

A PUBLICATION OF THE SCHOOL OF SPORT WITH  
HEART OF NOVA ACRÓPOLE | NO. 4 - YEAR 4.



### SPORT AND HEALTH

Find the best balance  
between your  
body and mind

### OLYMPIC STORIES

Vanderlei Cordeiro  
de Lima: from humble  
beginnings to the  
highest Olympic honor

### SPORT AND VOLUNTEERING

When Philosophy and  
Sport come together  
to help in the tragedy  
in Southern Brazil

# OLYMPIC GAMES

FASCINATING SINCE ANTIQUITY, THEY CONTINUE TO  
ENCHANT, BUT DOES THEIR ESSENCE STILL REMAIN?

PARIS 2024





**Carlos Adelantado Puchal**  
International President

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**Francisco Iglesias**  
International Coordinator

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**Sara Fantin e Sandro Silva**  
Editorial Directors

**Sara Fantin**  
General Coordination

**Sandro Silva**  
Art and Creative Director

Ana Gálvez, Gabriel Jubé, Franciso Iglesias, Luciana Castro, Melissa Ferrer Lambert,  
Ricardo Vela e Sofia Bittencourt  
Writers

**Tiago Arruda da Cruz**  
Designer

Alana Cardoso, Gabriel Jubé, Jáder Freitas, Maria Dora Waechter, Pietro Lunelli e Sofia Bittencourt  
Translation

Alfredo Aguilar, Esmeralda Merino, Maria Dora Waechter e Silvana Dias  
Proofreading

**Melissa Ferrer Lambert**  
Editorial Secretary

**Simone Matías**  
Illustration

**Comitê Brasileiro Pierre de Coubertin**  
Support

**Imagem de capa**  
Miriam Jeske/COB

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Dear reader,

It is with great joy that we present the 4th edition of our magazine, now renamed Niké. Inspired by the Greek goddess of Victory, this change reflects not only the international character of the School of Sport with a Heart of Nova Acrópole but also the essence of what we strive to convey. More than a name, Niké is a timeless symbol of achievement through effort, overcoming challenges, and seeking the highest within ourselves.

In Greek mythology, Niké is the goddess who crowns those who, through merit and dedication, overcome life's challenges. For ancient Olympic athletes, her representation went beyond victory in the stadiums. Above all, she symbolized the deepest of all triumphs: victory over oneself and the attainment of human virtues.

This spirit is what we aim to preserve and share in every edition. By refining its format, language, and visual identity, we strive to come closer to this timeless essence that permeates sport. After all, what truly fascinates us about the act of competing and great athletic feats? What lies behind the emotion we feel when witnessing acts of greatness in sports? Together with you, we seek to understand and share that magical element that permeates all sporting achievements and continues to captivate the world across time. The answer does not lie merely in the spectacle, as it goes deeper and touches something profound in the human being, reminding us of the eternal quest to find the fundamental meaning of existence.

To us, victory is about building: laying the foundations for an intimate understanding of everything around us and uncovering the essence of things beyond the dazzling allure of appearances or events. In our featured article, authored by the International Coordinator of the School of Sport with a Heart, you are invited to reflect on the profound meaning of the Olympic Games and their intrinsic connection to life itself.

Just as the Ancient Games served as a stage for human development, our magazine seeks to be a space for reflection and the recovery of the authentic meaning of sport. To us, Niké is an instrument for preserving memory and transmitting knowledge, sincerely wishing to share the lessons of history as a Teacher of Life, encouraging our readers to internalize these experiences and renew their efforts in the pursuit of human fulfillment.

As we conclude this edition, we have embodied the essence of the Olympic motto in practice, which inspires us to always strive to improve, to always move upward and forward. We feel crowned by the joy of dedicated effort and the overcoming of obstacles. Moreover, we celebrate the success of delivering our best in three languages, an achievement made possible by the collective dedication of every member of our team who worked tirelessly to bring these pages to life.

All of this was done to share with you the enthusiasm sparked by sport, which touches, moves, and unites our hearts with yours, dear reader. May it inspire you in your own inner journey, for Victory calls us, and to win is to build.

Enjoy the read!

*Sara Fantin*  
Editorial Director

## SCHEDULE 2025



### 2025, BUT PREPARING FOR 2026

In Austria, enthusiasm for sports is growing every day, especially following the success of the Creative and Sports Week. To channel this growing interest, Nueva Acrópolis will organize the first national sports weekend in Salzburg later this year. This event will kick off the preparations for the 2026 Olympic Games, which will be held in Spain.

It will be a weekend dedicated to training and competitions, fostering team spirit and personal growth. Additionally, the Austrian delegation is already preparing to participate in the Grazathlon in 2025 and is considering forming a team for the Linzathlon in the same year, further solidifying its commitment to sports across different regions of the country.



### CONNECTING BODY AND MIND

In Switzerland, the sports agenda is also packed with activities that combine physical effort and personal growth. On August 17, participants will swim across Lake Zurich in a 1.8 km challenge designed to develop virtues of courage and endurance, while also strengthening the connection to the city. On the same day, a table tennis tournament will take place in Zurich, promoting fun and a sense of community among participants.

The highlight of the year will be participation in the Lausanne Marathon on October 27, with athletes from the Lausanne and Zurich schools. The race will be an opportunity for participants to develop virtues, grow together as a team, and be inspired by the Olympic spirit. To prepare, weekly running training sessions will be held in both cities, always with the goal of preparing both body and mind for future challenges.





## XXII NATIONAL OLYMPICS SPAIN – 2025

The 22nd edition of the National Volunteer Olympics, organized by the Sports with Heart School of Nueva Acrópolis Spain, will take place from August 21 to 24, 2025, in the city of Chinchilla de Montearagón, and will bring together more than 300 participants from 15 branches.

More than just a sporting competition, the Olympics aim to promote coexistence, encourage personal growth, and teach healthy competition among younger participants. Additionally, the event offers an opportunity to practically experience many philosophical principles, such as the Greek concept of areté (excellence or virtue).

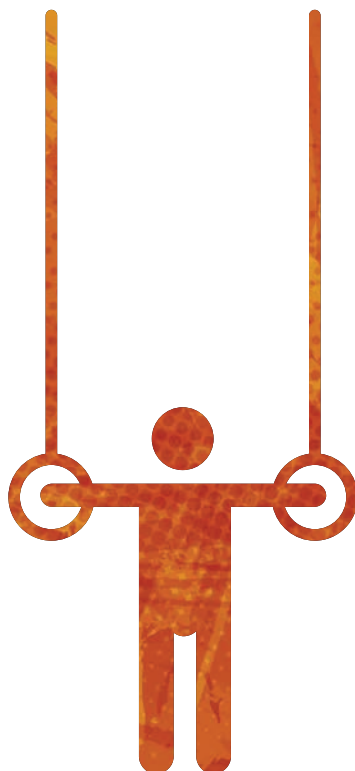
In addition to the personal development of the participants, the event also seeks to strengthen the bonds between the different branches across Spain.



## DAY OF COMPETITION AND UNITY

In Israel, the next big event will be a day full of national competitions in various sports, including archery, volleyball, shot put, running, table tennis, and chess.

In addition to the competitions, participants will have the opportunity to attend a special class and enjoy artistic performances. This day promises to be a celebration of sports, unity, and mutual learning, showcasing the power of sports to connect people and strengthen the community spirit.



## CELEBRATING THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT

In Brazil, Nueva Acrópolis will organize the Interregional “Pierre de Coubertin” Olympics in four states, bringing together philosopher-athletes from various cities to celebrate the Olympic spirit through sports and artistic competitions.

The event seeks to restore the classical sense of sports competition, offering a space for participants to get to know each other better, challenge themselves, and strengthen their bonds of friendship in a healthy and inclusive environment. Families, friends, and the general public are invited to participate and experience this unique opportunity.

Additionally, the city of Curitiba, in the state of Paraná, will host the 2nd edition of the Nature Run - Pierre de Coubertin Circuit in September. Organized by the volunteers of Nueva Acrópolis Curitiba, the event will feature a 5 km race in nature, where participants will experience the atmosphere of the true Olympic spirit.

As Coubertin teaches us: “The most important thing is not to win, but to compete well!”



## AUSTRIA IS ON FIRE!

Austria did not spare energy and creativity in the organization, in addition to the *2024 Creative and Sportive Week* at Mathildenheim, and the exciting *Tracking of the 4 Mountains*, in Carinthia, which stirred up the hikers.

The sports, culture, and adventure came together in energizing events in Austria, promoting health, union, and learning. Mathildenheim was the setting of the **2024 Creative and Sportive Week**, from July 7th to 13th. With more than 100 participants, the diversified schedule

was far beyond sports and offered the participants workshops in swimming, archery, table tennis, and volleyball, which were creatively combined with artistic activities, such as singing, painting, theater, and ikebana. Inspired by Platonic philosophy, the main idea was to promote education through the balance between body and mind. The closing was marked by mini-Olympic Games, in which the participants could try their abilities in sporting competitions and musical performances.

On June 28th, five adventurers from Carinthia Acropolis accepted the annual challenge of the **Tracking of the 4 Mountains**, a tradition always held on the second Friday after Easter. The challenge required participants to overcome the four mountains, walking through 54 kilometers and 2,000 meters of altitude, in a period of 12 to 16 hours. More than a physical resistance test, this journey is a deep experience of overcoming, in which personal limits are expanded and inner strength is collectively discovered. They rocked it!



BEACH VOLLEY rocked at Mathildenheim.

EECC Archives

## ISRAEL: OVERCOMING IN HARD TIMES

In Israel, sports have been an anchor of resilience and union, especially in times of crisis. Even facing challenges, the community finds in sports a way to become stronger and honor those who have gone. With around 30 participants, in addition to occasional guests, the regular activities include Archery, Volleyball, and Running. Despite the delicate situation of the country, the training allowed the inner connection to find strength in the collective. In March 2024, the participants united with high school students to play volleyball, but the main goal was beyond sports. Many students find in the game a way to relieve their tensions, always with reflection after the match about how sports can make people better. This was the second time that this activity was held, finished with the promise of future enriching collaborations.

The events highlighted the capacity of sport to unite, heal, and honor, even in times of great adversity

# PHILO SKI? IT IS GOOD AND HAS IT IN SWITZERLAND!



In the adrenaline of the snow, from the 23rd to the 25th of February this year, 12 participants gathered together at Gimmelwald, in Switzerland, for the **Philo Ski**, an event that combined skiing, snowboarding, and trekking with morning exercises and creative activities at night. Dedicated to the Norse goddess Skadi, the event explored the myth and applied its ideas to daily life. Besides challenging the participants to lead a team and keep the body healthy, the trip promoted people from different schools, languages, and ages to live together, all surrounded by a beautiful and astonishing alpine view.

SKI AND SNOWBOARD added a colorful touch to the snow of Gimmelwald.

## 27<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF THE TOUR OF THE ISLAND

In April 2024, thirty New Acropolis students gathered to participate in the **27th edition of the Tour of the Island**, in Florianópolis, running 140 km around the Island of Santa Catarina. Coming from many cities in the state, the participants demonstrated unity, perseverance, and Olympic spirit, strengthening friendship bonds and highlighting individual and collective strength. This participation reflects the commitment of New Acropolis to promoting sports as a human development tool, where competition becomes a journey of growth and learning.

THE SANDS OF FLORIPA heated under the happy and vigorous steps of the participants.

## SOULS AND HEARTS UNITED

In 2018, the **Sports School with a Heart** by Nova Acrópole and the **Brazilian Pierre de Coubertin** Committee joined forces in a partnership that strengthened the commitment of both institutions to promote human development and the building of a better world through the practice of sports.

As a result of this collaboration, in April 2024, the newest **Pierre de Coubertin Room** was inaugurated at the Nova Acrópole unit in Porto Alegre. This space was created to celebrate institutional collaboration and to further disseminate knowledge related to Pierre de Coubertin and Olympism.



Photos: EECC Archives

# THE ATHLETE AND THE REPETITION

TEXT RICARDO VELA\* | DESIGN SANDRO SILVA

REPETITION  
REPETITION  
REPETITION  
REPETITION



KEFIT/PIXABAY

Sports have been teaching us a lot of things. Today, doing repeated tasks sounds boring to us. The lack of motivation removes the conscience in the activities and the mechanical act starts to make its realization ineffective. Maybe, it would be worth replacing the word repetition with reiteration. The one who reiterates, puts more conscience; repeats one's own actions aspiring for improvement. As one masters different movements, they can combine them, fostering human creativity. The athlete engages with their movements and practices in a dynamic way: each repetition is unique, as their body becomes faster and more agile with every training session. They can jump higher, and their muscles grow stronger.

It's known to us, philosophers-athletes, that not only the body physical movements must be faster, higher and stronger. It's also applied to our conscience the same commitment: move through difficult moments with greater agility; seek higher, brighter perspectives to solve life's challenges, and draw strength from your virtues to overcome adversity.

My intention today is to discuss the value of repetition on the conscious plane. Just as in physical activities, during interactions between athletes, we should aim for repetition with a desire for improvement. It's important to highlight how valuable consistent rhythm is in how often we meet. Meeting regularly helps strengthen our friendship and bond, fostering a deeper sense of connection. The rhythm brings us closer to life itself – to the heart's own time, which beats in a rhythmic pulse. Following this, in each heart beat (each meeting, each sharing), we must reiterate the philosophical teachings.

While training, we will inevitably face conflicts and interpersonal problems. Some may claim they've never faced such situations. In that case, I encourage them to ask themselves: "Am I truly engaging in meaningful, convivial moments?" – because those who truly experience conviviality will naturally encounter its accompanying challenges. When facing difficult times, it is common for feelings of annoyance to arise; returning to meetings can become demotivating, and it's precisely at this moment that we must reinforce our learning and bring more awareness to our training sessions. In those moments, we must not forget the mindset of an athlete, driven by a desire for self-improvement, constantly seeking to refine their movements with every opportunity.

Repeat, repeat, repeat... But never in the same way. We don't need to be identical; instead, we can approach each repetition with greater awareness. Every day the Sun rises, yet no two days are alike. When the sun shines and our hearts are filled with its light, the problems illuminated by it reveal their solutions. In those magical moments, we forge connections. And when we cultivate strong friendships, when we discover a true friend, it's like the arrival of light—the sun rising once more. ☀️



# OLYMPISM AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

TEXT FERNANDO FONTOURA | NELSON TODT

The Philosophy of Education is placed inside of the Philosophy as an applied field, in other words, as a practical philosophy. In this way, it is in the same shelf of ethics, bioethics, politics and other fields that are in the threshold between reflective thinking and the action of this same thinking in the real world. It is worth remembering that practical philosophy is not equal to a direct intervention in the real world as the engineering and medical sciences do, for example, because its field of activity is abstract, and it uses the broad reflective thinking about what is real to justify rationally the need of an intervention in it. Therefore, fields such as Philosophy of Education have or might have application in different practices in the real world, transforming or innovating them, establishing new bases of rational justification. They are practical precisely for being one step away from becoming effective as actions in the world, as it was made in the abstraction of reflective thinking.

The result of a practical philosophy is bonded directly to the clarity of its concepts and the rigor of the arguments through logical rational justifications, when there is a consideration of the chosen issue as a whole and not just its specificities, which can lead to better evaluations of the horizons researched, to establishing new research and practical objectives, or to delimiting educational purposes and interventions. Therefore, conceptual analysis, careful evaluation of arguments, eradication of ambiguities and the elaboration of clarifying distinctions constitute a package of essential philosophical tools so that practical philosophy can, within the Philosophy of Education, develop diverse questions in various areas.

Following this line of reasoning, we chose as field of action Ethics, Pedagogy, Politics and Aesthetics, domains that **Pierre de Coubertin** referenced when mentioning Olympism in his writings.

When we talk about ethics, we talk about the ethics of virtues – according to what was proposed by Coubertin, the conception of an education based on values. In the field of pedagogy, we identify in the Olympism a broad theory of knowledge, in other words, an epistemology of virtues which are directly bonded to the previous fields. In politics matters, we clearly affirm that Coubertin's Olympic Philosophy is a dimension of education for peace. Here it is worth

highlighting the stoic cosmopolitanism: understand yourself as a citizen of the world and sustain that with firmness, serenity and dignity as a model of development for a virtuous education.

This politics area to which we refer is not proposed on the bases that we conceive today, whether are linked to geopolitics or state organizations, but established based on a virtuous human being that educates himself in a cosmopolitan model starting in his community.

Regarding the aesthetics emphasized by Coubertin in the practice of the Olympic Games, in the personal posture of the athletes or in character perfecting, we consider the notions of perception of reality developed by the German philosopher **Friedrich Nietzsche** known as Apollonian and Dionysian. They are broad perception categories that Nietzsche brings directly from Ancient Greece – the same historical time that Coubertin uses to justify the Olympic Games and Olympic Movement in general – that is, these are his references of an education based on values.

With these approaches in hand we can consider that the Olympic Movement is, generally, a great pedagogical purpose of education based on values through sports. This way, the Philosophy of Sport is part of the Philosophy of Education. Here it is also worth highlighting the importance of Coubertin's proposal, which contains a broad philosophical feature in it and which must, precisely for this reason, go far beyond physical education in schools or in social projects. Olympism can be unified and developed as a continuous educational system from a human perspective that is not only epistemological or practical, but also, and above all, ethical and virtuous.

Thus, we conceive Olympism as a specific branch of the Philosophy of Sport and in this concept are included themes as sportiness, stealing/cheating, improving athletic performance or even gender issues, sports accessibility, among many others. Considering all these topics, we can affirm that the model proposed by Pierre de Coubertin give to Olympism a character even more pedagogical-educational that merely sportive, once it was supposed to reach the education of the personality and the formation of the moral character of the young people, regardless of the practice of competitive sports.

# A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

## What It Is and How the III International Philosophical-Sports Pre-Season Went

TEXT SARA FANTIN\* • DESIGN SANDRO SILVA

Imagine receiving an invitation to travel through time and space to the places that were the birthplace of the Olympic Games and Western Philosophy – more precisely, Olympia and Athens. Clearly, many would accept the offer, but even if they knew it would be something monumental, they could hardly fathom just how extraordinary it would be.

That's exactly what happened from August 24 to September 1, when participants from around the world gathered for the III International Philosophical-Sports Pre-Season of the Sport with Heart School of Nueva Acrópolis. The event aims to promote Olympic education through sports and the development of core values, offering a unique immersion experience in Greek culture and history.

Over 220 participants from 18 countries had the opportunity to explore the deep connection between sports, philosophy, and history through a varied program, covering theoretical classes, sports and artistic activities, group discussions, and cultural visits to archaeological sites.

Yes, everyone there knew they were in 2024, the 21st century, but everything felt different. The atmosphere, the energy, the colors – nothing resembled the present. As they entered the International Olympic Academy, the site of the first part of their stay, it became clear that this would be one of the highlights of the event, as participants were able to immerse themselves in the legacy



Photos: ECCC Archives

of the Ancient Olympic Games. Now, the journey through time was complete.

The first day was inaugurated with a beautiful and moving artistic performance that crowned the opening ceremony. A prominent name kicked off the activities: Professor Nelson Todt, the International Vice-President of the Pierre de Coubertin Committee, who delivered a memorable lecture on the origin of Olympic philosophy and the history of the International Olympic Academy.

Afterwards, divided into teams with names inspired by Greek mythology, participants engaged in various sports activities, including volleyball, athletics, soccer, swimming, and even a new sport

**ARTISTIC PERFORMANCE**  
during the event's opening ceremony.



**VOLUNTEERS**  
from Nova Acrópole Greece performing representations of Greek culture that enlivened the Games of Antiquity.

(which one?). Following that, in a class by Professor Fabiana Turelli on the Panhellenic Games, dialogue circles were formed to reflect on the application of these teachings in the modern day, opening the way for the emergence of the best feelings in everyone.

The second day brought the much-anticipated visit to the Olympia archaeological site, where participants walked through the ancient ruins and the very stadium where the most important events took place. The place still retains part of the energy from the past, and it was possible to feel it, reaffirming what is already widely known: the Games were much more than just sporting competitions; they were celebrations that conveyed a sense of unity for the Greek cities, seeking to honor the gods, exalt the winners, and revive the myths, history, and glory of their heroes. More than just a tour of an archaeological site, what was experienced was a connection to



AMPHITHEATER at the archaeological site of Delphi, a sacred mountainous region associated with the god Apollo and the Muses.



“Each moment I experienced led me to the path of my best feelings. Every sports practice, class, visit to an archaeological site, and artistic rehearsal allowed me to discover a little more about myself.”

Natália Bortolás, participant from Brazil – Southern Region



VISIT to the Olympic Stadium at the top of the Archaeological Site of Delphi.

the ancestral Olympic Spirit that, despite the millennia, still reigns there, reminding everyone that we are victorious whenever we seek excellence in everything we do.

The following day, the formation activities continued in different modalities, providing participants with valuable tools to better understand themselves, recognize their limitations both in their relationship with themselves and with others, and also to identify their values that allow for the construction of habits to achieve a more harmonious and healthy way of life.

The emotional visit to the International Academy ended, leaving an indelible sentimental mark on those present. But now, the event would continue at Nueva Acrópolis' field headquarters in Greece, known as Agios Mamas, where a warm welcome reception ensured that the feeling of being at home remained constant—a feeling the Greeks were very successful in creating. 🌿



VOLLEYBALL TRAINING in Agios Mamas.



Reproduction/COB

# WITH OPEN ARMS AND HEART

*The marathon runner who embodied the Olympic spirit*

TEXT LUCIANA CASTRO\* • DESIGN SANDRO SILVA

It was 2004 and all eyes were on that most noble of races: the marathon. This time at the Olympic Games in Athens. With less than 7 km to go, Brazilian Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima was leading by a huge margin over the runner-up when he was suddenly attacked by a fanatic who forced him off the track. After being helped by a willing spectator to get rid of the attacker, Vanderlei rejoined the race but lost his rhythm and concentration as a result of the unfortunate incident. Although badly harmed, he resumed his strides but was eventually overtaken by the two runners that were in second and third behind him. When he entered the Olympic Stadium, however, instead of anger or frustration, we saw a broad smile on his visibly moved face and his famous little plane gesture, which he followed until he finally crossed the finish line in third place. In doing so, he became the only Brazilian to stand on the podium in an Olympic marathon. At no time did he protest or claim the gold medal because he had been attacked during the race. This honorable attitude showed us the qualities of a true champion: humility, effort, resignation and joy.

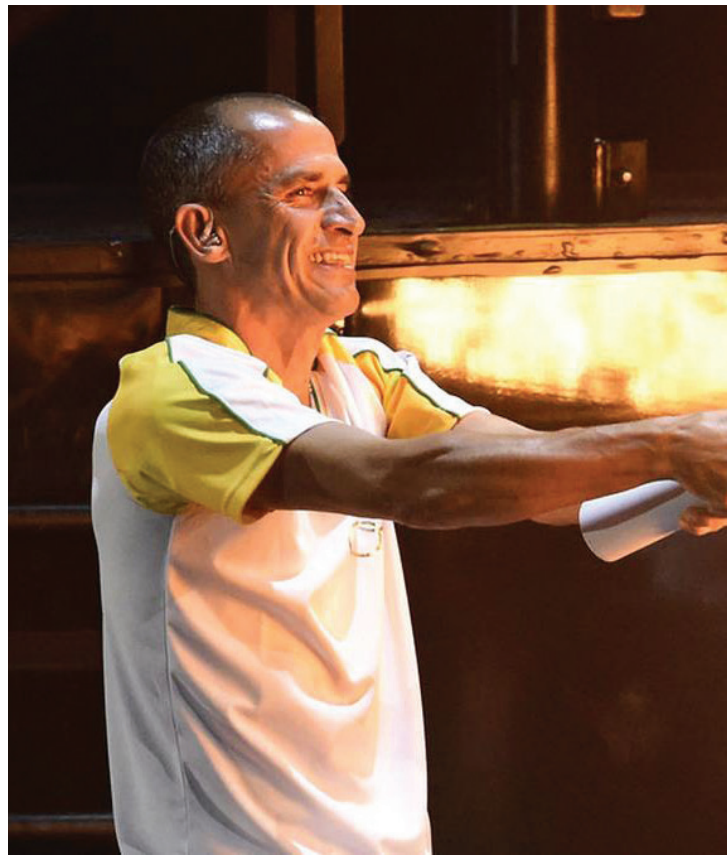
\*Luciana Castro – Monitor of the Paraná and Interior São Paulo of the School of Sport with Heart in Brazil – Southern Area.

But who is he? Vanderlei was born in Cruzeiro do Oeste, in the interior of the state of Paraná, on July 4, 1969. The son of farmers who fled the drought in the northeast of Brazil for the harvests of the south, he was registered a month after his birth. His first athletic dream was to become a soccer player, and like most young people, he played soccer with his friends in his spare time after helping his family harvest sugar cane. During elementary school, he enjoyed running home and eating the fruit he had picked from the tree, an enjoyment that would become a profession in the future. In high school, he got his first pair of sneakers, and for the pleasure of running that he had discovered, he would run several laps around the sports field during recess. It was at this time that he won his first competition, and the sport could not have been any other: track and field.

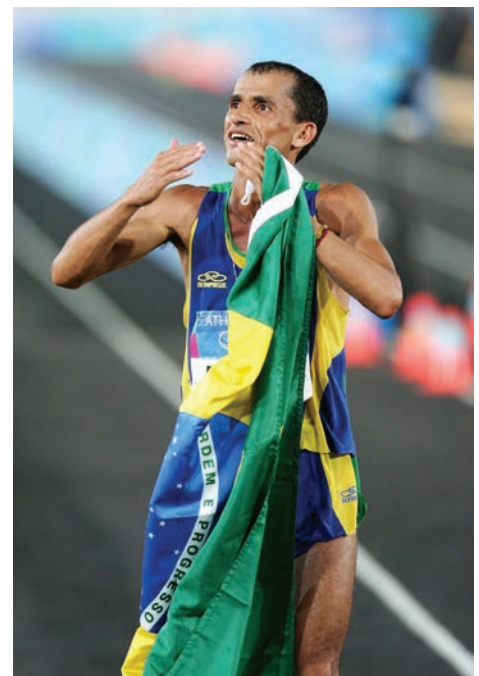
He is undoubtedly one of the greatest names in world sports. He is the only Latin American to have received the highest honor that symbolizes the true Olympic spirit, the Pierre de Coubertin Medal, which is awarded only to athletes who have demonstrated ethical values and admirable moral fiber in difficult or unusual situations during a competition. If justice is the force that prevails behind all things, in Vanderlei's case, seen live by millions of people, it was evident when he was awarded the highest humanitarian-sports award given by the International Olympic Committee. It shows that what really counts is the attitude, the character, the fair way of competing, so well represented by this great sportsman. Vanderlei ended his saga on Greek soil, the cradle of the ancient games, on the podium and with a remarkable sentence: "I couldn't take Emmanuel's medal. I'm happy with mine, it's bronze, but it's worth gold," he said when he heard that Emanuel, a beach volleyball athlete and gold medalist in the same edition, had said in an interview that he wanted to give him his own medal because he thought it was the gold that belonged to him.

Interestingly, he won his first marathon "by accident". It was in 1994, when he entered the race as a "rabbit," an athlete who sets the pace for the rest of the field and was supposed to run the half. Feeling good when he reached the 21 km mark, he could have stopped, but he kept going and made it to the end, eventually winning the race with a time of 2:11:06. From then on, he ran and won many more races, overcoming injuries and personal difficulties to get to Athens and live his greatest adventure.

The preparation for his third Olympic Games included a very special episode with his coach, Ricardo D'Angelo, who had been with him for 10



**MOMENTO EM** que o atleta é empurrado por um manifestante que invadiu a pista da prova da Maratona das Olimpíadas de Atenas (2004).



**NO PÓS** prova, dando a volta no estádio, comemora feliz e agradecido pelo apoio da torcida.





**VANDERLEI ACENDENDO**  
a Tocha na Cerimônia de Abertura  
dos Jogos Olímpicos Rio 2016.

© picture-alliance/dpa/Z. C.

Photos: Reproduction

years. He couldn't be with Vanderlei at the start and during the final preparations because he wasn't a member of the Brazilian Olympic Committee's coaching staff for this edition of the Games. So he wrote him a letter, which Vanderlei read in the Olympic Village before going to the start: "Remember the steep climb at kilometer 30. If you're feeling good, take a chance, because if you don't, you'll never win. My confidence in you is immense, so let's fight for the goal we've been dreaming of for so long. No matter what happens in the end, remember that you will always have my friendship and trust, and also remember that I admire you for the wonderful person you are. So, good luck, and let's get a beer together after the race".

Vanderlei says he thought a lot about the words in that letter during his biggest race as an athlete. He noticed that he was feeling very good on the difficult course and that one of the favorites, Paul Tergat of Kenya, was struggling. Like Tergat, he knew it wouldn't be easy to run against the favorite in this edition of the marathon, Italian Stefano Baldini, who ended up winning the race. Nevertheless, he ran with confidence and did his best. Speculation aside, he commented on his experience: "I will never say that I am the champion. I'm not going to use a word that Stefano himself used, and that was unfortunate. I'll never underestimate my opponents, especially because it's an assumption". This is another sign of his moral strength and a point for the human formation acquired through sport, present in the pedagogical power of sporting disciplines. After a while, Stefano retracted his statement and said that his colleague's performance was "a heroic act".

At the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil, the question arose: who would light the Olympic pyre? Many big names were speculated, such as Pelé, Gustavo Kuerten, Oscar Schmidt and Hortência. An extremely difficult choice, but Vanderlei was chosen. There is a reason why the Olympic Games have such a power that enchants and moves everyone, and that is why the lighting of the Olympic torch is the most emblematic part and the high point of the Opening Ceremony. The Olympic torch symbolizes the fire that the Titan Prometheus stole from Olympus and gave to mankind, giving them the ability to think, i.e., the human condition itself.

Vanderlei could have given up, he could have claimed the gold, he could have rebelled, or he could have sought revenge. Instead, he chose to act with his heart, and in doing so, his story has been immortalized. May we be inspired by his example to feel, think and act in the same way, to find and fulfill the role that each of us has to play in this world that needs it so much. ☺



**ATLETA RECEBE**  
ajuda de outro torcedor  
para se desvencilhar  
do manifestante.



**VANDERLEI NO**  
pódio, comemorando  
sua medalha de bronze  
e seu largo sorriso pela  
missão cumprida.



# OLYMPIC

The essence  
hidden behind  
the dazzle

# GAMES

A high-angle photograph of a female pole vaulter, Juliana Campos, in mid-air. She is wearing a blue and green athletic singlet with yellow accents and a blue visor. Her body is arched over a horizontal bar that is painted with horizontal stripes of blue, black, red, yellow, and green. She is holding a silver pole vault pole with both hands. The background is a plain, light-colored ground.

JULIANA CAMPOS in the Pole Vault qualifying rounds.

TEXT | FRANCISCO IGLESIAS\* DESIGN | SANDRO SILVA

A few days ago, we had the gratifying opportunity to witness the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and we saw authentic athletic feats in practically all the sports that make up the event. But even with all the dazzle, was this the essence, the central idea of those ancient games that Baron **Pierre de Coubertin** rescued from oblivion? Let's embark on this little journey to find out.

It's been almost 3,000 years since King Iphitos of Elis received the recommendation from the Oracle of Delphi to "restore the Games of Peace" – a mission that seemed very complicated due to the continuous clashes between the city-states of the time. Finally, he managed to agree with King Cleisthenes of Pisa and the legislator Lycurgus of Sparta on the Ekecheiria, the sacred truce, eternalized in the following oath: *Olympia is a sacred place; whoever dares to set foot on this land with armed forces will be condemned as impious. The one who does not punish an offense is also impious, if it is in his power to do so* – a text written on an iron disk that was kept in the temple of Hera, the mistress of oaths and pledged words.

\*Francisco Iglesias – International Coordinator of the New Acropolis School of Sport with Heart.

Obviously, the Games celebrated today no longer have the ability to stop wars as they did in Ancient Greece, and this shows that much of their essence has been lost over time. But despite everything, there is something magical that still remains.

Since Athens 1896 to Paris 2024, an almost countless number of athletes who have taken part in these editions have not been able to define what they experienced at the Games, but everyone, absolutely everyone, agrees on defining them as something special and unlike anything they have experienced in other sporting competitions. Perhaps, here, if we try to see things through the eyes of those ancient Games, we will be able to recover small treasures of knowledge that can make us see opportunities that allow for new possibilities in our daily lives.

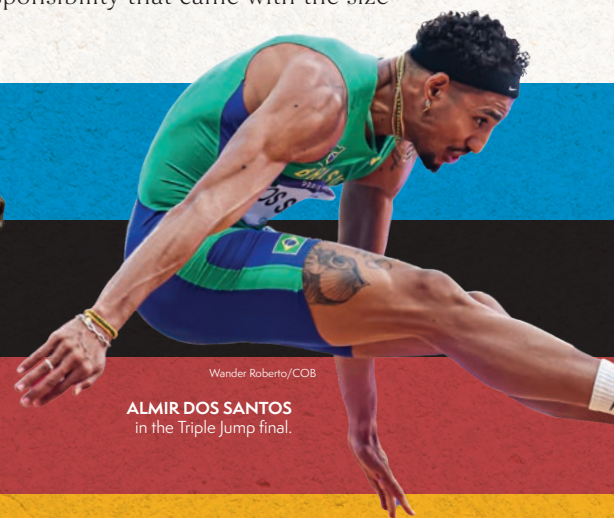
As well as stopping wars, there was another great noble purpose behind the Games: the integral formation of young people. This idea was brought up again by Baron Pierre de Coubertin when he recreated the Games and is summed up very well in the phrase he himself coined: *mens fervida in corpore lacertoso* – in other words, an ardent spirit in a well-trained body.

Sport understood without a pedagogical and practical purpose, as we often practice it today, was something that simply didn't exist for our ancestors. For example, long-distance and endurance races served to convey messages of the utmost political and military importance, which gave those who practiced them an experience that would be burned into their souls, given the responsibility that came with the size of the task.



**MARIA CLARA PACHECO** (in red) faces Stacey Hymer from Australia in the up to 57kg category of Taekwondo.

Wander Roberto/COB



**ALMIR DOS SANTOS** in the Triple Jump final.

Wander Roberto/COB



**MARTINE GRAEL** and **KAHENA KUNZE** in action in Sailing, 49er FX class.

Wander Roberto/COB



**THIAGO WILD** in the match against the Kazakhstani pair.

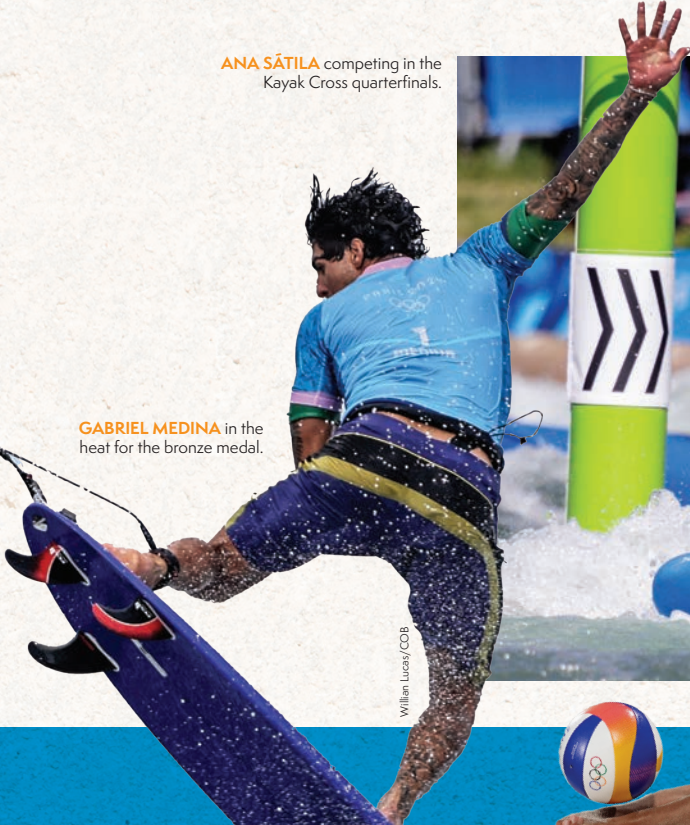
Guarar Nóbregui/COB

ANA SÁTILA competing in the Kayak Cross quarterfinals.



Miriam Jeske/COB

GABRIEL MEDINA in the heat for the bronze medal.



William Lucas/COB



Alexandre Leonaro/COB

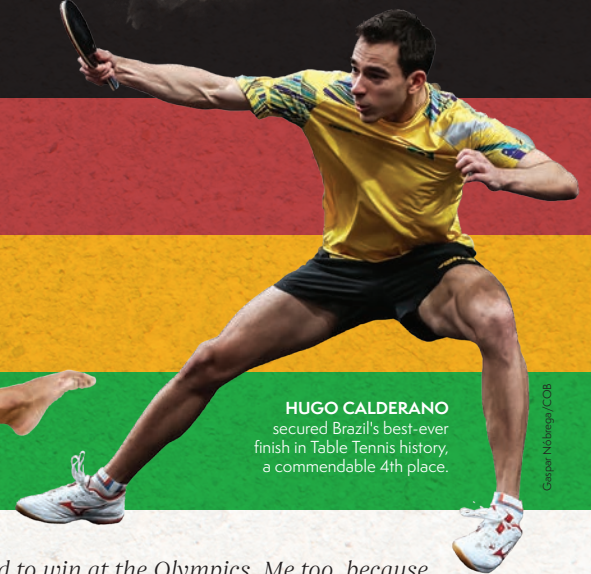
DUDA LISBOA quite literally doesn't let the ball drop. She and her partner, Ana Patrícia, clinched the gold in Beach Volleyball.



REBECA ANDRADE during the qualifying round. She took home 1 gold, 2 silvers, and 1 bronze.



Miriam Jeske/COB



HUGO CALDERANO secured Brazil's best-ever finish in Table Tennis history, a commendable 4th place.

Gasper Nóbrega/COB

The Games were considered sacred precisely because they were consecrated to the gods and helped to consolidate a moral and ethical base in all their participants. This moral height that was sought is today translated into the current Olympic motto: *Citius, Altius, Fortius - Communiter*. The translation is higher, faster, stronger - together! The motto, although at first glance it seems to deal only with the development of physical skills, if looked at more closely we can see that this is only the surface of something much deeper.

Of course, these unique events in human history have been the subject of reflection by philosophers. Competing in the Olympic Games has always been a dream of many people, and the most courageous didn't just want to compete, they wanted to win. The Stoic philosopher **Epictetus** had a student who once confided in him this desire, and he advised him as follows:

*You wanted to win at the Olympics. Me too, because what a wonderful thing that would be! But first take a good look at what precedes and follows such an endeavor. After this analysis, decide if you want to do it. You will have to follow a strict regime of discipline and diet, abstaining from sweets, exercising at the appointed times, cold or hot, drinking water and wine in moderation; in short, you will have to devote yourself entirely to the daily exercises, as if you were under medical care, and then take part in the games. There you can get injured, have your legs dislocated, be humiliated, and finally be beaten. After you've thought about all this, if you want, go and become an athlete.*

Let us think about the grandeur of what this powerful advice from Epictetus entails, if we go back to the beginning of this text, to the idea of moral formation, we will see that what is being proposed is that the candidate who wishes to participate in the Games must reconfigure his life and reinvent himself as a human being in order to achieve the minimum

conditions required for the undertaking, in other words, it was a requirement to become truly worthy mentally, morally, and physically, on truly superior levels, in order to live up to the magnitude of the event.

When we watch the Olympic Games, it's impossible not to get emotional or identified with them, without often really understanding why. But the truth is that the experience of the Games moves us because what we are seeing is the human experience itself summed up in the sporting competitions they promote.

If that's the case, why should our lives be any different? Don't we live in a daily competition to become better and better at the tests we must pass? Shouldn't we prepare for them, knowing that they will inevitably come? Wouldn't it be right to

strive for elevated levels of awareness and virtue for the circumstances that will require it?

Really, there are many questions to be answered... And when it comes to seeking virtue, the philosopher Socrates tells us that a person who is not virtuous cannot be happy, and a person with virtue cannot help but be happy.

Yes, it may seem difficult at first glance, but the fact is that every inner accomplishment that we achieve when we prepare ourselves and overcome some obstacle fills us with joy and renews our enthusiasm, precisely because this effort to be joyful develops this enthusiasm in us. Also because we are gathering the greatest treasure of all: ourselves.

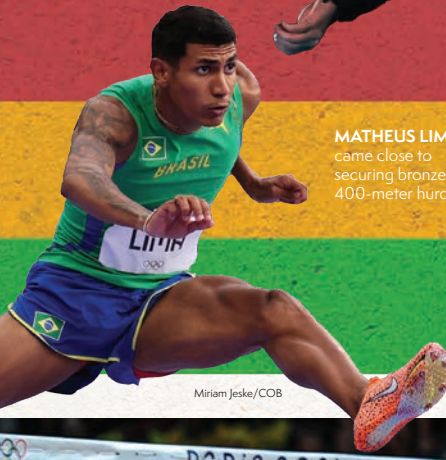
This is necessary so that we can revitalize the world, and to revitalize the world you have to run,



**AUGUSTO AKIO** will adorn his shelf with the bronze medal he won in Skate Park.



**INGRID OLIVEIRA** dazzling with her performance in the 10-meter platform Diving competition.



**MATHEUS LIMA** came close to securing bronze in the 400-meter hurdles.



**CAIO BONFIM** made history by winning Brazil's first medal in Race Walking, a silver.



**GABI** was named the best outside hitter of Paris 2024, and **CAROL** led in block points. The brilliant duo helped Brazil secure another bronze to take home.

move your arms, and achieve certain goals. After all, as taught by Professor **Jorge Ángel Livraga**, life itself is a game in a way, because we have our feet on the ground, and in many situations we find it hard to walk, we suffer from headwinds, our muscles ache, sometimes our will falters, and sometimes we want to lie down on the ground and rest, begging for a break. But there is something inside of us that screams: I CAN!

That's why the Olympic Games, in spite of all the

# OLYMPIC SLOGAN

## CITIUS

### MEANS FASTER

Not just faster at running, but also in the sense of speed of comprehension, the liveliness of intelligence. An athlete is anyone who has not only strengthened his muscles and developed his endurance, but the one who in sports has learned to suppress his anger, to be tolerant of his companions; not to take a vile advantage, to feel the mere suspicion of cheating as a deep dishonor; and to have a cheerful attitude even in the face of disenchantment and misfortune.

## ALTIUS

### MEANS HIGHER

Not only in relation to a desired goal, but also for the moral improvement of the individual. It's the understanding of inner states of consciousness that were previously hidden. From the point of view of an athlete who is well trained in moral and ethical concepts, there are two types of experience: good experiences and experiences. Defeat and victory are states of consciousness, although they may seem to be consequences of the goal of seeking victory. It is therefore something internal.

## FORTIUS

### MEANS STRONGER

It's not just about having more physical strength or being bolder in sports, but also in the struggle of life. The Greeks called the virtue of striving for this strength *Megaloprepeia* (magnanimity), which meant giving up comfort when one heard the call of the Olympic world to act with maximum effort and dignity.

## COMMUNITER

### MEANS TOGETHER

It is the coming together of the previous virtues in the practice of living together and in the tireless pursuit of universal brotherhood. For this to become a reality, one must be truly Olympic, and to be Olympic, as Coubertin would say, the first condition is to be joyful. Joy is a state of consciousness that brings us closer to the archetype of beauty, in other words, through it we develop strengths that we don't know we have in ourselves.

illusions and distractions we insist on putting in them, renew with each edition the memory of their true purpose: to encourage in all the people who follow them and are enchanted by them the search for human fulfillment. With them, we have seen and we will see many stories that will inspire us and fill us with beautiful references so that we can keep going, keep moving forward until we reach this goal, because it is also part of their essence to repeat each time one of their most beautiful lessons: that if we dive deep inside ourselves, we will realize that the victory lies in our own hearts. ○



# WHEN PHILOSOPHY AND SPORTS

# WILLIA

TEXT ARIELA BAUMGARTEN REZENDE\* E SANDRO SILVA • DESIGN SANDRO SILVA

Whenever nature shows its strength, we realize how fragile humans are in the face of it. The extreme weather events that affected Rio Grande do Sul in April this year (2024) resulted in the biggest flood ever recorded in the Guaíba hydrographic basin, in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre. The heavy rains caused floods and landslides — an unprecedented socio-environmental disaster that devastated the city, left thousands homeless, and caused countless victims, both human and animal, generating enormous commotion throughout the country.

Faced with such an impactful scenario, a group of people felt an irresistible impulse within themselves. From this deep and genuine feeling that makes us recognize each other as humanity, an impulse arose to travel hundreds of kilometers, offering to help those in need.

Who were they? Perhaps police officers or firefighters from other cities and states? It's true that many of these professionals also volunteered, but who is this group of volunteers? Of this group, they all have a very peculiar characteristic: neither policemen nor firemen; they are athlete philosophers. Athlete philosophers? What do you mean? Who are these people?





Photos: New Acropolis archive

# GENESS

# BECOME ONE AND THE SAME

Many of the New Acropolis volunteers who took part in the tragedy in Rio Grande do Sul are part of the “School of Sport with Heart,” committed to experiencing the original conception of the idea of the athlete, which is why they are called athlete philosophers.

And what is this original conception of the athlete? What is its relationship with philosophy? The Greek word “*athlētēs*” involved and contemplated a sense of effort, struggle, and battle to achieve excellence. This, of course, encompassed the formation of character as well as the improvement of the body. Nowadays, it's natural that when we think of athletes, the image that springs to mind is of people who live for competitions, records, medals, and high performance. Of course, there are those who do it out of genuine vocation and who inspire us greatly, but our civilization is far removed from the original idea of what it means to be an athlete, which dates back to Ancient Greece. In this sense, we have to ask ourselves a question: if we reduce the concept of being an athlete only to the cultivation of the body and to achieving records, is that really being an athlete or another form of slavery? It's worth thinking about.

Returning to our group of volunteer athlete philosophers — you may be wondering why they would do this. Of course, compassion is a strong enough element and could explain everything on its own, but there is something else that drove these people to leave their homes and help the people of the South; heading there as if it were an Olympics and as fast as a 100-meter dash, such was their will.



**TEAMWORK**

Team sports teach us how to synchronize with our teammates and act efficiently when the need arises.



**FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY**

Certain circumstances may be significant but not necessarily burdensome, requiring skill and flexibility to navigate. We develop these qualities through sports practice.



**WEIGHTLIFTING**

At many times, we need the strength to lift ourselves up and bear the heavy burdens upon us, so we can help one another.



**CONCENTRATION AND GOOD HUMOR**

Overcoming challenges requires concentration, and keeping a good sense of humor during difficulties is also a significant test.

It's likely that this is precisely the secret, because the call that came to them was that of the real-life Olympics, to act in the midst of chaos and in the face of the despair of others, without prizes, adequate preparation, or even medals. The prize here comes from an experience that words cannot express. And even if it doesn't encompass the grandeur of an Olympic feat, answering this call is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful things a human being can experience.

What this group found there were people whose homes had been flooded by water and mud — many were still marooned and needed to be rescued. The needs ranged from lacking basic items, continuous medicine, clothing, cleaning homes, or even rebuilding houses. Furthermore, the most important point of attention was the need for truly human psychological support. Despite the enormous difficulties, shelters were built and material needs were gradually met, but hugs, smiles, outstretched hands, and understanding glances were what really made the difference for those who had lost everything.

Photos: New Acropolis archive

When you arrive at a devastated place, full of deprivation, and you offer your help without preference for work fronts, loading and unloading trucks, scrubbing floors, cleaning walls, looking after the sick and those paralyzed by suffering, then these are, in fact, the real athletes — only those who are moved by something much deeper and higher can put themselves in front of such circumstances and give their heart there.

A volunteer is someone who acts out of willpower, but goodwill alone is not enough, because true goodness only really comes about with heart, intelligence, and preparation. This is what makes athlete philosophers, and this is the spirit that drives them. And it was precisely because they were philosophers first that they recognized and were able to interpret, in the face of tragedy and the suffering of others, an Olympic call that they could readily answer. These volunteers used sport as a tool to give their bodies the vigor they needed, and philosophy as a way of life that gave them moral and psychological strength when they most needed to fight for life and human dignity.

This Olympics of life made it possible to unite the Olympic spirit and volunteering, bringing together this specific group of people, who gave up their personal lives for a few days to give themselves to the unknown, willing to overcome fear, difficulties, and suffering. They showed themselves to be strong in all situations, because they were imbued with a heroic sense of struggle and thus strove to deliver their best. This allowed them to evoke the power of love that resides in the athlete's heart — an energy capable of overcoming any adversity and obstacle for the sake of others, thereby winning the noblest prize of all: a little more purity for their own soul. 🌀



Photos: I New Acropolis archive

#### PASSING THE BATON

To manage the many tasks we undertake with and for others, we must learn to receive responsibilities, carry them, resolve them, and pass them along with our knowledge. This ensures that every task or act of assistance is as effective as possible.



#### KNOWING HOW TO REST

To truly help others, it is essential to know when to recharge your energy. In sports, rest is also planned to consolidate our strength, so we can use it effectively in life.

#### HURDLE RACE

Overcoming barriers, whether personal or collective, is the very essence of sports. It mirrors what life brings us: opportunities to conquer ourselves and support one another.



*Fascinating and mysterious – who are this deity and what does mean to conquer her grace*

TEXT | DESIGN SANDRO SILVA

# NIKE



Climbing Mount Olympus and almost reaching its summit, came the most terrible creature, Typhon - the last trump of the Titans in the ten-year war against the Olympic gods. With its enormous height, Typhon's head touched the stars. A hundred hideous dragonheads rose from his hands, each with a black tongue protruding, and bright flames gushed from the eyes of the monstrous heads. It was so terrifying that the gods fled, leaving Zeus alone, afraid to face the most powerful creature that had ever existed. At that moment, Nike, the glorious goddess of victory, appeared hovering above him and uttered a great admonition:

*Lord Zeus! Arise as the champion of your own children! Let me never see Athene mingled with Typhon, she who does not know the way of a man with a maid! Do not make a mother of the unmothered! Fight, brandish your lightning, the fiery spear of Olympus! Gather your clouds once more, Lord of the Rain! For the foundations of the unshakable universe are already shaking under Typhon's hands; the four inseparable elements are being separated! [...]*

Zeus then resumes his haughtiness and vivacity, strikes vigorously against Typhon and beats him, after a colossal battle. Victory led Zeus back to war, and war led him back to Victory. If Nike hadn't exhorted Zeus, the order of the Cosmos would be doomed. But, who is this Goddess? Let's discover it together!

Daughter of the titan Pallas, the first representation of the war/battle, and oceanid Styx, who embodies the river with the same name in Hades, Nike is the personification of victory. She is also the sister of Zelus, the zeal; Kratos, the strength; and Bia, the force. These four are abstract entities and personifies the attribute which Zeus needed to overcome the titans in the Titanomachy - from the Greek *titán* (titan) and *makhē* (battle or war). The fundamental myth in Greek mythology symbolizes the fight for power and the transition from an ancient era to a new one, where the triumph of the Olympians represents the triumph of order, justice and rationality over chaos.

Nike did not directly participate in any of the old myths. However, Nonnus of Panopolis, greek poet from the V century b.C., in his epic poem *Dionysiaca*, gives her an active participation: in the poet's words, Nike appear under the form of the goddess Leto (goddess of the night) and made the exhortation mentioned in the opening of this text, in the excerpt from book 2, which narrates the battle between Zeus and Typhoon. Although her direct actuation is limited by this event, Nike gains relevance throughout Greek culture precisely because of her participation in the Titanomachy. This is because, in the beginning of the war, when Zeus summoned all beings to fight against the titans, Styx was the first



Sandro Silva/IA


to present herself to Olympus with her children. In recognition, Zeus honored her, decreeing that the most sacred oaths will be pronounced by her waters and her children will live there with him forever. This way, after the Titanomachy, they became an extension of the divine attributes of the “father of gods”, the great winner of the war, Nike, who personifies the Zeus’ victory, by extension, becomes the victory in all challenges.

The goddess, since then, whenever she appears is characterized by wings - a clear indicative of her fleeting character - and, many times, she is represented with a palm or a laurel wreath in her hand. The laurel wreath, delivered in the Olympic ceremonies, is a symbol of great honor and glory, indicating that the athlete would achieve a notable or extraordinary feat. The laurel, for being an evergreen tree, makes the laurel wreath symbolize immortality and eternity. The union of the symbols is a way to eternalize the memory of victories and achievements, indicating that those who strive and fight bravely, will become worthy of receiving this honor from the Goddess Nike.

There is no shortage of examples of remarkable feats of effort and achievement. One of them is the legendary Athenian soldier Pheidippides, who traveled 240 km in two days in order to ask help to Sparta and other Greek cities in the fight against the Persians. After the battle, he was sent back from Marathon to Athens, traveling more than 40 km, originating the famous Olympic competition.

Niké is always depicted with wings, a clear indication of her fleeting nature.

Pheidippides arrived in the city to announce the result with only one word: “Nenikamen!” (We won!), and fell dead from exhaustion at the end of the task - an epic effort which consecrated the soldier, with no doubt guided by Nike herself to the Olympus. Another remarkable moment happened in the olympic marathon competition in 1984, the first female competition in history. The Swiss Gabriela Andersen-Schiess entered staggering the Los Angeles Olympic Stadium, and, in the boundaries of her strength, crossed the finish line, entering the hall of Olympic legends and becoming a symbol of perseverance and olympic spirit.

Nike is also an inspiring idea as an attribute present in everyone, but only becomes concrete throughout the continuous effort and fight to overcome yourself each day and become truly human. When this day arrives, the goddess grace will be, then, conquered in a definitive manner. 

#### READ MORE

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# BODY AND



TEXT SARA FANTIN\* • DESIGN SANDRO SILVA

It is no news that sports and health go hand in hand since antiquity. It is also no wonder that many philosophers, in so many cultures throughout our history, recognized the importance of this amazing pair to the physical and mental well-being. Over the years, these philosophers presented us with a series of principles that show us how we can apply this relationship to the lifestyle of today's frenetic times.

**Plato**, one of the most influential philosophers in Ancient Greece, was one of them. In *The Republic*, one of his most significant works, said that the ideal education should include physical and intellectual training in order to form balanced and virtuous citizens, emphasizing the importance of gymnastics (physical education) to develop courage and strength, while music and philosophy would take charge of the development of the mind.

He saw physical health as a prerequisite to mental and moral health, explaining that gymnastics, when not excessive or insufficient, but balanced and with other activities, would promote general well-being, fundamental to the soul's health.

From ancient China, **Laozi**, the Taoist philosopher, also approached the subject in a beautiful way. His thoughts, which emphasized the harmony between the body and nature,

inspired and gave rise to practices such as Tai Chi and Qigong, which beautifully combine subtle movements, breathing and meditation.

For **Pierre de Coubertin**, French historian and educator, founder of the modern Olympic Games, sport was an essential educational tool for the new generations. Coubertin understood it not only as something to build muscles and resistance, but also to cultivate the body and the mind, thus restoring a better balance between the two.

All these thinkers shared the same idea: the vision that through regular physical exercise we will have the essential to lead a healthy and full life. The legacy they left are ideas that are still used today, such is their relevance.

In today's society, we often see body and mind being treated separately, which has led to a number of problems - such as the worrying increase in imbalances related to psychological health, not only in the field of sports, but in general. Even more frequently, we see professional athletes openly reporting their difficulties in dealing with the emotional aspects required for high performance, as in the case of the gymnast **Simone Biles** and the tennis player **Naomi Osaka**, who claimed to be unable to deal with the imbalances on the mental level and who, unfortunately, stopped competing in major events.

# MIND

## THE FUNDAMENTAL BALANCE

This fragmented vision, added to other characteristics of our time - such as the performance culture (pressure to be successful in all areas of life), the beauty industry and its idealized body shapes, and a lifestyle that is highly technological and disconnected from nature - instead of developing health, paradoxically makes a society even sicker and more distant from harmony with itself, with others and with nature.

If we return to the principles proposed by the classical philosophers, we will see that they point precisely in the direction of achieving inner harmony. In summary, health is achieved by cultivating our integral education. But how does one begin? Once again, the philosophical tradition shows us a way from the ideas of the millennia. If we follow these recommendations, we will be able to extract from the practice of physical exercises elements that will help us to better reconcile the demands of our daily lives.

» **Know yourself** to develop and use all your potential. In practice, observe yourself through the physical exercises and ask yourself the following questions: What are my more obvious virtues? What are my weaknesses? What evidence have I not yet overcome?

» **Dare to change** in order to have a positive and active attitude towards the facts of life. In other words, now that I know myself better, it's time to strengthen and practice the strengths I don't have yet. For example: I realized that procrastination is a big challenge for me, so what strength do I need to overcome this challenge?

» **Develop willpower** by practicing it daily, for it is the great power of overcoming, and realize that we all have it. Still using the example of procrastination, think, "I will win this challenge with my willpower! Commit yourself to meeting the deadline for the first task you set for your day. Starting the day with this victory will give you the strength to accomplish the following tasks as the day progresses.

» **Establish elevated goals and ideas.** In practice, this means asking yourself why you are exercising or not exercising. What are the goals of training your body? Think about what motivates an athlete to perform extraordinary feats or a person to risk their life to save another. There are many examples of inspiring feats, full of honor and beauty, that touch us deeply and make us want to find that same sublime strength - strength that can only be achieved when our goals and dreams are moved by that deeper sense that guides life.

Today we live in a delicate moment in our society. We are inundated with many things that create a series of cracks within us that can grow and contaminate us in the mental, emotional and physical dimensions. However, if we seek the balance between mind and body, governed by values, noble feelings and good actions that inspire us to the philosophical view of health, we will be able to think. In this way, we will be able to build a real armor of protection, which, besides protecting us from pollutants, will lead us towards a more qualified lifestyle and, consequently, towards a more balanced, harmonious and happy society. 🌱

\*Sara Fantin Sara Fantin – Coordinator of the Sports School in Brazil – Southern Region.

# THE ART OF FLOWING

Shutterstock/pio3

## *Dive into the historical depths of the ancient and traditional art of swimming*

TEXT SOFIA BITTENCOURT\*, SARA FANTIN E SANDRO SILVA • DESIGN SANDRO SILVA

Imagine yourself diving into a swimming pool, a beautiful river or even a crystal-clear sea, feeling the water envelop your body as it glides gently across the surface. At this point, you and the water synchronize in the same flow, in an aquatic ballet that - why not? - can be seen as a beautiful representation of the human being's own flow through existence. Much more than just a sport, swimming is a journey that reflects the challenges and triumphs of life itself. So, let's take advantage of the pun and dive deep into this fascinating sport and discover together how it can teach us valuable lessons for our daily lives.



Rather than a mere product of modernity, swimming is a sport deeply rooted in ancient civilizations, each of which has left an enduring legacy on its evolution.

In Ancient Egypt, around 2500 BC, Egyptians not only swam in the imposing River Nile, but also considered swimming as a noble art. Hieroglyphs discovered in tombs from that era depict human figures in swimming positions, suggesting that swimming was more than a practical skill—it was a significant activity embedded in their religious and cultural traditions. Intriguingly, the hieroglyph representing 'swim' portrayed a human figure with extended arms simulating movement in a very similar position to the modern crawl style. Egyptians swam in artificial lakes and also in the Nile itself, often incorporated into religious rituals and celebrations.

In Ancient Greece, swimming was regarded as an essential skill, valued on par with reading. It was a fundamental requirement in the education of both young citizens and soldiers. The Greeks greatly elevated its significance, as it became an integral part of youth education, particularly in coastal city-states.

In terms of military training—crucial in an era marked by frequent inter-city conflicts—Spartan soldiers were trained to swim in full-body armor as part of their preparation for war. Swimming also features prominently in Greek mythology, with figures like Odysseus and Theseus portrayed as skilled swimmers. Although swimming was not included in the ancient Olympic Games, records indicate it was featured in other Greek festivals and competitions.

In Ancient Rome, the contributions to swimming were remarkable, unprecedented, and impactful. The Romans combined advanced engineering with a culture of leisure, leaving behind their famous *Thermae*—complex public bathhouses that included pools for swimming.

When it came to military training, Roman historian Tacitus noted that Roman legions frequently practiced swimming to build endurance and prepare soldiers to cross rivers and bodies of water during military missions. He referenced this in his work *Annales*. Another Roman historian, Vegetius, emphasized the importance of swimming in his military manual *De Re Militari*, stating that a well-prepared soldier should be capable of swimming, running, and carrying heavy weaponry.

Beyond these contributions, the Romans also developed more efficient swimming techniques, including a primitive version of the breaststroke.

## THE EVOLUTION CONTINUES

Swimming continued to evolve over the centuries. In the Middle Ages, although it was practiced less frequently due to superstitious beliefs, it never completely disappeared. The Renaissance reignited interest in swimming, with treatises being written about its techniques and benefits.

As a demonstration of this renewed interest, the Renaissance saw the publication of the first book dedicated exclusively to swimming: *Colymbetes*, written in 1538 by Nikolaus Wynmann, a Swiss-German professor. This work laid the foundation for the systematic study of swimming, which eventually led to the sport we know today.

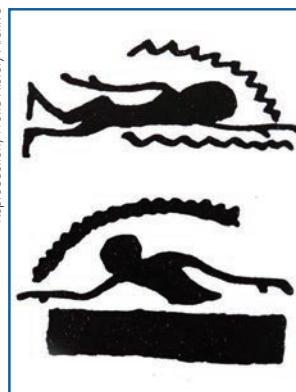
However, it wasn't until the 19th century that swimming emerged as a competitive sport. A curious milestone occurred in 1844 when two Native Americans introduced the crawl style to England, leaving the Europeans astonished by their speed



Roland Unger

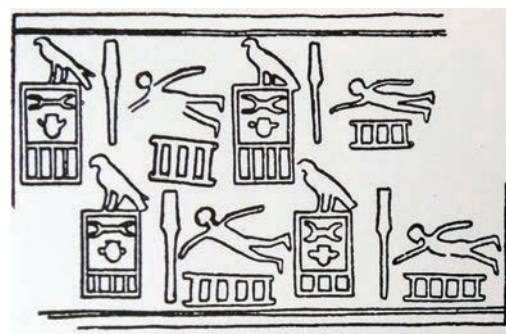
**THE DIVERSERS' CAVE**, in Wadi Sura, Egypt, located in the Gifl Kebir mountains, features swimmers depicted in 8,000-year-old rock art.

Reproduction/World History Archive



**EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHS** depict a swimming style similar to what we now know as the crawl.

Reproduction/World History Archive



Firedrop/Wikipedia



**THE TOMB OF THE SWIMMER** is an archaeological monument found in a small necropolis in Paestum, Magna Graecia.

Steve Richards



**SWIMMER'S MOSAIC** in Constantine, Algeria, which at the time of this beautiful artwork was part of the Roman Empire.

and efficiency. Imagine the scene: two “foreigners” revolutionizing swimming techniques right before the eyes of Victorian society!

Swimming was included in the first edition of the modern Olympic Games, held in Athens in 1896. From the very beginning, it was seen as an important test of strength, endurance, and skill, attracting great interest, especially because of the challenges it posed to competitors in open water. Initially, the competitions took place in the Aegean Sea and were contested solely by men under harsh conditions, as athletes had to swim in cold waters without the precise lane markings we know today. There were three distances in the swimming events: 100 meters, 500 meters, and 1,200 meters.

In the following Games, held in Paris in 1900, swimming competitions were held in rivers, with the Seine as the venue. Open water events continued for some time, but over the years, organizers began to incorporate artificial pools, which offered better conditions for athletes and allowed for more precise competition timing. Women began competing in 1912, at the Stockholm Games.

Today, swimming competitions are divided into four main strokes, each with its own peculiarities. The butterfly stroke, the youngest of the strokes (introduced in the 1930s), is also the most physically demanding. The backstroke is the only stroke where swimmers cannot see the finish line, requiring an extra sense of spatial orientation. The breaststroke is the oldest stroke and the only one where swimmers must touch the pool wall with both hands simultaneously when turning. Finally, freestyle is the fastest stroke of all, with elite swimmers reaching impressive speeds of up to 2.4 meters per second!

## SPORT AND PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Learning to swim is like learning to live. As we learn to live, each in our own way, the same happens with swimming, where everyone swims in their unique style. Although there are ideal techniques, they must be adapted to each individual, and as one progresses, they discover which stroke and which events suit them best. Regardless, every event teaches the swimmer how to face different challenges, and overcoming them requires total commitment. Some events demand strategy, others speed, or endurance. But in all of them, what matters most is moving forward without losing sight of the goal.

Moreover, all of them point in a direction that cannot be seen with the eyes, as swimmers look downward while swimming, but rather in the direction intuited to move smoothly and continuously forward. As ancient sages taught, “In evolution, the most important thing is the direction, not the speed.” In swimming, what matters most is finishing the race well, regardless of ranking. Isn't life just the same?

Therefore, more than a sport, swimming is a metaphor for life, teaching us to flow with adversity, to stay focused on our goals, and to find balance even in the most challenging situations. So, the next time you dive into a pool, remember: every stroke is an opportunity to learn, grow, and overcome yourself. 🌊

## SWIMMING A DAY OF LIFE

Swimming is like  
a day in the life

With fluidity, smoothness,  
but with struggle

Always moving forward,  
trusting in the toil

The eternal construction  
of moving forward

With speed, but also  
with constancy

Applying aesthetics  
to each movement

Not living according  
to the wind

But on the straight road,  
with attention and confidence

As Plato taught, the more  
Beautiful you are

The more you inspire  
others to virtue

And in the silence of the  
water, in this stillness

Each pool is a link in  
the great chain

Of a noble life,  
walked with love

Towards the archetypes,  
towards the Idea of the Good

Citius, Altius, Fortius,  
in joy and in pain

Together, stronger,  
united, beyond!

SOFIA BITTEN-COURT

# POINT!

*Haikyuu* is an anime based on a manga of the same name, which at first glance is about volleyball - something that wouldn't appeal to those who have no interest in the sport, right? Wrong. That's just the first impression we get of the series, which, although it has two protagonists, is full of interesting characters and a plot capable of involving the reader before they even realize it.

The story revolves around Shoyo Hinata and Tobio Kageyama, two characters with very different and almost antagonistic personalities, but who gradually realize how much they complement each other. Hinata and Kageyama play for the Karasuno high school team, which in the past was a great sporting benchmark. Both grow out of their rivalry - even though they are teammates.

Hinata is a young man who dreams of becoming what the anime calls "Ace" - the team's top scorer. However, he is only 1.62m tall and this puts him at a total disadvantage. Even though he jumps very high, the players he will be facing are much taller than him. Hinata still needs to develop the other fundamentals of volleyball in order to achieve his goals, but his personality traits will help him along the way: Hinata is very charismatic, humble and hard-working.

Kageyama, on the other hand, is extremely talented and taller (1.82 m). He's very skilled as an attacker and also as a setter, the position he plays. He is, however, rather selfish and self-centered. What Kageyama will learn as the plot unfolds lies mainly in the rivalry/friendship he shares with Hinata and the rest of the team.



SHOYO HINATA is one of the protagonists of *Haikyuu*.

Reprodução

In general, one of the anime's great assets is the mix of personalities - they all have their own motivations and develop them in different ways, which makes it easy for the audience to identify with them, get involved and end up cheering for them.

Within its proposal, *Haikyuu* brings a realistic atmosphere with regard to many issues, especially our ability to face suffering, however painful it may be. "Defeat" is a constant test that the characters have to face - more than just experiencing it, they have to maintain the motivation to continue pursuing their goals. In this sense, motivation presents itself as the necessary tool for improving what we really have control over: our own performance.

That's what *Haikyuu* is about: maturing in the midst of life's challenges in order to improve yourself. Throughout the story, the characters discover how to develop and improve their skills through training and reflection. In this way, it becomes possible to find meaning in what you do, where you are, with what you have - in order to understand the importance of action in your own life. Not to be missed!

Reprodução



THE KARASUNO VOLLEYBALL TEAM bursts into celebration, an epic moment after one of the toughest matches they've ever faced.

WHERE TO WATCH? Crunchyroll • Netflix

# AYRTON, AYRTON, AYRTON SENNA OF BRAZIL!

Those who watched Formula 1 in Brazil during the 80s and 90s had one certainty on Sunday mornings whenever a race was held: the iconic catchphrase of commentator Galvão Bueno would ring out whenever Senna triumphed, followed by the unforgettable *Tema da Vitória* (Victory Theme), composed by Eduardo Souto Neto. That happened so frequently that it spoiled Brazilians, and today many feel nostalgic for a time when those victories were delightful routine for fans who have loved and cheered for this sport since that golden era.

To ease the nostalgia of fans of this racing legend, and to introduce him to those who have yet to know his story, it is worth watching the film *Senna: The Brazilian, The Hero, The Champion* (2010), directed by Asif Kapadia. This cinematic masterpiece delves into the life and career of the iconic driver, offering an emotional and profound portrait of Senna through a rich combination of archival footage, personal recordings, and previously unseen interviews.

The narrative focuses not only on Senna's achievements and exceptional skills on the track but also on his charisma and convictions. The documentary examines his journey, from his humble beginnings in karting to his rise as one of the greatest drivers of all time, highlighting his rivalries with other drivers, particularly his most prominent rival, the Frenchman Alain Prost.

The cinematography stands out for its ability to capture the intensity that defined Senna's career. The editing is dynamic and engaging, while the soundtrack perfectly complements the action and emotion of the story. The film also delves into more personal aspects of Senna's life, offering a fuller portrait of the human being behind the legend.

*Senna* is not only a fitting tribute to one of the greatest drivers in history but also an honest exploration of his life and legacy. It is a must-watch experience for motorsport fans and anyone drawn to inspiring stories of overcoming challenges through sports. The film is available on various streaming platforms.

**WHERE TO WATCH?** Amazon Prime • Globoplay • Netflix



AYRTON SENNA with his iconic yellow helmet and red racing suit, is recognized as one of the greatest drivers in history.

Reprodução

# MICHAEL JORDAN

## MORE THAN AN ATHLETE, A MODERN MYTH

Have you ever wondered what separates the champions from the good players? What is the strength that drives some individuals to achieve extraordinary feats? Michael Jordan's story, the legendary basketball player, gives an assertive answer to those questions. Far beyond the statistics and titles, MJ's career is a real case about determination, resilience, extraordinary discipline, mental fortitude and relentless search for excellence. To see him only as someone who obtained memorable achievements in sports is to miss the deep lessons that his journey offers, challenging us to confront our own potential and the price we are willing to pay to achieve it.

In the documentary *The Last Dance*, we are invited to enter into the universe of this sportive icon and to discover the secrets behind his greatness. If you seek inspiration to surpass your own internal limits and achieve your more ambitious goals, prepare yourself to know the man who transcended the sport and became a symbol of a generation. Just like the heroes in Greek mythology, such as Achilles and Heracles, Michael Jordan embodies the strength, the courage, and the willingness to be comfortable with discomfort and the perseverance that resides in each of us.

WHERE TO WATCH? [Netflix](#)



# I AM AN ATHLETE, I NEVER DESIST

TEXT ANA GÁLVEZ\* | DESIGN SANDRO SILVA

FREEPIK

Using as inspiration the famous quote said by **Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima**, “I am brazilian and I never desist”, I want to think out loud about the meaning of do not desist. The latin etymology of the word desist, from the verb *desistere*, means “abandon, stop doing something that was planned”. Its lexical components are the prefix *de* (top to bottom direction, “away”, “privation”) and *sistere* (“to establish”, “take a stance”, “stand up”, “hold steady”).

It is quite interesting, because the opposite of desist would be insist, which is composed from the same verb *sistere* and the prefix *in* (inward), in other word, to take this inner position to elevate yourself, to stand up after the fall, to know overcome yourself over the failure or mistakes, to value the experience you have been through... And start over. Always you must try again: this is, definitely, do not desist.

**Confucius** said, when his disciples asked him what should be done to achieve a goal, that first they should try to do everything within their power. “And what else?”, they kept asking him. The Chinese wise man said: “Do not get tired”. Do not desist is, effectively, “do not get tired”; do not stop yourself despite the difficulties and the problems. An athlete-philosopher must never give in to the proofs that life presents to him. The other way around, he must use them as support to continue ascending, to continue his evolution, always upwards and forwards. The victory morale is in these moments where the difficulties are surpassed. It is a full space-time of training sessions, of inner situations, a conscious state that seeks to find and express the better in ourselves.

One way to help you not desist is to learn to reflect. The athlete’s reflection moment allows to anticipate the consequence of his acts, as Heracles did, when he killed the Nemean lion. He overcame his more instinctive part. However, he knew that this animal part must always be controlled and, therefore, he wore the lion’s skin over his shoulders, as a memento. The reflection is needed when we finish a combat. We cannot let ourselves be inebriated by the victory and believe that we are the best, nor desist because of the defeat and think that nothing is going well for us.

That’s why it’s essential to reflect after our little battles, it gives us equanimity. Every battle releases energy that has two poles, one positive and the other negative. We have to learn to appreciate the positive outcome of that battle, because it helps us to boost and raise our human consciousness. And whatever hasn’t gone well should help us learn from our mistakes and not repeat them.

We have to be able to assimilate the energy of life, understand its rhythms and synchronize ourselves with them. Otherwise, we’ll walk unevenly and this lack of rhythm will make us give up. Each of us will come across what we need to learn, so what we must never lack is the strength of will, love for everything around us and the intelligence to steer our course towards the goal we have set ourselves.

Let’s keep insisting, let’s not give in, let’s not stop; we are philosopher athletes. May the light of our hearts serve to illuminate all those who feel lost, may we give them the warmth and energy to keep going. All together as one humanity. 