

Guidelines for NOCs on Rule 50.3 of the Olympic Charter

The Olympic Games bring together competitors and spectators from all corners of this world - with 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.

Rule 50.3 is aimed at helping maintain that spirit, protect athletes from external influence and enable them to compete without distractions from divisive and emotional issues outside the world of sport. The rule is employed at each edition of the Games and the IOC would like to offer the following advice in regard to its application:

1. According to the Olympic Charter, the peak of the Olympic Movement's action is "the bringing together of the world's athletes at the great sports festival, the Olympic Games". The Games are about sport. They are not a stage for different kinds of political statements about issues such as armed conflicts, regional differences, legislation, religious disputes and many others.
2. Rule 50.3 of the Olympic Charter provides that "no kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas". For the purpose of these guidelines, these areas are defined as every area for which an official Olympic accreditation is required, including the Olympic Village. Compliance with this Rule implies avoiding the display of any sign, banner, poster, piece of equipment or clothing which could be perceived as any kind of demonstration or propaganda.
3. The conduct of participants at all Olympic sites, areas and venues could include all actions or manifestations of any kind by a person or group of persons, including but not limited to their external appearance, clothing, gestures, and written or oral statements. As in all Olympic Games, such conduct must comply with the fundamental principles of Olympism as well as, of course, with the laws of the host country. Ahead of Olympic victory ceremonies, athletes will be briefed about the Olympic protocol.
4. The participants in the Olympic Games will have many opportunities to express themselves upon the occasion of the Games, while respecting the Olympic Charter, for instance by giving interviews, if they so wish, including in Olympic Press or Broadcasting Centres or in mixed zones, personal opinions on social media and discussing with their fellow athletes, officials and others – to name but a few. The IOC relies on the common sense of all athletes and other participants in showing respect for the dignity of all fellow athletes, spectators, attendees and the host country. In regard to social media activities, please consult and share the "IOC Social Media, Blogging and Internet Guidelines" for participants and other accredited persons at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games. If in doubt always check with your NOC's Chef de Mission.
5. The IOC requests the NOCs to contact their athletes with a view to explaining the above and to responding to their queries. Everyone concerned, including NOCs, Non-Governmental Organisations and the media, should also respect the personal rights of each individual athlete, which include both the right to express themselves, the right not to comment on political issues and the right not to be subject to any form of discrimination. Importantly, they should not be distracted from their competitions.

Should there be any doubt, the NOCs may at any time contact Tosh Tsurunaga (toshio.tsurunaga@olympic.org) from the IOC NOC Relations Department, for assistance.