In recognition of his contribution to the science behind enhanced athletic performance and disease state management, the IOC Medical Commission named John Holloszy as the recipient of the IOC Olympic Prize on Sport Sciences endowed by Pfizer — the highest honour in the field of movement, exercise, and sport science, that has had a significant impact on science and/or society.

After an extensive review by an independent selection committee consisting of some of the world’s most accomplished scientists, John Holloszy was selected from an illustrious list of candidates representing four continents.

Holloszy was selected for his leadership in uncovering the mystery behind the correlation between muscle adaptation during exercise and its effect on the overall health of the human body. His groundbreaking discoveries led to significant breakthroughs in preventative medicine as it relates to heart disease, diabetes, obesity and the elderly. The quality of life for millions affected by these prevalent disease states and aging has since been greatly improved due to Holloszy’s initial understanding and subsequent discoveries of the impact of endurance exercise. His revolutionary discovery in 1967 also created the impetus that has helped to lay the groundwork for an entire field devoted to the study of movement, exercise, and sport.

“John Holloszy’s research in muscle adaptation has resulted in significant discoveries both in the treatment and prevention of degenerative diseases,” said Henry A. McKinnell, President and COO, Pfizer. “Today, researchers, physicians and patients are now working together and making great strides in improving the overall quality of life of the elderly, and reducing the risk of heart disease and diabetes through exercise.”

Holloszy established that insulin resistance plays a role in the development of coronary artery and heart disease, diabetes, and obesity and that exercise involving muscle contraction lowers insulin resistance, therefore reducing the risk of these widespread diseases. The impact of his research findings has been extended even further with the prescriptive use of exercise for the elderly due to Holloszy’s research linking regular exercise and increased longevity.

Holloszy’s exercise research has also had widespread influence on competitive sports, by enhancing training techniques utilized by elite and amateur athletes worldwide.

“As a result of John Holloszy’s findings researchers, athletes, Olympians and their coaches around the world are working together to increase overall athletic performance through applied science and training,” said Prince Alexandre de Merode, Chairman of the IOC Medical Commission. “Today, we are seeing the positive impact of science on training like never before and anticipate that even more world records will be broken as a result of this philosophy.”

From his laboratory at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Holloszy is responsible for laying out the scientific methodology that enables athletes to increase their endurance as they train, and to provide a rationale basis for athletic training that continues to test the limits of human performance.

For the American swimmer, Lenny Krayzelburg, World Champion Swimmer and Olympic champion in 100m and 200m backstroke in Sydney, “John Holloszy’s research on endurance exercise has had a tremendous impact on athletic competition. By incorporating his findings on muscle development into training programmes, athletes today can naturally maximize their performance while significantly reducing their wasted energy.”

Receiving his Prize during the Opening ceremony of the 111th IOC Session in Sydney (a cheque for US$500,000, a certificate of excellence and an Olympic medal) Holloszy commented:
“It’s a great honour to be recognized by the IOC Olympic Committee, my colleagues, and Pfizer for this distinguished award. I have devoted my entire career to making exercise a valid area of research and showing how it can help protect people against and reverse heart disease and diabetes.”

In addition to the IOC Olympic Prize on Sport Sciences, Pfizer endows three other IOC Medical Commission programmes including the IOC Olympic World Congress on Sport Sciences, the IOC Olympic Research on Sport Sciences and the IOC Olympic Academy on Sport Sciences. The IOC Medical Commission relationship began in 1994 with Parke-Davis, a subsidiary of Warner-Lambert, which was recently acquired by Pfizer.

The next IOC Olympic Prize will be awarded during the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City in 2002. The deadline for nominations is 1 April 2001. For more information, please contact the chair of the Selection Committee of the Prize at the following address: Benno M. Nigg, Dr.sc.nat., Professor for Biomechanics, Human Performance Laboratory, The University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2N 1N4, Email: nigg@ucalgary.ca

Benno Nigg.

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Olympic Quiz

The Games of the XXVII Olympiad

Answers

1. Sydney won the bid over Beijing (People’s Republic of China), Manchester (Great Britain), Berlin (Germany) and Istanbul (Turkey).

2. There were 199 NOCs competing in Sydney. East Timor, which does not yet have a recognized NOC, was allowed to enter athletes under the representation of Independent Olympic Athletes (IOA). All had male competitors. There were 190 NOCs, and East Timor that were also represented by female competitors.

3. The nine NOCs that had no females competing in Sydney were Botswana, the British Virgin Islands, Brunei Darussalam, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

4. There were 300 events held in Sydney. Of these 168 were open to men only, 120 were for women only, and there were 12 mixed events. The IOC 2000 Commission recommendations, which were accepted without exception at the IOC Session in December 1999, recommended that the number of events at the Olympic Games be no more than 280 in the future.

5. Officially, there were 28 sports contested in Sydney. Note that swimming, diving, water polo, and synchronized swimming are not considered separate sports, but rather disciplines within the sport of aquatics. Thus, some would say that there were 31 sports contested. Of the 28 official sports, there were 27 sports contested by men, and 25 contested by women. Men did not compete in softball, while women do not compete in baseball, boxing, or wrestling. The other 24 sports are contested by both men and women.


7. Americans Marion Jones, in athletics, and Dara Torres, in swimming, both won five medals.

8. There were six athletes who won three gold medals in Sydney: Ian Thorpe (Australia, swimming), Marion Jones (United States of America, athletics), Leontien Zijlaard-van Moorsel (Netherlands, cycling), Inge de Bruijn (Netherlands, swimming), Jennifer Thompson (United States of America, swimming), and Lenny Krayzelburg (United States of America, swimming).

9. Aleksey Nemov’s six medals at Sydney brought his total Olympic haul to 12 medals - 4 gold, 2 silver, and 6 bronze. Jennifer Thompson won four medals in Sydney to bring her total to 10 - 8 gold (all in relays), 1 silver, and 1 bronze. Birgit Schmidt-Fischer (Germany, canoe) won two gold medals in Sydney, giving her 10 in all - 7 gold and 3 silver.

10. The British Virgin Islands (IVB) was represented by a single male track and field athlete, Keita Cline, who competed in the 200 metres.