



PRESS RELEASE

IOA Athletes Commission Takes First Step Towards Empowering Indian Athletes

New Delhi : 07 Aug, 2025 - The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) Athletes Commission held its meeting today, marking a significant milestone in the journey towards prioritizing athlete welfare and perspectives. The Commission expressed its gratitude to IOA President Dr. PT Usha and Executive Council members for their proactive approach in establishing a platform for athlete voices to be heard.

The meeting was attended in person by Sharath Kamal, OP Kharana, Bhavani Devi and Shiva Keshavan at Olympic Bhawan, New Delhi. Bajrang Lal, Rani Rampal, and PV Sindhu attended online, and inputs were also given by Abhinav Bindra and Gagan Narang, who are committee members. During the meeting, the Commission deliberated on various initiatives aimed at creating an athlete-centric environment within the IOA. A key decision was the establishment of a dedicated Athletes Department within the IOA, which will be staffed with professionals committed to addressing athlete needs. This department will play a pivotal role in ensuring that athletes have a structured channel for feedback and support.

One of the primary focuses of the Commission was to ensure robust athlete representation in governance structure. To achieve this, each National Sports Federation will be requested to provide details of their Athletes Commission representatives. This will enable the IOA to establish a comprehensive framework for gathering feedback and insights from athletes across different sports disciplines and present the athletes' point of view through their official representatives.

The Commission also discussed the importance of safeguarding athletes and initiated discussions on setting up a robust safeguarding mechanism to protect athletes' rights and well-being.

In line with its commitment to athlete development, the Commission emphasized the need for anti-doping education. Collaborative efforts with the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) will be pursued to educate athletes about the importance of fair play and compliance with anti-doping regulations.

A significant aspect of the discussion revolved around supporting athletes in their transition to life after sports. The Commission proposed the development of an athlete career pathway that would provide opportunities in coaching, administration, and other fields beyond sports. To demonstrate its commitment, the IOA will hire two Olympian interns who will contribute to the initiatives and programs of the Athletes Commission.

The financial framework for these initiatives was also a key point of discussion. The Commission acknowledged the support of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), which provide \$10,000 and \$5,000 grants, respectively. These funds will be instrumental in organizing a National Athletes Forum later this year, which will bring together representatives from each National Sports Federation to discuss athlete-centric issues and chart the future course of athlete engagement in India.

The IOA Athletes Commission is poised to play a transformative role in shaping the landscape of sports in India. Through its initiatives, the Commission aims to empower athletes, ensure their voices are heard, and support their holistic development both during and after their sporting careers.

About IOA Athletes Commission:

The IOA Athletes Commission is a dedicated body established to represent the interests of Indian athletes and provide them with a platform to voice their concerns and suggestions. The Commission is committed to working towards the welfare and empowerment of athletes, ensuring their active participation in the governance and decision-making processes of Indian sports.

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