



Fédération Internationale Roller Sports

ROLLER AMBASSADOR DEREK PARRA ON THE ROLLER DREAM

AT IOC SPORTS PROGRAMME COMMISSION – LAUSANNE 14TH NOVEMBER 2008

Ladies and Gentleman, we are nearing the end of our presentation, but before we conclude I would like to share with you my motivation for accepting this incredible honour of being here today.

As a child growing up, I came from very little to call my own. But as with all children of the world, I was inspired to dream by what I saw around me.

My dreams were of being an Olympian in the sport that I grew to love, roller speed skating. I chased that dream with all my heart for a majority of my younger years, well into my late 20's. As expected, I made great sacrifices along the way. I moved from one side of my county to the other, penny less at times, all in hopes of realizing my dream.

In time, I had become one of the best in my sport. I travelled the world, competed for my country and won medals! I earned 18 World Championship titles, set two world records, and became the most decorated athlete in my sport. I had everything that I had dreamt of, except the opportunity to compete for an Olympic medal.

In 1996, at the age of 26, fearing the end of my athletic career, I was forced to give up. I did not give up on my dream, but I DID have to give up on my sport. I made a switch over to ice speed skating, something that no one had ever successfully done and after six more years of struggle, by the grace of God, I was finally able to realize my childhood dream by winning a Gold Medal at the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City.

Standing on the top of the podium to receive this Gold medal, is a moment that is permanently etched in my heart and mind and will live on forever, in the history of my country and the Olympic Movement and for that I am grateful. I stand here, in front of you today, an Olympic Champion of Ice skating, but in my heart, I will always be a roller skater.

Now that my athletic dreams are complete, I have a new dream! And I share this dream with 50 million people around the world.

My dream now is for the youth of the roller world. For the countless children, who are at this very moment, skating on roads and trails within their own towns and cities.

My dream is for the children in the parks and in the rinks, putting on their skates for the very first time!



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My dream is that they will not have to give up on the sport that they have grown to love.

That instead, they will continue to grow and be empowered to excel through their experiences in life on skates – all in pursuit - of an Olympic dream!

And finally, that they will have the opportunity to visualize and realize their own “Olympic moment” in this amazing sport...ROLLER SPEED SKATING!

Thank you again for this incredible opportunity.

I hope and pray that this will be a crowning moment in the history of our sport and the final element in our Olympic quest!