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WOMEN'S SKI JUMPING RESPONSE TO IOC PRESIDENT JACQUES ROGGE COMMENTS

Women's Ski Jumping advocates are pleased that President Jacques Rogge said that any decision to include women jumpers in Vancouver 2010 is based on technical merit, because women jumpers have already earned the right to compete on that basis.

"To say that there are hundreds of thousands if not tens of millions of athletes competing in other sports at a high level and comparing that to 80 athletes in ski jumping is an unfair comparison," said Deedee Corradini, President of Women's Ski Jumping USA, and former Mayor of Salt Lake City. "Perhaps he was referring to men's soccer world wide, but that is not comparable. We should be compared to the numbers of women in similar facilities-based sports in the Olympic Winter Games. Someone must have given Mr. Rogge bad or outdated information."

Corradini said that there are approximately 200 athletes from 17 countries registered as international competitors with the International Ski Federation (FIS), and thousands of girls participating in ski jumping through clubs in their respective countries. Of the 200 FIS registered elite athletes, 83 athletes from 14 countries competed in worldwide Continental Cup competitions in the 2006/2007 season.

Those numbers should be compared to Bobsleigh: 26 women/13 nations; Skeleton: 39 women/12 nations; Luge: 45 women/17 nations for the 2006/07 season. She said that in Ski Cross, which was added at the same time that Ski Jumping was denied, there were fewer than half the numbers of women and nations competing.

"The reason that gender discrimination even came into play is because the facts demonstrate that the women do qualify based on merit as compared to other accepted sports, and therefore there is no other explanation other than discrimination," said Corradini. "We have been held to a higher standard than other existing sports."

The former Mayor also pointed out that the Olympic Charter does not specify numbers required for a sport to be included, and no longer requires two World Championships before qualifying for the Olympic Games.

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