



# RULE 50.2 OF THE OLYMPIC CHARTER

What you need to know as a New Zealand Team member on Athlete  
Advocacy  
at the Games.

MAY 2024



## **RULE 50.2**

# **BACKGROUND**



The Olympic Games bring together people from 206 nations from around the world. This is more people from different places than any other sporting event in the world.

Athletes, entourage and spectators at the Games come from very different backgrounds, with different languages, different cultures, different traditions, different religions and different political views. Some countries that attend are even at war with each other.

The Games are about sport, and the IOC feels a special obligation both to ensure that the focus is on the athletes and their competition without being drawn into political controversies, and to provide a Games environment that lets athletes compete without distractions from divisive and emotional issues outside the world of sport.

The Olympic Charter is the guiding document for the entire Olympic Movement. It defines the mission and role of the International Olympic Committee, National Olympic Committees and other Olympic entities. It also provides rules for the organisation and administration of the Olympic Games, as well as guidance on disciplinary procedures and other governance issues.

You are bound to the Olympic Charter and its rules when you sign the Conditions of Participation for the Games.

## RULE 50.2

# DEFINITION



### What it is:

*"No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas."*

Rule 50.2 has four main goals:

- To protect athletes.
- To prevent the over-commercialisation of the Games and to keep the Olympic venues – (i.e. the field of play) free from advertising. This is known as the “clean venue” policy.
- To prevent the Games from being used as a platform for protests, demonstrations or the promotion of political, religious or racial propaganda.
- To define the rules for manufacturers’ identifications and other identifying features on sports uniforms and equipment, to prevent unauthorised commercial, political, religious or racial propaganda.

### Call for change on Rule 50.2

In 2020, with the prominence of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, the IOC, in consultation with the IOC Athletes’ Commission, made a number of changes to the rule to ensure athletes could share their views on matters important to them while protecting the field of play, podium and ceremonies, and while also ensuring the Olympic values were maintained.

## **RULE 50.2**

# **ATHLETE EXPRESSION**



### **How can I express myself under Rule 50.2?**

As an athlete, you are of course free to express your opinions and share your views.

During the Games you should feel free to answer questions, but only if you wish to, if asked in a press conference or mixed zone, in a media interview or on social media. Rule 50.2 is not intended to stifle public debate on any topic.

However, the IOC believes that official ceremonies (medal, opening and closing), competition on the field of play and any activity in the Olympic Village should focus on sport and remain free from advertising/publicity or any kind of demonstrations or political, religious and racial propaganda.

In this document, we talk about 'sharing your views. Please note, this is in relation to IOC Rule 50.2 - i.e. we refer in particular to demonstrations or political, religious and racial propaganda or any actions, gestures or comments that could be considered to meet this description and which sit under this Rule.

## **RULE 50.2**

# **WHAT DO I NEED TO THINK ABOUT?**



Before sharing a view, participants should ask:

- It is in alignment within the Olympic Values of Excellence, Respect and Friendship?
- Is it dignified and in good taste?
- Is it not against an individual or group, discriminatory, offensive, hateful, defamatory or otherwise illegal?
- Does it fit within the NZ Team Manaaki?
- What reaction might the NZ public, or NZ media have? Might their reaction cause you undue stress or put you under pressure or provide negative feedback?
- How could it or is likely to affect others, for instance, other medalists on the podium, other members of the NZ Team, your National Federation and even your sponsors?
- Is it compliant with IOC Rule 50.2?

## **RULE 50.2**

# **WHERE CAN I SHARE MY VIEWS\*?**



- In the mixed zones, including when speaking to the media
- In the International Broadcasting Centre (IBC) or the Main Media Centre (MMC), including when speaking to the media
- During press conferences in the venue or in the MMC
- During interviews
- At team meetings
- In traditional media or digital media
- Through social media channels

*\*Views i.e. demonstrations or political, religious or racial propaganda*

## RULE 50.2

# WHAT ABOUT ON THE FIELD OF PLAY?



You can share your views on the field of play prior to the start of the competition provided that the expression is:

- Consistent with Olympic Values;
- Not targeted, directly or indirectly, against people, countries, organisations and/or their dignity;
- Not disruptive
  - Not during another athlete's or team's national anthem and/or introduction,
  - No physical interference with the introduction of another athlete or team or the protocol itself (for example by unfurling a flag, a banner etc.);
  - Not causing (or assuming the risk of causing) physical harm to persons or property, etc.);
- Not prohibited/limited by the rules of the IOC and/or the competition regulations of your IF.

## **RULE 50.2**

# **WHERE CAN I NOT SHARE MY VIEWS?**



Under Rule 50.2, you may not use the following situations for any demonstration, or for political, religious or racial propaganda:

- During official ceremonies
- During competition on the Field of Play
- In the Olympic Village or Satellite Village locations



## **RULE 50.2**

# **FIELD OF PLAY/PODIUM UNIFORM**



- There are specific guidelines regarding what can be worn on the field of play and during the Opening, Closing and Victory ceremonies.
- Athletes should only wear their official uniforms on the field of play. If you have any questions about whether something is permissible, you should consult with the Chef de Mission.

## RULE 50.2

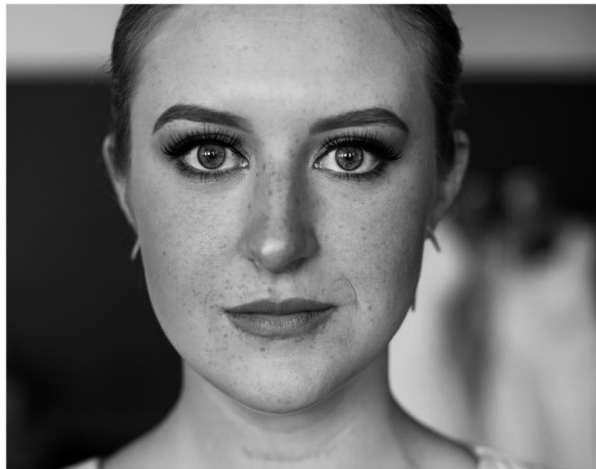
# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MEDIA



**Athlete Example**

@Athlete\_Example\_NZ  
3 August, 2024

#ClimateStrike



**ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE**

Rule 50.2 applies only within Olympic sites and venues and not to social media. Athletes are encouraged to post, blog and tweet their experiences from the Olympic Games.

Athlete asked about global politics or LGBTQIA+ matter in a media interview



**ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE**

During the Games athletes can answer controversial questions, if they wish to, if asked in a press conference or mixed zone, or in a media interview. Remember, however, to carefully consider the impact any comments may have on your performance or the wider team, and how they may be perceived by others.

## RULE 50.2

# ADVERTISING



### ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This Nike 'Dream Crazy' ad starring Colin Kaepernick features the former NFL quarterback and the slogan 'Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything. Just do it.' In 2016, Kaepernick started to kneel for the pre-game national anthem in protest at racial injustice in the United States and has been out of the NFL since.

While the action of kneeling may not always be compliant with Rule 50.2, featuring in advertising / external material expressing opinions is compliant.

## RULE 50.2

# ON THE FIELD OF PLAY



### ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This is the New Zealand women's football team before the opening match of the Tokyo Olympic Games. They took a knee in support of indigenous rights.

As it took place before competition and was respectful, not disruptive, not against a group or person it was compliant.

It was also discussed and shared with the other team, the NZ Team management and the IOC in advance so there were no surprises.

## RULE 50.2

# IN MEDIA MIXED ZONE



### ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This is Russian tennis player Andre Rublev, who wrote a message of peace on the camera lens. This would be compliant with Rule 50.2 as it is taking place in the media mixed zone, outside of the competition, and is not disruptive, not against a person or group and is respectful.

## RULE 50.2

# REFUSING TO TAKE PODIUM

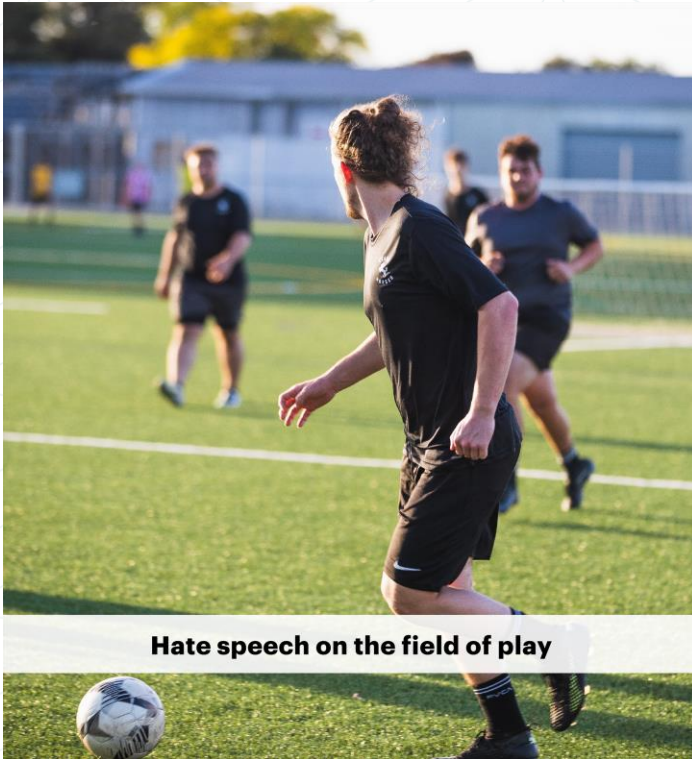


### UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

Australian Swimmer Mack Horton refused to take the podium with Chinese Swimmer Sun Yang at the 2022 World Champs, considering him a drug cheat. This action would not be compliant with Rule 50.2 as it is a demonstration around the podium and medal celebration.

## RULE 50.2

# HATE SPEECH, SPEAKING OUT AGAINST AN INDIVIDUAL OR TEAM



**Hate speech on the field of play**



### UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This would not be acceptable under Rule 50.2. It is targeting an athlete and their dignity, and it is taking place on the Field of Play. In addition, the NZOC states that any spoken word must not be discriminatory, offensive, hateful, defamatory or otherwise illegal and take into consideration all other factors outlined in this document.

## RULE 50.2

# REFUSING TO COMPETE



### UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This Algerian judoka refused to compete against Israeli athletes and as such, withdrew from competition ahead of the Tokyo Olympic Games. He received a 10-year ban from the IF as it was not compliant with their rules and regulations. It would be also unacceptable under Rule 50.2.

*"We worked a lot to reach the Olympics," Nourine said at the time. "But the Palestinian cause is bigger than all of this."*

- An Algerian Judoka has been suspended for 10 years for refusing to face an Israeli opponent.
- Fethi Nourine withdrew from Tokyo Olympics, saying he didn't want to "get his hands dirty"



## RULE 50.2

# PODIUM DEMONSTRATIONS



**UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE**

These expressions on the podium are likely to be considered by the IOC to be in breach of Rule 50.2.

## **RULE 50.2**

# **BREACHES OF RULE 50.2**



### **What happens if I breach Rule 50.2?**

If the IOC is made aware of a potential breach of Rule 50.2, it will treat each case individually depending on what is said or done including if there are any complaints made by other athletes and how disruptive it may have been. In addition, under clause 5 of your NZ Team Athlete Agreement or Team Support Agreement, whichever is relevant, as well as the Olympic Charter you have several obligations, including but not limited to:

- Abiding by the Olympic Charter and IOC Code of Ethics (includes Rule 50.2);
- Displaying high standards of personal conduct reflected in the manner of both appearance and behavior and of that befitting an elite sports person representing New Zealand;
- Treating everyone with respect, courtesy and without harassment, and take all reasonable steps to eliminate any form of physical, verbal, sexual and emotional abuse and/or harassment of others; and
- Not acting in any manner which brings or could potentially bring yourself, the NZOC, its Commercial Partners, your sport or the Team into disrepute.
- Sanctions may be imposed by the IOC, in accordance with the Conditions of Participation and/or the NZOC in accordance with your Team Agreement.

### **What happens when someone else breaches Rule 50.2?**

- Ideally, any athlete or team planning to undertake a demonstration or express their views in a place that may impact you or your performance or celebration, they will consult with you before-hand. This 'heads up' may give you time to think about how you will react, or you may need to decide at the time. The considerations are the same as if you are going to express yourself at the Games as outlined above.

## RULE 50.2

# OUTSIDE OLYMPIC VENUES



UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

Taking part in protests about the Olympic Games or its host country prior to, or during the Olympic Games does not align with New Zealand Team Manaaki.



UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

Wearing an item of clothing featuring a political statement, during the Olympic Games – even outside the Venues - does not align with New Zealand Team Manaaki. Note: correct uniform should be worn at all times.

## RULE 50.2

# HERE TO HELP

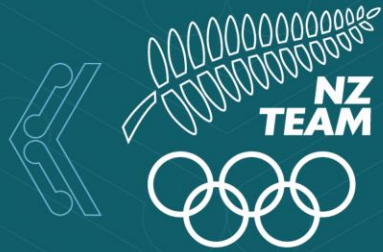


We are here to help, please get in touch if you require any further guidance or advice on these matters.

If you are considering making a demonstration or sharing any political, religious or racial views that matter to you, or have any questions on Athlete Advocacy at the Games, please contact:

- Pre-Games: Ashley Abbott, NZOC Public Affairs and Communications Director: [Ashley@olympic.org.nz](mailto:Ashley@olympic.org.nz)
- At Games time: Nigel Avery, Chef de Mission: [nigel@olympic.org.nz](mailto:nigel@olympic.org.nz)

**Important Note:** *Neither the NZOC nor the NZ government can control a situation where any athlete breaks the law of another country. If any athlete advocacy breaches such law, you will be subject to the laws of that country regardless of your status as an Olympic athlete or a NZ citizen.*



# NGĀ MIHI THANK YOU



WE ARE THE NEW ZEALAND TEAM  
KO TĀTOU TE KAPA O AOTEAROA