

UNDER ANALYSIS:

Lawyer Olympics:

**HOOP JUMPING AND BRIEF MARATHONS**

By Mitch Margo

Although it appears that most Greeks do not know it, there is an Olympics going on in Athens. Most venues are half empty, and I don't think it sounds any more optimistic to describe them instead as "half full." The U.S.A. basketball team is proving that a mediocre "team" can beat a group of one-on-one superstars, even if they are from the NBA, which now stands for National Big-ego Association. TV ratings are way down, terrorist alerts are way up.

Olympic officials, in an effort to spice up the games, have created some silly sports to grab viewer's attention. I'm talking of "sports" like beach volleyball, synchronized diving and rhythmic gymnastics.

If the network really wants to spice up ratings, I for one would like to see the "International Lawyer Olympics."

The opening ceremony will be a gala parade of pinstriped suits. Katie Couric and Bob Costas would comment as each country's attorneys walked past:

Katie: "Here come the lawyers representing the Cook Islands."

Bob: "That's right Katie. This small team has sheltered more than a billion dollars in U.S. corporate funds in 2004. That's a World and Olympic record that's going to be hard to beat. But if anyone can do it, here they come, the Swiss Banking Lawyers!"

Katie: "Don't they look snazzy in their Georgio Armani suits."

Bob: Coming out of the tunnel next is the Paraguayan Criminal Defense team. You know Katie, they were once the team to beat in the “Hiding War Criminals” competition, but most of the Nazis there have died off, leaving the team very thin.

Katie: Yes Bob. Favorites for the gold medal this year appear to be the feisty Serbians and the relentless team from Burma.

The International Lawyer Olympics will be laden with cutting edge events. One is patterned after the game show “Name that Tune” and it’s called “Indict that White Collar Criminal.” It works like this: Prosecutors from around the world are given facts about the potential defendant. For instance, he’s a 53-year-old son of an oil tycoon who was caught with 345 pounds of cocaine while returning from Colombia on his private jet. He claims that he thought the cocaine was talcum powder for his personal use.

French Prosecutor: “I can indict that man on 14 counts.”

US Prosecutor: “I can indict that man on 17 counts.”

French Prosecutor: “I can indict that man and his wife on 19 counts.”

US Prosecutor: “I can indict that man and his wife, impound his jet and deny him a lawyer as an Enemy Combatant.”

French Prosecutor: “Indict that man!”

Another one of the favorite events will be the Hoop Jump. This event has some roots in the current Long Jump and High Jump, but with a twist. In this event the judges are, well, judges. They set up several hoops around the arena at different heights and of different diameters. The lawyers then have to jump through the hoops to win. The competition gets harder as you go. For instance, the “proper venue” hoop is low and very

big while the “punitive damages” hoop rarely is reached, and even when it is, the judges can take it away later.

Some events really bring out the crowds. The Brief Marathon, which sounds like an oxymoron, matches contestants from some of the largest and most famous law firms in the world. In this event, the lawyers construct briefs that while technically in English, are totally incomprehensible and go on seemingly forever. Judges reward contestants on the “degree of difficulty” of both the topic and the execution. If any judge actually understands the writing, the contestant is disqualified.

One competition that is sure to win over the hearts of the general public is the 4x100 “Divorce Relay.” In this team event, a partner, an associate, a paralegal and a process server run divorce papers around the track to see which team can get one of the judges to grant a divorce the fastest. Extra points are awarded for each legal form that looks like it was prepared by a lawyer, but was completely filled out by the paralegal. The teams lose points if joint custody is awarded or the team has to stop to take a deposition.

The International Lawyer Olympics will be carried in its entirety this September on Court TV, unless someone else famous is charged with a crime. Stay tuned.

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