the increasing frequency and intensity of heatwaves, the Olympic Committee of Israel has published a new professional guide for sporting activity in hot weather conditions. Written by experts in physiology, medicine, nutrition, sustainability, and sports science, the guide provides evidence-based recommendations to help protect athletes' health, optimize performance, and support coaches, sports federations, and practitioners in adapting to changing environmental conditions.

The publication of the guide reflects the Olympic Committee of Israel's ongoing commitment to professional excellence and environmental responsibility, recognizing that adapting to climate change is essential to safeguarding the future of elite sport and ensuring safe, sustainable, and high-quality training and competition environments. [Click here](#) to access the full guide.

