

## **SLOVENIA NOW HAS ITS OWN NATIONAL SPORTS DAY**

23 SEPTEMBER – SLOVENIAN SPORTS DAY

Following a proposal put forth by the Olympic Committee of Slovenia – Association of Sports Federations, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia passed an amendment to the Public Holidays and Work-free Days Act on 17 June 2020, declaring 23 September a new public holiday – SLOVENIAN SPORTS DAY.

On 23 September 2000, during the Summer Olympic Games in Sydney, rowers Iztok Čop and Luka Špik and shooter Rajmond Debevec mounted the winners' podium and for the first time since Slovenian independence, the Slovenian national anthem was played at the Olympic Games.

An Olympic gold medal represents the pinnacle of achievement in sport, however is the result of prior organisation, development of sports clubs, promotion of sport in schools, the training of staff, and the laying of solid foundations for all of our athletes' future successes. The beginnings of organised Slovenian sport can be traced back to 1863, and the establishment of the Southern Falcon (Južni Sokol) Gymnastics Society on 1 October. This first sports club, which is still active today under the name Narodni Dom, nurtured such talent as Miroslav Cerar, the most successful Slovenian gymnast, winner of two Olympic gold medals and four-time World Champion.

Slovenians are a sports-loving nation. We see this in the achievements of our elite athletes, but even more so in the full sports fields of schools, the bursting mountain huts and cabins, as well as the well-frequented sports halls and gyms around the country. Elite Slovenian athletes increase our visibility across the globe, make us feel proud, strengthen our national identity, and motivate us to do sport and be physically active.

Regular physical activity is extremely important for staying healthy and keeping fit, which is why the Olympic Committee of Slovenia – Association of Sports Federations, who gave the initiative for new national holiday dedicated to sport, will do all it can to make sure that Slovenian Sports Day is the one day of the year when everyone engages in sporting activities. The purpose of Slovenian Sports Day is to raise awareness about the importance of regular physical activity, and encourage citizens to lead healthy sport-filled lifestyles. Let 23 September, Slovenian Sports Day, be a day when each and every one of Slovenians shows the attitude to sport through physical activity, since sport is a social activity with a number of positive effects: it improves health, encourages personal growth and positive values, and strengthens our national identity by bringing Slovenians together.

Let 23 September, Slovenian Sports Day, be the day we put on our running shoes, take out our sports balls, run bicycles, dust-off our yoga mats, or simply enjoy a relaxing swim. Let it be a time for sport for all Slovenians.

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**DAN  
SLOVENSKEGA  
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23. SEPTEMBER