



## Bill Sweeney

### CEO of the British Olympic Association

#### Sungyeon - Year 10

“Meeting Mr. Sweeney was a pleasure, I was able to learn many things about the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020 through this experience. One thing that I found the most heartwarming was the amount of effort that is put into each and every Olympic Games. I also thought the presentation on Team GB was a great way to advertise the 2020 Olympics and gain support from a variety of people, including Kawasaki city. Using my interest in photography, I hope that taking photographs and videos of our meeting with Mr. Sweeney will spread 2020 to more people so that way they can find out more about the Games. The detailed and entertaining presentation on the success of London 2012 that I watched on Tuesday 14th December by Mr Sweeney has made me more interested in Tokyo 2020.”

#### Taisei - Year 12

Q1. The IOC (International Olympic Committee) and WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) are committed to ensuring clean sport and work together to combat cheating in sport. Is there any advice you would give to aspiring Tokyo 2020 athletes to encourage them to uphold the values of clean sport and avoid doping?

#### Mr Sweeney

“That’s a great question. There was an IOC meeting about 2 months ago, and most countries/nations have an ‘athletes’ commission’ which represent the bigger, more well known athlete communities, and their main issue is trying to keep sport clean. It is very demotivating and sad if athletes have been training and practicing for several years but lose to another athlete who has been doping.

“The charter also states that each individual athlete has a responsibility to be truthful and honest and not to cheat.”

There are responsibilities on both the IOC and WADA sides, in terms of delivering a clean Olympic and Paralympic Games. This is a very challenging and complex part of society in sport where someone tries to cheat, and it can be very difficult for them to spot or catch, so the system must be run very well. The charter also states that each individual athlete has a responsibility to be truthful and honest and not to cheat.”



### **Mr Sweeney**

“There are a few really key criteria, one is that sports must be gender balanced, so for example there is a sport called squash in the UK and the perception is that it is predominantly male, even if this isn’t the case. Cricket has also had this issue, there are not enough female cricket teams and that is holding them back. So gender balance is really important. Another point is that the IOC is looking for sports that will keep the movement young, rather than opting for sports with an ageing demographic. If you look at what happened with winter sport in particular when you had things come in like snowboard cross and halfpipe, they are both very young sports and very vibrant. They are looking for sports that bring more attraction for youth and they are also looking for sports that do well on TV, things that you can broadcast and that gain attention easily. There’s another key criteria which is international reach, and so in total the IOC look for these; gender balance, youth appeal and broadcasting capability.”

### **Campbell - Year 12**

Q4. Since World War II there have only been 2 cities that have won the bid to host the Olympic Games twice - London (1948 & 2012) and Tokyo (1964 & 2020). The Tokyo 1964 Games were significant for Japan as they recovered from World War II and showed the world how sport can promote peace. What do you think the Tokyo 2020 Games will be remembered for?

“I think there will be a real outpouring of camaraderie, embracing the world, exchange of cultures, and that can only send a really positive message”

### **Tom- Year 12**

Q2. The London 2012 Paralympic Games and Channel 4 were made famous by their round-the-clock coverage of the Paralympic Games. Do you think that there are ways to increase the popularity of the Paralympic Games in the lead up to Tokyo 2020

### **Mr Sweeney**

“They talk a lot about some of the things that happened in the UK and I was making reference there about how 2012 was really transformational for Paralympic sport, and it was partly down, as you say, to Channel 4. They really got behind it and they broadcasted brilliantly and they promoted brilliantly, creating TV campaigns around it and I think that changed the perception of Paralympic sport. There’s also one or two sponsors that really support it heavily, so BP for example are big sponsors of Paralympic sport, they don’t sponsor us (Olympic Association) so I keep trying to get them to sponsor us as well. I think Japan has looked at 2012 as an example, it wasn’t so great in 2016, as it didn’t have the same level of awareness, so Japan’s looking at some of the things that worked in 2012 and is trying to replicate it. I’d be surprised if it doesn’t have full broadcast programmes in place.”

### **Martin - Year 12**

Q3. There are 5 new sports that will be introduced at the Tokyo 2020 Games; Baseball/softball, karate, skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing. What are some of the criteria that the IOC consider when deciding to enter a new sport into the Olympic Games?



### Mr Sweeney

“The world is a pretty messed up place at the moment, if you look at Pyeongchang, leading up to that we had all sorts of plans in place for evacuation as issues between the North and South Korea were kicking off and Trump was doing his stuff. But when you got to the Games, it was so interesting. If you went into the dining area you could see the North Korean team and South Korean team in there not far away from each other, I think they even made a united team for ice hockey, and there was the feeling that this was a real opportunity to get people talking together. The one thing about sport is that it increases dialogue, people aren’t throwing insults at each other from a distance, did that create some of the conversations happening now? I don’t know, but it definitely didn’t hurt it. I think in Japan’s case, Japan is a very peace loving nation, in 1964 they called the Games the ‘Happy Games’ and I think there will be a real outpouring of camaraderie, embracing the world, exchange of cultures, and that can only send a really positive message around the world in that 17 day period. Where 1964 was really about infrastructure, railways and roads, buildings and reconstruction, I think 2020 will be about softer issues such as diversity, embracing integration and it will be good.”

### Casey - Year 12

Q5. As CEO of the British Olympic Association, your responsibilities are numerous and varied. What do you feel is your biggest responsibility towards sport?

### Mr Sweeney

“I think in Games time it’s making sure all the athletes come home safe, I wouldn’t state it before going to Rio but I used to have nightmares about an athlete getting kidnapped or being in the wrong place at the wrong time. So when we got on the flight on the way home, the medal achievement was fantastic, but the greatest personal satisfaction was that we had 366 athletes come out to compete and 366 athletes going home. Also I think competition on the field is one thing but sport has always been a really big part of my life. I was born and grew up overseas, moved around schools and for me sport was a way to make new friends, get into new communities and so on. So for us I think there is the obligation to communicate the positive aspects of sport especially at a time when the world can be a little bit confused.”

### Obi - Year 12

Q6. The London 2012 opening ceremony was remembered as the most successful since Beijing. In your opinion, what is the importance of the Olympic opening ceremony in spreading Olympism and the Olympic values worldwide?

### Mr Sweeney

“I think it’s a great opportunity as the whole world is watching, so the message you can get across on that occasion is very important. I do sometimes get worried that cities try to compete with each other, so when Beijing come out with a big blockbuster, then London says “right, we’ve got to go one better”, so you end up

spending too much money. It was interesting in Rio where they just didn't have the money, when they originally bid the economy was going in a really good direction, Brazil was forecast to be the biggest GDP country in South America but it just didn't happen. I actually really enjoyed the Rio opening ceremony because it was done on a shoestring and it was all about Brazilian culture, dance and history, and so I think it's an opportunity to showcase that country and its' values and also send out a really positive message"

### **Mion - Year 12**

Q7. The BOA (British Olympic Association) recognises on its' website that sport is one of the most important platforms for promoting gender equality and empowering women, what would be your advice for further promoting gender equality in sport in Japan in the lead up to Tokyo 2020?

### **Mr Sweeney**

"I don't know the gender makeup of the Japanese team, but you'll see a lot of Japanese female athletes winning medals in the Olympics. One of the things that happened quite well in the UK was that after the success of our female athletes, organisations such as Sport England created a separate campaign called 'This Girl Can'. It wasn't just about elite sport but It was about not being afraid to start, and some of the issues preventing girls getting into sport were more about self awareness and confidence. It was a campaign specifically targeted to increase participation for girls in sport, and we're starting to see those numbers increase. Some of those participation numbers I mentioned to you there before (7 million more people do sport since Rio 2016), a lot of them are being driven by more girls getting into sport and you have to start that communication really, really early. If you look at our team in Pyeongchang, 60% of our medals came from female athletes. Tokyo, I would say about half the medals will come from female athletes, so it's reality."



### **Makoto - Year 12**

Q8. There are those who argue that the Olympic Games is costly and promotes commercialism, that it incites extreme nationalism and elitism in sport, what would you say to people like this to convince them of the positives of the Olympic Games?

### **Mr Sweeney**

"Great question, when does patriotism cross over into nationalism? Nationalism can be quite dangerous, whereas patriotism I think is quite normal, people feel proud of their country and it's getting that balance right. I think during Games time itself if you get the opportunity to go into the village or you experience that atmosphere over that 17 days, there really is a friendly, competitive spirit, so I think the values here are right. In terms of elitism, athletes really are elite in that they train to win and to compete against the best in the world, so how can we link that back into growing participation across sport? Which I think is really important. In terms of commercialism, we live in a commercial world, sponsors get involved in the Olympics because they know that there's a wide audience and so they are hoping that by investing in the Olympic Games that they are going to get a positive rub-off on their brand. I don't think that's going to go away, I think at the moment that McDonald's will not be a sponsor going forward and that's partly because it's the wrong fit. Even though the athletes love McDonald's and they're burning it off it sends a difficult message. The Olympic Games will also always be careful to avoid certain sponsors because of the message it might send."