

Ethiopia and Olympism

"Everyone knows the amount of moral and material effort needed to prepare and send an Olympic team, especially for developing countries, who in addition to the scarcity of their financial resources are obliged to participate in Olympic Games held regularly; nevertheless it is the circumstance that forces them to participate in the events which are held outside their own continent.

However, when we compare the sacrifices accepted with the noble aim of the Olympic movement—with the goals which can be achieved through the assembly of the youth of all races, religions and political ideologies, we have to accept the sacrifice happily and without reluctance."

Ydnekatchew Tessema, IOC member
and President of the Ethiopian Olympic Committee, 1972

ETHIOPIA

1,220,900 sq.km.

25,000,000 inhabitants (approximately).



ETHIOPIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (EOC)

Founded in 1948, reorganised in 1968.
Recognised by the IOC in 1954.

President in office: Mr. Ydnekatchew Tessema*.

Secretary General in office: Mr. Tsegaw Ayele*.

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*See biographical notes.

Role of the EOC

The only body responsible for the participation of an Ethiopian delegation at the Olympic Games, the EOC coordinates Olympic preparation, controls the training programmes, draws up the budget and meets its expenses. In addition the EOC endeavours to spread the Olympic ideals.

Creation

In its edition of 31st October 1948 the Ethiopian official gazette, the *"Negarit Gazeta"*, published a general notice of the creation of the National Sports Confederation of Ethiopia (CNSE). Article 11 of this notice mentioned, among the tasks of this new body, "the establishment of an Ethiopian National Olympic Committee in order to prepare our Empire's participation in the Olympic Games in the spirit of the International Olympic Committee."

In March 1949 Mr. Edward Virvilis, first Secretary General of the Confederation (CNSE), contacted the chancellery of the IOC in order to prepare the request for affiliation. The national athletics, basketball and football federations in turn decided to increase the international contacts. At Athens in May 1954 the IOC Session accepted the request

of 9th December 1953 by which the National Sports Confederation of Ethiopia, acting as a National Olympic Committee, asked for official recognition. In 1960 a young 39-year-old leader and former football international, Mr. Ydnekatchew Tessema*, became Secretary General of the CNSE. With his encouragement sports activities made great strides and already at Rome with Abebe Bikila's victory in the marathon Ethiopia's Olympic participation did not go unnoticed.

Elected President of the CNSE in 1967, Mr. Tessema* was a founder member of an NOC, completely independent from the CNSE, which took the name of Ethiopian Olympic Committee on 25th June 1968. In 1971 Mr. Tessema* became a member of the IOC, the first in Olympic history elected for Ethiopia.

IOC member in Ethiopia

Mr. Ydnekatchew Tessema*, since 1971.



Mr. Ydnekatchew Tessema rewarding a national boxing champion.

ETHIOPIA AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES

- **Date of first participation:** 1956.

Since then an Ethiopian delegation has taken part in every Olympic Games except those of 1976, when the team left the Montreal Olympic village the day before the opening of the celebration of the XXIst Olympiad.

● Representation of Ethiopia at the Olympic Games

	Athletics	Boxing	Cycling	Total
1956	8	0	4	12
1960	7	0	6	13
1964	5	3	4	12
1968	9	4	5	18
1972	24	7	6	37
1976	—	—	—	—

There has been no Ethiopian team at the Winter Games.

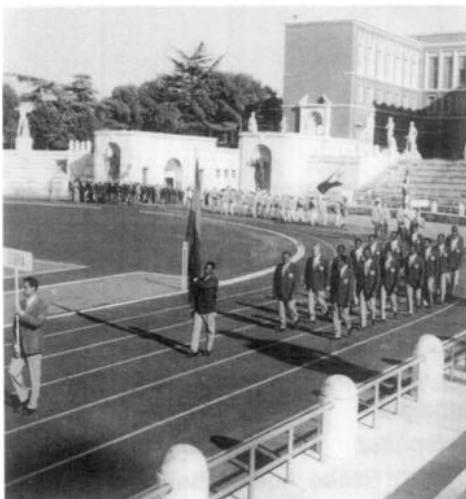
Successive Presidents of the EOC¹

1948-1960: General Abebe Abebe.

1960-1967: General Merid Menguecha.

Since 1967: Ydnekatchew Tessema*.

¹ Before 1968: President of the National Sports Confederation of Ethiopia.



Rome 1960 - The Ethiopian delegation.

● The Ethiopian Olympic Champions



Abebe Bikila



Mamo Wolde

Name	Christian name	Sport	Event	Year	Birth	Death	Notes
Bikila	Abebe	Athletics	Marathon	1960	1932	1973	First and only athlete to have won the Olympic marathon twice, paralysed from the waist down in a car accident in 1969, he remained an extraordinary and exemplary athlete until his death.
Bikila	Abebe	Athletics	Marathon	1964	1932	1973	
Wolde	Mamo	Athletics	Marathon	1968	1932		3rd in the marathon in 1972, 2nd in the 10,000 m. in 1968 after coming 4th in 1964.

PRESENT ORGANISATION OF THE EOC

- *The statutes* at present in force were adopted on 1st June 1968.

- *Composition:* among the members of the EOC are the IOC member in Ethiopia, a representative of the Commission for Sports and Physical Culture, two representatives appointed by each national federation regularly affiliated to an Olympic International Federation, various representatives of non-Olympic federations and other bodies able to assist the Olympic movement (organisations of military sport, police sport, school sport, university sport, corporate sport and the central organisation of youth).

- *The General Assembly* holds supreme power. It is composed of all the members and meets annually.

- *The Executive Committee*, elected by the Assembly for four years, is composed of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary General, a Treasurer and nine members. Two persons representing the same national sports federation may not belong to this committee. It meets every month.

● Members of the present Executive Committee

PT: Mr. Ydnekatchew Tessema*; *1st VPT:* Col. Dr. Feleke G. Giorgis; *2nd VPT:* Mr. Tefera Mekonnen; *SG:* Mr. Tsegaw Ayele*; *T:* Mr. Luilseged W. Senbet; *Ms:* Messrs. Yoseph Alemu, Ashenafi Yurea, Hailu Balcha, Kifle W. Mariam, Major Tekleab T. Tsion, Major Mekuria Abera, Messrs. Tamrat Samuel, Goitom T. Medhin, Getnet Ayele.

● Financing of the EOC

A State subsidy, profits from the celebration of the Olympic Day, and private contributions ensure this financing.

● Federations affiliated to the EOC

11 Olympic Federations...	IF Affiliation	Members in 1976 ¹
Athletics	1950	12000
Basketball	1956	1216
Boxing	1956	1700
Cycling	1956	300
Equestrian	—	—
Football	1952	36500
Weightlifting	—	—
Handball	—	360
Wrestling	—	—
Swimming	—	—
Volleyball	1956	2400

... plus the Ethiopian tennis and table tennis federations.

¹ Approximate figures.

THE EOC AND OLYMPISM

● The Olympic Day

This is in fact an Olympic Week, celebrated throughout the country, with both sports and cultural events.

● Protection of the Olympic emblems

The officials are aiming to have a law passed permitting complete protection. The proclamation published in the *"Negarit Gazeta"* of 26th May 1976 creating an Ethiopian Commission for Sports and Physical Culture states that only the NOC may use the Olympic emblem and the words "Olympic Games" or "Olympiad".

● Ethiopian Olympic Bibliography

1960 - "The Olympic Games" by Fe-krou Kidane, in Ethiopian. Published by the Artistic Press, Addis Ababa.



The stadium in Addis Ababa during the 10th African Nations Cup.

SPORT IN ETHIOPIA

- The Commission for Sports and Physical Culture replaced the National Sports Confederation on 26th May 1976. Its job is to organise and popularise sport in the country and it works in close co-operation with the NOC, especially as the High Commissioner is Mr. Ydnekatchew Tessema*, IOC member and President of the NOC.

Sport at school

All school programmes provide for two hours' sports activities per week.

- **Sports installations**

Ethiopian sport's major problem is the lack of sports facilities. Among the chief installations, let us note:

1. *Football pitches*

- a) At Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa stadium and university (Sidist Kilo and Building College), Kotebe Teachers' Training Institute,

General Wingate School, Medehane Alem School, Tefere Makonnen School, Lycee Gebre Mariam School and the Aba Dina Police College.

- b) 2 at Asmara.
- c) 1 at Dire Dawa.
- d) 1 at Bahir Dar.

2. *Other sports grounds*

- a) At Addis Ababa: YMCA (Arat Kilo and Addis Ketema), Jam Meda, Bodyguard Camp, Filwoha Meda (tennis), Ararat, Olypiacos, Officers' Club, the university and the Railway Workers' Club.
- b) 2 at Asmara, including the YMCA.
- c) 1 at Dire Dawa.

3. *Indoor facilities*

3 at Addis Ababa including the Juventus Club (Italian community) and the American School (American community).

4. *Swimming pools*

1 at Addis Ababa (Ghion Hotel).

5. Installations under construction

Installations comprising football pitches, athletics tracks and courts for basketball, handball and volleyball are being completed at Ghion, Gimma, Agaro, Metu, Gore, Gambela, Dembi Dolo, Ghimbi, Nekemti, Shambu, Ambo, Holetta, Arba Minch, Dessie, Assela, Awassa and Debre Berhan. In the capital, the construction of a sports palace with a capacity of 7,000 spectators will start in the near future.

- **Sport which draws the biggest crowds**

Football.

- **Sports experiencing the greatest development**

Football, athletics.

THE ETHIOPIANS AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS

Having been a member of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association's Executive, Mr. Ydnekatchew Tessema* is now President of the African Football Confederation and a member of the FIFA Amateur Committee.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Ydnekatchew Tessema

IOC member in Ethiopia since 1971.

An international fifteen times, having played football for 23 years, school athletics champion and a boxer, the introducer of modern physical activity

into Ethiopia is an accomplished sportsman. His career as a sports administrator is also praiseworthy as he has been Secretary General of the Ethiopian Football Federation since its creation in 1943, Secretary General (1960) and then President of the Ethiopian Olympic Committee, member of the FIFA since 1966 and founder-Vice-President (1957) and then President of the African Football Confederation.

Born on 11th September 1921, Mr. Tessema went to school in Addis Ababa, but the Italian invasion in 1935 prevented him from going to France to study law as planned. In particular he was Director of the Ministry of Physical Education and then the Ministry of Public Works. He was also Deputy Minister of Social Affairs in charge of Youth. At present he holds the post of High Commissioner of Sport and Physical Culture.

Mr. Tsegaw Ayele



Secretary General of the EOC since 1977.

President of the Ethiopian Basketball Federation and head of the competition sports section of the Department of Sport and Physical Culture,

he recently became Secretary General of the EOC, succeeding Mr. Fekrou Kidane who held this post from 1967 to 1977. Born at Gondar in 1940, a national level sportsman, a philosophy and theology graduate from the University of Addis Ababa, he studied administration and public relations in Great Britain, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Germany. He carried out various functions in the YMCA of Ethiopia and was its Secretary General for ten years.

