

Please find below a letter sent by fax and Federal Express to Dr. Jacques Rogge, president of the International Olympic Committee this week. Following up on our earlier request for a meeting with him in Denver last week, Dr. Rogge's staff asked us to provide written information about our quest to participate in the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

If you have questions, please contact:

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Included: Letter, Fact Sheet

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March 30, 2009

Dr. Jacques Rogge, President  
International Olympic Committee  
Chateau de Vidy  
Case postale 356  
1001 Lausanne, Suisse

VIA FACSIMILE +41 21 621 62 16 and Federal Express

Dear Dr. Rogge:

I write to you as the current and first World Champion of women's ski jumping, as a representative of the 15 jumpers pursuing a court case to participate in the 2010 Olympics and as an athlete with an Olympic dream. I have dedicated 20 years of my life to this sport and along with the other 160 registered women ski jumpers from 18 countries (FIS statistics), I love to ski jump, I've demonstrated my skill at ski jumping and I believe we have earned a place at the Olympics.

In 2006, when FIS voted 114-1 to recommend our inclusion in the Olympics, we were elated. When your organization turned us down, we were devastated. As an Olympic athlete yourself, you can imagine how crushed we were to have gained the confidence of our sport's governing body, only to be turned down by the IOC. The gates to the world's most prestigious sporting event were slammed shut in our face and it was very hard to understand the rationale.

At that time, we were told women's ski jumping "lacked universality." That year, 83 women ski jumpers from 14 nations were jumping at the elite level in the Continental Cup. That same year, your organization voted to accept skier cross, a totally new sport. In keeping with the IOC's 1991 decision that all new sports include both men and women, that meant that a sport with 30 female skiers from 11 nations at the World Cup was included, while we were excluded. At that time, there were also fewer female athletes participating in the World Cups in bobsleigh, luge, skeleton and snowboard cross and yet they participate in the Olympics as well (see numbers in attached Fact Sheet). So what exactly does 'universality' mean?

We have also heard your comment about our inclusion "diluting the medals" which seems to point to an inability to perform at an Olympic or world-class level. We believe completely in our

high-caliber athletic abilities, captured by the enclosed DVD of NRK television's broadcast from our first World Championship competition last February in Liberec, Czech Republic. While some media and even some officials focused on a few youthful, unqualified entrants – which cast women ski jumpers as very young, unskilled and prone to injury and falls -- they were not at all representative of the level and breadth of competition at Liberec. The top five finishers came from the United States, Germany, Norway, Austria and France. Our World Championship was tight, exciting and highly competitive. We have developed our sport and accomplished those performances in Liberec in the face of decades of systemic discrimination. The IOC is in a position to help put a stop to this discrimination, rather than fostering it. This is in keeping with the IOC's Charter and the values of equality to which we all ascribe. It would be truly Olympian for your organization to show the world that equality is important, indeed essential, to the sports of the Olympic Games.

We know we have ruffled some feathers by seeking legal recourse. But we felt ignored, baffled by shifting goalposts and finally, in frustration, we launched the lawsuit against the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee. VANOC has consistently stated they can do nothing for us and they "are the wrong plaintiffs." In saying that, they have completely missed the point of our discrimination argument. The 2010 Olympics are in Canada, a country that prides itself on its progressive and unbiased values, morals, laws and policies in terms of gender equality, particularly as they are applied to public entities. We are very confident that the Canadian judicial system will see that excluding women ski jumpers while allowing male ski jumpers on publicly funded facilities is simply wrong. And then what?

The comment of your staff member, with whom I had a brief telephone conversation last Thursday, that we seem "intent on going to court regardless of what we do," is also confusing. What have we been offered? We have not had any meaningful conversation with anyone from your organization and we have made numerous overtures. Well-meaning observers have floated various "options," but demonstration events are passé and 2014 is too far away. We are ready now. And it would be a victory for all.

Creating the first completely gender equal Olympic Winter Games in history could be a key part of your legacy as president of the IOC. VANOC, too, could be justifiably proud of hosting such an historic event. We know there are many other pressing matters on your agenda for the Vancouver Games, so resolving this issue by allowing us one event on the normal hill would be satisfying for everyone. And obviously, there would not be a need to go to court on April 20.

We have definitely won in the 'court of public opinion,' too. Over 10,000 people from all over the world have signed an on-line petition ([www.wsj2010.com](http://www.wsj2010.com)) supporting our inclusion at the Olympics. Stories carried by media outlets such as the BBC, The Globe & Mail, The New York Times, The Vancouver Sun, USA Today, ESPN and many others have all commented on what appears to be unwarranted and discriminatory treatment. The facts do not support any other argument. Just imagine, by including us in 2010, you will indeed show the world that the Olympic Charter's words "implementing the principle of equality of men and women" is not an empty statement and shallow promise. Instead, including us demonstrates leadership and will have far-reaching benefits for developing women in sports universally and ski jumping as a sport in particular.

We are available to meet with you when and where it is convenient for you. In keeping with our commitment to transparency in all our communications, this letter will be shared with the media after you receive it.

Sincerely yours,

Lindsey Van

On behalf of:

Katie Willis, Canada, Marie-Pierre Morin, Canada, Karla Keck, USA, Meaghan Reid, Canada, Zoya Lynch, Canada, Ulrike Graesler, Germany, Jade Edwards, Canada, Anette Sagen, Norway, Jenna Mohr, Germany, Nata de Leeuw, Canada, Monica Planinc, Slovenia, Charlotte Mitchell, Canada, Jessica Jerome, USA, Daniela Iraschko, Austria

Enclosure

Women's Ski Jumping Fact Sheet

Comparison of universality in winter sports  
for women competing at the elite level, 2006-2007

		Athletes	Nations
Women's Ski Jumping [1]	83	14	
Skier Cross [2]		30	11
Bobsleigh [3]		26	13
Snowboard Cross [4]	34	10	
Luge [5]		45	17
Skeleton [6]		39	12

[1] Based on ladies Ski Jumping results including summer 2007 as posted on the International Ski Federation (FIS) website at [www.fis-ski.com](http://www.fis-ski.com)

[2] Based on 2007 World Cup standings for Skier Cross (SX) as posted under Freestyle Skiing on FIS website

[3] Based on 2006/2007 Women's Bobsleigh Individual Standings World Cup as reported by the International Bobsleigh and Tobogganing Federation at [www.bobsleigh.com](http://www.bobsleigh.com)

[4] Based on 2007 World Cup standings for Snowboard Cross (SBX) as posted under Snowboard results on the FIS website

[5] Based on 2006/2007 World Cup (Viessmann Weltcup) ladies overall standings as reported by the International Luge Federation at [www.fil-luge.org](http://www.fil-luge.org)

[6] Based on 2006/2007 World Cup standing in Skeleton as reported by the International Bobsleigh and Tobogganing Federation at [www.bobsleigh.com](http://www.bobsleigh.com)