

editorial



Dear Friends,

Each time, the coming of the Olympic Games puts the world, especially its sporting community, in a flutter. In fact, with the Big Event approaching, we are overcome

by the disease called Olympic Fever. Every time we are convinced that the thermometer cannot rise any higher, yet this time we feel something new, an added excitement. This phenomenon must be due to the mysterious venue and the fact that the world's most

populous nation is going to host us. Besides, China is a superpower in sports: the Chinese people not only like but also understand sport. In recent years Chinese athletes have astounded the world with fantastic results in an ever wider

range of sports. Even in our sport, where the Chinese are traditionally domineering, we can establish steady improvement. Not only have the female weightlifters grown practically invincible but even the men rarely return with empty hands from Olympic



Games or world championships. China made its first appearance in weightlifting at the Olympic Games in 1952. Among the women, this is the most successful nation; among the men only four countries have amassed more Olympic medals. What should we expect this August, on the home turf? Miracles? Or would it be more appropriate to call it a matter-of-course? We would love to be able to predict the future, but despite all the clever gadgets surrounding us in our 21st century life, the "prophet machine" has not yet been invented. What we can, however, foretell is that Beijing will stage the Games brilliantly. And we know that in weightlifting there will be a change of guards. Four years ago in Athens an era came to an end. An array of superstars said goodbye to the barbell at the Olympic Games. Some of them had written chapters in weightlifting's golden book of history. Mutlu, Pechalov, Zhan Xugang, Dimas, Asanidze,

Kakhiasvilis and Weller will not be lifting in Beijing. New champions will take their place. We expect to crown many new champions in the Chinese capital. Out of the defending champions of Athens only Shi Zhiyong, Zhang Guozheng, Sagir Taner and Hossein Reza zadeh, as well as Nurcan Taylan and Liu Chunhong are anticipated to reappear on the stage of the Beihang University of Aeronautics and Astronautics Gymnasium (the Olympic weightlifting venue). Let the new talent step forward! Nonetheless, we should not forget to pay due tribute to those great champions who have won three Olympic gold medals. In our sport, to collect three Olympic champion titles is no easy job. A track-and-field athlete, a swimmer or a gymnast can become triple Olympic champion even within one Olympic Games. In weightlifting you have to extend your career in top shape through twelve years. Individuals with exceptional qualities: those who have taken part in three or even

more Games. Let us tip our hats before Imre Földi or Ronny Weller. They could do that, capturing – in addition to the gold – further medals. Alone the right to be entered to the Olympic Games is a very hard task to achieve. Due to the small overall quota of 260 competitors, the IWF has implemented a very demanding, yet as fair as possible, Qualification system. In the course of the last two years since the 2006 World Championships in Santo Domingo, nations and individual athletes have gone through the stages of Olympic qualification – under the strictest ever anti-doping controls conducted by our Federation. Whether in the frame of quota won in the team ranking or by an individual performance, or even by earning the precious "Wild Cards", all weightlifters have worked hard for the honour of standing in the line-ups in Beijing. The IWF's Olympic Qualification System assures both quality and a wide range of nations to be represented. We expect lifters from 88 National Olympic Committees

to Beijing. In the Olympic Games held so far, fifty countries have earned Olympic medals, among the women eighteen. We have every right to suppose that the number of these proud nations will increase in 2008. The Iranian giant, Hossein Reza zadeh, weightlifting's most recent megastar may fight for his third Olympic gold medal. Among the women, Liu Chunhong can be the first to capture her second Olympic champion title. The Games are at the same time a major exam for all. We trust that – with the common-sense and fairness of the Olympians and NOCs involved – weightlifting will pass this test with excellent marks. We wish the best of success to all: hosts, participants, coaches, officials and most of all to the supporting Weightlifting Family!

Dr. Tamás Aján
IWF President
Yannis Sgouros
IWF General Secretary



The IWF Executive Board held its last meeting in Cali, Colombia, finalizing policies for Beijing 2008