

Establishment of a Section on Sports Archives within ICA

Statement of Objectives

Approved by ICA Executive Committee, St Petersburg, June 2003

Sports around the World

As an individual and social activity, sport has unified all human communities, since the birth of civilization. Sports express effort and discipline, the rules and the game, pleasure and the passing of limits, competition with oneself and others, sharing and solitude, emotion and celebration.

Over time, sport serves as a leisure activity, a means of practising a hobby, a social pastime, a study of performance and a profession. It produces its code and functioning from friendly encounters at tournaments, to matches, to games. It is an activity for amateurs within clubs and circles, and in our contemporary world, it has become an economical and financial stake with championships and prizes, taking on a global dimension thanks to audio-visual media.

Diverse and Growing Archives

All sorts of structures contribute to sporting life creating records, documentation, publications, photographs, posters, databases, sound recordings, films and videos covering the legal, organizational and administrative aspects, technical preparations for sport matches, the events themselves and their results, as well as all the associated activities such as: medicine; media coverage through the press, radio, television and film; the educational framework through which students learn; and sponsoring by companies and government agencies, to name only a few. All these traces of sport, in writing and images, along with the places and landmarks where games and competitions take place, are that which continues after the event, and can be the basis for analysis, research, comparison, memorising. They can be symbols, firstly, for the athletes and for their organizations. They are the basis for multidisciplinary studies by historians, psychologists, doctors, sociologists, ethnologists, economists, architects. As such they are a cultural heritage integrated comprehensively in the world of today.

Sport has become a real object of study, discussion and inspiration. It is a field covered in the academic world in the social and human sciences. At the same time, sporting organizations increasingly need retrospective references and are trying to manage their archives and documentation better with the aim to rationalize the preparation of their future activities. Moreover, the media are looking for historical documents, and those sports-people attaining stardom are particularly attentive to their image.

New Responsibilities for Archivists

The world of archivists and documentalists is, in consequence, directly affected by these evolutions on a grand scale, showing increasingly strong public demand: archives and documentation services are functioning within sports organizations and teams, public archives and documentation services are taking responsibility for all sorts of national or local associations' fonds, foundations dedicated to advancing sport are being created, and universities are engaged in giving studies of sport a broader readership.

The establishment of a section on SPORTS within the INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES is a response to the need to highlight much more strongly the archival and documentary wealth already protected by each of our respective institutions. But we must also increase this protection by involving all representatives of the sporting world. An innovative approach to promotion can no doubt be achieved with the participation of sports personalities: managers, trainers, association directors, media specialists, patrons, sponsors, the Olympic movement and the athletes themselves.

To reposition archives in everyday life and give back a part of humanity

Objectives of the ICA Section on Sports Archives:

- To involve all representatives of the sporting world in the promotion of the identity and history of sports, by developing the necessary partnerships with them.
- To promote preservation, research and accessibility of archives and documentation of sports around the world, with the assistance of new communication technology.
- To identify the archival and documentary fonds of all media, both those already well-organised, and those which are not yet protected and could be at risk.
- To share heritage and culture experiences beyond the specialized circles of archivists, documentalists and historians, by introducing innovative cooperation with local, national and international sports movements.

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Establishment Committee,
Section on Sports Archives