

# MAGAZINE REPRINT

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SURPLUS U.S. OLYMPIC FUNDS BOOST YOUTH SPORTS

By Cheryl Sullivan

From The Christian Science Monitor

**SUMMARY:** The largest Olympic surplus ever remains from the privately funded 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Most of the funds will be used to promote amateur athletic opportunities for youth in local communities across the United States.

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## SURPLUS U.S. OLYMPIC FUNDS BOOST YOUTH SPORTS

By Cheryl Sullivan

An innovative new program aimed at spurring participation in amateur athletics in the United States is being started by a community group in Los Angeles, California. The project is one of more than a dozen youth oriented athletic programs about to begin in southern California, backed by surplus funds from the 1984 Summer Olympics held in Los Angeles.

There is a sizable pot to deal with. Some \$225 million -- the largest Olympic surplus ever -- remains from the privately funded games (contributions from U.S. corporations and individuals).

Much of that money will be kept in local hands. Under the Los Angeles Olympic charter, 40 percent is to go to the U.S. Olympic Committee, 40 percent to the games' host region, and 20 percent to the U.S. national amateur sports federations.

The foundation responsible for divvying up southern California's roughly \$90 million share made several awards recently.

Among the recipients: a rowing club in Santa Barbara that will use some of its funding to help disabled rowers; a group in East Los Angeles that intends to start a girl's softball league; and a tennis association that will launch programs, mainly for youth from low-income families.

"Our primary purpose is to improve the quality and quantity of sports for youth in southern California," says Stanton Wheeler, president of the Los Angeles Organizing Committee, Amateur Athletic

Foundation -- the group distributing the region's share of the surplus.

The foundation is trying to establish itself as a catalyst for local amateur sports. One of its pet projects will be to establish a "sports resource center." The center will act as an athletic research facility and clearinghouse for information about sports programs in southern California.

While the foundation's mandate is to enhance amateur athletics, some of its recent grants have social significance as well. The idea is to bring athletics to youth who seldom get a chance to participate in recreational activities.

The foundation has received over 200 requests, and in its latest round of funding it gave out 17 grants worth a total of about \$1 million. It expects to spend \$16 million on foundation-initiated programs and youth sports over the next two years, the funds for which will come mainly from investment income on its share of the surplus.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Olympic Committee is just beginning to take grant requests for its surplus, which will be targeted more at athletes with Olympic potential.

"Having a stable source of funding like this could have a big impact on both our current and future athletes," says Rob Hilbert, executive vice-president of the U.S. Olympic Foundation in Colorado.

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Cheryl Sullivan writes for The Christian Science Monitor, a daily U.S. newspaper.

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CAPTION:

U.S. YOUNGSTERS, sponsored by a local boys and girls athletic club, play basketball at a gymnasium in Rhode Island. Many U.S. youth amateur athletic programs will be receiving grants from funding left over from the 1984 Olympic Games held in Los Angeles, California. Photo by Anestis Diakopoulos. (No. 84-1567)

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