

Commentary Ruml: Cutting Wrestling From Olympics Doesn't Make Sense

BY KEN RUMI
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The worst news for wrestling struck on February 12, 2013. On February 12, 2013 the IOC (International Olympic Committee) bombed the wrestling federation by cutting wrestling from its core program of 25 sports in the Olympics 2020. It felt like the wrestling federation around the globe was bombed on February 12, 2013 just like the empire of Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

By cutting wrestling for its 23 core programs in the 2020 Olympics has awakened a sleeping giant and it also has created a tremendous resolve to get the sport back in the good graces it has enjoyed in the 26 Olympic contests over a century ago (1896-2012).

Outrage is being expressed by a multitude of countries taking the leading role to overturn the IOC ruling and reinstate wrestling back in the 2020 Olympics; countries such as Russia, USA, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Japan, China, Poland, Sweden, Cuba, Hungary, and South Korea.

The question to be pondered upon is how could the IOC do this to the millions of competitors in the sport of wrestling around the globe. This is not right and justice was not done.

Does the IOC understand or even care that wrestling has been a part of every modern Olympic games since 1896. They apparently have no knowledge that Abe Lincoln and George Washington wrestling and done better in their times. I don't think the IOC understands that wrestling is mankind's oldest sport. They need to brush up on their history knowledge.

Does the IOC understand that the Olympics is the most incredible sporting event in the world with 75 countries gathering for competition and phenomenal performances produced in the sport of wrestling? Are they aware that wrestling has produced some of the best moments in Olympic history in any sport. Examples are like Dan Gable in 1972 from Iowa and Randy Lewis from Rapid City, South Dakota in 1980; both Olympic golds and pinning their way through the Olympics for their golds. Also like Rulon Gardner of Wyoming in the 2000 Olympics who stunned the world by defeating a Russian that was not beat in 12 years (3 Olympics)?

What about the IOC? Who are they? It operates out of Switzerland. Their board makes all the rules, policies, and any changes that are to be followed by the Olympic committee. The IOC is a "very exclusive group with no wrestling leadership on the board." Their voting was secret and it took several ballots before the decision was made to cut wrestling out of the 2020 Olympics.

The reasons the IOC came up with was the wrestling is not a very popular sport; also that the viewing time was low throughout the Olympics in wrestling at the 2012 Olympics in London, and also the financial end didn't hold up. Well, to me it's all about money and politics. In 1980 the USA boycotted the Olympics for international political reason when we had Olympic wrestling. That was wrong. That was not the right decision. They always say that one thing we have to worry about in sports is politics. There will be politics in sports, but it should never go to this high of a level and that's where it is.

I witnessed at the 2012 Olympics in London that many different nations took home some Olympic medals and all the session in men's freestyle, men's Greco, women's freestyle were all sold out. I don't understand their reasoning.

You have to be informed that many countries don't have wrestling. There was 75 countries in the world that participated in the sport of wrestling out of 170 nations all over the globe in the 2012 Olympics in London.

I witnessed athletes from a great number of nations that have won medals at the 2012 Olympics. There were medalists from 29 different countries at the Olympics in London, countries as diverse as Iran, South Korea, Sweden, Cuba, and Hungary. Indeed more countries have been represented on the winners' podium in wrestling than for nearly any other sport.

I would like to give you some Olympic statistics about medal counts the USA has earned in the Olympics since 1896. The USA collected 49 golds, 35 silver and 25 bronze medals in men's freestyle in 26 Olympic contests (1898-2012). In men's Greco-Roman, the USA collected 3 golds, 6 silver and 5 bronze. In women's freestyle the USA collected 1 silver and 3 bronze in 3 Olympics (2004-2012). Note: Women's freestyle just started in the 2004 Olympics.

What is wrestling doing to do throughout the world to overturn the IOC's ruling? Well, first off world-wide, we are letting Russia set in the front seat and go after the IOC and FILA (Federation Internationale de Lutte Amateur), an inter-

Iverson Earns HM All-America Honors

Basketball: Creighton's McDermott Repeats On First Team, SDSU's Wolters Earns Third Team Honors



Colorado State's Colton Iverson (45) dunks against Louisville during the first half in the third round of the NCAA Tournament at Rupp Arena in Lexington, Ky., on March 23. Iverson was selected as an honorable mention All-American, as selected by the Associated Press.

FROM P&D & AP REPORTS

Yankton native and Colorado State senior Colton Iverson was named an honorable mention selection to the Associated Press All-America Team for men's basketball, announced on Monday.

Iverson, who transferred to Colorado State following his junior season (2010-11) at Minnesota, made the most of his one year on the court for the Rams, leading CSU to one of the best seasons in program history in 2012-13. The Rams won a school-record 26 games and advanced to the third round of the NCAA tournament, before being knocked out by title-favorite Louisville on March 23 in Lexington, Ky.

Behind the play of Iverson, the Rams boasted one of the nation's top rebounding attacks and most efficient offenses. Iverson ranked ninth nationally in field-goal percentage (.556), and Colorado State ranked as a top-50 scoring offense, averaging 72.9 points per contest. Iverson averaged a team-high 14.2 points per game, and notched 14 double-doubles on the year, good enough for 20th in the NCAA.

On the glass, Iverson was the No. 20 rebounder in the country, pulling down a Mountain West leading 9.8 boards per game. As a team, the Rams led the NCAA in rebounding margin, out-boarding opponents by an average of nearly 12 rebounds per game.

Iverson's impact was also felt on the defensive end of the floor, as the 6-10 center posted a team-leading 25 blocks and altered countless other shots, while routinely shutting down opponents inside the paint.

Iverson becomes the third player in school history to be honored on the AP All-America list, joining CSU greats Bill Green (1963 consensus All-American) and Lonnie Wright (1965 AP honorable mention).

South Dakota State senior Nate Wolters was named a third team selection.

"We're very proud of Nate and all of what he's accomplished," head coach Scott Nagy said. "When you consider all of the players in Division I basketball, to be one of the top 15 players speaks not only to his athletic ability and what he's done for us, but also the kind of person he is and how hard he's worked to make himself a better basketball player."

A St. Cloud, Minn., native, Wolters averaged 22.3 points, 5.6 rebounds and 5.8 assists per game in leading the Jackrabbits to the NCAA Tournament for the second straight season. Additionally, he scored an SDSU record, and 2012-

13 Division I single-game high 53 points at Fort Wayne on Feb. 7.

Wolters currently ranks fourth nationally with 22.3 points per game, 21st nationally with 5.8 assists per game and 22nd nationally with a 2.51 assists to turnover ratio.

Wolters leaves SDSU with career records in points with 2,363, assists with 669 and free throws made with 648. Wolters, along with fellow senior Tony Fiegen, both played an SDSU record 128 games in their careers, with the team compiling an 85-46 record in their four years at SDSU.

Doug McDermott made Creighton history last season when he was selected as the school's first player on the AP All-America team. Now he's done it again.

The 6-foot-8 junior forward, the second-leading scorer in Division I, was a repeat selection Monday, the 51st player to earn the honor in consecutive seasons.

"It's pretty crazy. I couldn't expect to have as good a year as I did," said McDermott, who averaged 23.1 points and 7.5 rebounds while shooting 56.1 percent from the field and 49.7 percent from 3-point range.

Trey Burke of Michigan and Otto Porter Jr. of Georgetown tied as the leading vote-getters for first team, while Victor Oladipo of Indiana and Kelly Olynyk of Gonzaga were the other players selected.

McDermott, who led the Bluejays to the Missouri Valley Conference championship with a title-game win over Wichita State, wasn't shocked that he was the second repeat selection in as many years, following Jared Sullinger of Ohio State. But the honor was satisfying.

"It's not too surprising because I approach the game the same every time," he said. "I knew I could kick it into gear and have a special season. It's tough to do what I did with the defenses I faced. I got a lot more attention. I found ways to expand my game. I was really pleased."

So was his coach, and father. "I'm just really proud of the season that he was able to put together," Greg McDermott said. "On one hand he was able to consistently put up incredible numbers on a team that won a lot of games. At the end of the day I know that was most important to Doug."

Burke and Porter both received 62 first-team votes and 319 points from the same 65-member national media panel that selects the weekly Top 25. Voting was on a 5-3-1 basis and was completed before the NCAA tournament.

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Litke: Trophy Meant More Than Any Get-Well Card

BY JIM LITKE
AP Sports Columnist

The photograph of Kevin Ware in a hospital bed with the NCAA regional championship trophy propped up alongside like a giant get-well card makes it all easier to take.

But hours earlier, in those first few heartbeats after his leg snapped grotesquely in a corner of the frame as CBS televised Sunday's Midwest regional final between his Louisville team and Duke, no one dared look. Even CBS couldn't.

Its cameras lingered first on Duke's Tyler Thornton, who had just made the 3-point shot on the same play — freezing momentarily, covering his eyes with his hand, and then looking back to be sure what he had seen only from the edge of his peripheral vision actually happened.

Then Thornton grimaced, covered his heart with both hands, and as the camera shot widened to take in the expressions of shock and anguish among Ware's teammates on the Louisville bench and in the stands, there was no longer any doubt.

"I got sick to my stomach, and I'm kind of the resident authority on broken legs," said former NFL quarterback Joe Theismann,

who suffered a similar compound fracture on a Monday Night Football game in 1985. "A lot came rushing back. I still remember what everything looked like when it happened, still feel the moisture on my back lying on the grass, the large second hand on the scoreboard sweeping. Everything."

Theismann sent Ware a text almost immediately and followed up in a brief phone conversation Monday.

"I just offered any help I could, maybe with the psychological and emotional aspects of the rehab down the road. It's not something you'd put on a resume, but I believe being able to talk to somebody who's been through that might help."

"And Kevin sounded good. He's in a good place. He's going to get the best medical attention, and I'm sure, he's already got way more attention than he needs. ... Remember, the Internet barely existed in 1985. Back then, you got hurt, you went to the hospital, started to rehab and tried to come back. Not many people paid much attention. This went worldwide in a matter of seconds," Theismann said.

The injury to Ware's right leg caused the tibia to poke out from his shin — and like Theismann's. As curiosity and dread com-

peted for attention in the minds of viewers, CBS gave its producers roughly 40 seconds to watch the replays, decide whether to show the play again, and if so, in how much detail.

They settled on one replay from the other end of the court, a second from the original angle, and no more. Sean McManus, the head of CBS Sports, said, "We did not try to highlight it. I think we did the right thing."

Agreed. But that didn't stop the photos, videos and exchanges on social media from exploding instantaneously. A day later, after Louisville coach Rick Pitino visited the recuperating Ware and reported that he left the trophy behind with this instruction — "Just make sure you don't lose it" — the story still simmers.

The initial reaction, explained Syracuse professor of popular culture Robert Thompson, is simply a sign of the times. On the other hand, the continuing interest in the story shows how little human nature has changed.

"Neither of those mean we're terrible people. I think it speaks more to this need we feel now to bear witness. Look at the technology that's in place. Couple it with the image of a human body doing something

that seems so alien in that instant — something that's both disturbing AND striking — and there's this almost creepy desire to watch it over and over again," he said.

"And you know, we've seen car crashes in NASCAR races and terrible collisions in the NFL, and in a sense, that's become part of the narrative. That's not the case with basketball, which is a big part of what made it so jarring," Thompson added. "Just look at his teammates' reaction in the moment after. But then you know they rallied and won the game for him. That's what's shoring this whole thing up — this continuing fascination — especially since, so far, it looks like a happy ending is within reach."

And with luck, Ware's story will play out that way. Pitino reported the surgery was successful and that, barring an infection, Ware will be back in Louisville in time for the charter flight to the Final Four in Atlanta, which happens to be Ware's hometown.

"Kevin had a good night. He's not in a whole lot of pain," Pitino said during a conference all Monday. "I know right before the surgery, when he was able to watch the play-

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Verlander Keeps Twins' Bats Cool In Season Opener

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Minnesota Twins gave their frostbitten fans a reason to stay until the end.

Justin Verlander's dominant start for the Detroit Tigers was too much to overcome on this cold opening day.

Verlander struck out seven over five shutout innings at frosty Target Field to send the defending American League champions past the Twins 4-2 on Monday afternoon.

With the gametime temperature at 35 degrees and the wind blowing at 17 mph, fans had to bundle up. But opening day is always a draw, as evidenced by the announced crowd of 38,282, a sellout by Twins guidelines.

Phil Coke got the last two outs for the first save by the Tigers' closer committee. Prince Fielder, wearing a black ski hat covering on his head, had two hits and an RBI to help spoil Vance Worley's first start for the Twins, who left 12 runners on, including the bases loaded in the seventh. They also struck out 12 times.

Tigers reliever Drew Smyly gave up a run on a wild pitch in the sixth inning and another on an RBI single

by Ryan Doumit in the seventh. But Al Albuquerque struck out back-to-back batters to finish that inning and strand three men. In the sixth, Fielder made a slick scoop of Jhonny Peralta's one-hop throw from the hole at shortstop to barely beat Pedro Florimon on an inning-ending grounder with two runners in scoring position.

"Our guys kept battling through it," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. "We just missed a couple opportunities."

Verlander was 0-1 in his previous five season openers. With his \$180 million, seven-year contract that could keep the right-hander with the Tigers through 2020 only days old, Tigers manager Jim Leyland took the safe route by removing him after those five dominant innings.

Doubles by Joe Mauer and Justin Morneau were the only signs of resistance by the Twins, who haven't beaten Verlander since April 27, 2010. He is 8-0 with a 1.71 ERA in nine starts during that span. The former AL MVP and Cy Young



Detroit Tigers pitcher Phil Coke (40) reacts after closing out the game against the Minnesota Twins at Target Field in Minneapolis, Minn., Monday. Detroit beat Minnesota, 4-2.

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