



# 2022 with LNOC







# Sponsors and Partners



The publication prepared by the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania uses photographs by Vytautas Dranginis, Kipras Štreimikis, Alfredas Pliadis, Sauliaus Čirba, Elvis Žaldaris, Rokas Lukoševičius, Lukas Banyš, Teodoras Biliūnas, Aleksandras Savickis, Gintaras Šiuparis, Elijaus Kniežauskas, Paulius Židonis, Linas Žemgulis, Lina Motužytė, the archives of the LNOC, the IOC and the EOC.



# About the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania

**T**he National Olympic Committee of Lithuania (LNOC) is an independent, not-for-profit, public organisation belonging to the world of Olympic Movement.

The LNOC sends athletes to represent Lithuania at the Olympic Games and other Olympic events such as the European Games, Youth Olympic Games and Olympic Festivals.

The LNOC actively implements the programmes and agenda of the International Olympic Committee by supporting and implementing projects on Olympic education, qualification enhancement and development of personal competences, promoting gender equality and fair play in sport, the development of sport for all, takes care of promoting the Olympic Movement, perpetuating its history, and honouring the people who have contributed to the country's Olympic Movement. ●







**D**ear all,  
 2022 was a busy year for the entire Lithuanian sports community. It was the second consecutive Olympic year.

The Beijing Winter Olympics were very challenging – both in terms of logistics and security, and in terms of weather conditions. I am proud of the team that rose to these challenges and ensured the best conditions for our athletes.

I want to celebrate the victories of our athletes. In 2022, they won 14 medals in Olympic events at the European and World Championships. I hope very much that the athletes will keep up the momentum when the Paris Olympics qualification period begins. The young athletes also made a pleasant surprise by winning 10 medals at the European Youth Summer Olympic Festival in Banská Bystrica. This is Lithuania's best achievement in history.

2022 was also remarkable for its sport policy. There has

been yet another attempt at a rushed sports reform without having fully prepared for it.

Following the adoption of amendments to the Law on Lotteries by the Seimas in 2021, 8% of the working capital of *UAB Olifėja*, which previously used to be allocated to the Olympic Movement, is being transferred to the state budget from July 2022. It was promised that the LNOČ budget will increase after the reform, but it will unfortunately shrink by two thirds in 2023.

Although the LNOČ budget will shrink almost by half this year, to €3.8 million in revenue, we still plan to provide grants to sports federations. EUR 790 thousand is earmarked for this purpose.

Why? I don't want this to sound trite, but the reason is simple – we want to help. Attempts to jeopardise the funding system that had been successfully operating for 30 years have been numerous. We have always saved money to take athletes to the Olympics, but now that we see the seriousness of the situation, we want to help the federations.

We understand that the changes in funding have not been easy for us or for the sports federations, therefore we plan to help them. As things stand, we see that our income will decrease, but as long as we can, we will try to help federations and athletes.

We are pleased to continue working with our sponsors and partners. They not only help us involve thousands of people in the activities of the Olympic Movement, but also to contribute to the well-being of athletes. We are proud of our continued cooperation with *Olifėja*, *Euloto*, *Western Shipyard*, *4F*, *Affidea*, *LTeam LAB*, *Impuls*, *Lemon GYM*, medical laboratory *Medicina Practica*, *Glimstedt*, provider of health supplies and services *Teida*, *Toyota*, *3Dmotion LAB*, *DHL*, *TV3*, and *RC*.

In 2022, we were growing. We are delighted to have been able to contribute to the development of sports managers. We have had three more sports administration trainings, the graduates of which, having returned to their organisations, applied the knowledge they had acquired to, for example, attract new sponsors.

We have a unique opportunity to work with the IOC Olympic Solidarity to help federations get funding for development projects. Five talented athletes received Olympic Solidarity scholarships: discus thrower Mykolas Alekna, swimmer Aleksas Savickas, pentathlete Elzbieta Guoda Adomaitytė, rower Povilas Stankūnas and boxer Gabrielė Stonkutė. In 2022, they achieved spectacular results.

This year, five federations – Figure Skating, Sailing, Ten-

nis, Table Tennis and Wrestling – organised technical courses for coaches funded by Olympic Solidarity. In addition, the women's volleyball and basketball teams received additional Olympic Solidarity grants to prepare for the Paris Olympics.

The area of Olympic education was being strengthened too. We have started developing a unique physical literacy model, which we will implement in our projects next year. The Olympic Values Education Programme implemented in Lithuania attracted the attention of the IOC and we were invited to Lausanne to share our experience. For the first time, the *Olympic Month* project for primary school children attracted participants from all Lithuanian municipalities. We are very grateful to First Lady Diana Nausėdienė, who is not only the patron of the Lithuanian Children's Games, but also strongly contributes to promoting physical activity among children and young people.

The number of events organised by the Lithuanian Olympic Fund has grown too. The Olympic Day in Kaunas, the Beijing 2022 Olympic Festival, the Sports Film Festival – these are the projects where we introduce the Olympic values to the public, give them the opportunity to try a wide range of sports, and encourage movement. We believe that with the change of the Foundation's leadership, the development will be even greater.

The year was crowned by the Lithuanian Sports Awards, during which we jointly honoured representatives of both Olympic and Paralympic sports. We work closely with the Lithuanian Paralympic Committee and support each other, therefore it is great to be able to honour athletes together.

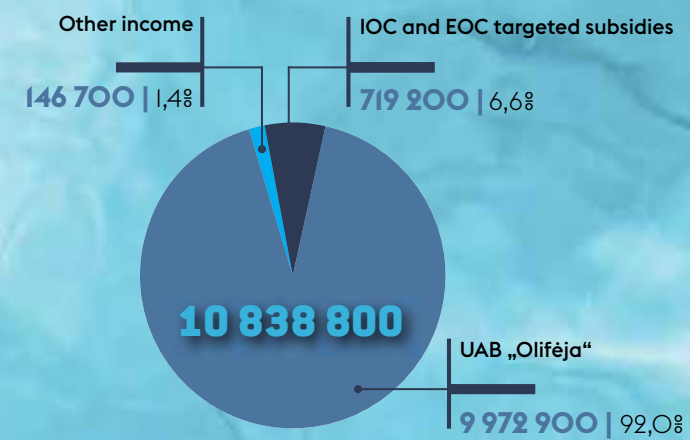
I would like to thank the entire LNOČ team for the tremendous work they do for Lithuanian sport every day. We will not stop at that in 2023 – we will be taking as many as four teams to Olympic events: the European Youth Winter and Summer Festivals, the European Games and the World Beach Games. It will be a busy year, but we will do everything we can to make sure that our athletes have the best possible conditions at all events and that we can continue our support to sports federations – our financial support might be of a lesser size than in the past, but we will intensify our knowledge and expertise sharing.

**Daina Gudžinevičiūtė**

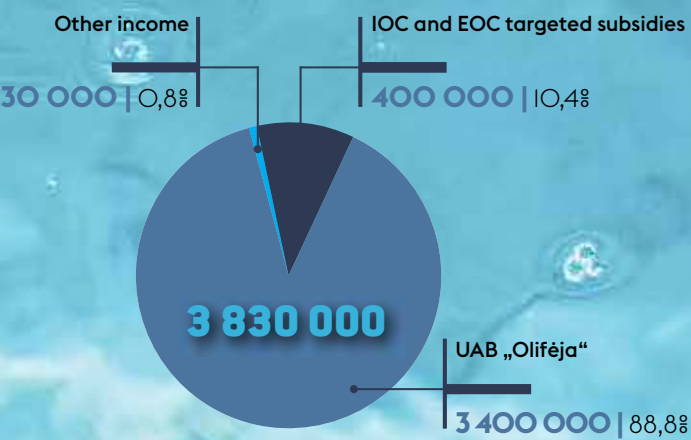
Lietuvos tautinio olimpinio komiteto prezidentė



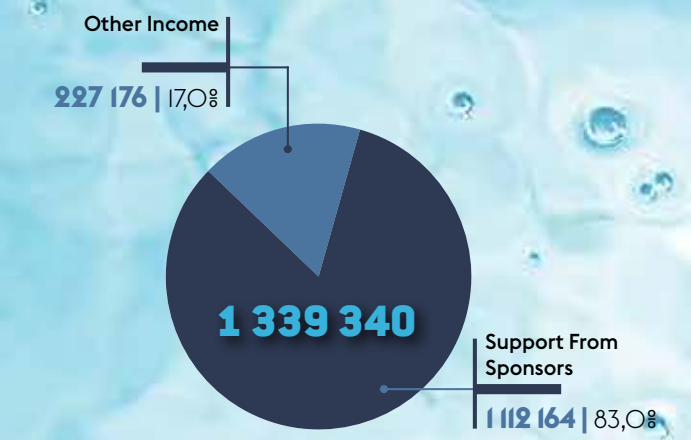
**2022 LNOC revenue structure, €**



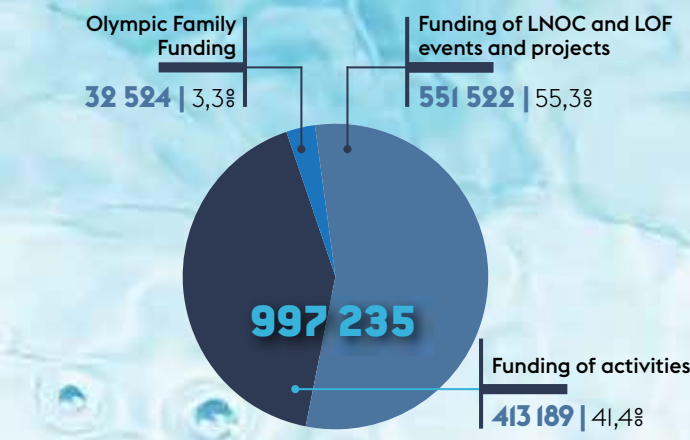
**Planned 2023 revenue structure, €**



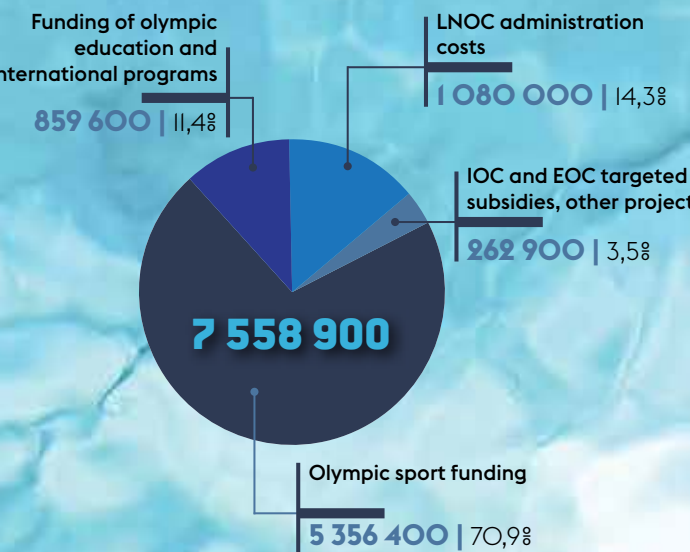
**2022 LOF revenue structure, €**



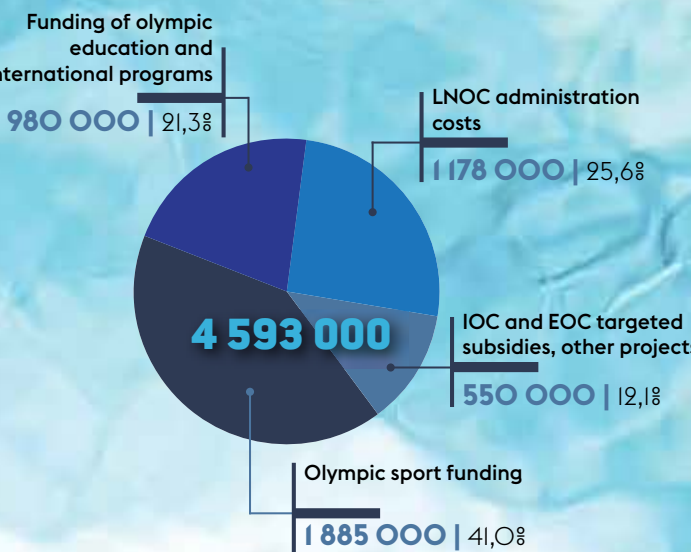
**2022 LOF expenditure structure, €**



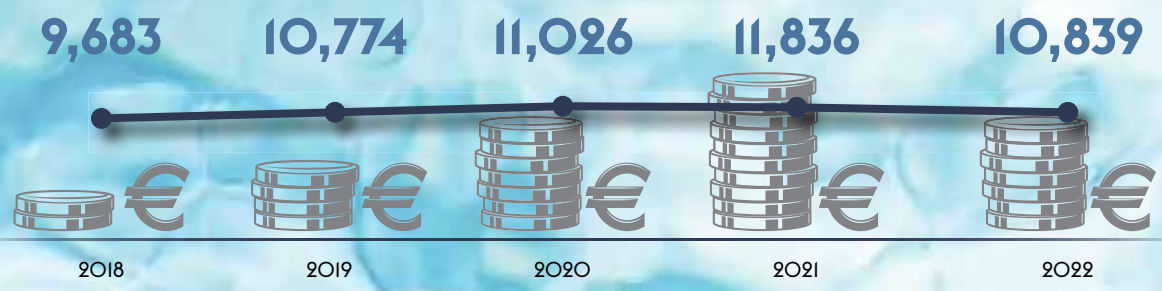
**2022 LNOC expenditure structure, €**



**Planned LNOC expenditure structure, €**



**LNOC revenue, amount in million €**





LNOC  
LTeam



PRESS



PORTALS



TV



RADIO

2022 Media Appearances

286  
34

2194  
316

74  
|

27  
|

Contacts Reached, mil.

9,723  
1,317

480,432  
57,552

10,453  
0,133

1,096  
0,056



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# Beijing Winter Olympics

On 4–20 February, a record number – thirteen – of Lithuanian athletes took part in the Winter Olympics in Beijing, China. This is the largest number of athletes ever in the Winter Olympics delegation from our country.

Among Lithuanian athletes, the biathletes scored highest, who turned a new page in the history of our country's sport – for the first time in the history of the Olympic Games, Lithuanians competed in the men's relay event. The quartet of Tomas Kaukėnas and Vytautas Strolia, making their third Olympic Games appearance, and debutants Karolis Dombrovskis and Linas Banys finished 14th.

Cross-country skier Modestas Vaičiulis competed in the third Games in his career and cross-country skier Andrejus Drukarovas in his second. For biathlete Gabrielė Leščinskaitė, cross-country skier Tautvydas Strolia, the four schoolgirls representing the Lithuanian Olympic team – cross-country skiers Eglė Savickaitė and Ieva Dainytė, Alpine skier Gabija Šinkūnaitė and ice dancers Paulina Ramanuskaitė, as well as Paulina's partner, Deividas Kizala, this was the first time they had ever tried themselves on the Olympic slopes and in the arenas.

Biathletes and cross-country skiers competing in Zhangjiakou 220 km from Beijing, Alpine skiers competing in Yanqing 60 km from the capital of the Games, and ice dancers performing in Beijing faced many challenges, just like their competitors.

The unprecedented security demands of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the freezing cold and piercing mountain winds, the breath-taking Olympic excitement and many other challenges disrupted the plans of many of the world's brightest stars, but there were also some who exceeded their expectations at the Beijing Games.

2022 with LNOČ



The opening ceremony of the Olympic Games took place on the evening of 4 February at the Beijing National Stadium. Beijing became the only city to host both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games, as in the summer of 2008 the athletes from all over the world gathered here for the Summer Olympics.

Paulina Ramanuskaitė and Deividas Kizala, a figure skating couple, carried the Lithuanian flag in the opening parade. Paulina and Deividas received the fateful phone call on 24 January telling them to pack their bags for Beijing, even though they had been informed about this likelihood at the beginning of the year.



Saulius Ambrulevičius and Allison Reed, who are among the top 15 duos on the planet, won the right to represent Lithuania in the Olympics. However, this couple did not get this chance to compete in the country's honour in Beijing because the American, who is making Lithuania famous on ice, was not granted, by way of exception, Lithuanian citizenship. Therefore, they were replaced by Paulina Ramanuskaitė and Deividas Kizala, who have been dancing together for the second year only, and who ranked only as the 105th in the world at the time of the Games.

On 20 February, cross-country skier Vaičiulis carried the Lithuanian flag at the colourful closing ceremony, accompanied by the images of the most spectacular moments of competitions.

109 sets of medals in 15 events across seven sports were awarded to the participants of the Beijing Games. A total of 2,877 athletes from 91 National Olympic Committees took part in the Games. Seventeen Olympic records were set.

Norwegian athletes topped the Beijing Games medal league table with 16 gold medals, breaking the record for most gold medals won at a single Winter Games. The record was previously shared by three countries: Canada at the 2014 Vancouver Games and Norway and Germany at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games, each winning 14 gold medals.

In total, the Norwegians won 37 medals (16 gold, 8 silver and 13 bronze) at the Beijing Games. Germany came second in the medals league table (12, 10, 5) and China was third (9, 4, 2). Latvia, Estonia and Poland won one bronze each.



Although, due to the pandemic, the number of spectators of the competitions was limited to permanent Chinese residents, whose flows were also being restricted, over 97 000 fans supported the athletes in the arenas. The opening and closing ceremonies at the Beijing National Stadium were attended by 14 000 people each.

The Beijing Winter Olympics were the second to be held under pandemic conditions. For the first time, Lithuania's Olympic mission was headed by Agnė Vanagienė, Deputy Director of the Olympic Sports Directorate of the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania.

„As a sports manager, it was quite a challenge but also an invaluable experience. However, I am very hopeful that the Paris Summer Olympics will be the way we are used to,“ said Agnė Vanagienė.

For the Head of Mission and her team, the Beijing Games started much earlier than for the athletes and their assistants. There were many organisational issues to deal with, while at the same time making sure that all members of the Olympic team did their homework honestly. Winning a ticket to the Games was not enough to make sure they get there – the organisers had strict security requirements. China was very careful, therefore even the most achieving athletes had to register their health status on a special app two weeks before their flight to China.

„Preparing for and attending the Olympic Games is always a challenge for mission leaders, who must ensure the best conditions for athletes and deal with unforeseen situations. At the 2022 Winter Games, this task was quite complicated. It was not easy to organise joint charter flights with the Scandinavian countries, to comply with even stricter security requirements than in Tokyo, and to cope with the extreme cold at the main base of the Lithuanian team in Zhangjiakou.

I can only once again praise the Olympic mission leaders Agnė Vanagienė and Einius Petkus, who, having gone through already the second pandemic Games, have proven that they are an unbeatable team fearless of any challenges. Team leaders, coaches – all of them have put in a lot of work and effort to provide the best conditions for our athletes to train and compete.

For the second time in my life, I had a great honour of awarding the Olympic medals to the winners of these Games. This time it was to the winners of the ski jumping mixed team event. The Olympic awards ceremony is the most spectacular moment in an athlete's career. It is a great honour for me to be part of such an important moment in their lives. Every time I rejoice together with the

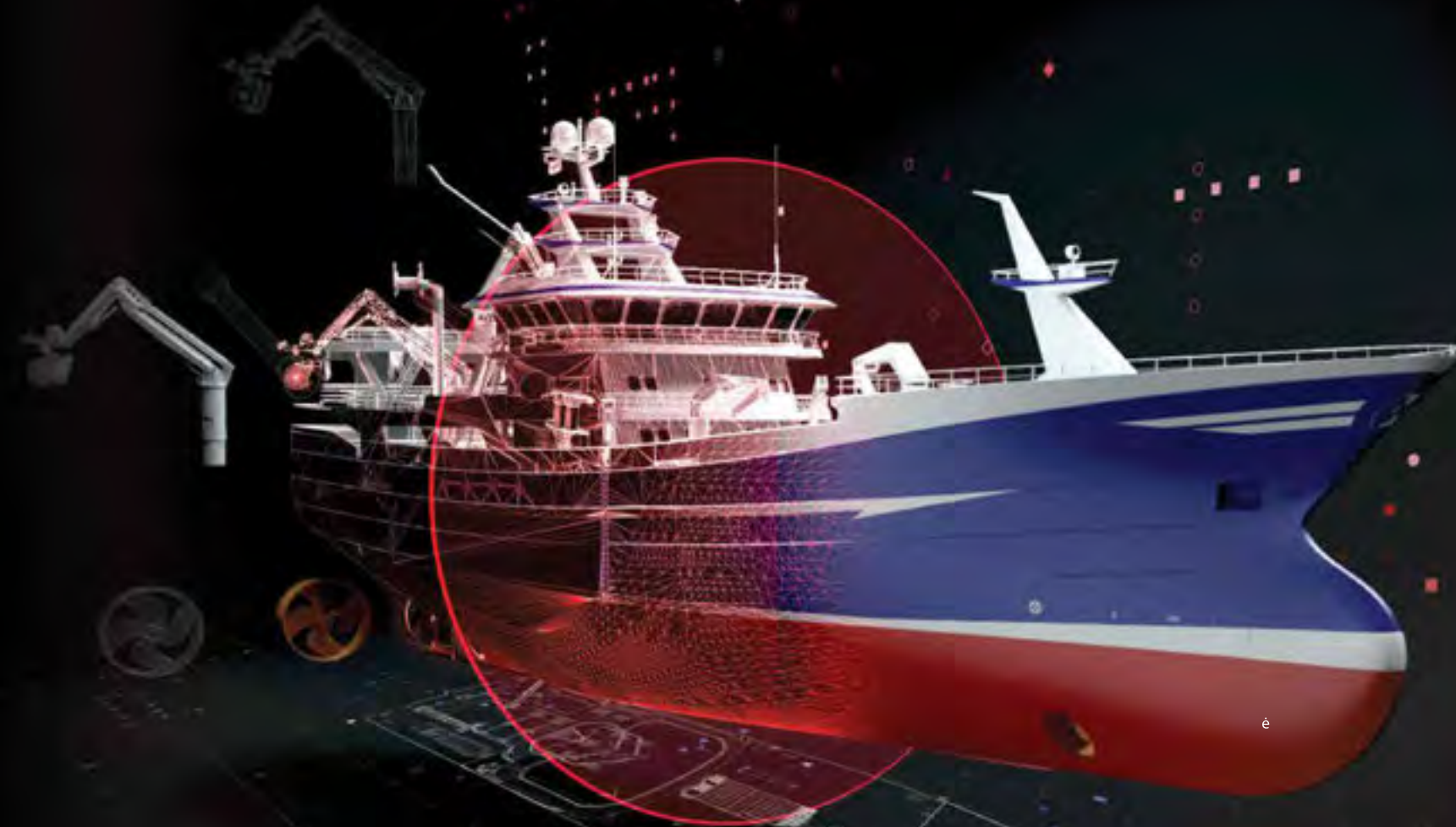


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„Vakarų laivų gamykla“ įmonių grupė jau penkis dešimtmečius yra viena didžiausių jūrinės inžinerinės pramonės įmonių Lietuvoje, išsaugojusi klasikinės laivų statybos tradicijas. Šiuo metu grupė vienija 19 skirtingos specializacijos įmonių.

Didžiuojamės galėdami pasiūlyti visas, su laivo gyvavimo ciklu, susijusias paslaugas.







athletes," said Daina Gudžinevičiūtė, LNOC President and member of the International Olympic Committee.

The Lithuanian delegation in China was accompanied by three medical staff: the Ukrainian doctor Igor Gorobets, who travels everywhere with the biathlon team, physiotherapist Laura Gedminaitė, and doctor Mantvydas Šilkūnas, who took care of the cross-country skiers and the ice-dancers' couple.

There were more Lithuanians at the Games. Pentathlete Justinas Kinderis competed in two Olympic Games in

six months. In 2021, he competed in Tokyo and in January 2022 he flew to Beijing for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. However, he did not compete for medals in Beijing, nor did he seek to cross the finish line in any of the winter sports events. He was appointed head of the coordination work of biathlon photography. The position was offered to the Lithuanian after he received good feedback about his work in Pyeongchang 2018 in South Korea, where he headed a volunteer unit. ●

## RESULTS

### BIATHLON

**Gabrielė Leščinskaitė.** 15 km individual race – 61st place, 7.5 km sprint – 63rd place.

**Vytautas Strolia.** 20 km individual race – 21st place, 10 km sprint – 43rd place, 12.5 km pursuit – 58th place.

**Tomas Kaukėnas.** 20 km individual race – 70th place, 10 km sprint – 80th place.

**Karolis Dombrovskis.** 71st place in the 20 km individual race, 73rd in the 10 km sprint.

**Linas Banys.** 20 km individual race – 79th place, 10 km sprint – 90th place.

**Lithuanian National Team (Tomas Kaukėnas, Vytautas Strolia, Karolis Dombrovskis, Linas Banys).** Es-tafetė 4x7,5 km relay – 14th place.

### FIGURE SKATING

**Paulina Ramanauskaitė and Deividas Kizala.** Ice dancing – 23rd place (rhythmic dance – 58.35 points, free programme – did not qualify).

### ALPINE SKIING

**Gabija Šinkūnaitė.** Slalom – did not finish.

**Andrejus Drukarovas.** Giant slalom – did not finish.

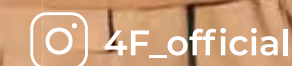
### SLIDINĖJIMAS

**Eglė Savickaitė.** Freestyle sprint – 82nd place, 10 km classic style race – 89th place, team sprint classic style (with Ieva Dainyte) – 23rd place.

**Ieva Dainytė.** Freestyle sprint – 86th place, 10 km classic style race – 91st place, team sprint classic style (with Eglė Savickaite) – 23rd place.

**Modestas Vaičiulis.** Sprint freestyle – 49th place, team sprint classic style (with Tautvydas Strolia) – 24th place.

**Tautvydas Strolia.** Freestyle sprint – 68th place, 15 km classical style race – 83rd place, team sprint classical style (with M.Vaičiulis) – 24th place.





# Beijing 2022 Olympic Festival



On 4-20 February, in parallel with the Beijing Winter Olympics, the Beijing 2022 Olympic Festival took place at the White Bridge in Vilnius.

Daina Gudzinevičiūtė, President of the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania, which organised the Beijing 2022 Olympic Festival together with the Lithuanian Olympic Fund, said: „The Olympic Festival has become a unique space for many Vilnius residents and guests to spend their leisure time actively – we invited everyone to get involved, to try new sports, to learn something new, to get to know Olympic sport better, to socialise, to compete. We have no doubt that the festival will help to make the Beijing Games and the performance of the Lithuanian Olympic team at the Games more memorable.“

According to LNOC President, winter sports in Lithuania are growing in popularity every year, as is the interest in various sports, more and more people start engaging in cross-country and Alpine skiing, skating and trying out various activities on ice. This might encourage more interest in professional sports.

„Any activity becomes more interesting when you can try it yourself. That’s what we emphasised at the Olympic Festival: we organised various lessons, joint training sessions, hikes, and those who wanted to compete could take part in special tournaments – everyone could find an activity they liked,“ said Daina Gudzinevičiūtė.

The festival delighted Vilnius residents and visitors with a versatile programme. The festive opening of the event at



2022 with LNOC





the Hoptrans Vilnius Skating Rink began with a thunderous concert by Donatas Montvydas. After just a couple of songs, the public erupted in cheers, and eventually the skating rink turned into one big dance floor.

During the opening, the audience could also see a special figure skating show, where Paula Rakauskaitė and Milita Makarevič, members of the ice skating club Ledo Magija and students of coach Beata Sabina, performed their programme.

The sports activities of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Festival started with fun activities on snow. On the very first Saturday of the festival, a special 700-metre-long cross-country skiing track was festively opened on the Neris embankment. This distance was chosen for a reason – it is a symbolic gift to Vilnius and its citizens on the occasion of the forthcoming 700 jubilee of the city.

The newly opened track hosted a variety of competitions over the first weekend, with children and schoolchildren competing, a family relay race, and more experienced athletes competing in the super sprint and duathlon races.

„It's great to have a cross-country skiing course in the centre of Vilnius. We would like people to fall in love with winter sports, to try skiing as often as possible and to realise how good it feels to get moving,“ Olympic champi-







200

participants were attracted to the LTeam Rogaining 2022 orienteering competition.



2022 with LNOC



2022 with LNOC





on cross-country skier Vida Vencienė shared her thoughts during the opening ceremony.

And although the track melted sooner than expected due to the spring rainy weather, Vida Vencienė believes that the most important thing is people's good mood, their enthusiasm to participate, to get involved in winter sports. Despite the melted cross-country skiing course, alternatives to skiing were offered for some time – free cross-country skiing training sessions with Olympian Mantas Strolia were held in Vingis Park, and they attracted a great deal of interest.

Every weekend, participants of different ages and physical abilities gathered at the Vilnius Skating Rink to learn the secrets of figure and speed skating, ice hockey, ice skating, Bavarian curling, and improve their personal skills.

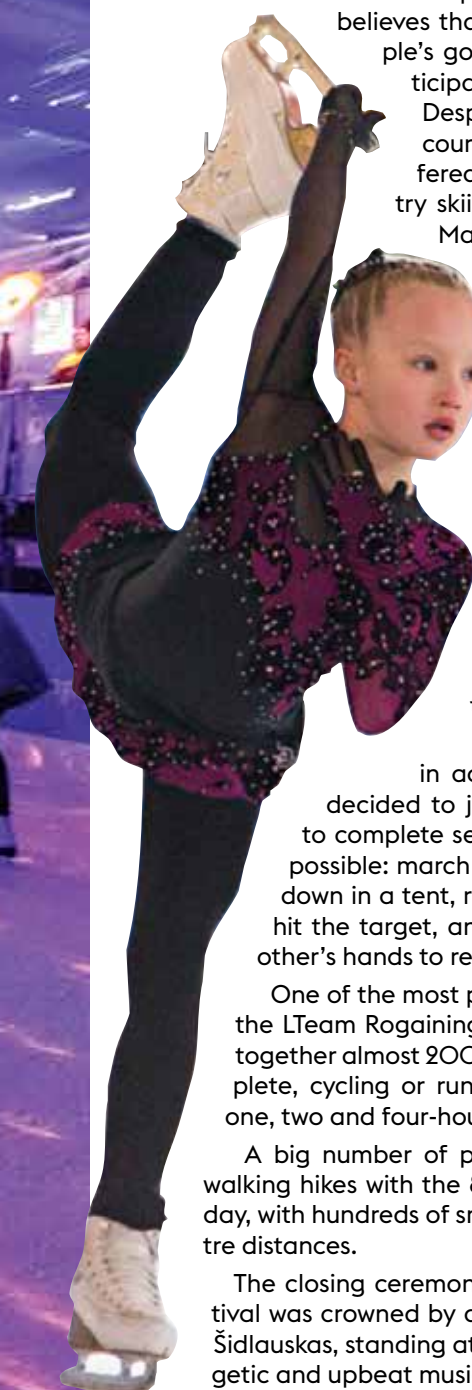
Famous athletes also tried Bavarian curling at the tournament of stars – they competed in teams of four with one goal: to push a special disc as close to the target as possible.

Families were invited to participate in active games. The participants who decided to join the LTeam fun relay race tried to complete several different events as quickly as possible: march together with special skis on, settle down in a tent, rack their brains and sort the waste, hit the target, and run together while holding each other's hands to reach the finish line.

One of the most prominent events of the festival was the LTeam Rogaining 2022 competition, which brought together almost 200 orienteering fans, who had to complete, cycling or running, the distance of their choice: one, two and four-hour courses with 40 checkpoints.

A big number of people would participate in Nordic walking hikes with the 8 Žingsniai Club trainers every Sunday, with hundreds of smiling walkers making 4 or 6-kilometre distances.

The closing ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Festival was crowned by a free disco on ice, where DJ Justas Šidlauskas, standing at the mixing console, provided energetic and upbeat music until late in the evening. ●





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# General Assembly

On 25 February, the ordinary session of the General Assembly of the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania was held in Vilnius, where the participants were presented with the 2021 Annual Report of the organisation and approved the 2022 LNOC budget.

60 out of 67 LNOC members attended the General Assembly session taking place at the Crowne Plaza Vilnius Conference Centre. The event was also attended by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport Jurgita Šiugždienė and Deputy Minister Linas Obcarskas, and Member of the Seimas Algirdas Sysas.

„Last year was a difficult year for the whole sports com-

munity: the Olympic Games taking place in the context of the pandemic, difficult training conditions during the confinement period, radical changes in funding. We do not have all the answers so far, but I hope that the new page in Lithuanian sport history will be turned while listening to the sports community and taking into account athletes' interests," said Daina Gudžinevičiūtė, LNOC President and Olympic champion.

As the funding regime for high performance sport has changed from 1 July 2022, the funding of sport was the main issue at the General Assembly session. While until six months ago the Olympic sports federations also received funding from the LNOC for the training of athletes according to the set criteria, this responsibility has been fully taken over by the State since the summer.

LNOC Treasurer Darius Čerka gave an overview of the organisation's budget report for last year. Total income for 2021 amounted to €11.37 million, almost €1.5 million more than planned. This was due to increased ticket sales by UAB Olifėja and consequently 8% of these sales allocated as support to Olympic sport.



Lithuania's voice is becoming heard in the international arena louder and louder.

The vast majority of spending – 77% – was on Olympic sport. 8.1 million euros were allocated by the LNOC to Olympic scholarships, Olympic sports federations, to procurements of special equipment, medical and scientific support for Olympic candidates, to the implementation of the programmes Tokyo 2020, Beijing 2022, Paris 2024, to athletes' training, the Olympic Shift Programme and other activities carried out by the Olympic Sports Directorate.

The number of Olympic scholarships paid by the LNOC increased in 2021. Ahead of the Tokyo Olympics, 111 athletes – four more than in 2020 – received Olympic scholarships to train for competition.

Algimantas Blažys, Chairman of the LNOC Audit Commission, presented the work and results of the Commission. The Commission checked the main financial indicators of the LNOC and found no irregularities. Artūras Štura from PricewaterhouseCoopers, the company that audits the Olympic Committee, supported the conclusions of the Chairman of the Audit Commission, stressing that the financial statements give a true and fair view. The auditor had no further comments or observations.

The 2021 budget of the Lithuanian Olympic Fund (LOF) amounted to EUR 1.49 million, while the expenditure amounted to EUR 1.1 million. In 2021, the LOF invited sports fans to six Olympic events.

Lithuania has further strengthened its position in the international sports arena. LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė was elected Vice President of the European Olympic Committees (EOC), and to the Executive Council of the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC).

Five Lithuanian representatives have been elected to six EOC Commissions, which was the highest number of representatives from one country.

„Lithuania's voice is becoming heard in the international arena louder and louder. This means that we are moving in the right direction," said Daina Gudžinevičiūtė.

The importance of the LNOC's Olympic education programme has also grown. During her visit to Lithuania, First Lady Diana Nausėdienė was accompanied by Mary, Crown Princess of Denmark. They not only took an interest in Olympic education in Lithuania, but also met with participants of the Lithuanian Children Games.

The Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP), which is being implemented in Lithuania, was presented at the meeting of the International Olympic Committee Network of National Olympic Committees Culture and Education Specialists. Xenia Kourgouzova, Senior Education Manager

of the IOC Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage, observed the OVEP training in Lithuania.

By the decision of the General Assembly, the Lithuanian Karate Federation (LKF) lost its status of LNOC member. The LKF became a member of the LNOC after the sport was included as a demonstration sport in the programme of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. The LKF became a member of the LNOC after obtaining the status of an Olympic sports federation, but without karate being included in the programme of the next Olympic Games, the federation lost this status.

The session also approved the 2022 LNOC Business Plan. It was presented by LNOC Secretary General Valentinas Paketūras. ●





# Changes to the Olympic Funding System

July 2022 marks a time of significant change in the world of Lithuanian sport – the end of the Olympic sports funding model that had been in place for three decades. As of this date, all funding for high-performance sport has been taken over by the state.

Until then, sports federations used to receive funds for athlete training from two sources – the state and the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania.

The LNOC used to allocate Olympic scholarships to athletes according to set criteria, and funds to federations for the training of athletes preparing for the Olympic Games. In 2021, 108 scholarships were paid from the LNOC budget, which also provided social guarantees for athletes, and €8.11 million were allocated to fund Olympic sport. The LNOC also funded those Olympic team candidates whose results were not sufficient to qualify for a state grant according to the criteria.

As of July, the state has assumed the responsibility for funding federations and athletes, and the newly created National Sports Agency (NSA) became responsible for implementing the country's sports policy.

„These are big and important changes for which it is important to carefully prepare in advance. The fact that the amendments to the law were adopted just a few days before 1 July, and the funding criteria are still being discussed, suggests a sense of rush with which the changes were made. The sports community remembers very well the hasty reform implemented a few years ago, the consequences of which were seen at the Tokyo Games. This resulted in the destruction of the centralised system of sports medicine and science, but now there is talk of rebuilding what was destroyed. The Department of Physical Education and Sport was closed, all responsibility for training athletes was transferred to the federations, and now a similar institution is being established – the NSA. I hope that my concerns are in vain and that it is just because of this bitter experience that I am sceptical about hasty changes. For the sake of the sports community and, most importantly, for the sake of the athletes, I do hope that the transition to the new system will go smoothly,“ this is how LNOC Presi-

dent Daina Gudzinevičiūtė evaluated the changes that will take place on July 1.

The changes have also had a significant impact on the activities of the LNOC. Following the adoption of amendments to the Law on Lotteries by the Seimas in 2021, 8% of the working capital of UAB Olifėja, which previously used to be allocated to the Olympic Movement, will go to the state budget from July 2022. The LNOC budget was expected to increase after the reform, but by 2023 it will shrink by two thirds.

„We live on the dividends paid to the shareholders of UAB Olifėja, which are expected to shrink by more than two-thirds from 2023, when the lottery tax rate will rise to 18%. Meanwhile, the amount of work at the LNOC has decreased only slightly. The Olympic Charter obliges each National Olympic Committee to transport athletes to the Olympic Games and other Olympic events. This means that the LNOC is responsible for all the organisational part: tickets, clothing, accommodation, equipment, medical care, and dealing with any problems that arise on site. Two or three Olympic events take place every year, where we take both young and elite athletes.

We will continue taking care of our athletes. Although we will no longer be able to help financially, we will organise personal competency training together with Olympic Solidarity and the European Union. We plan to focus even more on women's leadership in sport, on promoting the values of fair and respectable sport, and on the principles of good governance,“ explained Ms Gudzinevičiūtė.

The funding reform initiated by the Seimas has attracted the attention of the International Olympic Committee. The LNOC received a letter from the IOC expressing „grave concern about the reforms and legislative changes that have been introduced in Lithuania, which could have a very negative impact on the financial resources and autonomy of the IOC, and which would have a very serious impact on the Olympic Movement in your country“.

The IOC points out that neither the LNOC and national sports federations nor the stakeholders were consulted prior to the implementation of the reform. The LNOC re-

The infographic features a green background with a white border. At the top center, it displays the Lithuanian Olympic Committee logo (LIETUVA) and the LTeam logo. Below the logos, the title "LNOC as of 1 July 2022" is written in white. The content is organized into two columns: "Ongoing activities:" on the left and "Suspended activities:" on the right. Each column contains a list of bullet points in white text.

## Ongoing activities:

- development, promotion of and support to the Olympic Movement in Lithuania in accordance with the Olympic Charter;
- protection of Olympic property in Lithuania on behalf of the International Olympic Committee;
- organising participation and representation of Lithuania in the Olympic Games, the European Games, Youth Olympic Games and Olympic Festivals;
- development of the LTeam brand, which unites the Lithuanian Olympic Team;
- implementation of Olympic education programmes, promotion of children's physical literacy and physical activity;
- participation in the IOC Olympic Solidarity Programme and the European Union's international partner programmes:
  - organising personal competency and qualification upgrading training for athletes, coaches, managers;
  - development and implementation of training programmes for athletes, programmes on equality in sport, women's leadership in sport, fair play and respectful behaviour in sport;
- continuation and expansion of activities in international organisations.

## Suspended activities:

- payment of Olympic scholarships;
- financial support for the training of athletes;
- funds for the development of sports federations.

quested that a copy of the letter be forwarded to the relevant Lithuanian authorities to urge them to reconsider the initiated reforms and to ask for an open and constructive dialogue with all stakeholders in order to find a mutually acceptable solution that is in the interests of the Olympic Movement and Lithuanian athletes and corresponds to the principles of the Olympic Movement.

The IOC recalled Rule 27.6 of the Olympic Charter, which

states that National Olympic Committees „shall preserve their autonomy and resist any pressure, including but not limited to political, legal, religious or economic pressure, which would impede compliance with the Olympic Charter“. The IOC also looks forward to the understanding and cooperation of all parties in order to achieve a harmonious relationship and a productive partnership between the LNOC and the authorities. ●



# Address by the LNOC Athletes' Commission



The situation with the changed funding system for high-performance sport and the takeover of all Olympic sport sponsorship by the State is concerning for athletes, many of whom now remain in limbo.

The LNOC Athletes' Commission, in full awareness of these problems and their importance, is speaking out about them.

„At the moment, the situation is complicated: a number of high-performance athletes, including some Olympians or athletes who could become Olympians, have lost their scholarships, there is a lack of funding for shift training, and the federations don't know how they will be able to send athletes to camps or competitions at the beginning of next year, because they are not clear about when the state funding will reach them,“ said the chairman of the Commission, Olympic vice-champion Mindaugas Griškonis.

Apart from Mr Griškonis, the LNOC Athletes' Commission is composed of its Secretary, the LNOC Director of Olympic Sports, Olympian Einius Petkus, and members of the Commission – Olympians Simona Krupeckaitė, Saulius Ritteris, Brigita Virbalytė-Dimšienė, Edvinas Ra-

manauskas, Viktorija Andrulytė, Laura Asadauskaitė-Zadneprovskienė, Egidijus Balčiūnas, Andrius Gudžius.

On 22 November, the Commission held a meeting and decided to contact the heads of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MoESS) and the National Sports Agency (NSA). A proposal related to the training of high-performance athletes was sent to them.

It said: „Having heard about the objectives of the MoESS to have 100 athletes at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, working daily with the national sports federations, having the best knowledge of the problems related to the training of high-performance athletes and the experience of other countries, we, on behalf of the LNOC Athletes' Commission, make the following proposals and ask:

- \* When awarding the state scholarship and funding to a sports federation, the awards criteria should include not only the athlete's place they won, but also the sports result (metres, seconds, etc.); the athlete's potential, the importance of backup athletes and training partners must also be taken into account.

- \* Ensure optimal funding for promising young athletes.

- \* No compulsory contribution of own funds by sports federations in relation to the budget allocated based on sports results.

- \* Ensure the availability of advance payments for camps, competitions and equipment for athletes organised by the federation.

- \* Ensure that sports federations are funded at the beginning of the calendar year to cover, in a timely manner, the costs of non-competitive training and participation in competitions.

- \* Increase funding for athletes training for the Olympic Games, taking into account the particularly high cost of training, inflation and the global economic situation.

Please take into account our arguments when drafting the outline procedure for the implementation of the state budget funding of high performance sport programmes, which will significantly contribute to the achievement of objectives of the MoESS and the NSA.“ ●

*impuls*

## PAGAUK IMPULSĄ SVEIKAM GYVENIMUI

Didžiausias sveikatingumo klubų tinklas Lietuvoje



# LNOC Seminar



On 8 and 9 December, the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania held a seminar in Druskininkai for sports federations and national team head coaches. During the seminar, the federations presented their preparation work for the upcoming Paris Olympics and, apart from this, raised problematic issues.

Olympic champion and LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė said to the participants in her welcome speech: „This seminar is not only an opportunity to share our experience but also to hear first-hand what the changes implemented in the sport system will entail. I wish you to spend this time productively.“

The event was attended by over sixty heads of Olympic sports federations, national team coaches and heads of municipal sports departments.

The seminar was opened by Mindaugas Špokas, Director of the National Sports Agency (NSA), who presented the objectives, structure and strategy of the institution, which was established this year.

„Our short-term goal is two medals at the Paris Olympics, while our long-term goal is four medals in Los Angeles in 2028,“ said Mr. Špokas.

Having presented the vision of the agency, the leader of the NSA, which implements sports policy in Lithuania, was asked some questions. One of the main topics of the discussion was the description of the conditions for funding high-performance sport programmes approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The federations were concerned about the narrowed, performance-targeted funding criteria, the increased and unclear bureaucratic burden, and the delays in funding.

### Uncertainties After the Reform

With the State taking over all responsibility for the funding of high-performance sport on 1 July, the scholarship arrangements for athletes have also changed. A total of 179 athletes received scholarships in the second half of 2022, including 62 athletes with disabilities and 43 young athletes.

The participants of the workshop noted that the change in funding arrangements means that the scholarship is awarded on the basis of performance but does not take into account the athlete's potential and chances of qualifying for the Olympic Games.

Nijolė Medvedeva, Secretary General of the Lithuanian Athletics Federation, regretted the change in the procedure for payment of scholarships. Although eleven athletes went to the Tokyo Olympics, only four athletes received state scholarships at the end of 2022.



„We are currently preparing at least two dozen athletes for the Paris Olympics and we expect to have at least as many athletes representing our country as in Tokyo. However, in terms of scholarships, we are outsiders. We should be working together to help athletes, rather than to make it harder for them to reach the heights. Now a young athlete who has competed in the Olympics, gained experience, but has not reached the highest results in sport no longer receives a scholarship, they lose support. I think this is greatly unfair towards athletes,“ Ms. Medvedeva said, pointing out that participation in the recent Olympic Games is not included among the criteria for receiving a state scholarship.

Einius Petkus, Director of Olympic Sport at the LNOC, reminded that the size of the Olympic team also determines the quota of service personnel allocated to a country. This means that a larger national team can take a larger number of medical practitioners and coaches to the Olympic Games.

### Address on Behalf of the Athletes

Mindaugas Griškonis, Chairman of the Athletes' Commission, rower and President of the Lithuanian Rowing Federation, shared the proposals collected by the Olympians, which the Commission sent to the responsible institutions.



„The main issue we have raised is the criteria for awarding scholarships. I have been approached by several female athletes, Olympians, who have lost their scholarships and are living on the federation's food allowance. I do not understand it: if the country is aiming to have a hundred athletes at the 2028 Games, how can athletes receive only four scholarships? I am a representative of the rowing sport, and I cannot complain, our athletes get more scholarships, but every sport is different. Mightn't it be worth taking it into account? It might be worthwhile setting up a panel of experts to look at each case individually.

Another pressing problem is the delay in public funding. Federations are unable to make advance payments. For example, in January we are planning a training camp at a sports base that is also desired by more national teams, but we cannot pay for the booking," said Mr. Griškonis.

Federations of games sports shared their fears about the future, as they can hardly qualify for public funding according to the established criteria.

„This is the genocide of the games sports," Donatas Pasvenskas, Head of the Lithuanian Handball Federation, said straightforwardly.

Darius Čerka, President of the Lithuanian Volleyball Federation, echoed him, adding that the funding the Federation currently receives is just enough to maintain one staff member, who is in charge of logistics services. Meanwhile, the national teams prepare for competitions with their own money.



Vydas Gedvilas, President of the Lithuanian Basketball Federation, which used to be the biggest beneficiary in terms of funding, pointed out that although the results were improving, the federation received less money from the state. „We were promised a 38% increase in funding, but we have had an equivalent reduction! The Agency has a huge challenge ahead of it and if things do not improve but rather get worse, we will have to assume the responsibility," said Mr. Gedvilas.

Raimundas Daubaras, Head of the Lithuanian Sailing Union, was concerned about the funds allocated for the purchase of equipment, as the new inventory budget provides for up to EUR 100,000. The new Olympic windsurfing equipment of class IQFoil is expensive and very fragile, therefore sailors fear that if the equipment breaks, it will be difficult to ensure that it can be renewed promptly, as the equipment will have to be purchased by way of public tender.



# 4

**Olympic events – the European Youth Winter and Summer Olympic Festivals, the World Beach Games and the European Games – will take place in 2023.**





Criticism has also been levelled at the Working Group on the Improvement of the Training System for High Performance Athletes, whose comments, according to the Federations' representatives, have been little taken into account. Most federations raised the issue of the payment of food allowances to coaches and referees, which arose because the outline of the conditions of financing of high-performance sport programmes prohibits it.

#### Allocation of Grants to Federations

During the seminar, E.Petkus and Agnė Vanagienė, Heads of the Olympic Sports Directorate of the LNOC, introduced the changes in the organisation and funding of the training of athletes preparing for the Olympic Games. As of 1 July 2022, when the state will take over all funding for Olympic sport, the LNOC will no longer compile lists of Olympic candidates and Olympic hopes athletes.

With the organisation's budget significantly reduced, the LNOC will no longer fund athlete training, Olympic preparation programmes for the games teams, Olympic scholarships, coaches' salaries, athletes' equipment, special transport, medical and educational services.

The LNOC will no longer be able to financially assist federations in organising training camps before Olympic events. For example, athletes who requested this had the opportunity to participate in an acclimatisation camp in Hircuka before the Tokyo Games, and in 2022, the LNOC allocated €80,000 for final training camps before the European Youth Summer Olympic Festival in Banská Bystrica.

The change in the Olympic funding system is expected to generate €3.8 million in revenue in 2023 – almost double the amount of 2022. €1.88 million will be used to fund Olympic sport to prepare for and participate in next year's Olympic events and the upcoming Paris Olympics.

The draft 2023 LNOC budget presented to the Executive Committee provides for one-off grants for Olympic sports, LNOC-recognised partners and federations of sports included in the Paris Olympics programme amounting to €790,000.

„Although we have not yet received or heard about the funding promised by the State to the Olympic Committee, we understand that the changes in funding introduced this year have not been easy for us or for sports federations. We hope that the grants will help to cover the required 5% of own resources from the state funding we receive. According to the current situation we see that our income will decrease, but as long as we can we will try to help the federations,“ said LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė.



2022 with LNOC



2022 with LNOC



I do not understand it: if the country is aiming to have a hundred athletes at the 2028 Games, how can athletes receive only four scholarships?

#### Preparing for Olympic Events

The leaders of the LNOC Olympic Sports Directorate gave an overview of the preparations for the 2023 Olympic events. There are as many as four events. These are the European Youth Winter and Summer Olympic Festivals, the World Beach Games and the European Games, which will host Olympic qualifying tournaments for a number of sports.

The heads of the federations discussed preparations for the 2024 Paris Olympics and the biggest challenges – rising costs, long distances between sport venues and transport planning, as well as staff shortages.

Vaida Mačianskienė, the LNOC's Director of Foreign Relations, presented to the federations the opportunities offered by the International Olympic Committee's Olympic Solidarity. The LNOC facilitates the opportunity for sports coaches and federation leaders to improve their skills through qualification upgrading courses. Olympic Solidarity can finance athletes' second careers.

During the seminar, the new Director of the Lithuanian Olympic Fund, Lina Minderienė, introduced herself to the heads of the federations. She discussed the Fund's activities, work with sponsors and prospects.

The President of the Lithuanian Federation of Sports Medicine Paulius Petraitis discussed the issues of sports medicine and the challenges caused by the changes. Gintaras Jasiūnas, President of the Association of Municipal Sports Department Managers, presented a study on the activities of Lithuanian municipal sports training centres. ●





# Fair Play Awards

On 23 February, the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania honoured the winners of the Lithuanian Fair Play Awards. LNOC President Daina Gudzinevičiūtė and Head of the Lithuanian Fair Play Committee, medallist at two Olympic Games Austra Skujytė, presented the awards to the winners.

The 27th Awards honoured the winners in six nominations: Lifetime Achievement, Fair Play, Fair Play of a Young Athlete or Youth Team, Young Athlete as a Role Model for Peers, Fair Play Project and Fair Play Organisation.

„It is delightful that year after year we see many examples of fair play in sport in Lithuania and we have the opportunity to honour them and present to the public. It's not just an award but also a reminder to everyone that we are first and foremost human beings. Therefore, to be able to lend a hand to a stumbling competitor or to achieve a meaningful goal without counting working hours is something that each of us should strive for," said Austra Skujytė.

For its countless hours dedicated to children with oncological diseases and its noble goal, **Rimantas Kaukėnas' Support Group** has been awarded as the Fair Play Organisation 2021.

Basketball player and physiotherapy specialist **Gintarė Katkutė** was awarded in the category of Fair Play of a Young Athlete for its conduct during the Women's League B Division play-offs. Gintarė rushed to help the leader of the opponent team, who badly injured her head, leaving the match herself.

The winner of the Fair Play Project nomination is the programme by **Kazickas Family Foundation Youth Can**. This programme is modelled on Zimbabwe's Hoops4hope initiative. Throughout the school year, weekly free sessions are organised which, through sports, discussions and educational activities develop personal and social skills, provide employment and healthy lifestyle opportunities for young people in Lithuania's regions, and ensure a safe and positive environment.

**Jovilė Rackevičiūtė** won the award of a Young Athlete as a Role Model for her Peers. For the past three years, this 18-year-old athlete has been volunteering and dedicating her free time to children with special educational needs, introducing them to track-and-field athletics.

**Zenonas Misiūnas**, President of the Lithuanian Special Olympics Committee, former professional cross-country skier and coach, was awarded and honoured for his lifetime achievements. He was Director of Utena Special School-Multifunctional Centre and, for more than 30 years, he has been coaching children and young people with intellectual disabilities. In training, competitions and tournaments in foreign countries, he has not only got to



It is delightful that year after year we see many examples of fair play in sport in Lithuania and we have the opportunity to honour them and present to the public.



know children with disabilities closely, but has also become convinced that active sport is the best way for people with disabilities to get integrated into society. He is a man who brings the community of people with special needs together through sport.

The Fair Play Award of the Year was given to Hilla Reuveny, physiotherapist and physical training coach of the Israeli national youth swimming team, who assisted the Lithuanian swimmer Aleksas Savickas during the European Youth Championship. Coach Žilvinas Ovsukas said that Aleksas was preparing for the 200 m breaststroke final. After two swims, the athlete needed help from a physiotherapist. The Lithuanian team did not have its own physiotherapist, therefore Žilvinas approached for help a representative of the Israeli team working nearby and offered to pay. However, Hilla refused the payment and agreed to help the Lithuanians. After a massage by Hilla Reuveny, Alex managed to overtake the Russian athlete at the final by 0.02 seconds faster and to win the gold medal. ●

## FAIR PLAY COMMITTEE

The Lithuanian Fair Play Committee was established on 25 March 1993. The aim of the International Fair Play Committee is to protect and promote respect for fair play and its values, not only in elite sports or sport-for-all programmes, but also in everyday life.





# Olympic Education Forum

**R**espect, joy earned through effort, the pursuit of excellence, harmony of mind, body and will, and noble behaviour – these are the topics of Olympism education, which, being based on these topics, can be the key to success in the development of the 21st century individual. This was the topic of the seventh Olympic Education Forum organised by the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania.

The participants of the event, which took place in Kaunas Žalgiris Arena, were welcomed by the First Lady of the



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I invite everyone to join the Olympic education initiatives. Together, let's strive to make more children and young people fall in love with sport.

country Diana Nausėdienė and LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė; well-known athletes, educators and specialists took part in the discussions and conversations. They invited us to take a broader view of education and to discuss the topic „Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together“.

„Olympic education is a movement that builds self-confidence, teaches respect for oneself and others, imparts knowledge about healthy lifestyles, creates equality of opportunity, and brings communities together. It is the flywheel of the Olympic Movement, which can serve humanity, help fight discrimination of all kinds, create a responsible attitude towards environmental issues, and support initiatives linking sport with culture and education.

You, the representatives of education, are the strength and power of Lithuania. I invite everyone to join the Olympic education initiatives. Together, let's strive to make more children and young people fall in love with sport,“ urged Nausėdienė.

LNOC President Olympic champion Daina Gudžinevičiūtė was delighted with the opportunity to meet live after a two-year break.

„Last summer, the International Olympic Committee renewed its slogan „Faster, Higher, Stronger“, adding the word „Together“, and with this addition, the slogan now symbolises the unity that is so necessary in today's challenging world. We are delighted to be together live this year after a two-year break. Today, we have athletes









usly agreed that respect is one of the most important elements not only in sport, but also in life, and we have to help young people understand this from the early days.

Austra Skujytė, Olympic Vice-Champion and President of the Lithuanian Committee for Noble Sportsmanship, also agreed with the thoughts of the participants. In her presentation „Noble Behaviour in Sport and Life“, she stressed that noble behaviour is one of the most prominent forms of respect. The former athlete shared her long experience in sport, when she had to deal with noble behaviour, and gave advice on how to recognise and encourage such behaviour in young people.

Educators play a special role in fostering respect and other Olympic values. Donatas Petkauskas, experiential learning coach and non-formal education specialist, delivered a presentation „Pursuing Excellence. Educator's Position and Attitudes Necessary for the Development of Values.“

Olympic champion Laura Asadauskaitė-Zadneprovskienė and Paralympic medallist Edgaras Matakas, who spoke in the discussion „Joy Earned Through Effort“, shared their long-lasting sports experience and memories from their childhood. They invited educators and coaches to help children find the things that make them happy, to never stop believing in them and to encourage them to work hard.

The Olympic Education Forum concluded with a discussion „Harmony of the Body, Will and Mind,“ during which Tomas Linksmuolis, physiotherapist, nutritionist and healthy lifestyle specialist of the Olympic team, Dainius Jakučionis, psychotherapist, lecturer, Mindaugas Šatkus, founder of the Šešios Trim sports community, and Ieva Kulbickienė, lecturer, judo coach, and cofounder of the „Tapk Čempionu“, discussed the ways to inspire the youth to move and the results of their willpower efforts. ●





# New Miracle Project

**N**ew Miracle is the LNOC's unique initiative, with four other European National Olympic Committees joining it.

One of the project's main objectives is to promote gender equality, leadership and participation in decision-making, and to build self-confidence. Good examples of the project are expected to lead to changes in society. The project is aimed at young volunteers in the field of sport, as well as decision-makers working in sports federations, clubs and other sports organisations.

The LNOC's application for this project was one of the few to win European Union funding. The maximum funding available for this initiative is €355,000.

The LNOC started working on EU-funded projects in 2016.

„But we have always participated as partners, which means that someone from a foreign Olympic Committee would write a project and invite us to join in when they received funding. We had set three priorities: good governance, second careers for athletes, and gender equality, or in other words, greater involvement of women in decision-making in sports organisations, and their qualification upgrading,“ said Agnė Vanagienė, the LNOC's Deputy Director for Olympic Sport.

As its author, leader and coordinator, the LNOC is particularly proud of the New Miracle project. The project was written in 2020, its implementation deadlines had to be adjusted due to the pandemic, which was also the cause of one-year postponement of the Tokyo Olympics. The LNOC asked the European Commission to extend the project for six months. Having received the approval, the fruit of patient work is already being reaped.

The LNOC has invited four other National Olympic Committees – those of Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia and Italy – to work together. Most EU projects also involve researchers as academic experts in the development of training programmes with lasting value. This time, the University of Rome Foro Italico was chosen.

The New Miracle Steering Committee, approved by the European Commission, consists of LNOC members Vaida Mačianskienė and Agnė Vanagienė, Maruta Taima from the Latvian National Olympic Committee, Petra Gantnerova from the Slovak National Olympic Committee, Daniela Drago from the Italian National Olympic Committee, Merle Kaljurand from the Estonian National Olympic Committee and Sabrina Demarie from the University of Rome.

„The Italian National Olympic Committee recommended the university, which has very strong lecturers and professors in this field, and the sports curriculum. As a project coordinator, I find the programme really impressive and valuable, and the Italians themselves choose to teach it at their university,“ said the LNOC Deputy Director of Olympic Sport.

The programme, piloted by Italian students, will be fully operational in 2023.

In preparation for the project, a free training programme has been developed for young or aspiring sports managers and an exclusive mentoring platform where New Miracle participants will have the opportunity to consult with experienced colleagues and strengthen their collaboration skills.

„We see a trend that there are not many women in top positions in sports organisations. We hope that the participants of this project will take away not only knowledge and skills, but also motivation and inspiration to set even more ambitious goals. For many years, we have been organising training courses for both beginners and advanced sports administrators, organised by the International Olympic Committee's Olympic Solidarity. This platform will be a strong step forward for the development of sport management in Lithuania.

In December, a joint training of mentors was held in all five countries. Our aim is for the participants to take away tools that they can use in their work environment. That is why we pay special attention to both the mentor training and the content of the training,“ said Ms Vanagienė.

The total number of participants is over 100 from five countries. Lithuania selected 25 professionals working in sports federations, clubs and organisations. The first national training session was planned for mid-January. The training will focus on the management of sports organisations, leadership, and the gender equality policies of inter-



national sports organisations. The latter aspect is a major focus. It also covers gender bias, stereotypes, gender roles and norms, sexual harassment in the working environment.

In February, six Lithuanian participants will attend an international session in Bratislava, Slovakia.

„Unfortunately, we can't send everyone, because it's very financially strenuous. Besides, with each country bringing its own participants, there will be a really big training group,“ explained Agnė Vanagienė.

However, she acknowledged that the bigger in scope the work, the bigger the responsibility. „The project we are coordinating has been allocated €350,000 over three years. Managing everything, getting the partners involved, creating an interesting and useful training programme, taking care of the financial reporting and documentation required by the European Commission is a difficult task. These things are both human resource- and time-intensive. It is an extra job on top of all the other things the LNOC does, but I find it very meaningful,“ she said. ●

# 5

**National Olympic Committees participating in the *New Miracle* project.**





In May, Vanagienė attended the RINGS project partners' meeting in Bratislava (Slovakia). This was the first physical meeting since the project started in February 2020.

The meeting focused on a tool developed by the project to help modernise the strategic management and governance of the National Olympic Committee and to support project implementation. The partners had a productive

discussion on the lessons learnt from the project.

Per Nylykke, Deputy Director for Public Affairs at the Danish National Olympic Committee and the Danish Olympic Confederation (DIF), shared one example of successful stakeholder engagement. The DIF cooperates with Amnesty International Denmark at the national level, especially when organising major sports events and promoting human rights. ●



# Project RINGS

The idea behind the RINGS project, which started in 2020 and ended in 2022, was to modernise the strategic governance and management of the National Olympic Committee by modernising the cooperation with internal and external stakeholders.

The Erasmus+ project was coordinated by the European Olympic Committees (EOC) Office at the European Union, with the National Olympic Committees of Denmark, Slovakia, Turkey, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Netherlands and the Johannes Gutenberg University in Germany as partners.

The tools developed through the project should help the LNOC and other National Olympic Committees to deal more efficiently with day-to-day issues and activities and contribute to improving good governance.

These tools were presented to the Lithuanians in September during the LNOC Advanced Management Training.

„Through this project, we have developed a good governance manual that will be available not only to National Olympic Committees but also to other sports organisations. As one of the topics that the participants of the training are looking into is strategic management, they were presented with the PR handbook developed by the RINGS project.

These guidelines were developed in close cooperation with the National Olympic Committees involved in the project: drawing on their experience in dealing with both the media and other stakeholders, and taking into account the challenges and decisions they face. I have no doubt that this will be a very useful tool for sports administrators as well,“ said Agnė Vanagienė, Deputy Director of Olympic Sport at the LNOC.







# Athletes' Dual Career System

The National Olympic Committee of Lithuania, together with the National Olympic Committees of Poland, Slovenia, Turkey and Greece, have joined forces to create an effective athletes' dual career system.

In May, the leaders of the LNOC Olympic Sports Directorate Einius Petkus and Agnė Vanagienė visited the Polish Olympic Committee to discuss with the partners the objectives and progress of the project.

„This was the first meeting where we shared what we have done so far in our countries. Some are more advanced, others less so. For example, the Slovenian Olympic Committee is probably the only one in Europe to have a centre for the dual career of athletes. In Lithuania, we help athletes develop their personal qualities and competences through training. Recently, together with the International Support Foundation Western Union Lithuania Foundation, we have completed training for young athletes. We focused on two main topics – leadership and personal branding. Every year we organise special dual career training for athletes,” said Agnė Vanagienė, Deputy Director of the LNOC Olympic Sports.

The Polish Olympic Committee won European Union funding for the project and invited the other four countries to cooperate. The project will run for two years. During this period, the aim is not only to develop a dual career system for athletes but also to test it.

In October, the heads of the Olympic Committees participated in the meeting held in the Greek capital Athens where they drafted a questionnaire for athletes.

„After the first meeting in May, we all analysed the situation in our countries and found many similarities. The career of an athlete is limited in time and, sooner or later, all athletes are faced with the question: what's next? There are those who, due to injury or other circumstances, have to face this question earlier than they would like to. The LNOC regularly organises training courses for athletes helping them develop their personal competences and then apply them in the job market. A dual career system would be of great help to athletes,” said Agnė Vanagienė, the leader of the project in Lithuania.

The first step towards the implementation of this project is a survey of athletes, which will show the need, expectations and challenges that athletes face.

„This study will not only seek to find out what athletes would expect from a dual career system, but also the whole context surrounding it: why do athletes end their careers, what field do they choose to study, and if not, why? We will interview athletes of all ages, from young people to those who have retired from active careers,” said Agnė Vanagienė.

The results of the study, which will have surveyed 500 athletes from the participating countries, will be presented in Turkey during the third partner meeting in April 2023. In order to gain a broader understanding of the context of the demand for dual careers among athletes, the interviews will be made among athletes of all ages, from young people to those who have retired from active careers.



The career of an athlete is limited in time and, sooner or later, all athletes are faced with the question: what's next?

„Eventually, at the end of the project, each participating National Olympic Committee will have to have a responsible person who will have information about studies, educational opportunities, social partners and will be able to advise the athletes on these issues,” said Vanagienė.

The system will be tested with one selected sports federation in each country.

The project involves a number of well-known Olympians who are currently working for their National Olympic Committees. For example, one of the project coordinators is Luiza Zlotkowska from Poland, a former short track speed skater and two-time Olympic medallist. ●







groups of a dozen to twenty people, using games, practical tasks and sharing their experience. This is the only way to achieve the best results, by speaking in a fairly personal way rather than to large audiences.

One of the instructors – psychologist, certified skills trainer, coaching expert Vega Dikčienė was delighted about the young people she met in all the cities: „Most of them did not require any special effort to incite their interest, they are naturally bright and interested in everything that seems important in life. They are athletes, result-oriented, goal-oriented, therefore the topic of personal efficiency was timely and relevant. The training was delivered through activities, experiences and examples. The first group provoked me by saying: „Don't talk about others, tell us about yourself.“ Therefore, I conveyed the contents of the topic through my life journey. I am also a leader myself, the head of a training centre, I have always worked as a psychologist, and now I am studying psychotherapy.“

The instructor emphasised that the age of the participants in such trainings determines a lot – seventeen- and eighteen-year-old students have a different feeling and appreciation of themselves and of the subjects they are taught, while the younger ones rather tend to be just listeners.

„We discussed if you can be a leader to others, to bring them together, to invite them to move in a certain direction, if you are not a leader yourself, if you yourself have no discipline. We talked about the need to start with oneself first. It is not an easy topic, but very interesting. The four hours would fly in a flash when using games, discussions and other activities. I would return from this training feeling uplifted. I would joke to my friends that I should not be the one to get the salary, but rather I should be the one to pay for the positive emotions, the „cleanliness“ of the participants, their ingenuity - no pretence, no pomposity. These young people are amazing,“ said Vega Dikčienė in admiration of the future sports leaders. ●

# Youth Leadership Training

However critical some educators may be of Generation Z, young people who play sport – from teenagers to twenty-year-olds – are curious, inquisitive and very receptive to knowledge. This was confirmed by the instructors and the participants of the training organised by the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania in cooperation with the Western Union Foundation Lithuania targeted at this age group.

The training was aimed at promoting youth leadership. Professional instructors, who had worked with athletes many times, would share the day: one instructor taught how to express personal leadership in a smart and practical way through social networks and other means of publicity, while the other – a coach and psychologist - taught how to be a leader not only in sports, but also in life.

164 young athletes took part in the workshops, which took place over almost two months in nine institutions. In 2021, 102 athletes from Vilnius, Šiauliai and Panevėžys took part in the training organised by the LNOČ and the Western Union Lithuania.

In 2022, the geography of the seminars expanded – the training was attended by the students from Kaunas Žalgiris Football Academy, Kaunas Žalgiris Basketball Academy, Kaunas Startas Sports School, Kėdainiai Sports Club, Garliava Sports Centre, Klaipėda Vladas Knašius Basketball School, Palanga Sports Centre, Molėtai District Physical Education and Sports Centre, Ukmergė Sports Centre.

Having started with Kaunas, the instructors in April also taught in Panevėžys, Kėdainiai, Garliava, Klaipėda, Palanga, Molėtai and Ukmergė. Each time, they worked in

## CONTRACT

The LNOČ signed a sponsorship agreement with Western Union Foundation Lithuania in September 2020. The objective of the cooperation is to help the young athletes to develop not only on the sports playground but also as individuals and to introduce them to second career opportunities.





## European Youth Winter Olympic Festival in Vuokatti

The 15th European Youth Winter Olympic Festival, which took place on 20–25 March in Vuokatti, Finland, was marked by the achievement of gender balance and significantly fewer security restrictions than in recent times. A total of 932 athletes from 46 countries took part in the European Youth Winter Olympic Festival. 135 sets of medals were awarded over the five days of competition.

The date of this festival had to be postponed twice due to the pandemic. It was supposed to take place in February 2021, then it was decided to hold the event in December, and in the end most of the events took place a year later than planned, apart from boys' hockey tournament, which was held in December 2021.

15 athletes represented Lithuania: biathletes Domas Jankauskas, Lukrecija Daugirdaitė and Viktorija Kapancova, figure skater Jogailė Aglinskytė, Alpine skiers Oskaras Karlavičius, Nikolajus Navitskas and Gabija Šinkūnaitė, short track speed skating athletes Gabija Astrauskaitė







and Kotryna Sokolovskytė, cross-country skiers Kasparas Misiūnas, Ernestas Tretyakovas, Eglė Savickaitė, Rūta Žemaitytė, snowboarders Lukas Putys-Gallagher and Patricija Ivanovaitė.

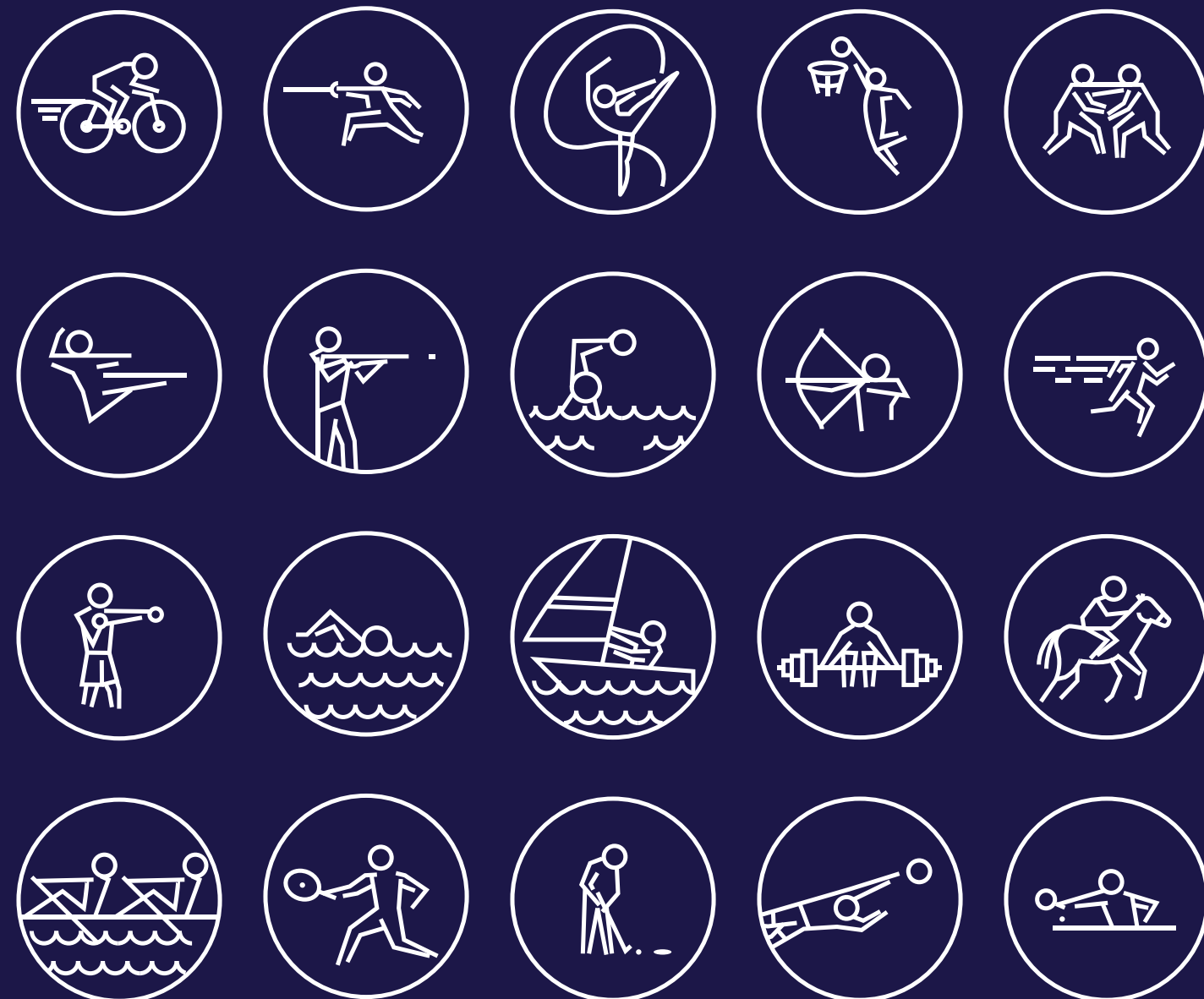
The best from the Lithuanians was Ms Aglinskytė, who finished ninth. She was entrusted to carry the Lithuanian tricolour flag during the closing ceremony. Lukas Putys-Gallagher and Patricija Ivanovaitė carried the national flag at the opening parade.

Gabija Šinkūnaitė and Eglė Savickaitė competed in Vuokatti just one month after their debut at the Beijing Winter Olympics.

At the opening ceremony of the European Youth Winter Olympic Festival on the evening of 20 March, Spyros Capralos, President of the Association of European Olympic Committees, expressed his support for Ukraine fighting the war, and welcomed 28 participating athletes from the country. He also thanked the Olympic Committees of the Old



# TEISĖ LAIMĖTI







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Continent for financially supporting the Ukrainian delegation to come to Finland.

Less than a month before the festival, the EOC Executive Committee, in an extraordinary meeting following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine by Russia, decided to exclude Russian and Belarusian athletes from the European Youth Winter Olympic Festival.

Daina Gudzinevičiūtė, EOC Vice President and President of the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania, also attended the opening ceremony. She was entrusted with the task of awarding the medallists of some of the events during the festival.

Participants competed in nine sports disciplines: Alpine skiing, biathlon, ice hockey, snowboarding, cross-country skiing, ski jumping, short track speed skating, figure skating and Nordic combined. The inclusion of girls' hockey and Nordic combined for the first time in the competition programme practically ensured gender balance.

The athletes participating in the festival range in age from 14 to 18 years.

At the closing ceremony, the peace flame that had been burning for a week in the Vuokatti Arena was extinguished and the European Youth Winter Olympic Festival flag was handed over to the Friuli Venezia Giulia region of Italy. ●



## LITHUANIA AT THE FESTIVAL

### BIATHLON

**Domas Jankauskas:** sprint – 52nd place, 12.5 km individual race – 60th place.  
**Lukrecija Daugirdaitė:** sprint – 50th place, 10 km individual race – 55th place.  
**Viktorija Kapancova:** sprint – 55th place, 10 km individual race – 54th place.

### FIGURE SKATING

**Jogailė Aglinskytė** – 9th place.

### SHORT TRACK SPEED SKATING

**Gabija Astrauskaitė:** 1500 m – 26th place, 500 m – 15th place, 1000 m – 17th place.  
**Kotryna Sokolovskytė:** 1500 m – 18th place, 500 m – 21st place, 1000 m – 23rd place.

### ALPINE SKIING

**Oskaras Karlavičius:** slalom – disqualified, parallel slalom – 55th place.  
**Nikolajus Navitskas:** slalom – failed to finish, parallel slalom – failed to finish.  
**Gabija Šinkūnaitė:** slalom – 46th place, parallel slalom – 56th place.

### CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

**Kasparas Misiūnas:** 10 km freestyle – 76th place, 7.5 km classic – 73rd place, sprint freestyle – 70th place, mixed relay 4x5 km classic and freestyle – 17th place.  
**Ernestas Tretjakovas:** 10 km freestyle – 72nd place, 7.5 km classic – 70th place, sprint freestyle – 61st place, mixed relay 4x5 km classic and freestyle – 17th place.  
**Eglė Savickaitė:** 75 km freestyle – 46th place, 5 km classic – 45th place, sprint freestyle – 35th place, mixed relay 4x5 km classic and freestyle – 17th place.  
**Rūta Žemaitytė:** 7.5 km freestyle – 62nd place, 5 km classic – 60th place, sprint freestyle – 63rd place, mixed relay 4x5 km classic and freestyle – 17th place.

### SNOWBOARDING

**Lukas Putys-Gallagheris:** 27th place in Big Air, 34th place in the slope style.  
**Patricija Ivanovaitė:** 10th place in Big Air, 11th place in slope style.





# Project *HeForShe*

The National Olympic Committee of Lithuania implements the *HeForShe* initiative of the United Nations Movement for Gender Equality.

The project serves as an invitation to men to express their support for women and, together with them, actively aspire for equal gender opportunities, change stereotypes, and be a united and visible driving force of change.

Project *HeForShe* was launched in 2014 with the famous speech by actress Emma Watson, pointing out that gender equality is a common concern for all. Since then, millions of men around the world have joined the project, including former US President Barack Obama.

In Lithuania, LNOC looked at this project in the context of sport through telling sensitive stories from the world of sport.

The second project of this season started in 2021, and in 2022 the LNOC presented five new stories of men supporting women – wives, daughters, mothers, colleagues – pursuing a career in sport.



The first story is about Agnė Šniukienė and Agnė Klimaitienė, members of the triathlon club *Ironmama*, which brings together strong and ambitious women, and the support they receive from their husbands in preparing for sport challenges.

The second one is about Kristina Ramonienė, who decided to learn the secrets of sailing. Experienced captain Rimantas Gutauskas helped her realise her dream.

The third story goes about Donata Grigienė, a long-time player of the Lithuanian National Field Hockey Team, prize-winner of the Lithuanian and European championships, player at the Šiauliai *Ginstrektė* team, coach of the boys' field hockey team. The athlete and her rugby player husband Mindaugas Grigas say that their marriage, which has lasted for more than a decade, is based on the foundations of mutual understanding and unconditional support.

The fourth one is about the Rankelės family. Robertas Rankelė, father of two daughters, Gabrielė and Greta, who have chosen to take up skeet shooting, knows the recipe for bringing up his daughters without being constrained by stereotypes. He and his wife let their daughters explore all the activities that interest them.

The fifth one is about Vilma Juchnevičiūtė, a pentathlon coach. She talked about what it means to be the only girl in the boys' water polo team, the breakthrough and the most important lessons given by the first coach Jonas Čirūnas. ●



2022 with LNOC



# Children Games



The Lithuanian Children Games, the largest physical activity project for kindergarten children in Lithuania taking place since the beginning of the year, came to a close on the first weekend of June in Palanga, where the last two grand festivals of the final stage were held.

The final events, which amounted to as many as 10 in 2022, were based on various relay races. Teams of three girls, three boys and two educators took part in a series of sports challenges during the festivities, designed to develop children's overall physical fitness.

This was the third and final round of the project's eighth season. In the first phase, the participants were invited to participate in remote coaching sessions, while in the second phase, the participating pre-school establishments organised sports festivals within the institutions.

„The growing number of participants each year is not only encouraging, but is also a sign that we are working in the right direction. This year, as many as 44,000 children from all over Lithuania took part in the project's activities, not only trying different forms of physical activity but also experiencing many good emotions. We are very grateful to the patron of the project, First Lady Diana Nausėdienė, for her sincere support and attention to the little ones. We would also like to thank our partners from the National Association of Preschool Physical Education Teachers (RIUKKPA), with whom we have been walking hand in hand and in the spirit of the same values for the last eight years. And, of course, to the educators. Their work is invaluable,” said Daina Gudžinevičiūtė, Olympic champion and President of the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania.

In the final stage of the project, which attracted a record number of participants this year, the young athletes were supported by the patron of the project, the First Lady of the country Diana Nausėdienė, LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė, Olympic cyclists Simona Krupeckaitė and Olivija Baleišytė, swimmer Ugnė Mažutaitytė, Olympic judo fighter Sandra Jablonskytė, basketball player Martyna Petrėnaitė, and Paralympic champion and President of the Lithuanian Paralympic Committee Mindaugas Bilius, Olympic vice-champion rower Saulius Ritteris, national women's football team player Simona Petravičienė, wrestler Danutė Domikaitytė, Youth Olympic champion swimmer Agnė Šeikaitė and Paralympic rower Augustas Navickas, who arrived to inspire them with motivation.

„The 8th season of the Lithuanian Children Games was extremely intense. After a two-year break, it was possible to organise live events again: workshops for educators, festivals in institutions and major festivals in six Lithuanian cities. All of these events gave participants the opportunity to interact







and collaborate, to reveal their abilities, to gain knowledge and to develop their competences.

I am delighted with the active support and participation of parents, the creativity of the educators in organising the institutional festivals, and the whole team of organisers, with whom it is possible to implement the events of all sizes and formats.

I hope that next year's project will involve even more pre-school institutions, that the participants will be as creative and responsible, and that the support team will be as large and active," said Audronė Vizbarienė, President of RIUKKPA.

A total of 331 pre-school teams took part in the major festivals of the last phase of the project. Twelve RIUKKPA coaches welcomed the 2648 participants at the final events, introducing them to the competitions and making sure they performed the movements correctly.

In what has become a true celebration of sport, participants ran, jumped, climbed, exercised their balance and played games to train various movements with the help of the coaches.

”

I hope that next year's project will involve even more pre-school institutions, that the participants will be as creative and responsible, and that the support team will be as large and active.

10

final stage events of the Lithuanian Children Games were held in 2022.



2022 with LNOC



2022 with LNOC





“ All the events were exceptionally well supported, with an average of 600 spectators coming to each festival to see how the young athletes were performing.

2022 with LNOC



During the last round of festivals, the organisers helped the young participants feel like professional athletes, with events being organised in city arenas and newly built sports centres. All the events were exceptionally well supported, with an average of 600 spectators coming to each festival to see how the young athletes were performing.

The project is under the patronage of the country's First Lady Diana Nausėdienė.

Since 2014, the Lithuanian Children Games have been organised by the LNOC and RIUKKPA. The aim of the project is not only to introduce pre-school children to sport, but also to involve them in engaging physical activities, thus promoting the joy of sport, socialising, experiencing good emotions and strengthening health from an early age.

The project is partly funded by the Sports Support Fund, administered by the Education Exchange Support Fund. ●

2022 with LNOC







# Celebration at the President's Office

**O**n 3 June, First Lady Diana Nausėdienė and the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania organised a festivity in the courtyard of the President's Office to Mark Children's Day.

President of the Republic of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda, Diana Nausėdienė, Olympic champion and LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė and Olympic vice-champion rower Mindaugas Griškonis welcomed the participants of the festivity and joined them in the activities.

„I am proud that the Lithuanian Children Games project, which has been successfully running for eight years and was initiated by the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania, has reached the courtyard of the Lithuanian President's Office.





Contributing to the promotion and implementation of the ideas of physical literacy education, the Olympic picnic at the President's Office is becoming a continuation of the Lithuanian Children Games, as yet one more chord in this beautiful initiative," said the patron of the Lithuanian Children Games Diana Nausėdienė.

More than 300 pre-school and primary school children and educators attended the event. Children with special educational needs also enjoyed the sports activities.

Participants gathered for a joint exercise session, after which the teams were invited to 13 different entertainment and sports activities. The activities included a special exercise prepared by a physiotherapist, as well as activities to promote healthy eating and lifestyle.

„For adults and educators, this day is a reminder that children are the foundation of our next day which determines the future of our country and society. Only happy and healthy people can build a strong and competitive country," reminded the First Lady.

„Physical activity not only helps children develop their bodies, learn determination and teamwork, but also brings





them lots of joy. Today, hundreds of children from different educational institutions played together, interacted and shared their positivity and good mood with all of us.

We are grateful to Ms Diana for her initiative, support and encouragement in talking about the importance of physical literacy for a healthier society. The attention of Heads of State is particularly important for educators, who inspire children to move and play sport through their hard work and by example.

I hope that this year's festivity, which was held for the first time, will become a beautiful tradition," Daina Gudzinevičiūtė said with delight.

Symbolic awards were handed out to culminate the festivity, where all participants were declared winners and received medals. After the awards, the guests were invited to a picnic on the courtyard lawn of the President's Office.

First Lady of the country Mrs Nausėdienė actively supports the LNOC's Olympic education projects, she is the patron of the Lithuanian Children Games and of the project Olympic Month, and spreads the word about the importance of physical literacy in Lithuania. ●



# Olympic Day



More than 20,000 participants, dozens of Olympians, hundreds of activities, competitions, tournaments, games and awards – on 18 June, Kaunas Santakos Park was transformed into one big sports and entertainment site, with the citizens being whirled into a movement festival *Olympic Day 2022*.



The last couple of years have been a real challenge due to the pandemic restrictions, therefore the 2022 event organised by the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Olympic Fund and Kaunas City Municipality in Kaunas, the European Capital of Culture, was highly anticipated.

Six Kaunas athletes were entrusted to carry the Olympic Day torch from the Town Hall Square to the stage in Santakos Park – the seventh place-winner at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics pentathlete Gintarė Venčkauskaitė, Olympic sailor Juozas Bernotas, European champion, basketball coach Lina Dambrauskaitė, basketball player Ugnė Sirtautaitė, gymnast Tomas Kuzmickas, and the World boxing champion Gabrielė Stonkutė.

After the lighting of the symbolic Olympic flame, the participants were greeted by the LNOC President, Olympic champion Daina Gudzevičiūtė. „The Olympic Day is a beautiful tradition and a great festival for the city. I am very happy that it has returned to Kaunas. I am very delighted to see so many people having fun, trying





out various sports activities and interacting with the Olympians," said Daina Gudzinevičiūtė.

Minister of Education, Science and Sport Jurgita Šiugždinienė shared her positive energy: „Sport is not just about the highest achievements, sport is about a healthy lifestyle too. Sport develops the Olympic values of respect, friendship and excellence," the Minister reminded.

#### Thousands of Runners Flooding Santaka

Immediately after the opening ceremony, the little runners lined up at the start line of the 500 m race to start the Olympic Day running competition. After the children's run, the participants traditionally completed the Lithuanian Olympic mile – 1988 metres, commemorating the year of the restoration of the LNOC, with 5 and 10 km runners taking over the course. This year, a record number of about 2,000 runners took part in the event.

The fastest participants completing the distance were awarded prizes supplied by LTeam, sponsors and partners. Among women, Meda Repšytė, Kamilė Murnevaitė and Olympic biathlete Gabrielė Leščinskaitė were the first to complete the 5 km distance. Vilius Aleliūnas, Laimonas Strikaitis and Danielius Jevensaperis were the fastest among men.

Lina Kiriliuk, Loreta Kančytė, Neringa Songailaitė-Kovarskienė were the fastest in the 10 km race. The fastest men were Olympic marathon runner Remigijus Kančys, Ignas Brasevičius and Jaunius Strazdas.

#### Competing on a Scenic Course

Fans of orienteering sports also tried their hand at the event – the LTeam Rogaining competition was held here, with 116 teams competing. With the help of a map, the participants, running or cycling, visited the most picturesque places of the central part of Kaunas seeking to find hidden checkpoints within a certain period of time.

Povilas Čiurlevičius and Vytis Aleksiejūnas (*Born2Move*), who overcame the two-hour challenge, were the strongest running teams, and the four-hour challenge was completed by the *TRItono #1* team of Osvaldas Kazlauskas, Artūras Maciulevičius and Audra Bogužinskienė, Karolina Tomkuvienė (*Medeina OK/Origami runners*).

In the amateur cycling two-hour race, Tomas Streikus and Aurimas Gulinas with the team *Dzūkijos Meškos* became the leaders, while the four-hour race was won by the *Antaris Team* with Martynas Dobilinskas and Tomas Griškoniš; in the women's category, Žuvys with Ieva Baltriukaitė and Reda Žalimienė enjoyed the triumph.

#### The Stars Competing Too

The *ZIP FM 3x3* basketball tournament was part of the



# VISKAS SPORTO MEDICINAI





celebration, with 26 teams competing. As many as eight of them were teams of famous people. Members of the Seimas, Lithuanian Basketball League referees, public figures, TV presenters Adomas Grinius, Aurelijus Bezekavičius and singer Alekna decided to compete on the basketball court on Saturday.

After a tough fight, the team from Marijampolė *Išvien – Bosima* and its members Aidas Sabukonis, Andrius Levanas, Povilas Gaidys, Paulius Gvzdaitis celebrated their victory. The second place went to *Ginklanešiai* with Andrej Tichonov, Karolis Kuliūnas, Kipras Urbanavičius, Medaras Pauliukėnas, and the third place went to the *Makruha* team.

#### Obstacle Course for the Fittest

One of the most endurance-intensive events is the *OCR Lithuania* extreme run. More than a hundred participants took part in a special 100 metre-long obstacle course. They had to overcome *Ninja steps*, hanging rings, *Monkey Bars* obstacles, i.e. to cross a certain stretch while hanging on their hands. The event also included a simple stability test, a crawl under the net – everything was fast and dynamic.

After a tough fight on the *OCR Lithuania* course, Renaldas Bugys, Valerijus Liaščiavičius, Frank van Lieshout became the winners, while the strongest women's trio was Ieva Želvytė, Inga Palaikienė and Joana Budrevičiūtė.







### Record-Breaking LTeam Partners' Cup

This year, the sponsors and partners of the festival were extremely active in the activities of the Olympic Day. A special LTeam Partners' Cup tournament was held in Kaunas, where as many as 17 teams competed for the title of the best team.

They competed in the Lithuanian Olympic mile run, demonstrated their marksmanship with archery and airsoft guns, and tried the bungee run. Participants also had a special „X“ event, where they not only had to exercise their bodies, but also test their knowledge about sport – the LTeam team prepared interesting questions for the participants of the Olympic quiz.

After a tough fight, Šiauliai City Municipality won the first place, Western Shipyard



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scored second, while the third place went to Jonava City Municipality.

#### Awarding the Laureates

The winners of the Lithuanian School Games, which was the biggest sports project for schoolchildren, were awarded during the Olympic Day. This year's school Games, which took place under the circumstances determined by the pandemic, invited pupils to try innovative, undiscovered sports.

The prize winners from primary schools, kindergarten-schools, gymnasiums, secondary schools, pro-gymnasiums, and basic schools, as well as groups of pro-gymnasiums and primary schools in rural areas were honoured on the grand stage of the Olympic Day. The most active municipalities of towns and villages were also awarded.

For the first time in the history of the Games, there was an election of the school with the most original sport, which had involved the biggest number of students in the Games and had united the biggest number of community members during the season. Awards were also given for the most environmentally friendly idea and the most noble behaviour.







The Minister of Education, Science and Sport Ms. Šiugždinienė, Vice-Minister Linas Obcarskas and LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė awarded the winners.

**Many Free Activities**

Olympic Day 2022 offered over a hundred different free sports and entertainment activities for residents and visitors. Everyone willing could try out different sports, talk to professional athletes, meet Olympians, take part in games and tournaments, join educational and Olympic education events. Motivational gifts were given to everyone for their active participation, the total of over 15,000 prizes.

Sports federations and clubs took part in the event, not only summer, but also winter Olympic and non-Olympic sports were introduced to the participants, while the Lithuanian Paralympic Committee organised separate activities.

Linas Adomaitis appeared on stage immediately after the closing of the sports event. His concert with a live band crowned this year's Olympic Day's celebrations. The programme was rounded off with a free open-air cinema screening of the biographical drama „I am Zlatan“ at the Castle Amphitheatre.

Kaunas City Municipality symbolically handed over the Olympic Day flag to the host of next year's celebration – on 3 June 2023, the Olympic Day will be hosted by Panevėžys. ●







# Olympic Solidarity Support

# 5

**athletes who have received Olympic Solidarity Scholarships: track-and-field athlete Mykolas Alekna, rower Povilas Stankūnas, pentathlete Elzbieta Adomaitytė, boxer Gabrielė Stonkutė and swimmer Aleksas Savickas preparing for the 2022 Paris Olympics.**

In 2022, the LNOC successfully expanded its activities through the International Olympic Committee's Olympic Solidarity Programme, which now counts half a century.

One area is scholarships for athletes.

„In the past, athletes preparing for the Summer Games used to receive much less money than those training for the Winter Games. In 2022, the distribution mechanism was changed and the amounts were equalised,“ said Agnė Vanagienė, the LNOC's Deputy Director for Olympic Sport.

The 2022 Olympic Solidarity Scholarships were granted to five athletes preparing for the 2024 Paris Olympics who have won either the European or World Youth Championships. They are track-and-field athlete Mykolas Alekna, rower Povilas Stankūnas, pentathlete Elzbieta Adomaitytė, boxer Gabrielė Stonkutė and swimmer Aleksas Savickas.

Women's beach volleyball and basketball teams received USD 50,000 each from the Olympic Solidarity Programme in the form of grants. Divided over four years, this amounts to USD 12 500 annually. This amount is earmarked for the teams' training and motivational needs.

„We see a great potential in the teams and we want to have them at the Olympics,“ said Agnė Vanagienė.

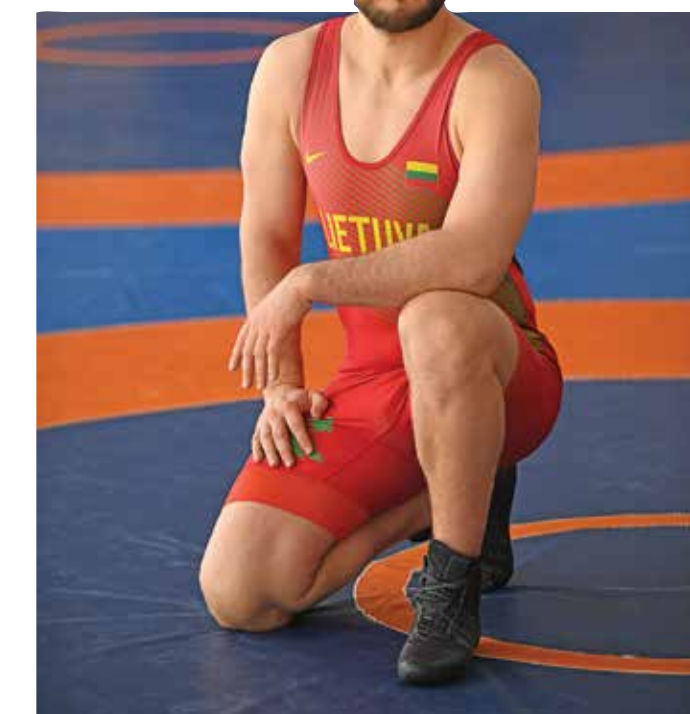


Wrestler Mantas Knystautas, who started studying at the University of Cologne in 2022, also received the funding from this programme. The IOC cooperates with the University of Cologne. Seven candidates applied for this scholarship, the LNOC selected and recommended Mantas Knystautas to the IOC, and now Olympic Solidarity covers his studies costs. The studies are distance learning and the wrestler combines them with sport. After graduating as a sports manager, he will be ready for the opportunities of a second career.

In 2022, Olympic Solidarity funded technical courses for Lithuanian coaches in five sports. How and to what extent this programme is used depends on the initiative and creativity of individual federations.

The planned budget of the Olympic Solidarity technical course is \$15 million until 2024, with each National Olympic Committee eligible for \$80,000. The LNOC has already used part of it.

In 2022, the Lithuanian Table Tennis Association received almost USD 11,000 for specialists' qualification enhancement. Nine coaches participated in the training. The amount of more than USD 10,000 was used to train as







many as 25 wrestling specialists. The Lithuanian Sailors' Union received USD 8 000 and 18 coaches were given the training. The Lithuanian Skating Union and the Lithuanian Tennis Union received the largest amounts of \$12,000 each. The money was used to train 64 ice skating and 10 tennis coaches in technical courses.

Maryna Amirchanova, a distinguished Ukrainian coach, trained the coaches of figure skating in Kaunas; her students have participated in as many as eight Winter Olympic Games and have won medals at the European Figure Skating Championships.

According to Vaida Mačianskienė, Head of the LNOC Foreign Relations Directorate, how and to what extent the programme is used depends on the initiative and creativity of individual federations.

For example, the Lithuanian Biathlon Federation, on its own initiative, filed an application for coaches' qualification upgrading course to its own international organisation rather than via LNOC. Coach Kotryna Vitkūnaitė received training abroad consisting of three phases. „The Federation itself found a way to benefit both in the area of its sport and for the sake of Lithuania,“ said Vaida Mačianskienė. ●

## SUPPORT

**Olympic solidarity helps National Olympic Committees to fulfil their mission and commitment to the Olympic Movement. This is done through programmes that promote the basic principles of Olympism. Support is given to athletes preparing for competitions, to coaches improving their professional training, to National Olympic Committees strengthening their administrative capacities and promoting Olympic values.**



# VISADA TIK Į PRIEKĮ

Toyota hibridiniai automobiliai neabejotinai pirmauja tarp dešimties geriausiai parduodamų automobilių markių Europoje kaip išskiriantys mažiausias CO<sub>2</sub> emisijas.

Toyota kompanija sau nustato ne vieną tikslą, nes visuomet galima judėti pirmyn, įveikiant nulines emisijas, visus netikėtumus ir kliūtis.

#LetsGoBeyond



# LNOC and LTeam at the Festival *Būtent!* (Exactly!)



Healthy living is one of the areas of life most surrounded by myths. A healthy diet, a good attitude towards movement and physical activity are important for everyone who wants to live a healthy life and inspire their children to do the same. It is these myths that the LNOC has invited you to dispel during the discussion „Don't Eat After Six and Other Myths Surrounding Healthy Lifestyles“ which took place at the festival „Būtent!“

During the discussion, these topics were discussed by nutritionist, doctor of biomedical sciences Artūras Sujeta, physiotherapist Tomas Linksmuolis, who had worked with the Olympians, and President of the National Association of Preschool Physical Education Teachers (RIUKKPA) Audronė Vizbarienė.

„Nowadays we can separate nutrition from the body image and talk about it as a tool that can help people think more effectively. Is it necessary to refrain from eating after six? Research shows that it is better to refrain from eating at least two hours before bedtime, otherwise the food will be absorbed, but this may simply interfere with the REM phases of sleep,“ Artūras Sujeta began the expert talk.

Audronė Vizbarienė, who participated in the high-profile discussion, is involved in the process of developing a unique Lithuanian model of physical literacy. She welcomed the opportunity to discuss the importance of physical activity for pre-school children.

Speaking about the myths of adult sport and movement, Tomas Linksmuolis stressed that the human body tends to adapt to absolutely everything, but it is important to distribute the workload correctly.

During the discussion moderated by journalist Saulijus Nalivaika, the specialists discussed a wide range of relevant issues and answered questions from the audience.

The two-day festival also featured an LTeam zone, where participants were invited to try archery, acroyoga, the American game Corn Hole, tightrope walking and baseball. Olympic vice-champion Saulius Ritter gave rowing lessons, while Viktė Ažukaitė taught fencing.

In the children's area, RIUKKPA specialists invited the little ones to try out the activities and games of the Lithuanian Children Games. ●





# Dreams & Teams Project



The aim of the unique project *Dreams & Teams*, organised by the British Council and the LNOC, is to develop students' leadership, organisational skills, cooperation and teamwork skills through sports and non-formal education activities and to provide educators with knowledge and skills to help them develop students' leadership and other 21st century competences, as well as to promote cooperation between the schools in Visaginas, Šalčininkai and Klaipėda regions, and to bridge the intercultural divide.

On 20 September, the fifth season of the project was presented in the amphitheatre of Žalgiris Arena in Kaunas, where former and future participants of the project – gymnasium students and teachers – gathered for the event.

„We are very grateful to the British Council for their trust and support and for the fact that this project is now in its fifth season in Lithuania. We are delighted that by bringing together Lithuanian, Russian and Polish speaking schools, we are not only breaking down the social barriers that sometimes arise, but are also using sport as a tool to enrich young people's skills. It is especially great that former participants will join this year's project – all of you already have something to share and know the value of the project best,” said Kasparas Šileikis, Director of Olympic Education of the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee, who invited the participants after his presentation to listen to a discussion „Leadership in Sport, School, Community“.

The discussion's participants included Ilona Malakauskiene, a teacher at Klaipėda Versmės Pro-Gymnasium, Ugnė Taliataitė, a student of Klaipėda Vėtrungė Gymnasium, and Andrius Šidlauskas, a bronze medallist at the European Swimming Championships.

After listening to the discussion, the participants took part in a quiz game and practical leadership and cooperation-building activities of the *Dreams & Teams* project, moderated by the students of Klaipėda gymnasiums who had already participated in the project.

The fifth season started at the beginning of December with the training session for Visaginas and Šalčininkai teachers. The pupils from these schools became project participants in 2022, and the teachers who took part in the meetings were the coordinators of their school teams.







During the two-day training, the aims and structure of the project were presented to the participating teachers; the topics analysed through various practical and theoretical activities included 21st century competences, the possibilities of promoting active youth engagement, the specificities of intercultural learning, and the gender dimension of working with young people.

Immediately after the training, teachers were invited to form teams in their schools. The project brings together five mixed teams in terms of gender, cultural identity and language from each of the Visaginas and Šalčininkai regions. Each of them will receive funding in 2023 to organise a project event for their school or district communities.

Teams will have to organise at least two events to promote the project's values, bring together students speaking different languages, and promote 21st century competences, leadership, gender equality and interculturalism.

Throughout the season, the participants were supported by Klaipėda school students who participated in the project in 2021.

In April 2022, at the end of the project's four-year cycle,

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We are delighted that by bringing together Lithuanian, Russian and Polish speaking schools, we are breaking down the social barriers.

an impact study was carried out, resulting in eight recommendations.

The recommendations encourage the involvement of all interested groups and schools of all backgrounds in similar projects, the organisation of multicultural groups working together, and the involvement of both students and teachers in the activities. The direct cooperation between the







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The direct cooperation between the participants in the project promoted knowledge, helped to overcome prejudice, fostered a sense of respect for the other, and encouraged a willingness to accept and understand them.







participants in the project promoted knowledge, helped to overcome prejudice, fostered a sense of respect for the other, and encouraged a willingness to accept and understand them.

It also highlights the importance of a safe, open and equitable environment and the opportunity for experiential learning. A welcoming and safe atmosphere allows ideas and initiatives to flourish. It fosters creativity and imagination among the participants, and helps students with different abilities and talents to co-create and discover their strengths and areas of responsibility.

It is also recommended that similar projects seek op-

portunities to involve students and teachers in coherent, long-term and systematic competency-building activities. According to the participants, the long duration of the project and the involvement of schools in as many seasons as possible ensured lasting and profound changes in the participants and school communities.

The recommendations justify the effectiveness of physical activity as a tool for implementing similar projects. The results show that physical activity and sport is an excellent tool for developing a wide range of competences such as leadership, teamwork, communication skills, organisational skills and others. ●

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

*Dreams & Teams* is a unique project designed to develop students' leadership, organisational, cooperation and teamwork skills through sports activities, and to equip educators with the knowledge and skills to develop students' leadership and other 21st century competences. Since 2017, the British Council in Lithuania and the

National Olympic Committee of Lithuania have been implementing this initiative in our country. Leadership, organisation and teamwork are just some of the many skills that sport helps to develop. This is what the *Dreams & Teams* project aims to achieve by using sport as a tool to develop 21st century competences.





# Olympic Values Curriculum

Support and physical activity are powerful educational tools. Sport can engage and inspire young people, help them build confidence or social skills, and encourage healthy and active lifestyles. The Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP), developed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and run by the LNOC, aims to achieve these goals.

Lithuania has been implementing the OVEP programme for five years now, and the LNOC, the first to translate it into its national language, is being considered as a role model for other Olympic Committees.

„We are one of the leaders in the world, and especially in Europe, implementing the IOC programme and applying its principles in our activities, instilling its principles in children through educators, coaches, and athletes,” says Kaspars Šileikis, Director of Olympic Education of the LNOC.

The volume of work and productivity is best reflected in numbers. In the five years of the programme, the LNOC has organised 40 Level 1 and Level 2 training sessions. 17 trainers have been trained who deliver the sessions to the audiences within their reach – to students in their own and other schools and to fellow teachers.

The main trainers and lecturers Nerijus Miginis and Donatas Petkauskas have been involved in various LNOC Olympic education activities for ten years, and have been working with OVEP since the programme was launched. Often participants of the seminars admit that they have been inspired by the lecturers and have themselves started spreading Olympism and the values it promotes in the institutions where they work.

Over five years, around 1400 participants have been involved in the training at all levels. The trainers work not only

in Vilnius, but also in Klaipėda, Šiauliai and Druskininkai.

The OVEP implemented in Lithuania has received international recognition – in 2021, Xenia Kourgouzova, Director of the IOC Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage responsible for education, visited the training in Kaunas; she considers the programme in Lithuania as a model for other countries around the world.

In 2022, on the initiative of the IOC, a representative of the LNOC was invited to share his experience at the OVEP evaluation workshop which took place in Lausanne in October. In Switzerland, Mr Šileikis presented the programme’s success story in our country.

„We have fully adapted the programme to the Lithuanian context, its activities require minimal resources, therefore our OVEP can be applied almost anywhere. We are delighted to be able to share our experience with other National Olympic Committees, sports and education representatives from around the world, and we are grateful to the OVEP trainers and lecturers Nerijus Miginis and Donatas Petkauskas. The international recognition and the invitation to share their experience is a reflection of their sincere work. We have also benefited from the experience gained at the event. Participants believe that one of the most successful experiences is the involvement in the training of the best athletes. Olympic athlete Eglė Balčiūnaitė has already attended one of our training sessions, and not only willingly immersed herself in the activities, but also enriched the process with her own experience. Therefore, we are planning to involve even more athletes,” said Mr Šileikis.

The representatives of the National Olympic Committees of India, Argentina, Senegal, Israel, Ireland and sports organisations implementing OVEP also shared their experiences. The event discussed the ongoing updates of the programme publications, which aim to improve, develop and make OVEP even easier to implement and more attractive to all countries around the world.

„In Lithuania, we are facing a lack of physical activity among young people, so we, Olympic Education Directorate, have been actively seeking to integrate OVEP into the LNOC programmes. The main goal is to promote physical activity, teach physical literacy, broaden people’s horizons and make them aware of the Olympic Movement and its values. And they are not only about physical activity, but also about learning other skills or improving existing ones. These include leadership, communication and all the other skills that are essential for a 21st century person,” explained Šileikis.

The first ever OVEP Regional Forum were held in 2022. The first meeting of the OVEP was held on 22 June in Ute-



# 40

Level 1 and Level 2 training sessions the LNOC has organised in the five years of the programme.



na. It brought together 80 educators and education representatives implementing the programme.

Through OVEP events, the aim is to promote key Olympic principles, such as noble behaviour, respect for oneself, for others and for the environment, to experience the joy of sport and physical activity, to strive for perfection, to live a life of harmony between the body, will and mind.

The main trainers and 17 other training educators know how to introduce these principles or remind about them in non-standard ways. Often, first-time attendees of their trainings are surprised to find that there is little resemblance with the usual events of this kind, where presentations are given and the audience listens and takes notes.

„These trainings include lots of non-formal education exercises and tasks. In other words, there are practical activities that educators can engage in and then take back and apply in their own lessons. The important feature is that this training is not of a standard type. The training is rich in theory, but also includes practical activities. Since the training provides participants with the knowledge and tools to work in a different and more interesting way, not only physical education teachers, but also Lithuanian language, history and mathematics teachers are eager to participate in the training – they successfully apply in their own lessons what they learn here,“ the Director of the LNOC’s Olympic Education expressed his delight about the method of combining learning and sport. ●

## TRAINERS

The OVEP training is delivered by professional trainers Nerijus Miginis and Donatas Petkauskas who also share their experience with participants. When talking about OVEP, the trainers stress the uniqueness of the programme.

„First of all, the training confirms the trend that physical activity and physical literacy are very important. If we look at other programmes, we have creativity, acting, media literacy and many others, but there are very few programmes to promote physical activity.

The most fascinating thing is that, alongside physical activity, this programme is about values. If we look at the general curriculum, all the subjects should help develop values, but very often there is a lack of specific tools. Those who come to the OVEP training are provided with those tools. Sport is a particularly powerful tool for developing Olympic values and beyond, and in this training, the educators get a taste of this – they participate in the activities themselves. And it doesn’t matter whether you are a coach, a teacher of physical education, of Lithuanian language or of any other subject – the activities are very broadly applicable,“ Mr Miginis pointed out.

„As a trainer and as a father, I find it that one of the most important things is that OVEP enables the development of values. During the training, we not only try activities, but we also have reflections where we share our thoughts, which is very important for the effectiveness of the process. Values are nice, but we also analyse our behaviour so that we not only hear about values being important, but also evaluate our own behaviour and those values from a distance in all areas of life. It is delightful that educators get so willingly involved, and consequently we feel a great pleasure about it too,“ said Mr Petkauskas.



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# Physical Literacy Project

Although physical activity is one of the most important elements of a healthy lifestyle, according to the Institute of Hygiene, only 13.6% of school-age children in Lithuania engage in active physical activity (at least 60 minutes a day) after school. One of the reasons for this is a lack of skills, motivation and habit. The LNOC is implementing a unique physical literacy model that will not only help develop skills but also inspire movement.

For this project, the LNOC has brought in experienced partners from the UK, the organisation Youth Sport Trust International. The organisation has already developed similar models which are being implemented in the UK.

Physical literacy is about physical characteristics, movement skills, self-confidence and motivation to be physically active throughout life. In other words, a physically literate individual is healthy and has developed correct movement skills to the extent that he or she is able and willing to engage in a variety of physical activities on any surface – the ground, air, water, ice. Such an individual is motivated to move, has the ability to do so correctly and has a good understanding of their body.

In such countries as Australia, Canada, the UK and Wales, the development of physical literacy starts in early childhood. Children who have proper concentration on physical literacy are not afraid to engage in different activ-

ities, have the opportunity to try them out, and develop all physical attributes and movement skills appropriate and necessary for their age.

Moreover, it is scientifically proven that movement helps maintain not only physical but also mental health, helps to socialise and learn teamwork.

In our country, the model is being developed and implemented in four phases: the first phase is an analysis of physical literacy models in different countries, the second phase involves an analysis of the situation in Lithuania, the third phase is the development of a physical literacy model, guidelines and practical methods, and the fourth one involves the training of teachers on how to apply the developed methodology and model.

„We are delighted to have the opportunity to work with real physical activity professionals. Their work is enormous, and the unique model of physical literacy, adapted to the Lithuanian context, has been developed after a careful analysis of the current situation in Lithuania and by drawing on the knowledge and experience of each educator participating in the training. It is very important that we see a strong commitment on the part of the educators, a desire to develop and acquire knowledge about physical literacy, and to pass this knowledge on to Lithuanian children. Together we are all striving to raise a healthy and



physically active society,” said Kasparas Šileikis, Head of Olympic Education of the LNOC.

Viv Holt and Kevin Barton, experts from Youth Sport Trust International, who visited Lithuania at the end of 2021 and assessed the context of physical education, launched the final phase of the training for educators in Lithuania on 9-12 May 2022. The training continued in June.

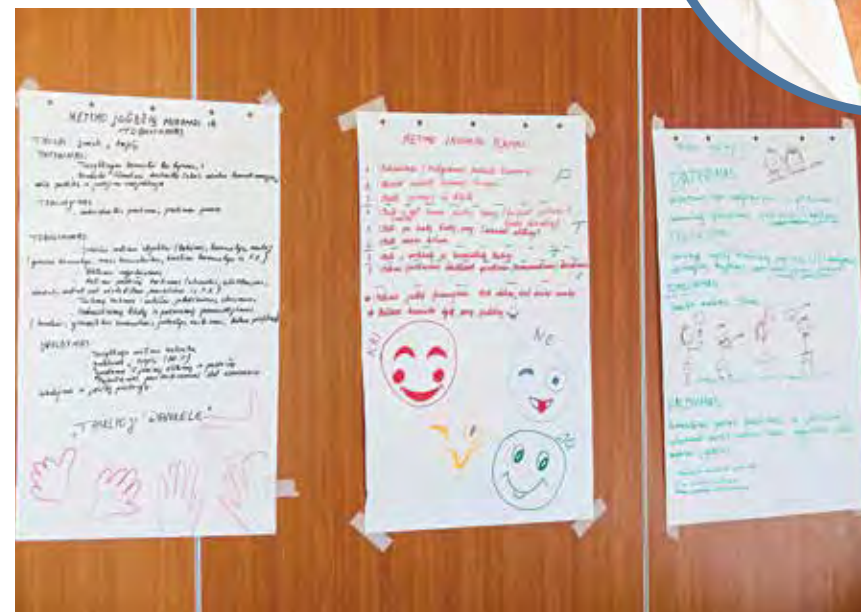
„One of our goals is to help pre-school and primary school teachers understand that the time spent on physical literacy is the time spent building wealth for the school and the country. Our mission is to convince as many people as possible – teachers, school leaders, parents – that teaching physical literacy has to start at an early age,” spoke Mr Barton about the behind-the-scenes work related to the development of the model.

„When we first visited Lithuania to assess the context of physical education in your country, we met many teachers whose willingness to work and enthusiasm is hard to describe: they are very creative and would give everything they have for the children. We had the opportunity to meet even more motivated educators at the training – the way they got involved, the number of suggestions they made and the willingness with which they participated is very pleasing to me. Seeing the enthusiasm of Lithuanian teachers, I truly believe that together we can create something very good for young people,” said Viv Holt delighted with participants’ active participation.

The training on methodology and model application included theoretical and practical sessions and the testing of a hands-on approach to learning: the participants could experience the benefits of basic movement skills and of physical literacy themselves. Moreover, participants of the training had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the model, coming up with concrete practical examples of how educators can consistently and systematically help children develop basic physical education skills.

During the second training, educators engaged in practical activities on how to deliver physical literacy training to different audiences, analysed potential challenges, answered the questions that participating educators might have during future discussions, and prepared a presentation of the physical literacy model for different target groups.

„During the first training sessions, we mostly focused on conveying the concept and definition of physical literacy







itself, on tracking the child's progress and on how to work with children in a practical way based on the physical literacy model. During the second training we focused on working with adults, on teaching them to work with children and to explain the concept of physical literacy. In short, we focused on teaching them to spread the importance of physical literacy and helping them to implement this model throughout Lithuania," said Audronė Vizbarienė, President of the Republican Association of Preschool Physical Education Teachers, after the training.

In August, the representatives of the Working Group on Physical Literacy Model Development met in Birštonas to analyse the guidelines of the model.

„I really believe that the emergence of physical literacy in Lithuania will be a spectacular event, because the model will involve parents, kindergarten teachers, primary school teachers, and namely they are the people who inspire and shape children's habits. It is a shame that we are still on what I would call an authoritarian path of physical activity, where we are told to run and finish within a certain time, irrespectively of the fact whether it is physically possible for the child to do so or whether the child has or has not developed certain skills. Forced physical activity is traumatic; first and foremost, a child needs to feel joy, to learn certain movements in order to be able and, most importantly, to be willing to excel“, said Dr Ramunė Žilinskienė, Director of the Vilnius University Health and Sports Centre, emphasising the importance of the process of creating a physical literacy model.

„The model development process is going smoothly and we are very happy to have gathered an experienced and motivated team. The process involves heads of educational institutions, representatives of municipalities, and highly experienced educators. Our ambitions are high. We believe that by integrating the model into the education system, by inspiring children's excitement about moving and by helping them acquire basic movement skills, together we can create a healthy, confident, motivated and physically active society.

We are very delighted to have the support of the First Lady of the country Diana Nausėdienė; President Gitanas Nausėda also mentioned the importance of physical literacy in his annual address. Our team of future trainers is motivated, open and inspiring, we are extremely grateful to them and are eager to start spreading the message of physical literacy in Lithuania," said Mr Šileikis.

The project dedicated to the development of the physical literacy model is partially funded by the International Olympic Committee's Olympic Solidarity Programme. ●

2022 with LNOG



# Oficialūs 2024 m. Paryžiaus olimpinių vasaros žaidynių transliuotojai



# LNOC training



It's not just training and physical performance that determines athletes' results. A lot depends on the knowledge shared and put into practice by coaches, managers and the athletes themselves. Training for sports staff in various fields is an important part of the activities of the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania.

The training has been organised since 2014, when Agnė Vanagienė, Deputy Director of the Olympic Sports Directorate of the LNOC, received a certificate from the International Olympic Committee to organise such training.

All of this training is free of charge. It is funded by the IOC Olympic Solidarity Programme, supported by sponsors and the LNOC itself. There are also training sessions organised within the framework of Olympic Generation Programme and by the LNOC Athletes' Commission.

### Sports Administration Course for Managers

The first LNOC-organised sports administration course for managers finished in Vilnius on 7 April; it was the first training from a series organised in 2022. 20 sports management professionals from all over Lithuania enhanced their knowledge there.

The Sports Administration Programme is a unique LNOC project funded by Olympic Solidarity which has been running for eight years, providing the opportunity to two dozen managers from national sports centres and clubs, municipal sports departments and other organisations to participate in the project every year.

The four-day intensive training for managers, which took place in 2022, focused on internal communication, time management and leadership. The lecturers also introduced them to the Olympic Movement, the Olympic values and their importance.



2022 with LNOC

Frequent participants in such training are former athletes who have changed their career for sports management. One of them is Saulius Ritteris, Olympic vice-champion and Secretary General of the Lithuanian Rowing Federation.

„This position is new experience for me, so I'm working hard to develop the necessary knowledge to achieve the best results possible. This training is one way to do that. I think the most important thing is that the trainers illustrate the information they teach by practical examples and advice that is very easy to apply in everyday work,“ said the Olympic vice-champion.

### Sports Administration Course for Coaches

In May, a sports administration training course for coaches, funded by the LNOC and the International Olympic Committee's Olympic Solidarity Programme, took place in Vilnius. Nearly two dozen Lithuanian sports coaches enhanced their knowledge in the area of the Olympic Movement, the challenges facing sport and sports management.

The course, consisting of four intensive days of training by professional trainers, took place on 10-11 and 26-27 May. The participants learned about LNOC activities and partnership opportunities, analysed ways of resolving conflict situations and decision-making in groups, and explored the changes that can be expected when applying management principles in sports coaching.

„This is not the first year we have been able to contribute to the development of sports coaches, which we are delighted about. Not only does administrative knowledge help us plan our work more efficiently, but it also gives us the motivation to improve our professional qualifications. Every year, when planning our training, we take into account



2022 with LNOC

the latest trends and the most relevant topics,“ said Agnė Vanagienė.

Now in its ninth year, the LNOC's Sports Administration Training course enhances participants' knowledge about the Olympic Movement, its values, the challenges facing sport and sports management. The programme also aims to build coaches' capacity to develop tools and procedures to help all sports organisations raise the level of professionalism in administration.

### Advanced Management Courses

Well-chosen practical tasks, the knowledge needed for a second career in sports management, useful contacts and an inspiring professional trainer – these were the main advantages of the advanced management course. None of the participants regretted taking four more months until December to study and were delighted to have been selected for the training.

Why should the sports managers, including Saulius Ritteris, Secretary General of the Lithuanian Rowing Federation, Brigita Virbalytė, an Olympian, the country's best race walking representative and one of the leaders of the National Athletes Association, Rima Valentienė, a former basketball team player and the Director of the Lithuanian Women's Basketball League, Mindaugas Noreika, coach of the national youth (under-20) basketball team and the director of the Capital Basketball School, as well as the managers of various sports federations be required to build a tower out of spaghetti or go out on the street to interview people?

„This training, like the others in my programme, is primarily focused on the needs of the audience. I tried to select such practical exercises that illustrate the ideas and theoretical models well. I aim to deliver dynamic training sessions in which participants should have no time to peek at the watch,“ explained Lauras Balaiša, a well-known trainer who delivered the course.

Word of mouth about the quality and benefits of the training is spreading, therefore in 2022, as soon as it was announced, people started feverishly registering.

„There have never been so many applicants, so it was not easy to select the participants,“ said Agnė Vanagienė, Deputy Director of Olympic Sport of the LNOC.

The 20 selected sports administrators from various sports federations, clubs, schools and other organisations were trained in public relations, strategic management, marketing, leadership, human resources management and event organisation. The training consisted of five two-day sessions, with the last session taking place in early December.



„Ten days of training were spread over four months. Selected participants have to allocate a lot of personal time for the course, each one is given the task of studying the organisation they come from. The training is therefore not theoretical but purely practical, and it is very useful not only for the participant, but also for the institution they are representing, the activities of which may be seen in an unexpected light, thus discovering important issues to be corrected or, on the contrary, to be followed. What makes our training special is that we try to ensure that it is not generic but reflects the needs and interests of the target group. The training is targeted and aimed at sports organisations, which have a specific basis and purpose“, explained Agnė Vanagienė, who organises surveys after each training, which is immediately analysed in order to revise the list of lecturers and to improve the system and content.

Advanced Sports Management Training Started in 2016.

Athlete Virbalytė sought to participate in the training first of all because it was an advanced course for sports managers rather than a beginner course. The „spaghetti challenge“ impressed her and other participants by being a task that required them to divide into teams, choose leaders and build a tower out of real noodles.

„The aim is to build as tall a building as possible. It involved 40 spaghetti, two metres of duct tape and a marshmallow placed on top. The structure had to last until the winner was announced. We tried really hard and we wanted to build a big tower, but it didn't work. I'm proud of my team because we maintained stability and we had a good distribution of roles. The problem was that the goal was too big. It was a reminder that you always have to think about your options. Moreover, we underestimated the quality of the materials – the pasta was fragile, rather than expensive and sturdy. Even though the goal was too big, we enjoyed the teamwork – the division of roles, the sharing of tasks. This is something that is very much emphasised in this training. It is interesting to test ourselves and the knowledge we have gained by doing practical tasks,“ smiling, Ms. Virbalytė said.

„The Spaghetti Challenge is not the trainer Balaiša's idea. Similar tasks have long been used in top-level management training abroad.

„To do it, participants have to combine their leadership skills and knowledge to achieve a result when competing with others. Through this exercise, participants see the mistakes they make (such as inaccuracies in planning, over-optimism, communication errors, etc.), can discuss them with me and their colleagues, find links to the processes in their

organisations, and at the same time, discover new solutions,“ explained the speaker.

### Olympic Generation Training

On 19-20 April, the LNOC „Olympic Generation“ training course „Olympic Education as a Tool for the Development of General Competences“ was held in Birštonas for managers of educational institutions. This first-ever conference was attended by 37 heads and administration representatives from all over Lithuania.

„The aim of the training is to introduce the directors and deputy directors of general and pre-school education institutions to sport and physical activity as an educational tool and to all the activities of the LNOC Education Directorate. We are delighted to see so many motivated participants interested in our activities who came from all over Lithuania and willingly joined the training. We believe that the involvement of educational authorities is one of the most important elements of successful programmes, which will allow us to achieve our goals and objectives in a more efficient and high-quality way,“ – said Kasparas Šileikis, Director of Olympic Education of the LNOC.

The participants, brought together by trainers Nerijus Miginis, Donatas Petkauskas, Laima Telksnienė and Auksė Buožienė, had the opportunity to try the practical activities of Olympic education, to get acquainted with the programme of education of the Olympic values, education through sport and the possibilities of cooperation with the LNOC.

### Course for Primary School Teachers

In 2022, the LNOC launched the Virtual Course for Quality Physical education, a training course for primary school te-



2022 with LNOC

achers willing to strengthen their competences, the delivery and presentation of physical education lessons, and to diversify the approach to movement throughout the educational process.

The course consists of ten theoretical and practical topics. Teachers are introduced to ways of strengthening children's emotional health in physical education classes, of acquiring knowledge of different sports, of integrating them into the classroom, organising fun and engaging physical education classes, other methods and competences important in the educational process, the concept of physical literacy, and the importance of the teacher's own attitudes and intrinsic motivation.

The first part of the course takes place on the e-learning platform. On the platform, educators can find training material and assignments to complete on their own. The main part of the e-learning consists of video material in which education and sports professionals provide theoretical knowledge and practical examples on how to connect with the child, how to effectively develop children's physical activity and physical literacy, how to organise the reflection process properly, etc.

After attending the lectures, teachers receive a certificate confirming that they have completed a programme on quality physical education class and can register for the experiential training. During this training, participants are invited to deepen their knowledge together with their colleagues: to share their experience and challenges, to develop new approaches and to reflect together on their experience.

You can listen to the course by logging in: <https://kfu.olimpinekarta.lt/>



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## PUBLIC SPEAKING TRAINING

In January, LTeam members participated in a public speaking training led by trainer Adrija Čepaitė, a master of stage language, elocution and rhetoric.

The training, initiated by the LNOC Athletes' Commission, took place over three days. During the first meeting, which was held remotely, the participants analysed how public speaking differs from ordinary speaking, why it is useful to learn public speaking, how to understand public speaking, and discussed all the elements of public speaking.

„Let's not see language as just a means of communication or as something that fills the the space. Let's see language as an integral part of the action and value we need to create for our listeners. Most people understand language as one-way traffic. They think: what am I going to tell them, what are they going to hear? In that case it is a monologue. Public speaking always has feedback, it is a dialogue. Athletes are just as much influencers as businessmen, artists and others, so it is very important for them to understand this,“ said A. Čepaitė.

In other training sessions, the athletes tried their hand at public speaking themselves, they took part in discussions, debated and analysed them.

„The knowledge and practice of public speaking allows you to be more confident when speaking in front of an audience, as well as to convey the main message more effectively and to reach people themselves,“ said Viktorija Andrulytė, an Olympian, sailor, sailing medallist and World Championship medallist, who was delighted to have the opportunity to take part in the training.

In order to provide all possible assistance, the LNOC Athletes' Commission continuously invites athletes to training sessions to improve their skills and develop beyond the field of sport.





# European Youth Olympic Festival in Banska Bistrica

The European Youth Olympic Festival in Slovakia, which took place on 24-30 July, where 2253 athletes from 48 countries competed, was the most successful in Lithuania's history: our young athletes won as many as ten medals, including four gold medals.

A total of 55 Lithuanian athletes took part in the 16th Summer Olympic Festival in Banska Bistrica. They won medals: four gold, four silver and two bronze.

Lithuanians won the same number of medals at the 2011 festival in Trabzon (Turkey), although the number of gold medals was lesser – three. It was there that the star of swimmer Rūta Meilutytė was born. The future Olympic champion brought home gold, silver and bronze medals.

The gold in Banska Bistrica went to Smiltė Plytnykaitė (100 m freestyle swimming), the 4x100 m freestyle swimming relay team of S. Plytnykaitė, Sylvia Statkevičius,

Patricija Geriksonaitė, Ieva Višockaitė and Rusnė Vasiliauskaitė, the triple jumper Aurėja Beniušytė, and the gymnast Kristijonas Padegimas (pommel horse).

Silver medals were won by the Lithuanian Junior (U16) basketball team, the mixed 4x100m freestyle relay team of swimmers S. Plytnykaitė, P. Geriksonaitė, Kristupas Trepočka, Kostas Vaičiūnas, swimmer S. Statkevičius (200 m freestyle) and track and field athlete Danielius Vasiliauskas (200 m run).

Badminton player Viltė Paulauskaitė and swimmer S. Plytnykaitė (50 m freestyle) won the bronze medal.

„We quietly hoped that swimmers, basketball players or athletes will win medals, but the awards won by gymnasts and badminton players encourage optimism. It is amazing to see young people representing Lithuania not only win medals but also improve their personal results.

We are delighted that the athletes felt very strong support: in the media, on social networks and in Banska Bistrica itself. A number of athletes had family members arriving in Slovakia. For example, the parents of Smiltė Plytnykaitė, the swimmer who won the biggest number of medals, watched not only all of their daughter's competitions, but also the performances of other Lithuanians, and had planned their holidays so that they could spend a week after the event travelling around the surrounding countries. Another very important thing was that the athletes supported each other. In their free time from competitions and training, they went to the arenas to support their counterparts. The representatives of practically all sports watched the basketball final against the French," said LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė.

2253 athletes from 48 National Olympic Committees competed in 10 sports and won 120 sets of medals. Lithuania finished 13th in the medal league. Italy won the highest number of medals (21 gold, 12 silver and 14 bronze).

„This Youth Olympic Festival has incited a lot of good emotions not only to the whole national team but, I believe, to Lithuania as a whole. All the athletes fought to the end at the maximum of their effort and performed at their best. I hope that this Olympic experience has inspired the young people to strive for higher goals, and that one day we will see them at the Olympic Games," said Einius Petkus, Head of the Lithuanian Mission at the Festival.

The ceremony meant to see our delegation off to the festival took place on 19 July at the Republic of Lithuania President's Office. First Lady Diana Nausėdienė wished overall success to the athletes.

„You have all sacrificed a lot to get to one of the most important milestones of your life. May the path you have chosen strengthen you and the opportunity to compete against the best of your peers from all over Europe inspire you to reach breath-taking heights. Strive to always and everywhere be a role model for Lithuania's children and young people. Show with your victories on and off the sports field how important it is to move, to exercise, to continuously improve your body and soul," Diana Nausėdienė encouraged the athletes.

The First Lady symbolically handed over the Lithuanian tricolour flag to one of the flag bearers of the opening parade, basketball player Dovydas Buika, who promised to represent Lithuania with honour.

The young athletes were accompanied to Banska Bistrica by biathlete Gabrielė Leščinskaitė, who won silver at the 2013 European Youth Winter Olympic Festival. In Slo-







vakia, she served as one of two psychologists for the Lithuanian team.

During the opening ceremony on 24 July, judo wrestler Barbora Endriekutė carried the flag together with Dovydas Buika. Boris Kollar, President of the Slovak National Council, opened the festival, while Olympic champions biathlete Anastasija Kuzmina and athlete Matej Toth lit the symbolic flame.

„It’s a great honour to be in Slovakia, one of the most sporting countries in Europe. By hosting this festival, Slovakia becomes one of only five countries that have managed to successfully organise both summer and winter Youth Olympic Festivals. This is a great achievement. More than 2,000 future sports stars will shine in Banská Bystrica all week long. They will not only compete but also embody the Olympic values of respect, friendship and excellence. I wish you to enjoy this event,“ said Spyros Capralos, President of the Association of European Olympic Committees.

As was the case with the Winter Festival in March, the teams of Russia, which is waging war in Ukraine, and Be-





# LITHUANIAN NATIONAL TEAM AT THE FESTIVAL

## BADMINTON

Domas Pakšys (singles, mixed doubles), Viltė Paulauskaitė (singles, mixed doubles).

## CYCLING

Arnas Bilertas (individual time trial, group race), Auksė Lekavičiūtė (individual time trial, group race), Miglė Daneikaitė (individual time trial, group race), Nikolas Klimavičius (individual time trial, group race), Orianta Kiseliūnaitė (individual time trial, group race), Titas Laurinavičius (individual time trial, group race).

## JUDO

Barbora Endriekutė (weight category up to 57 kg), Dovilė Gotto (weight category up to 63 kg), Matas Norkevičius (weight category up to 66 kg), Danilas Vincelovičius (weight category up to 73 kg), Algirdas Žylus (weight category up to 81 kg), David Krmoyan (weight category up to 90 kg).

## GYMNASTICS

Danilas Korobkovas (individual equipment, team event), Kristijonas Padegimas (pommel horse), Matas Imbrasas (individual equipment, team event).

## BASKETBALL

Dovydas Buika, Gantas Križanauskas, Kevin Šacas, Kristupas Grybas, Kasparas Jakučionis, Kristupas Smirnovas, Matas Buteliauskas, Mantas Laurenčikas, Nedas Raupelis, Paulius Narvilas, Rokas Kreišmontas, Steponas Žilakauskis.

## TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETICS

Arminas Ačas (shot put, discus throw), Aurėja Beniušytė (high jump, triple jump), Danielius Vasiliauskas (200 m), Gabija Mockutė (100 m hurdles), Justė Perveneckaitė (5000 m race walk), Kamilė Petrauskaitė (pole vault), Karolina Vaitkevičiūtė (800 m run), Matas Janaruskas (400 m run), Orianta Navikaitė (javelin throw), Titas Kukšta (800 m run), Upė Jurškaitytė (1500 m run), Viltė Bubinaitė (400 m run).

## SWIMMING

Guoda Stančikaitė (100 m, 200 m breaststroke), Guoda Tručinskaitė (200 m, 400 m medley), Ieva Visockaitė (400 m, 800 m freestyle), Karilė Ališauskaitė (100 m, 200 m breaststroke), Kristupas Trepocka (100 m, 200 m freestyle), Kostas Vaičiūnas (100 m, 200 m, 400 m freestyle), Mantas Kaušpėdas (100 m, 200 m backstroke), Patricija Geriksonaitė (100 m, 200 m backstroke), Rusnė Vasiliauskaitė (100 m, 200 m backstroke), Smilte Plytnykaitė (50 m, 100 m, 200 m freestyle), Sylvia Statkevičius (100 m, 200 m, 400 m, 800 m freestyle), Vytė Gelažytė (200 m, 400 m medley).

## TENNIS

Julius Alexandrov (singles, mixed doubles), Laima Vladson (singles, mixed doubles).



larus, which is supporting the aggressor, were not invited to Banská Bistrica. Over 60 young Ukrainian athletes took part in the festival.

During the closing ceremony, the Lithuanian flag was entrusted to swimmer Ms. Plytnykaitė. The 15-year-old athlete won four medals: two individual (gold and bronze) and two team (gold and silver).

„The LNOC allocated 80,000 euros for the final training camps. The camps were planned by the federations. For example, judo wrestlers worked for several weeks in the mountains of Slovenia, swimmers laboured in Klaipėda, basketball players camped in Kaunas. I think the athletes certainly had good conditions to prepare for competitions. However, due to the changes in the funding of Olympic sports in the country, this was the last time we were able to allocate funds for athletes' preparation. The



main financial obligation of the LNOC in these events is to cover the costs of travel, clothing and participation in the competitions. We estimate that one day's accommodation for an accredited person cost 90 euros.

We also took a team of medical practitioners and sports psychologists to the festival on our own initiative, as well

as a large amount of sports medicine equipment. The athletes not only had the opportunity to receive medical treatment, to use the tools to help them recover from exertion, but also to consult with doctors, to gain knowledge which I believe they will use in the future," said E. Petkus, reviewing the festival. ●

## AWARDS

On 15 September, the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee held an awards ceremony for medal winners of the European Youth Olympic Festival, which took place in July. Olympic champion and LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė congratulated the athletes, their coaches and team members.

„Traditionally, we do not congratulate festival medallists immediately after the event, but wait until after the summer holidays. This is another opportunity not only for us, but also for the athletes to remember the most beautiful moments of the festival. Once again, I congratulate you not only on winning the medals, but also on gaining unforgettable experience, making new friendships and getting acquainted with the Olympic community. I hope you have been inspired and will remain part of the Olympic Movement," said LNOC President.

Moreover, the LNOC awarded the winning athletes, their coaches and team physiotherapists with monetary awards, which ranged from €300 to €700. The sports federations received appreciation certificates as a form of gratitude for their success in training athletes.



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# LNOC President's Golf Cup

In June, the golf course of the National Golf Resort near Klaipėda hosted the ninth Golf Cup Tournament of LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė.

Athletes competed in five different categories, and the awards were presented to the winners by Vice President Saulius Galadauskas and President of the Lithuanian Golf Federation Česlavas Okinčicas.

Mykolas Vasiliauskas (the V Golf Club) won the Men's Grand Cup. He made 162 strokes in two days. Valentas Ivančenko (the V Golf Club) took the second place, who made seven strokes less than Mr. Vasiliauskas. Both players made 81 strokes each on the second day, but on the first day, Mykolas Vasiliauskas' strokes were much more accurate.

The Women's Grand Cup went to Augustė Skolskytė (National Golf Resort). Her score is 208 strokes.

The biggest competition was for the Men's Junior Cup. Here, the winner was the representative of the National Golf Resort Edmundas Gedmincas (178 strokes), overtaking his team-mate Arūnas Kuraitis (186) and Giedrius Jarmalavičius (187) from Vilkė Golf Club.

The winner of the Women's Junior Cup was the young Patricija Ulozaitė (183), while Džilda Antanavičienė (208) was second. Both belong to the European Centre Golf Club.

Vytautas Kukarskas won the Men's Challenge Cup; he is a member of the LNOC Restoration Working Group.

The LNOC President's Golf Cup tournament has been held since 2014, when it was announced that golf was included in the Olympic program. ●



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# Preparing for the European and Olympic Games

Preparations for the 2023 European Games and the 2024 Paris Olympic Games continued in 2022. To ensure that our athletes do not have to worry about any domestic issues during the competitions, the LNOC traditionally tried to prepare for possible challenges in advance.

The European Games will take place in Krakow and the regions of Lesser Poland and Silesia from 21 June to 2 July. As many as nineteen Olympic qualification tournaments will be held during the Games.

The representatives of the following sports will have a chance to win a ticket to the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics: archery, synchronised swimming, track and field athletics,

badminton, 3x3 basketball, boxing, breaking, canoe slalom, BMX cycling, mountain biking, diving, fencing, judo, modern pentathlon, rugby-7, shooting, table tennis, taekwondo and triathlon. At the same time, Paris will host the European Championships in athletics (teams), synchronised swimming, badminton, canoe slalom, canoe sprint, BMX cycling, mountain biking, diving, fencing, judo (teams), modern pentathlon and teqball.

„This means that the competition level will be really high. The best athletes in Europe will be there. We are planning that the Lithuanian delegation will consist of around 100 athletes. This would be our biggest team at the Games. To



compare, three years ago we took 73 athletes to the European Games in Minsk. It is not easy to ensure the best conditions for such a large team, therefore our team is preparing intensively for the challenges ahead," said Einius Petkus, the LNOC's Director of Olympic Sport.

Mr Petkus and his Deputy Agnė Vanagienė attended the Heads of Mission Meeting and Open Days in Poland in 2022, therefore they were able to take into consideration many factors and see what the biggest challenges are ahead of them and the athletes taking part in the Games. The athletes, who will live in the main Games Village in Krakow, will be comfortably accommodated in newly renovated student dormitories.

„Problems can arise because the competitions of the individual sports are spread quite widely across the country, with some venues more than 200 km apart. Our task and goal as Olympic mission leaders is to ensure that the athletes staying in other cities have the same service and living conditions. Shooting, boxing, climbing, badminton and breaking sports representatives will be at a considerable distance from Krakow, therefore reaching the sports venues will be quite difficult," said the LNOC's Deputy Director for Olympic Sport.

In 2022, Einius Petkus and Agnė Vanagienė visited Paris, the capital of the 2024 Olympic Games, several times. After a meeting of the Chef De Missions and Open Days, they saw that there will be many issues to be solved regarding the welfare of athletes. Transport is a major concern. In the middle of the working week, it took an hour to travel from



one Olympic site to another, although it was just a few kilometres away. During the Games, traffic will become even more intense. The organisers are promising to install Olympic lines. Public transport is recommended, but this may cause safety concerns for athletes. Starting with January 2024, Paris will ban the entry of diesel cars, while most of our sports federations own namely diesel cars whereby they transport equipment to competitions. Before the Games, another headache may arise – for instance, the transportation of a convoy of boats to the right place. Household issues are also a concern. The Olympic Village is being built in an industrial area, and the houses under construction do not have air-conditioning, only the heat recovery system, which ensures ventilation but little cooling. And it can be extremely hot in July in Paris.

„After the Games, the buildings of the Olympic Village will be turned into apartment blocks. Residents who will purchase the apartments will be able to install their own air conditioning if they wish. Therefore, in order to save costs, the organisers of the Games are not doing this themselves," says Agnė Vanagienė.

The Netherlands, for example, a country with a large Olympic team, has already sent a team of 40 people to install air conditioning in the buildings where their athletes will live, at their own expense. Lithuania cannot afford it, therefore the LNOC team is working on finding other solutions.

Einius Petkus says that in preparation for the most important upcoming top-level events, the disruption of the



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## athletes of the national delegation foreseen to be sent to the European Games in Poland.

sports funding system is causing a concern. After the Seimas adopted the amendments to the Law on Lotteries at the end of 2021, starting with July 2022 8% of the working capital of the company Olifėja, which used to be allocated to the Olympic movement, is being transferred to the state budget. All funding for sport has been taken over by the State.

„A new institution has emerged to implement sport policy – the National Sports Agency. It has very ambitious goals, but it is important to remember that it is a public institution that does not always have the flexibility to assess the situation. We have witnessed this very clearly when the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport approved the Outline of the Conditions for Funding the Programmes for High Performance Sport. The most worrying aspects comprise the narrowed, results-oriented funding criteria, the increased and not entirely clear bureaucratic burden, and the delays in funding. For example, 179 athletes are currently (at the end of 2022) receiving scholarships, including 62 athletes with disabilities and 43 young athletes. This means that 74 athletes preparing for the Olympic Games receive scholarships. In comparison, until 1 July, the LNOC paid Olympic scholarships to 108 athletes. What has changed? The athlete potential criterion is no longer in place and the scholarship is no longer paid for participation in the Olympic Games. In my opinion, each athlete's case is different and should be considered individually. It is very difficult to find universal criteria that are suitable for each sport and each athlete's situation.

The country has set a target of taking 100 athletes to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, but I cannot see how this target can be achieved under the current criteria.



It is true that nowadays it seems to be about „quality rather than quantity“, that it is not the size of the Olympic team that matters but rather the number of medals won. Such an attitude seems to me very unprofessional, because, with such high qualification criteria, the number of athletes qualifying for the Olympic Games is an indication of the level of sport in a particular country. Moreover, depending on the sport, it is often just centimetres, seconds or fractions of a second that make a difference when winning a place. It is also noteworthy that the size of the Olympic team determines the quota of service personnel a country is given at the Olympic Games. This means that a larger team can take more medical practitioners and coaches to the Olympics.

As long as we can, we try to help sports federations. That is why in 2023 we will continue providing one-off grants to federations of Olympic sports, LNOC-recognised partner federations and the federations of sports included in the Paris Olympics programme.

Of course, our main task is to organise participation in Olympic events. We will continue to do our utmost to ensure the best conditions for our athletes to participate in the Olympic Games, European Games and Youth Olympic Festivals,” said the Head of the LNOC’s Olympic Sports Directorate. ●







# International Activities of the LNOC President

**D**aina Gudzinevičiūtė, a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and President of the LNOC, is a member of the Executive Committees of the IOC and the European Olympic Committees (EOC), and a member of a number of their commissions. She also represents the EOC on the Executive Council of the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC).

## Activities of the IOC

On 3 February, Daina Gudzinevičiūtė attended the first part of the 139th session of the International Olympic Committee in Beijing. The session consisted of two parts. The first was held just before the opening of the Winter Olympic Games, the second took place after the Games.

„Sustainability is one of the IOC’s main directions and we talked about it a lot during the Session. This is also the hallmark of these Olympic Games. When building the infrastructure and sports arenas for the Games, efforts have been made to make use of existing spaces and to renovate and adapt the arenas used for the 2008 Beijing Summer Games. Moreover, the competition arenas will use renewable energy sources. Reducing organisational costs and sustainability will be an even bigger focus during future Games,” said the LNOC President.

The heads of the Ethics, Audit and Finance Committees presented their reports to the IOC members, and so did the Organising Committees of the Tokyo Summer Olympics and the Beijing Winter Olympics. Discussions were held on the progress in the preparations for the 2024 Paris Summer Olympic Games, the 2026 Milan and Cortina d’Ampezzo Winter Games and the 2028 Los Angeles Summer Games.

IOC members approved the sports to be included in the programme for the 2028 Los Angeles Games. These include track and field athletics, rowing, badminton, basketball,



canoeing, cycling, equestrian sports, fencing, football, golf, gymnastics, handball, field hockey, judo, wrestling, swimming, rugby, taekwondo, tennis, table tennis, shooting, archery, triathlon, sailing, volleyball, surfing, skateboarding, and climbing.

The Session participants discussed the future of boxing, weightlifting and modern pentathlon in the Olympic programme. IOC members will make a decision on that at the 2023 Session, when the final list of sports to be included in the programme for the 2028 Games in Los Angeles will be adopted.

On 19 February, Ms Gudzinevičiūtė participated in the second part of the session remotely. Juan Antonio Samaranch, a long-standing member of the IOC and former member of the IOC Executive Committee, was elected IOC Vice President. Nenad Lalovic from Serbia and Ivo Ferriani from Italy were re-elected as members of the Executive Committee.

Five new IOC members were also elected, including Yiech Pur Biel, an Olympian recognised by the United Nations Refugee Agency, who represented the IOC Refugee Team in 2016 and was Refugee Team Leader at the Tokyo Olympic Games. It is the first time he has been elected to the IOC. He is originally from South Sudan.

The IOC members decided to hold the 2023 IOC Session in Mumbai. The event returns to India after a 40-year break. In 2023, India will celebrate 75 years of independence.

Towards the end of 2022, LNOC President attended the meeting of the IOC Athlete Support Commission in Lausanne, Switzerland, and in mid-December, she attended the three-day meeting of the IOC Coordination Commission of the 2026 Winter Olympic Games in Milan and Cortina d’Ampezzo, Italy; the latter meeting took place in Milan.

## Activities in the EOC

On 10-11 June, EOC Vice President Gudzinevičiūtė attended the EOC General Assembly session in Skopje, the capital

of Northern Macedonia. The meeting focused on the work done during the year and the organisation’s plans.

After the EOC Executive Committee decided to exclude the representatives of the Russian Olympic Committee, which has invaded and is devastating Ukraine, and the National Olympic Committee of the Republic of Belarus, which supports its actions, from attending the session, the situation in Ukraine was the subject of much debate. The report by Sergey Bubka, President of the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine, was greeted with an ovation.

„This session of the General Assembly is really different. Although the agenda was busy and the list of things to discuss was as long as it had never been, we did talk a lot about the situation in Ukraine and how else we can help. I am glad that the European Olympic Community is united in this respect. I talked extensively with Sergej Bubka at the event and he thanked Lithuania for its support in the face of the horrible war and for the help it has given to the athletes,” said Olympic champion Daina Gudzinevičiūtė.

Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee, addressed the leaders of the European National Olympic Committees at the event, calling them to foster Olympic values and get united for the sake of peace.

The General Assembly session featured report by EOC President Spyros Capralos, Secretary General Raffaele Pagnozzi and Treasurer Peter Mennel. Preparations for major Olympic events were discussed.

The participants of the event were introduced to the preparations for the 2023 European Games in Krakow, Poland. Among other delightful developments, the participants were informed that the contract with the host city has been signed and preparations for the Games are progressing smoothly.







The chairpersons of EOC Commissions Presidents presented the work carried out during the year, with one of the most important achievements being the development of the EOC Strategy 2030. They also presented the results of the Beijing Winter Olympics in February and the preparations for the 2024 Summer and 2026 Winter Olympics.

The message about the war in Ukraine was also sent in May during the lighting of the flame of the 16th European Youth Summer Olympic Festival in Rome, Italy. Daina Gudzinevičiūtė also attended the ceremony. The flame of the Festival taking place in July in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia was lit at the Ara Pacis Museum in Rome, next to the Altar of Peace.

Ms. Gudzinevičiūtė took part in another lighting ceremony in the Italian capital Rome in November, at the flame lighting ceremony of the 2023 European Youth Winter Olympic Festival.

Gudzinevičiūtė also regularly attends the meetings of the EOC Executive Committee. In September, she represented the EOC at the commemoration of the sad anniversary of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre and the victims. As is known, a hostage drama took place at the Olympic Village during the 1972 Munich Olympics, claiming the lives of eleven Israeli athletes and a German police officer.

„The Olympic Games are a celebration of friendship, respect and honourable competition. It is still difficult to comprehend how such an incomprehensible tragedy could

occur at such an event. Fifty years on, the memory of the victims has not faded. It is still the blackest day in the history of the Olympic Games and a very painful lesson,“ said LNOC President.

The ceremony was attended by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Israeli President Isaac Herzog, International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, the leaders of the Israeli National Olympic Committee, and the victims' relatives.

Gudzinevičiūtė attended two ceremonies: the first, together with the relatives of the victims, took place in the Olympic Village and the second one was held at the Fürstenfeldbruck Air Force Base near Munich.

#### Activities in the ANOC

On 6 February, LNOC President Daina Gudzinevičiūtė attended a meeting of the ANOC Executive Council. She became a member of this Council when she was elected EOC Vice President.

At the meeting in Beijing, which was held during the Winter Olympics, the following reports were presented: the reports of the associations of National Olympic Committees from different continents, the Finance and Audit Commission's report, the Election Commission's report, and the Legal Commission's report. The ANOC Presidential elections, scheduled for 17-21 October 2022, were discussed, which will be held during the ANOC General Assembly in Seoul, the capital of South Korea.

However, Ms. Gudzinevičiūtė refused to attend the ANOC General Assembly session in Seoul, as did some



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other heads of National Olympic Committees. This decision was taken after ANOC invited the heads of the Russian and Belarusian National Olympic Committees to the event.

A week before the event, the leaders of the National Olympic Committees of Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia addressed the ANOC Executive Council, urging it to reconsider whether officials from Russia and Belarus should really attend the event.

„In the current situation, where we are witnessing the terrible humanitarian consequences and the dangerous escalation of the situation in Ukraine, we ask the ANOC Executive Council to reconsider whether officials of the Russian and Belarusian National Olympic Committees are indeed allowed to attend the forthcoming General Assembly session. Solidarity with the Ukrainian people and sport must continue being our top priority,“ the address read.

The Presidents of the Latvian and Estonian National Olympic Committees did not go to South Korea either.

The LNOC President attended the ANOC Executive Council meeting virtually.

The National Olympic Committee of Guatemala was absent from the ANOC General Assembly as well – it has been suspended by the International Olympic Committee. This decision was taken by the IOC Executive Committee after the country's Constitutional Court decided, in August, to suspend the statutes and regulations of the National Olympic Committee for unspecified reasons. This situation in the country followed the election of the President of the National Olympic Committee in March, which was organised in accordance with the statutes of the Committee approved by the IOC and the Olympic Charter. The suspension by IOC means that Guatemalan athletes will not be able to take part in the Olympic Games on behalf of their country, under their country's flag and with their anthem, and that their National Olympic Committee will no longer receive funds from the IOC.

#### New Initiative

On 12 December, LNOC President held a meeting in Vilnius with the Olympic medallist, World and European champion, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Olha Saladukha and the representatives of the Belarusian Sports Solidarity Foundation. They presented a new initiative and talked about how information on athletes supporting Russia's war in Ukraine is being collected and publicised.

The initiative is the result of the work by a special working group set up by the Youth and Sports Committee of the Ukrainian Parliament. The aim of the working group, chaired by Olympian Olha Saladukha, is to promote inter-

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national sanctions against Russian and Belarusian athletes who support the war in Ukraine.

The website tribuna.com publicises the names of the athletes, both current and retired, who actively support Russian President Vladimir Putin's policies and participate in public events aimed at justifying Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In December, 56 individuals were included in the list.

Julia Chan, a member of the working group, Director of the Kyiv Youth and Sports Department, Vice President of the Kyiv National Olympic Committee, Aliaksandr Apeikin, Director of the Belarusian Sports Solidarity Foundation, who is contributing to this initiative, and Anatoly Kotov, former Secretary General of the National Olympic Committee of the Republic of Belarus and Head of International Relations of the Foundation also visited the LNOC headquarters in Vilnius.

„We have been cooperating with the Belarus Sport Solidarity Foundation for a long time. These are people who speak out bravely against the regime and consequently had to flee the country. I know them very well, so when I heard about this initiative, I not only invited them to Vilnius, but have also organised meetings with the colleagues in Latvia and Estonia. Their project is a kind of a wall of shame that will remain even after the end of the war and will not allow us to forget who supported the war and the violence,“ said Olympic champion Daina Gudzinevičiūtė.

The initiators emphasised that the list is not exhaustive and asked those with more information to share it. ●







# LNOC Representatives in IOC Commissions

In 2022, LNOC President Daina Gudzinevičiūtė and LNOC Director for International Relations Vaida Mačianskienė continued their activities in the Commissions of the International Olympic Committee.

## Olympic Education Commission

In November, Vaida Mačianskienė participated in the International Olympic Committee's Commission for Olympic Education. The Commission met again in person at the event in Lausanne, Switzerland.

„Due to the pandemic, our communication and meetings with our colleagues were held virtually for more than two years, so it is great to see each other again and discuss education issues and the Commission's plans in person,“ said Vaida Mačianskienė.

The Commission members were welcomed by Olympian Joël Bouzou (OLY), President of the World Olympians Association (WOA). He invited the Olympians to leave their signatures on the IOC glass wall. From now on, Olympians visiting the IOC headquarters will always be invited to sign it. Over 20,000 Olympians have already joined the WOA Association.

„The meeting put a lot of focus on the Olympic Values Education Programme – Lithuania is one of the world leaders in implementing it. We discussed how this programme is being implemented in other countries, what

challenges they face, what opportunities have still not been used. We discussed how we could involve young athletes and Olympians in the Olympic values education projects, so that they not only get to know the Olympic values more closely, but also become their ambassadors and motivators,“ said Vaida Mačianskienė.

She added that one of the IOC's goals is to inspire athletes and the public to embrace Olympic values not only during the Olympic Games, but also in-between them.

At the IOC Olympic Education Meeting, the representatives of the Olympic Sports Centre presented recent projects: a study „eSport in the Olympic Movement“, a study on the use of Olympic arenas after the Olympic Games, etc.

## Athlete Support Commission

At the beginning of December, IOC Member and LNOC President Daina Gudzinevičiūtė attended the Athletes' Entourage Commission meeting in Lausanne, where the Commission presented its strategic plan.

„This Commission looks at athletes' support through their environment: through coaches, doctors, scientists, family members or friends. These are the people whose unconditional support influences the results. Therefore, the aim of the Athlete Entourage Commission is to help improve the quality and level of services provided to athletes by working with and uniting key stakeholders,“

said Daina Gudzinevičiūtė.

The Commission's President, IOC member and former President of the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine, Sergey Bubka, presented the draft plan for the IOC Athlete Entourage Commission until 2026. Awareness, cooperation, competent support, gender equality and inclusion, as well as the well-being are the cornerstones of this document.

„All IOC Commissions aim to work in harmony and contribute to the implementation of the IOC's strategic plan Olympic Agenda 2020+5. The Athlete Entourage Commission can make an important contribution to strengthening athletes' rights, promoting safe sport and athlete protection,“ said Gudzinevičiūtė.

When implementing the IOC's objectives, the Commission will raise issues of concern, will organise discussions and close cooperation with other IOC Commissions, and will increase support for both athletes and those around them. The Commission will promote the importance of having experts with the highest level of holistic thinking in the athletes' environment.

During the meeting, to Olympians received the updated information on the Athlete 365 platform, which offers athletes a unique opportunity to enhance their knowledge and professional skills. The platform includes guidance on fitness, emotional health, sports psychology, business and management.

## Winter Games Coordination Commission

In mid-December, Daina Gudzinevičiūtė attended a three-day meeting of the Coordination Commission for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026. This was the third meeting of the Commission which focused on the progress of preparations, infrastructure and logistics.

In addition to being a member of the Coordination Commission, IOC Member Gudzinevičiūtė also chairs the Olympic Family Working Group.

„Preparations for the Olympic Games are progressing smoothly and in an orderly manner. We see that distance and logistics will be the major challenge for all participants. For example, Milan and Cortina are 410 km apart, which will take more than five hours to cover. We must accept that if we seek to reduce organisational costs and to make the Games as sustainable as possible, therefore the competitions will continue to be held



in different cities. We have already experienced this at the Summer Games in Tokyo and the Winter Games in Beijing. But we were able to cope with it. I have no doubt that we will do the same in Milan, we just need more careful planning,“ said IOC Member Gudzinevičiūtė.

When organising the Games, the aim is to minimise the impact on the environment, which is why the already existing renovated arenas will serve as sports venues and infrastructure for most of the Games events. For example, the opening ceremony is scheduled to take place at Milan's legendary San Siro Stadium, which has a capacity of 80 000 spectators.

Attention is drawn to the use of public transport during the Games. During the Winter Games, the IOC members will also be encouraged to opt for the public transport system of the Games instead of their personal cars.

In total, three Olympic Villages will be set up for the Games – in Milan, Cortina d'Ampezzo and Val di Fiemme. The Games events will take place in five zones. Milan will host the Opening Ceremony, ice hockey, ice skating and the main media centre.

Curling, bobsleigh, women's Alpine skiing and biathlon competitions will be held in Cortina d'Ampezzo, while men's Alpine skiing, snowboard and free style skiing competitions will be held in Valtellina Valley.

Cross-country skiers, ski jumping, Nordic combined and short track speed skating athletes will compete in Val di Fiemme.

The closing ceremony of the Games will take place in Verona.

The Commission members inspected the arenas being prepared for the Games and met the new General Manager of the Games Andrea Varnier. He stressed that one of the main priorities of the Organising Committee is to involve the public, the Italian government and local businesses in the success of the event. ●



# ANOC Forum

The first Global Forum of National Olympic Committees' Heads of Sport Directorate (GFHOSD) was held in Lisbon, Portugal, in early November. LNOC representative Einus Petkus also attended the event organised by the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC).

„Most of the colleagues who participated in the Forum are facing very similar challenges, therefore it is interesting to learn from their experience and share ideas on how we can address them in Lithuania,“ said Director of the LNOC's Olympic Sports Directorate.

50 delegates from around the world attended the four-day event. Participants were selected to the first seminar on the basis of their country's sports results and organisational performance. The event focused on the challenges faced at the last Tokyo Summer and Beijing Winter Olympic Games. Accreditation and accommodation issues ahead of the 2024 Paris Olympics were discussed.

„Each discussion was followed by practical work. Working in groups, we tried to take into account the situations in the different countries and to offer advice on how to deal



with the arising issues. I am pleased that some countries are only now discovering things that we have already implemented. For example, for many years we used to organise centralised camps for athletes from different sports. This was a unique opportunity for athletes to meet, to support each other, to try other sports. This has given birth to a number of athletes' initiatives. We had many discussions about competition. It is only natural that big, rich countries have more opportunities to prepare athletes to compete for Olympic medals. We talked about how small countries like Lithuania or Latvia can compete in such conditions,“ said Einus Petkus.

The Forum mostly focused on the well-being of athletes, their involvement in post-competition activities, the use of social media during the Games, the protection of athletes, and the challenges that coaches encounter. The sports calendar, the Olympic qualification cycle and the rising costs necessary to prepare for the Olympic Games were also an object of discussion. ●

# 50

delegates from around the world attended the Global Forum of National Olympic Committees' Heads of Sport Directorate.

# EOK Seminar

At the beginning of October, Einus Petkus and Agnė Vanagienė, representatives of the LNOC Olympic Sports Directorate, took part in a two-day seminar for National Olympic Committees. It was the 42nd event organised by the European Olympic Committees (EOC) in Ancient Olympia.

„Every year, this seminar brings together representatives of the European National Olympic Committees working in a similar field – sport departments staff, heads of Olympic missions. We all face similar challenges, therefore it is very useful to share experience and solutions. This year's seminar is special because it is taking place in ancient Olympia – the cradle of the Olympic Movement,“ emphasised Einus Petkus, Director of Olympic Sport of the LNOC.

Pamela Vipond, Deputy Director of the International Olympic Committee's Olympic Solidarity Programme, welcomed the support of the continent's National Olympic Committees for Ukraine's Olympic community. Apart from welcoming Ukrainian athletes, the countries have helped them with the preparation for competitions; moreover, the Olympic community has donated over €2 million to the solidarity fund set up by the IOC and the EOC. She stressed that the next important step is to develop a strategy to help Ukrainian athletes prepare for the qualifying competitions for the Summer and Winter Games.

The process of developing the EOC Strategy 2030 was also discussed. During the first phase, intensive discussions were held with all European National Olympic Committees (NOCs), which helped clarify priority areas such as strengthening support to the NOCs, helping athletes to develop, both personally and professionally, using tools to promote gender equality, and ensuring greater inclusiveness at EOC events. The focus will be on good governance principles and strengthening the marketing strategy for EOC sport events.

Preparations for the 2023 European Games in Krakow were also discussed. „Preparations for the Games was one of



the key issues discussed at the event. The pandemic and the refugee crisis caused the organisers a number of challenges, but I am pleased that they managed to overcome them. The process is going smoothly. Of course, we also discussed the preparations for the 2024 Paris Olympics,“ said Agnė Vanagienė, Deputy Director of Olympic Sport of the LNOC.

The event focused a lot on marketing and communication.

The seminar dealt with the organisation of the European Youth Olympic Festival in Slovakia which was held this summer, the involvement of volunteers and the results of the Young Ambassadors programme. The Festival in Banská Bystrica was one of the most successful ones in terms of publicity.

One of the highlights of the seminar was the election of the best young European athlete. The 2022 winner is Serbian high jumper Angelina Topic. The participants also observed the European Olympic Laurel Awards. The award is a token of honour from the European Olympic Committees for the contribution to the development of sport and Olympism in Europe. EOC Vice President, LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė presented the award to one of the winners, former President of the Latvian Luge Federation Atis Strenge. ●







## Believe in Sport Ambassador

**S**aulius Ritter, the Rio 2016 Olympics silver medallist, European champion and world championship medallist, rower, did not have a long break after putting his impressive career on hold last year after the Tokyo Olympic Games. Apart from taking the position of Secretary General of the Lithuanian Rowing Federation in the autumn, he has recently joined the ranks of an Ambassador of the International Olympic Committee's programme *Believe in Sport*.

The International Olympic Committee's programme *Believe in Sport* brings together half a dozen ambassadors

from different countries. They are former athletes, referees, coaches – popular and influential individuals in the sports community, with impeccable reputations. Through the Ambassadors, the programme aims at encouraging athletes around the world to play sport with integrity and honesty, and to prevent any manipulation of results or any other aspiration.

The ambassadors – people who truly care about fair play in sport – are appointed by the IOC on the proposal of the National Olympic Committees or the International Federations of the individual sports.



„The mission of the Ambassadors of the IOC's Programme for Fair Play in Sport without Manipulation is to connect with athletes, educate them and tell them how to deal with situations when you are faced with, for example, betting, or where you see improper means being used to achieve a result, and how you should react to it. Sport is a field where everything should be clean and fair, and where the best result should be achieved by devoting every effort and showing respect for the opponent.

After the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania nominated me as candidate, I had several conversations with IOC representatives via Zoom. They were assessing my achievements, certain experiences, my human qualities. When I was selected, I took part in an international one-hour distance learning course with the IOC representatives in charge of the programme. It was rather an introduction to the course, and they will be sending me all the materials soon. The LNOC is planning an event on 12 July where I will have to give a speech and share what I have learnt. There will be more opportunities afterwards to implement my responsibility to disseminate information on how to avoid situations where sports results are being manipulated. For

now, this is just the beginning of this important work," said Mr Ritter.

Asked whether he had also gained some knowledge for his new job at the LNOC-organised course for sports administrators, the Olympic vice-champion said: „Yes, indeed, I was lucky enough to get enrolled and have the opportunity to take the course. I gained valuable knowledge on how to behave in certain situations while occupying this position – I am now Secretary General of the Federation, or otherwise the Sport Manager.

I really liked the fact that the trainer Lauras Balaiša not only gave facts but also practical examples. When you combine theoretical things with practical things, you absorb and apply everything much better. This knowledge will also be useful when communicating with colleagues, organising and conducting meetings.

Of course, there are situations when I make mistakes. But I go by the saying that the only one who does not make mistakes is the one who does absolutely nothing. I work responsibly, and sometimes I worry that something might go wrong, but that's normal – one needs experience for everything. I'm happy that the surrounding people are very supportive and I'm learning fast.“

According to Saulius Ritter, when he was a professional athlete, he had a very clear calendar and daily routine: when to get up, eat, do the warm-up before training – everything was down to the minute: „Nowadays, I have all kinds of days, whatever the workload. Of course, there are certain guidelines – the competitions calendar, the athletes' preparation plan, reporting deadlines. I have commitments, but at the same time I need to develop a strategy, to organise all the activities of the federation. Life has changed and this requires self-discipline, clear time management, because if you don't organise your work properly, the day can be over very quickly and your hours run short.

What has become easier, it is the fact that I do not necessarily need to have had a good night's sleep or physically recovered to do my job well, while, on the contrary, rest was very important in professional sport. I have got used to my new life and I find it easier to organise my day, I manage to exercise, sometimes as early as at 5 am before work. I also find time for leisure. It is very convenient that the federation's headquarters is in Trakai, not far from home. I have to come to Vilnius often, but it is also close by.“ ●







# Olympic Month

For the fifth year in a row, Lithuanian primary school children took part in the Olympic Month project, which involved 2.7 thousand classes, or over 50 000 children from all municipalities in Lithuania, in activities on the themes of physical movement, healthy eating, cooperation and emotional health.

Teachers and parents invited primary school children to learn about each of the topics, based on the materials prepared by experts to be used during these lessons, breaks and at home.

„We are delighted to have successfully completed the fifth season of the project, which not only attracted a record number of participants, but also athletes and well-known public figures. Primary school children develop basic habits for life, therefore it is very important to set the right example, to encourage, to develop physical literacy and healthy lifestyles from an early age.

I would like to thank the patron of the project, Mrs Diana Nausėdienė for her great support, which participants can feel too. We are also grateful to the athletes who inspire primary school children by their example, to the parents and to the teachers for their commitment who see and understand the value of the project and are actively involved,” said Olympic champion and LNOG President Daina Gudzinėvičiūtė.

” We are delighted to have successfully completed the fifth season of the project, which not only attracted a record number of participants, but also athletes and well-known public figures.





Olympic athletes Diana Zagainova, pentathlete Ieva Serapinaitė, canoe sprint athlete Henrikas Žustautas, canoeists Mindaugas Maldonis and Andrejus Olijnikas, skier Mantas Strolia, track-and-field athlete Irina Krakoviak-Tolstika, boxer Tadas Tamašauskas, basketball player Laura Juskaitė helped the participants learn more about the topics of this project.

The children learnt the basics of healthy eating with chef Gian Luca Demarco and nutritionist Artūrs Sujeta, and improved their knowledge of emotional health with psychologist Asta Jakonienė.

The importance of teamwork and trust in each other was discussed by the quadruple scull athletes Aurimas Adomavičius, Dominykas Jančionis, Giedrius Bieliauskas, Žygmantas Gališanskis and the team's coach Kęstutis Keblys, volleyball players Monika Paulikienė and Ainė Raupelytė, members of the girls' hockey team Hockey Stars Gabija Griņiūtė, Gertrūda Gliožaitytė, Greta Baubaitė, Jonė Vaičiukienė, football club players Žalgiris Saulius Mikoliūnas and Edvinas Gertmonas, and the representatives of basketball club Rytas Margiris Normantas and Gytis Radzevičius.

A survey of participating teachers conducted immediately after the project showed an overall rating of 9.7 out of 10. According to the teachers, the vast majority of parents (69%) appreciate the benefits the project brings to their children. Almost all the teachers surveyed (98%) plan to use the materials in the future and plan to participate in the project next year (97%). ●

2022 with LNOC

## DRAWING LOTS



The end of the Olympic Month was traditionally crowned by the patron of the project, the First Lady of the country Diana Nausėdienė. During the ceremony of drawing lots, she helped to announce the lucky classes, which received the prizes established by the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

„I am extremely delighted to see the growing scale of the project. This year, for the first time, primary school children in all Lithuanian municipalities were learning the secrets of physical activity, healthy eating, cooperation and emotional health. I am especially grateful to the teachers who have led their classrooms throughout the Olympic Month. Your sincere and exciting desire to raise not only educated, but also healthy, physically and emotionally literate, self-confident children also able to trust their friends is the foundation and the light of the Lithuanian state,“ said Mrs Nausėdienė.



# LTeam Conference

Every year in mid-autumn, the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Olympic Fund organise an event that brings together fans and professionals of various sports – the LTeam conference, which has been held for the sixth year.

During the conference, specialists from different fields share relevant information and give presentations on various

sports-related topics, such as how to improve the effectiveness of training, how to cope with psychological issues, how to find the key to success in the world of marketing, and how to communicate on social networks.

The event, which had been held for five years as a public event for everyone interested in sport, changed its format in 2022 and became focused on athletes, LTeam members.







6

years the LNOC and LOF have been organising the LTeam conference.



In the last week of October, a large number of LTeam members took part in the training organised by the LNOC and LOF in Druskininkai. „LTeam members listened to Edmundas Jakilaitis, a well-known journalist, TV presenter and active participant in various social projects, talk about the importance of using one's visibility to contribute to various projects. His motivational presentation on „Opportunities for Sports Leaders to Act for the Benefit of Society and the Country“ caught the athletes' interest, while sharing his personal experience encouraged them to think about taking part in activities that inspire their fans and the public.

Marketing Specialist Guoda Sakalauskienė made a detailed presentation to the athletes. She talked about how to get to know your online twin and the importance of nurturing your personal brand. Every Olympian is a role model for many, whose name can become a brand in its own right, with a strong image and reputation in society. It is therefore important to position it properly on the internet and social media.







”

During the conference, specialists from different fields share relevant information and give presentations on various sports-related topics.

Another topic of interest to LTeam conference participants was personal finance management. Odeta Bložienė, an entrepreneur and financial expert, shared her advice on this topic with the athletes. How to effectively distribute one's earnings, how to deal with volatile income, monetary prizes, how to learn economising and how to make money work for you – this knowledge is necessary for everyone.

The Anti-Doping Agency presented innovations in its field in a separate presentation, and photographer Gedmantas Kropis taught photography tricks. The audience took part in a special quiz on sports topics prepared by Paulius Ambrazevičius. ●





# Contract With 3D Motion Lab

In 2022, the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Olympic Fund began cooperating with the biomechanical research laboratory *3D Motion Lab*.

The innovative 3D motion monitoring and evaluation laboratory helps identify weak health indicators of high-performance athletes. With the help of the devices by the Swedish company *Qualisys 3D*, athletes undergo the analysis of gait and posture, running, functional movements, balance tests; if necessary, individual physiotherapy is prescribed. Based on the results obtained, competent specialists prepare for athletes an effective health enhancement plan, give recommendations on how to achieve better sport results, help them rehabilitate faster after suffering various injuries.

„Partnership with the research laboratory *3D Motion Lab* is an important step towards achieving the maximum physical fitness of *LTeam* athletes and ensuring impeccable state of their health. We understand the significance of tests and analysis very well – being aware of specific indicators and receiving individual recommendations from specialists, Olympians will be able to use their physical capabilities more efficiently, train in a more targeted way and spare their bodies,” said Daina Gudžinevičiūtė, Olympic champion and LNOC President, who signed the cooperation agreement with *3D Motion Lab*.



The video measurement and analysis equipment used in the laboratory by the Swedish company *Qualisys 3D* is based on advanced technologies, precise biomechanical research and diagnostics.

„I believe that all *LTeam* members will feel the benefits of this cooperation. We are delighted that modern 3D motion monitoring and evaluation technology will make it possible to contribute to improving the results of Olympians. Our goal is to help them exercise effectively and, most importantly, without experiencing any pain or additional discomfort,” said Rūta Vilemienė, the Manager of *3D Motion Lab*.

The innovative system captures movement trajectories located on the markers of body control points and reflects them with infra-red rays. While performing movements, the athlete is observed from eleven different sides – nine infra-red and two video cameras are used arranged around the subject. Finally, the results obtained are transferred to the virtual space, they are evaluated by a physiotherapist, who gives conclusions and recommendations on how to increase the effectiveness of sport or rehabilitation. ●

2022 with LNOC

Our goal is to help Olympians exercise effectively and, most importantly, without experiencing any pain or additional discomfort.



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# Sports Film Festival



At the beginning of November, the event, which has been organised by the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Olympic Fund for eighth years in a row, welcomed the visitors of the Pasaka Cinema Theatre.

In just over a week – from 3 to 10 November – seven films were screened at the Pasaka Cinema Theatre.

„The festival's mission is to show that sport can be very diverse. Both in terms of sports and the emotions that prevail in the gym. The cinema is a way to get a closer look at undiscovered competitions through art, to better understand the feelings that the best athletes experience. After all, every achievement hides the invisible side of hard work,” said Daina Gudžinevičiūtė, Olympic champion and President of the LNOC which was the organiser of the festival.

Edvinas Pukšta, who is probably the most famous Lithuanian film critic and commentator, was once again the compiler of the programme of the Sports Film Festival. He says that selecting the best films was not the easiest task, as year 2022 was rich in outstanding sports-related films.

The festival's repertoire consisted of seven films. Three of them were documentaries: „Visions of Eight”, „Angels in the Rink” and „Alaskan Nets”. Four were feature films: „Tinitus”, „Zátopez”, „Poslední Závod”, and „Free Skate”.



# 7

films screened at the Pasaka Cinema Theatre within over a week – from 3 to 10 November.





A film about the Summer Olympics organised in Germany 50 years ago became the opening film of the Sports Film Festival, with „Visions of Eight“ opening the week-long festive event.

„Every year it gets more and more difficult to find the films focused specifically only on the subject of sport – sport films get integrated into other genres, other themes and become more and more topical, more and more frequently seen in prestigious film festivals and competition programmes. The variety and supply of such films is growing, and the audience is also expanding – it no longer only professionals or connoisseurs of certain sports that are interested in the so-called sports films – they rather involve everyone who likes quality cinema,“ – points out Edvinas Pukšta.

In 2022, the Sports Film Festival intrigued the audience by inviting them to get a closer look at the sports that are less frequently seen in Lithuania, to experience the life of the athletes practicing different sports. The film stories were about synchronised jumps into the water from a springboard, ice hockey on roller skates, basketball, running and winter sports – skiing, figure skating. The action of the films took the viewer to places from the sunny Brazil to the harsh



2022 with LNOC





Alaska, from the democratic Finland to the conservative Iran, introduced the viewers to the Czech sports favourites and to behind-the-scenes life of the 1972 Munich Olympics.

A film about the Summer Olympics organised in Germany 50 years ago became the opening film of the Sports Film Festival, with „Visions of Eight“ opening the week-long festive event.

The 1972 Games are also remembered by many for the heart-breaking hostage drama in the Olympic Village, which claimed the lives of eleven Israeli athletes and a German police officer. The choice of „Visions of Eight „ as the opening film was no coincidence – it was a symbolic commemoration of the events that took place there.

„It’s painful and hard to imagine that something like this could happen during a sports competition. Today it is history. Just when it seems that nothing alike can happen anymore, war breaks out and athletes start dying. Sport must be peaceful, it offers competition, while the competitor is not the opponent,“ Daina Gudzinevičiūtė told the guests at the Pasaka Cinema Theatre in the capital on 3 November, introducing the festival’s opening film.



The festival’s mission is to show that sport can be very diverse.

In her welcome speech, Israeli Ambassador Hadas Wittenberg Silverstein recalled that the early morning of 6 September had changed the lives of many Israelis forever, and that „the terror attacks have left a deep trauma behind and a terrible message that no one is ever protected from terrorists.“







The Lithuanian Olympians who competed with the world's best athletes in Munich in 1972 – swimmer Birutė Užkuraiytė-Statkevičienė and track-and-field athlete (shot put) Rimantas Plungė were also present at the opening of the Sports Film Festival.

After the screening of the film, the athletes shared their memories and talked about what it meant for them to participate in the most prestigious sports event, and shared the emotions and impressions they had experienced.

A large sports community listened to the Olympians' memories from Munich, with a large number of film-loving guests, including representatives of various federations, coaches, sports doctors and Olympians attending the opening ceremony and walking the red carpet: Saulius Ritteris, Dovydas Nemeravičius, Martynas Džiugys, Viktorija Senkutė, Mindaugas Maldonis, Modesta Morauskaitė, Diana Zagainova, Brigita Virbalytė, Smiltė Plynykaitė, Gabrielė Leščinskaitė, Tomas Kaukėnas, Karolis Dombrovskis, Mykolas Alekna's coach Mantas Jusis, and many others. ●

## FESTIVAL REPERTOIRE

### Documentaries



**Visions of Eight** / Directors: John Schlesinger, Arthur Penn, Michael Pflughar, Claude Lelouch, Miloš Forman, Yuri Ozerov, Mai Zetterling, Kon Ichikawa.



**Alaskan Nets** / Director: Jeff Harasimowicz.



**„Angels in the Rink** / Director: Sam Kalantari.

### Feature films



**Tinnitus** / Director: Gregorio Graziosi.



**Zatopek** / Director: David Ondříček.



**Posledni Zavod** / Director: Tomáš Hodan.



**Free Skate** / Director: Roope Oleniu.





# Teacher Awards

On 6 December, a traditionally ceremony was held at the Republic of Lithuania President's Office to honour and reward the most innovative, active and deserving pre-school and general physical education teachers.

These awards are intended to thank educators for their significant contribution to the promotion of physical activity in Lithuania, for educating the younger generation through their lessons enriched with innovative methods, for working with the communities of educational institutions, and for contributing to the organisation of events in their own city, in Lithuania or internationally.

The winners were congratulated by First Lady Diana Nausėdienė, the Vice-Minister of Education, Science and

Sport Linas Obcarkas and the President of the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania Daina Gudžinevičiūtė.

„Play activities, which are so important for every child, especially in the pre-school years, are a wonderful source of experience, self-discovery and good mood. At the same time, it is a great introduction to form good habits. When one starts with games and later develops a habit to exercise regularly, movement eventually becomes a conscious choice. A healthy lifestyle becomes an integral companion of a growing personality. Everyone gets stronger – children and adults, parents and teachers. Society is getting stronger, and our country is getting stronger,“ said Diana Nausėdienė when congratulating the teachers.

Ten most active educators working in schools and pre-

school educational establishments were honoured at the awards ceremony. The winners were selected by a competent jury consisting of representatives of the LNOC, the National Association of Preschool Physical Education Teachers (RIUKKPA) and the Lithuanian Physical Education Teachers' Association (LKKMA). The winners were awarded monetary prizes and one-of-a-kind statuettes by the organisers.

„Today we are rewarding educators whose work is guided, on a daily basis, by the Olympic motto: Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together. Your activity and sincere desire to continuously improve, to use your knowledge to develop a healthier, more physically literate society, and to inspire those around you with your personal example is very important for Lithuania. I sincerely thank each and every one of you for your invaluable work and dedication to children and physical activity,“ said LNOC President Daina Gudžinevičiūtė.

The main criteria of this competition are teachers' practical activities and their contribution to children and young people's physical activity and the development of physical education and sport in the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. According to the organisers of the competition, the evaluation of teachers' contribution is not only based on victories in sport but also on their activity in developing competences, organising events, applying innovative methods, working with the communities of educational institutions and other activities contributing to promoting physical activity in Lithuania.

„Physical educators work in one of the most important areas of education, because without quality physical activity and health promotion, we would not succeed in other areas. It's not easy to incite a modern child's interest, but you do your best and you find ways to do it with your creativity. I sincerely thank you for this,“ Vice-Minister of Education, Science and Sport Mr Obcarkas thanked the educators.

Participants were congratulated by Pijus Česaitis, a student of the National M. K. Čiurlionis School of Art, who performed Nathan Milstein's Paganiniana on the violin.

„Being a teacher is first and foremost a source of pride for me. When the news reached me that I had been selected as one of the laureates, I didn't know how to react. My family was happy, hugging me, proud, and for a while I didn't understand what had happened. But then I felt the tears coming. Then I realised that this award was a recognition of all my 35 years of work, effort, love for my job, dedication, determination and the constant support of my colleagues and family. I am very grateful for this extra motivation,“ said Danguolė Venckuvienė, a physical education teacher at Joniškėlis Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė's Gymnasium.





”

A healthy lifestyle becomes an integral companion of a growing personality. Everyone gets stronger – children and adults, parents and teachers.

„I am extremely delighted about this award. It is a great honour to see my name among all the winners. I am delighted to bring this award to my pre-school institution, to my city – Raseiniai. This means a lot for our town. I think that the essential element of successful work is to love one's work, then the baggage of knowledge gets filled unnoticeably, and the children are quick to feel one's love of physical activity and to take it over. When working with children, one should not be afraid to step into a child's shoes oneself, at least briefly – the joy of movement is very important for the development of physical literacy, therefore remember to cherish it all the time,“ said Diana Pečiulienė, physical education teacher at Raseiniai Kindergarten-Nursery School Liepaitė after the awards.

The project was initiated and organised by the LNOC, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, LKKMA and RI-UKKPA. ●



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## LAUREATS

**Sonata Jonauskienė** (Kaunas Kindergarten-Nursery School *Klausutis* and Kaunas Kindergarten-Nursery School *Spindulys*)

**Diana Pečiulienė** (Raseiniai Kindergarten-Nursery School *Liepaitė*)

**Indrė Jurgaitienė** (Šiauliai Kindergarten-Nursery School *Rugiagėlė*)

**Eirūnė Žuklevičienė** (Kaunas Kindergarten-Nursery School *Varpelis*)

**Ieva Pavlovskienė** (Kaunas Kindergarten-Nursery School *Vyturėlis*)

**Irutė Juršėnaitė** (Vilnius Blessed Teofilus Matulionis Gymnasium)

**Laura Sekmokaitė** (Vilnius *Saulės Gojus* School)

**Danguolė Venckuvienė** (Joniškėlis Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė's Gymnasium)

**Erika Rusonienė** (Alytus Džūkija School)

**Jolita Gvergždienė** (Kėdainiai *Aušra* Progimnasium, Lithuanian Sports University)



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# Lithuanian Sports Awards



A red carpet, more than 800 guests in festive attire and a spotlight on the best achievers of the sports world. On the evening of 21 December, the prestigious Lithuanian Sports Awards took place at the Litexpo Exhibition and Congress Centre, honouring the most meritorious Olympic and Paralympic athletes and their coaches.

It has become a tradition to award the country's best athletes before the major holidays of the year. Organised by the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania (LNOG) since 1994, this event has been taking place for the second year in a row in cooperation with the Lithuanian Paralympic Committee and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

Eleven athletes were awarded at the 2022 event, includ-

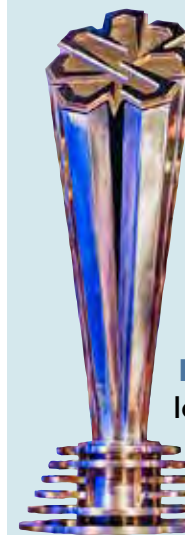


People with disabilities are an integral and important part of society, talented, hard-working and winning.



## LAUREATS

### Olympic sport



**Female Athlete of the Year:** Rūta Meilutytė (swimming)

**Male Athlete of the Year:** Mykolas Alekna (athletics)

**Team of the Year:** Mindaugas Maldonis and Andrejus Olijnikas (men's canoe double)

**Coach of the Year:** Mantas Jusis (athletics)

**Breakthrough of the Year:** Gabrielė Stonkutė (boxing)

**Lifetime Achievement:** Jurijus Moskvičiovas (modern pentathlon)

### Paralympic sport

**Female Athlete of the Year:** Raimeda Bučinskytė (shooting)

**Male Athlete of the Year:** Edgaras Matakas (swimming)

**Team of the Year:** the Lithuanian wheelchair basketball team

**Coach of the Year:** Algis Mečkovskis (judo)

**Breakthrough of the Year:** Gabrielė Čepavičiūtė (swimming)





ing five Olympic and five Paralympic medallists, as well as the exclusive Award for Lifetime Achievements. Both Olympic and Paralympic Laureates were evaluated in the categories of male Athlete of the Year, female Athlete of the Year, Team of the Year, Coach of the Year and Break-through of the Year.

A large sports community gathered at Litexpo to con-



gratulate the laureates – not only athletes, members of their teams and sports federations, but also the representatives of education, science, culture, politicians and diplomats.

„The Lithuanian Sports Awards traditionally crowns another active and eventful year, and this event is a great opportunity to thank all the athletes and their coaches, and to celebrate their personal achievements. We continue the



nice tradition of honouring both Olympic and Paralympic athletes on one stage. This cooperation between the two National Olympic Committees is an example that sport is a strong unifying force," said Daina Gudžinevičiūtė, President of the LNOC and Olympic champion.

President of Lithuanian Paralympic Committee Mindaugas Bilius also expressed his delight about the mutual cooperation. According to him, sport is an ice-breaker that successfully changes people's lives and contributes to the creation of a healthier, stronger and more civic society.

„People with disabilities are an integral and important part of society, talented, hard-working and winning. The Lithuanian Sports Awards, being a celebration where Paralympians line up alongside Olympians and together inspire the people of Lithuania to strive for more, to dream bigger and to defy artificial stereotypes, is proof of this. Here we are working together to create a better future for our country," said Mindaugas Bilius.







On the festive evening, the Minister of Education, Science and Sport Jurgita Šiugždiniienė also expressed her appreciation of athletes' achievements. „Sports victories do not come out of nowhere – they are always the result of the athlete's will, dedication, long hours of patient work and, of course, of the coach. I thank all the athletes – your victories make us all feel big and strong,“ the Minister said.

The World Vice-Champion and European Champion discus thrower Mykolas Alekna received the award of the male Athlete of the Year. His father, two-time Olympic vice-champion Virgilijus Alekna, had been awarded as the best Lithuanian male athlete four times.

Swimmer Rūta Meilutytė, who returned to the sports arena after a break of almost three years, was awarded the title of the best female athlete. She won bronze in the

Olympic 100m breaststroke at the 2022 World and European Championships, and became the non-Olympic 50m breaststroke World and European champion. It is the fifth time that Rūta Meilutytė has been selected as the country's best athlete of the year. She had previously been awarded the title in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2018.

Rūta Meilutytė's coach Rasa Mažutaitienė accepted the award on behalf of Rūta.

The award of the Team of the Year went to the men's canoe double rowers Mindaugas Maldonis and Andrejus Olijnikas, who won silver in the 500 m event at the World Championships and bronze at the European Championships.

Mantas Jusis, coach of the World Vice-Champion and European Champion Mykolas Alekna, was awarded the title of the Coach of the Year.



Krunglecas, and Olympic prize-winner Justinas Kinderis.

The moderation of the festive evening was entrusted to the experienced TV stars Mindaugas Stasiulis and Jurgita Jurkutė, who always have a way with words. The event's musical programme featured well-known national performers, including Monika Linkytė, Vaidas Baumila, Giedrė Kilčiauskienė, The Roop, and the Klaipėda trio Voiceless, playing cellos and drums, with the dancers from the Alytus dance studio Aušrinė performing to the music.

The awards were presented by well-known public figures and stage stars.

Before announcing the best Paralympic team, journalist Edmundas Jakilaitis spoke about the best team in the world. He called it the Ukrainian nation fighting against Russian aggression.



The award of the Breakthrough of the Year nomination went to boxer Gabrielė Stonkutė, who brought home a bronze medal from the European Youth (U22) Championships and became the Non-Olympic champion in the weight category of under 81 kg. The athlete was unable to attend the ceremony, therefore her award was presented to her coach Vidas Brugus.

In 2022, the exclusive Lifetime Achievement Award went to one of Lithuania's most famous modern pentathlon coaches Jurijus Moskvičiovas, who not only trained the country's most meritorious athletes, but also instilled in them the love for sport and coaching. He trained such athletes as Olympic champion and vice-champion Laura Asauskaitė-Zadneprovskienė, two-time Olympic medallist Andrejus Zadneprovskis, Olympic vice-champion Edvinas

„The best team in the world doesn't get tired, doesn't stop and doesn't back down. The best team in the world knows why they are fighting – they are fighting for their freedom and for the lives of their loved ones. The best team in the world is not just soldiers or volunteers. The best team in the world includes the best athletes in Ukraine, who, individually or in teams, went to war with weapons in their hands to defend their homeland as soon as the war broke out. There are athletes and coaches who died on the battlefield. And they will never stop, will never give up and will never tire. Therefore, I invite us to never tire, never stop supporting the strongest and best team in the world,“ urged Edmundas Jakilaitis.

The nominees were announced at the end of Novem-





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ber and were selected by the Lithuanian Sports Awards Council, consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Paralympic Committee, the Lithuanian Federation of Sports Journalists, the Lithuanian Union of Sports Federations, the Association of Heads of Lithuanian Municipal Sports Departments, the Lithuanian Olympic Foundation, and the LNOC Athletes Commission.

The Council's vote accounted for 80% of the vote, while the remaining 20% was decided by the public – they could vote for their favourite athletes on the LNOC website till 12 December.

The Paralympic sports laureates were selected by the Executive Committee of the Lithuanian Paralympic Committee. ●





## Festive Tradition

“I am delighted that you remember about us and come here, and it is an honour for us to celebrate the most beautiful holidays of the year together with you,” said Daina Gudzinevičiūtė, President of the LNOC, addressing the Olympic Athletes of different generations.

On 20 December, the Olympic champion traditionally greeted the members of the Lithuanian Olympians Association (LOA) on the occasion of the upcoming holidays.

“We have been cherishing this tradition of meeting together before the holidays for many years. You are a very important part of Lithuania’s Olympic history and the Olympic family, therefore I am extremely delighted to shake hands with each of you, to discuss the latest news and results of the sport and to congratulate you on the most beautiful holidays of the year. I wish us all harmony, health and peace in 2023,” said Daina Gudzinevičiūtė.



Olympic champions, medallists, famous Olympians and sports veterans – members of the LOA – gathered at the LNOC that day. They were presented with symbolic LNOC presents.

“We look forward to this Christmas gathering every year. We could probably meet more often, but we know that the LNOC will assemble everyone together before Christmas. This is an opportunity to sit together, to talk, to share memories,” said Birutė Statkevičienė, the first Lithuanian swimmer to compete in the Olympic Games and Vice President of the LOA.

Traditionally, the Olympians, having gathered before the major holidays of the year, not only discussed the Association’s activities, but also shared ideas for future projects.

“Last year was difficult, but we would not be Olympians if we did not overcome challenges. We are delighted to



have accomplished almost all the planned work, and next year we will have even more ideas,” said Lina Kačiūšytė, President of the LOA and Olympic champion.

She welcomed the World Olympians Association (WOA) project “A Little Bit of Home Warmth for Ukrainian Children.” One of the initiators of this project is LOA Vice President Ms Statkevičienė, who came to the event with her visually impaired pupil Simon Žvirblis. The 15-year-old, who has been playing sport for just over a year, is already showing great results, and Ms Statkevičienė sees the young athlete competing at the 2024 Paralympic Games.

Founded in 2003, the Lithuanian Olympians Association aims to promote Olympic ideals, the provisions of the Olympic Charter and the principles of fair play, and to continue the traditions of Olympic sport. ●





# Oak Tree Changing its Image

The mascot of the Lithuanian Olympic team, the Oak Tree, has changed its attire – the much-loved character is starting 2023 in renewed style. This transformation of the Oak Tree is symbolic due to the the upcoming anniversary – in the spring, the LTeam brand will celebrate its tenth anniversary.

„Over the past decade, the Oak Tree has become an integral part of LTeam and the entire Olympic team, and it is hard to imagine any event or project organised by the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania or the Lithuanian Olympic Fund without the Oak Tree. It has become an attractive participant in various festivities and games loved by children and adults alike,” said Daina Gudzinevičiūtė, LNOC President.

The extremely Lithuanian name of the Oak Tree was chosen by sports fans, and the stylised oak leaf has been used in the LTeam brand logo since 2013. According to LNOC President, it is a symbol of strength, resilience, longevity and a united nation, which carries an important message.

„LTeam represents Lithuania all over the world, and athletes wear the LTeam uniforms at major competitions – European and World Championships, European Games and Olympic Games. The brand is particularly important in shaping the image of Lithuanian sport abroad and promoting Lithuanian athletes in the country and around the world. „LTeam promotes physical activity of the society through various activities, with particular attention to children and young people,” emphasised Daina Gudzinevičiūtė. ●

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