The rising tide of media coverage about the Summer Olympics in Tokyo shows that they claim not only to be the most problematic major sports tournament in history.

The Tokyo Olympics, postponed from 2020 because of the coronavirus, will begin July 23. At the July 20 session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Tokyo, a change in the Olympic motto “Faster, Higher, Stronger” was approved, adopted by the first Olympic Congress in 1894. According to the new version, the motto of the Olympic Games will now read as follows: “Faster, higher, stronger - together” (Latin: citius, altius, fortius - communis).

According to Toshiro Muto, Director General of Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee, the total cost of the Olympic Games in Tokyo, incurred by the Japanese government and the Tokyo government, has already totaled 15.4 billion dollars. The Director General of the organizing committee noted that the budget of the Games was reconsidered after the postponement. An additional $900 million was spent to create a safe environment for the Olympics.

Nevertheless, criticism about living conditions in the Tokyo Olympic Village and safety issues has not subsided. For example, there is no hot water in the rooms of Russian fencers in the Olympic Village at the Tokyo Games, and the team’s head coach Ilgar Mamedov had to use a screwdriver to take a shower. Wires stretch through all the rooms, one outlet and this one is on the opposite wall. Earlier, a photo was published of Russian volleyball player Artem
Volvich resting his head on the ceiling in the bathroom of the Olympic Village.

Many questions are floating around about athlete beds, although it must be acknowledged that sex in the Olympic village becomes a topic of discussion at every game. For example, the American publication Deadspin ridiculed the strange “anti-sex measures” taken at the Tokyo Olympics, where cardboard beds were made for the athletes to break and condoms, which are always handed out at such events, were offered to take home as souvenirs.

According to media reports, the canoeing competition was threatened by oysters: in the Tokyo Bay area, a considerable number of shellfish attached to the floats needed to maintain a calm water surface, which forced the emergency fishing of 14 tons of oysters, for which the city authorities have spent an additional $1.28 million.

Failures in the Tokyo Olympics “bubble system“ intended to prevent coronavirus infections are coming to light one by one, the Japanese newspaper Mainichi Shimbun wrote in its editorial and called on the organizers of the Olympics to temper their optimism. “But with just days to the official start of the games, holes in the Olympic bubble have been particularly conspicuous,” writes the publication. Meanwhile, the IOC and the organizing committee, assuring that there are no risks for the Japanese, holding parties and offering to let spectators into the stands if the situation improves, act as if nothing is happening.

One of the Ugandan delegation, who had tested negative and been vaccinated, tested positive at airport quarantine. Another athlete who went on to the team’s training ground later tested positive there. Municipal staff who met them at the airport and their bus drivers were classed as individuals with whom the infected people had had close contact. On top of this, an athlete slipped out of the team’s accommodation and is currently missing. Cases of infection in the South African soccer team have been confirmed.

In the run-up to the Tokyo Olympics, the alarm about doping has been raised with renewed vigor in academic and sporting circles. Although it is almost impossible to hide the usual methods of fraud, however, ”science has made great strides forward.” There is a significant breakthrough in gene therapy, which scares the hunters of doping in sports. If athletes start altering their genome, the consequences will be catastrophic. In this regard, the Swedish edition Svenska Dagbladet recalls how just before the Turin Olympics in 2006, a sensation erupted after email correspondence was made public, based on which Thomas Steinmann, the coach of German runners, was accused of dosing young trainees with the steroid drug Repoxigen. This drug can be used as a doping agent to increase the ability of muscles to absorb oxygen and thus improve endurance. The international anti-doping organization WADA banned gene doping in 2003, and the Steinmann case shook everyone at the time. Today, however, Carl Johan Sundberg, professor of molecular and applied physiology at the Karolinska Institute (one of Europe’s largest medical universities, located in the suburbs of Stockholm), does not rule out the possibility that gene doping is already being used. Rumors about it are multiplying, although WADA has not yet caught an athlete.

In this regard, the recent remarks of IOC head Thomas Bach about the debut of transgender athlete Laurel Hubbard of New Zealand at the Tokyo Olympics are being followed with increased attention. According to him, the qualification rules were adopted by the international federation before the start of the selection for the Olympics, they cannot be changed during the competition, but the IOC is studying this issue with all interested parties: medical, social experts, human rights experts and, of course, the international federations to evaluate these rules and approve some principles. In January 2016, the IOC Medical Committee recommended that transgender athletes be allowed to participate in the Olympics even if they have not yet undergone sex reassignment surgery.

Laurel Hubbard, 43, competed in the 87-kg weight class and qualified for the Games as the strongest weightlifter in Oceania. She had a sex change in 2012 and had previously performed under the name Gavin Hubbard. After gender reassignment surgery, Hubbard won a silver medal at the 2017 World Championships in Anaheim and also won the 2019 Pacific Games.

Meanwhile, in Japan and many other countries worldwide, amid the worsening situation with the coronavirus pandemic, there is an ongoing debate and public outcry about the advisability of holding the Summer Olympics in Tokyo under these conditions. So, Ipsos published the results of a survey of attitudes toward the event in 28 leading countries around the world. 80% of those surveyed believe that the Olympics will inspire younger generations to participate in sport, and 62% believe that the Tokyo Olympics will mark an important opportunity for the world to come together. At the same time, 57% of respondents worldwide believe that the Olympics are not worthwhile at this time.

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