

Luis FERNANDEZ – My interviews with Kirsty COVENTRY

TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEO n°8:

E-sport, the structural accelerator

KIRSTY, hello.

When you take a step back and look at the future of the Olympic Movement through the prism of Evolution with a capital E, it's a safe bet that in three or four Olympiads - we're at the 34th - the lines will have moved.

For a long time, Olympism was a shop that had a magnificent showcase, the Olympic Games. Today, this shop has two other beautiful windows:

- Since 1960, in Rome, the Paralympic Games
- Since 2010, in Singapore, the Youth Olympic Games

This shop is preparing to inaugurate a fourth window display:

- In 2027, in Saudi Arabia, the E-sport Olympics.

This last showcase is not a showcase like any other:

Of course, it has its specificity like the other 3 showcases, but it stands out radically in three points:

- **1st point:**

The influence of e-sport could, tomorrow - that is to say in a few Olympiads - have supplanted that of the current Olympics. What for?

Because it is the privileged leisure of today's youth.

Because, in our environment, the sports world, e-sport is the symbol of the accelerating evolution that we all see, everywhere.

An evolution that no one, no one, no one will be able to stop.

On the other hand, don't make me say what I didn't say: I spoke of radiation, not of suppression.

- **2nd point:**

The admission of e-sport to the Olympic family will be a prodigious accelerator in the evolution of sports structures.

What for?

Because e-sport is the leisure of the new civilization that unfolds every day all over the planet. As a result, the I.O.C., like the federations and all the structures that have emerged from the old world that is disappearing, will be swept away, swallowed up by the new.

And, unless they completely refound, neither the I.O.C. nor the federations will escape it.

To grow old is to become rigid and to die. I have said and written that it is necessary to "have the audacity to say, the courage to act, the strength to win."

So, I simply ask the question:

- Isn't the global Olympic and Sports Movement old?
- Isn't the I.O.C. old?

And, in order for us to agree on the answer - or so that we can debate on a sound basis - here is a proposal for a definition of old age on which we can agree:

"Old age has a fear of advance, an idea of delay, in vision, fear and, by way of infusion, skepticism."

To be young is to welcome with open arms the new day is dawning, full of magnificent promises.

And E-sport is one of them.

- **3rd point:**

The organization of e-sports does not care about the traditional organization of the Olympic and Sports Movement.

What for?

Because in e-sport, a regional committee, an NOC or a national federation is useless.

Talk to e-sports practitioners about such structures. They'll laugh in your face and, nicely, out of respect, call you fossilized dinosaurs

After highlighting the 3 points that differentiate e-sport from other Olympic showcases, such as the Olympic Games, the Youth Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, let's go further.

More than 2 years ago, on April 17, 2023 to be precise, in my blog on sports policy according to Luis, I published a video on e-sport.

There she is.....

Have you watched it?

Today, I don't change a comma. And if I go further:

A phenomenological look at the appearance of this new leisure activity leads to highlight:

- First of all, this hobby, a sports version, has the same mistakes as the traditional federations when they were created: With all the trial and error inherent in any novelty. No federation, at its birth, escaped this stage.
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- Secondly, that this hobby has a real educational dimension
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- Finally, that this leisure activity is a fertile ground for the affirmation of values and ethics.

Judge for yourself:

Look at this chart.

THE EDUCATIONAL DIMENSION OF E-SPORT

1. Objective time is no longer an intangible given: We play when we want
2. Objective space is no longer an intangible given: we play with whomever we want on the planet
3. The player is, from the start, by virtue of his pseudonym, in the shoes of a character
4. This character can occupy several roles.
5. The game worlds vary. The player therefore learns to evolve in different environments.
6. E-sports is, therefore, an excellent 4X4 for real life. The interpenetration of 3 virtualities (the pseudo, the different roles, the different universes) promotes and develops the adaptive plasticity of the brain.
7. The rules enacted are respected: they cannot be challenged, they are programmed. The referee is an integral part of the game.
8. The relationship with the body is almost non-existent. Hence the emergence of some drifts, either biological (obesity) or psychological (disconnection from reality)
9. The educational role of e-sports can be self-evident.
10. This educational role must be promoted by the institutions.
11. These esports are at the forefront of the world's leading leisure industry.
12. Sports geography is no longer in order.

If I say a few words about each of these characteristics:

1. **Objective time is no longer an intangible given: We play when we want**

The playground of the e-sportsman is the screen of his computer, his cell phone, his i-phone. The player can play alone, or with partners whenever they want, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

2. **Objective space is no longer an intangible given: we play with whomever we want on the planet**

This playground is connected to all other playgrounds located on the entire surface of the globe. As in other sports disciplines, contact, exchanges, and reading of the opponent's game are immediate, even if the two players are physically located more than 10,000 km apart;

3. **The player is, from the start, by virtue of his pseudonym, in the shoes of a character**

Before launching the game, in the same way that the player in a locker room changes to put on his outfit, the e-sport player takes on a pseudonym. He can then hide behind this mask to let his full potential express itself.

4. **This character can occupy several roles.**

Unlike traditional sports in which the player occupies a position or practices a single discipline, here, in e-sports, he can switch from one to the other as he pleases or even play several roles. Imagine, for example, that in foot ball, the young player learns in the same season not only to play in the different positions but also to coach or lead the team.

5. **The game worlds vary. The player therefore learns to evolve in different environments.**

In general, when a young person practices a sport, he signs a licence for a sports season and, in general, he has renewed it. As a result, the universe in which he evolves is quite stable. In e-sports, the practitioner, on the other hand, can indulge in all the sports, all the existing games, as he wishes, without constraint.

6. **The video game is, therefore, an excellent 4X4 for real life. The interpenetration of 3 virtualities (the pseudo, the different roles, the different universes) promotes and develops the adaptive plasticity of the brain.**

This triple possibility of the player - being someone else, playing different roles, evolving in different environments - is an undeniable educational asset for his real life. Those who are the most successful and the happiest are those who know their strengths and weaknesses. To do this, it is still necessary to vary the experiences. It is precisely this possibility of experimentation that is offered to all video game players.

7. **The rules enacted are respected: they cannot be challenged, they are programmed. The referee is an integral part of the game.**

Here, more than in any other sport, "the referee is an integral part of the game" to use the time-honored expression. The player therefore gets used to respecting them from the start, and even in the solitude of his training. That's for what's happening on the screen. Now, in a competitive environment, there's everything around. And here, it is enough for the rules to be as simple and as applied as in the game for the notion of the integration of the rule to be fully an educational element. This last point is the responsibility of the international federation of e-sports.

8. **The relationship with the body is almost non-existent. Hence the emergence of some drifts, either biological (obesity) or psychological (disconnection from reality).**

These excesses are often put forward to mask a hesitation to discover these new activities. Without denying them, it is nevertheless necessary on the one hand to place it in a real perspective to know its real importance and on the other hand to provide countermeasures. Should we deny the pleasures of swimming, driving or skiing on the pretext that a few accidents occur? Better yet, should we prevent young people from practicing them? and... Who could?

9. **The educational role of e-sports can be self-evident.**

A triple conjunction favours this educational dimension: the spontaneous attraction towards these activities, the compulsory respect of the rules, the effective consideration of any abuses.

10. **This educational role must be promoted by the public authorities.**

Video games are an essential complement to any educational system. In video games, "you are who you want to be, without constraints of language, race, physics or skill". Not to mention the excellent contact tool for integrating young people who have lost their homes.

11. **These esports are at the forefront of the world's leading leisure industry.**

In addition to the fact that the practitioners of these electronic sports can also benefit from all the sources of funding developed by traditional sports: sponsorship, derivative products, gambling, naming... The link between sport and the economy is immediate, direct, real,

12. **Sports geography is no longer in order.**

The notions of departmental committees, regional committees, national federations fall by themselves. They no longer make sense, and this is the real challenge of this International Federation compared to all those that exist. To set up sustainable structures that respect and even anticipate all the characteristics of the twenty-first century. It is for this reason that the statutes of this International Federation will be voted on by all licensees after the implementation period.

By way of conclusion

If I have been able to contribute to change, even if only a little in the view of esport, I consider myself satisfied. Even if some sports officials still have a hard time perceiving it, e-sport is one of the ways in which Olympism will shine for the 21st century.

Since its inception, Olympism's mission has not deviated from "To make young people confident and serene."

Whatever the sports disciplines, leaders and educators try to inculcate that "the characteristic of the athlete is to know himself, to conduct himself, to conquer himself".

Why should it be any different with the leaders and educators of e-sports?

Thank you