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**The Post-Soviet Development of Elite-Level Athletics in  
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**

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**The Post-Soviet Development of Elite-Level Athletics in  
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**

There is little dispute that elite-level athletics, and the Olympics in particular, capture the attention of many in countries all over the world. It is also well-known that certain countries recognized for their Olympic prowess in many sports, particularly the Soviet Union and China, developed extensive programs to ensure such success. A corollary to these well-oiled athletic machines is the efforts of developing countries to achieve international success in selected sports, and their reasons for doing so, which may include nation-building and international recognition, among others. The five Central Asian former Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were previously a part of the Soviet system of athlete development and generally experienced the successes and harms of that system. Upon the break-up of the Soviet Union, athletes from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan competed in the 1992 Olympics as part of the Unified Team, but have since competed for their individual countries. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan began competing as individual countries in the 1996 Olympics.

This paper will review each country's participation in the modern Olympic movement, the sports each country has chosen to support at the Olympic level, their possible reasons for doing so, and will compare and contrast the relative levels of success to date among these five countries. The prescribed length of the paper will make it impossible to evaluate each individual sport, so analysis will focus on certain sports and/or athletes that provide examples of why the given state has made that sport a priority.

## I. The Modern Olympic Movement: Why Countries Choose to Participate

Pierre de Coubertin of France is credited with establishing the modern Olympic movement, with the first Olympic Games held in 1896 (“Modern Olympic Games” 2-3; *see also*, International Olympic Academy). Coubertin stated some high-minded goals for the Olympics that are still part of the Olympic Movement, and are included in the Olympic Charter: “The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth people through sport practiced in accordance with Olympism and its values” (Olympic Charter, 2011, Rule 1). Olympians are themselves encouraged to act as role models in their own countries and throughout the world (see, e.g., Gibson; Mpekatorou; Proceedings of International Olympic Academy).

These goals are insufficient to explain why countries support participation in elite international athletics, or what reasons to pursue such participation may be important to developing countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (“KKTU”). In addition to the direct example hopefully provided by the athletes, participation – and especially success – in international sports can contribute to nation-building through international recognition, development of national identity and integration. It can also support economic development and provide opportunities for “sports diplomacy.”

Many of these goals overlap in practice and are intangible, so it is difficult to quantify outcomes, but the literature consistently references them. For example, sports teams provide symbols promoting national identity such as flags, national anthems, bands, banners and logos (Eitzen 371; Houlihan 216). Eitzen believes these symbols, along with funding and facilities provide social control (Eitzen 372, 373). Houlihan states that these symbols of national identity were used in sport to unite the French and English in Canada and for “Russification” in the Soviet Union (Houlihan 216; Allison 345). Thus, development of national identity can overlap with integration (see Allison 350-351). While these

examples can be negatively viewed, especially Russification for KKTU, symbolism in international sport could now be used by these countries to re-develop their own national identities.

International sports, especially success in the Olympics, can “project a positive image of the nation abroad,” promoting individual state interests such as the Soviet perception of their superior ideology or regional dominance of China (Houlihan 216, 219). There is also a perceived value in hosting a major sporting event; doing it well leads to recognition in the international community (Ibid. 219). Comparisons between the Beijing and London Olympics and Ukraine’s shared hosting with Poland of the UEFA Euro2012 Soccer Tournament are examples of positive and negative recognition.

Of course, one purpose for seeking international recognition from sporting events is to support economic development (Ibid. 217). This goal is taken so seriously that professional marketing agencies are often hired to assist in the effort. Rein’s article on place-branding sports takes this a step farther, providing sports-branding techniques to benefit “emerging, transitional, negatively-viewed and newly industrialized countries.” Possible platforms for branding are the event (hosting an event, as described above), the team (promoting national identity) and the place (“wholly integrating sports into the design of the place”) (Rein 77-78, 80).

One given example of “team” is New Zealand’s All Blacks, which cultivated a rugged persona through an opening ritual based on Maori traditions and team logos. The team’s brand became a part of the national identity and promoted New Zealand abroad (Ibid. 75). This again demonstrates the overlap among the various goals for a country to engage in elite, international athletics. It also provides a marketable approach that could be taken by any of KKTU to increase the impact of their participation in such athletic events.

Riordan, discussing the Soviet system, emphasized that for developing countries, sport is not supported for fun, but to achieve serious goals (Riordan, *Developing Societies* 288). In addition to the

goals listed above, he also includes military readiness, hygiene and health, and social policies such as the emancipation of women, all of which were goals of the sport system in the Soviet Union that included KKTU (Ibid. 287, 293).

The reasons for any country to participate in the Olympics, or other elite level international sports, range from the aspirational to the economic, encompassing ideology, social policy and diplomacy. Countries develop programs to increase their success in these athletic events; marketing experts are hired to properly brand the countries, teams and athletes. As countries that moved from being part of the Soviet Olympic powerhouse to developing or transitional country status, it is safe to conclude that each of the KKTU countries has much to consider in developing a national sports program and defining its reasons for doing so.

## **II. Measuring Success from Participation in the Olympics and How this Influences Which Sports are Nationally Supported**

Even cursory viewing of the Olympics leads to the conclusion that medals are generally concentrated among relatively few countries, which means that most countries must choose to participate for reasons other than just medals (see Oyeyinka). There are numerous studies considering factors that influence a country's success in the Olympics. These show the size of the country's sport budget and the "intensity and collective efforts to win more medals will undoubtedly affect a country's performance" (Ibid. 164). Oyeyinka concludes that economic factors, political instability (especially ethnic wars and genocide) and religion also have a major impact (Ibid.). Still, most anyone would conclude that when deciding what sports to participate in, winning a medal is better than not and making the Olympics is better than not, since sport is competitive – a win/lose proposition. Thus, other factors being equal, a country will likely choose to support a sport where there is a reasonable chance of success as measured by Olympic participation and medals.

Sports brand marketing is also likely to be part of the analysis in today's economy. For this purpose, Rein recommends considering the resources that can be committed, considering the country's historic association to the sport and finding a niche, otherwise known as not picking a sport where the medals are nearly always won by one country, e.g. China and table tennis (Rein 81; Silver). One exception is where there has previously been an athlete from that country with individual success in a particular sport, as this provides an opportunity for branding and development of the sport (Ibid.).

Riordan links the selection to national or cultural identity, which is aligned with Rein's emphasis on the need to connect team branding with national identity. Riordan's factors include an analysis of whether sports in newly independent states should grow out of indigenous national traditions or align with more popular sports already a part of international and Olympic competition (Riordan, *Developing Societies* 296). His examples are relevant to KKTU: (1) China held a Minority People's Folk Games in 1985, which included 3000 participants from thirty ethnic groups that competed in seven sports and twenty-seven display games; (2) there are many folk games in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ("USSR"), some of which were included in national competitions, including Uzbek Kyss-kuu, a horseback chasing game, and numerous other Central Asian folk sports (Riordan, *Developing Societies* 297, 306). However, he also notes that it is difficult for sports like this to cross ethnic boundaries to an international elite level (Ibid.). In addition, both China and the Soviet Union were already Olympic powerhouses, so these events seem more geared to encouraging broad participation in sport than in developing sports for Olympic competition. Countries like KKTU might find more success in selecting Olympic sports with some nexus to already-popular indigenous sports.

During the 2012 Olympics in London, the New York Times ran a somewhat tongue-in-cheek article considering these questions for "the Kyrgyzstans of the world." The author evaluated economic balance, competitive balance and medal abundance, concluding that such countries should look for a

sport that is cheap to get in to, isn't already dominated by one country and which offers a lot of medals (Silver). While not a thorough statistical analysis, Silver's conclusions are interesting and include a number of examples from KKTTU. For economic balance, he looks at Gross Domestic Product versus cost of the sport, concluding that countries with comparatively low GDP fare better in sports with lower associated costs; weightlifting versus equestrian. He specifically notes that Kazakhstan has won Olympic medals in weightlifting and that Kyrgyzstan, while it has many horses, is unlikely to fare well in equestrian events where the medalists are from countries with the highest worldwide GDPs (Ibid.)

Silver quips that "competitive balance" equals "how good are the Chinese?", meaning it is best not to pick a sport where one country has won most of the medals over multiple Olympics. "Medal abundance" translates into a conclusion that individual sports offering multiple Olympic medals are better choices than team sports offering one medal, such as taekwondo, gymnastics and wrestling (Ibid.). He concludes that the easiest sports to medal in are wrestling, taekwondo, weightlifting, boxing, gymnastics and judo (Ibid.) KKTTU is in fact fairly well represented in these sports, and some of the countries have obtained Olympic medals in these sports.<sup>1</sup>

One comment to Silver's article suggests that developing and transitional countries focus on women's sports that are not popular among women, noting that China has begun to do this but has not yet dominated the field (Ibid.) This possibility is related to a potential factor, other than Olympic medals, for measuring success of participation in elite international and Olympic sport – increased participation of women. This is particularly relevant in KKTTU, where greater participation of women was encouraged in the Soviet period (discussed below), but is not generally supported in Muslim countries (see Akyildiz; Grabarenko; see also, Eitzen 373). For example, national leaders can prohibit their athletes from

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<sup>1</sup> Online comments to Silver's article suggest other factors to consider: time in the sport to achieve an elite level, athlete attrition, time commitment (does the athlete have another job?) and number of registered athletes in the sport in the winning country (depth of talent pool) (Ibid.). These are valid factors but the information may be difficult to obtain.



participating in an international event, as did thirty-four Islamic nations at the 1996 Olympics, who would not allow their female athletes to compete because doing so would violate Muslim rules for appropriate women's dress (Eitzen 375). However, none of KKTTU were among them. All had women athletes competing in the 1996 Olympics, and for three, this was their first Olympics since the break-up of the Soviet Union. This is an excellent example of the participation of women as a measure of the success of a country's decision to compete at an Olympic level and of sports diplomacy in action.

### **III. Elite Sport During the Soviet Era and Participation by the Five Central Asian Former Soviet Republics, KKTTU**

If a country were to develop a national sports program considering: (1) goals for participating in the Olympics and other elite international sporting events; (2) factors influencing which sports to focus on; (3) a branding program and diplomatic relations; and had an adequate budget, it could well end up with a plan similar to the Soviet sports program. This is not to suggest that the Soviet program did not have many serious problems, but rather that it is an example of a cohesive plan that bore results. It is also significant to the current state of sport in KKTTU.<sup>2</sup> The USSR headed the medal table in most every Olympics, Summer and Winter, from 1952, when it first participated in the Olympics, until 1992. This was not accidental success: knowing that Olympic success brings international prestige, the Soviet Union purposefully focused its programs on Olympic sports (Riordan, *Soviet Sports Diplomacy* 71).

Riordan has written an extensive history of the development of sport, at all levels, in the Soviet Union (see Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*). Relevant portions are described here: In the Soviet Union, sport was a requirement, like schooling, with a series of programs and schools at each level, where talent was identified and advanced (Riordan, *Soviet Sports Diplomacy* 71). The purpose was broader

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<sup>2</sup> China also has such a program, but an in-depth analysis of that program is beyond the scope of this paper because none of KKTTU were included within the borders of China during the Soviet and post-Soviet period.

than elite sport since their philosophy included a physical culture (Riordan, *Soviet Sport* 3; Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society* 43 et seq.). This is akin to the Latin maxim, “a sound mind in a sound body.”

There was also a military defense reason for encouraging physical training, especially in the years leading up to World War II. Therefore, the military provided much of the framework for sports development during this period, including shooting among the chosen sports until the late 1980s (Houlihan 215; Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society* 150-152). Thus, the Soviets believed talent in sport deserved special attention and training support, but it still came after the broader physical culture (Riordan, *Soviet Sport* 17).

Certain Soviet policies had a direct impact on KKTU, including integration, sports diplomacy and efforts to increase the number of women in sport. Countrywide physical culture efforts encouraged athletes at national/Olympic level to come together (Akyildiz 6). They then provided an example for broader integration of society. Soviet sport diplomacy was also highly developed, and actively applied to the Soviet efforts to build relations with bordering countries and those that shared the Communist ideology (See Riordan, *Sport Diplomacy*; Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society* 347-387). Finally, the Soviets implemented a social policy to increase the number of women in sport (Riordan, *Developing Societies* 293). This included similar amounts of funding and effort for women’s and men’s sports, and sportswomen were accepted in Soviet society (Riordan, *Soviet Sport* 130 et seq.). Some examples of these policies as applied to the Central Asian Republics follow.

#### **A. Integration**

Social integration was intended to integrate diverse ethnic groups (Houlihan 215). “The Soviet Union attempted to use sport to submerge a broad range of ethnic communities within a Soviet identity” (Ibid. 216, citing Riordan). In its most negative form, this “Russification” would destroy many unique aspects of the hundreds of cultures that were part of the Soviet Union, including those in Central

Asia. However, to the Soviets, integration of “massively diverse ethnicities” was key (Riordan, Soviet Sport 12-13). The physical culture and training programs were an important part of the Soviet socialization of its citizens (Akyildiz 2).

Thus, the Soviet Union studied the level of sport participation in all of its republics, adjusted the level of facilities and coaching available based on those results and held competitive events in each region. By 1970, most Central Asian republics were in medium group of sports activity (except Tajikistan), generally reflecting socio-economic ranking (Riordan, Sport in Soviet Society 307).<sup>3</sup> In response to this data, the USSR Committee on Physical Culture and Sport (CPCS) added sporting facilities and professional coaching in Uzbekistan (Akyildiz 2).

Similarly, The Soviets held the first Central Asian Games held in Tashkent, 1920, at same time as other regional Soviet competitions (Ibid. 5-6).

“Immediately after the Russian Revolution of 1917 and even before the Civil War was over, the new Soviet government organised the First Central Asian Olympics in the old Islamic centre of Tashkent in October 1920. This was the first time in history that Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmenians, Kirgiz and other Muslim peoples, as well as Russians, Ukrainians and other Europeans, had competed in any sporting event together.” (Riordan, Developing Societies 290)

At these games, the Central Asian participants focused on their own national games, including games on horseback like poiga, ulak, kyz-ku and ogdarysh and the local form of wrestling, kurash. The final ceremony included a large gymnastics and folk dancing exhibition (Riordan, Sport in Soviet Society 80). Additional such events were held in later years, including a Second Turkestan Olympics in 1921, an All-Turkestan Olympics in 1924, the first All-Uzbekistan

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<sup>3</sup> Riordan notes it is difficult to tell if the data is accurate since there are some reports of padding numbers (Ibid.). This demonstrates one of the difficulties with the Soviet system: corruption.

Spartakiad in 1927 and local sports competitions for selection of elite athletes (see Akyildiz; Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*). In subsequent decades modern Western-style sports would come to monopolize these events. Regarding the 1921 event:

“...the sports included athletics, weightlifting, wrestling, basketball, gymnastics, soccer and chess. The athletics events even included the modern pentathlon and decathlon. To popularise organised sports, a Russian team was sent to give displays; an American immigrant, L. Jackson (who later became a Merited Boxing Coach of the USSR), gave demonstrations of boxing.”

(Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society* 113)

The initial focus on traditional sports demonstrates the importance of this factor in choosing which sports a country might support, but the transition to current Olympic sports also shows the draw, be it through plan or unintentionally, of broadly-popular global sports.

Riordan’s research concluded that about 26,000 people were members of the sports clubs in Uzbekistan by the end of 1926 (*ibid.* 113). By 1970, “the Soviet republic of Uzbekistan (which was previously part of the Turkestan khanate) is said to have had . . . over 4,000 qualified instructors, a State Institute of Physical Culture, physical culture faculties at the Tashkent, Andizhan and Bukhara college of education, thirty physical education departments in other institutes, and four sports boarding schools - more than any other republic” (*ibid.* 308). This was likely the result of the Soviet integration efforts. The Muslim Uzbeks did resist integration into Soviet society, and it was difficult to integrate them because many lived in rural areas (Akyildiz 2, 5). However, Olympic sport culture is one area where they did integrate, with successful Uzbek athletes being touted as examples of successful integration (*ibid.* 2, 6).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The Soviets also punished non-cooperation in sport and integration efforts: “At the 15th All-Uzbekistan Spartakiad that took place in May 1971, two Uzbek boxers suddenly vanished and another, a Candidate Master of Sport, refused to enter the ring when faced with superior opponents. As a result, the Candidate Master was

Similarly, the three republics of Kirgizia, Turkmenia and Tadzhikistan tended to place last in the Spartakiads. By 1972, these republics had a higher percentage of qualified coaching professionals than the top three, Belorussia, Russia and Ukraine. Riordan surmised this might be part of a national policy to raise the level of sport in these locations (Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society* 311). Of note, these three countries, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, continue to be less active in the Olympics and international competition since the break-up of the Soviet Union than are Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

### **B. Sport Diplomacy**

The Soviet Union also utilized the Islamic sportspeople of the Central Asian republics to develop stronger ties with other Muslim countries. Again, this was no accident, but conscious implementation of the plan for Olympic and elite international sport:

“[T]he promotion of contacts by the USSR between its Central Asian nationals and representatives of the Middle East indicates also that priority was being given to these contacts for regional, strategic reasons as well. Bilateral sports meetings with Egyptian, Syria, Iraqi, Lebanese, Libyan, Tunisian, and Algerian athletes, which have grown particularly since 1969 . . . generally took place in Islamic territory of Soviet Union.”

(Riordan, *Soviet Sport Diplomacy* 103)

Famous Uzbek sportspeople were used for public relations at international meetings with Muslim countries of Asia and Africa (Akyildiz 14). Riordan also states that a sports cooperation treaty was signed in 1969 between the USSR and Egypt, providing for Soviet-Arab Sports Weeks. These alternated between Egypt and the USSR, with Uzbek, Kirghiz, and Kazakh athletes sent to Egypt in 1970 and Egyptian wrestlers, weightlifters, athletes, and swimmers competing against Soviet Uzbek opponents in Tashkent, Samarkand, and Andizhan the next year (Riordan, *Soviet Sport Diplomacy* 104).

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stripped of his title, and disqualified from boxing for two years; the other two were disqualified for one year - all for 'demonstrating cowardice and indifference' (Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society* 308).

The USSR went on to sign similar agreements over the next decade with Iraq, Syria, and Algeria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Libya, and Jordan (Ibid.).

These are just some examples of Soviet sport diplomacy that utilized the Central Asian republics, primarily for their Muslim backgrounds. A prior Uzbek sports minister stated that “the attainments of Soviet Uzbekistan and its entry into world sport are of immense importance. They demonstrate graphically the triumph of Lenin’s national policy. Today, Uzbekistan has become a beacon of mature socialism in the East, attracting the attention of young developing states” (Ibid.). While Lenin’s policy is no longer in issue, it is clear that sports diplomacy developed international connections for at least parts of this region.

### **C. Women in Sport**

As stated above, the Soviet sport system included an intentional policy to encourage greater participation of women in sport. Riordan believed that this program provided Soviet women with superior development opportunities as compared to other nations (Riordan, Soviet Sport 136-138). Though the Central Asian republics maintained traditional Islamic culture into the Soviet period, the Soviets were determined to equalize women in society, and sport was an important part of that effort (see Grabarenko 424 et seq.; Riordan, Soviet Sport 21).

As of 1977, many women in the Central Asian republics were still not allowed to participate in sports. The lowest sports participation for women in Soviet period were in Muslim areas: Riordan references a Kazakh author in 1973, stating that some parents forbid their daughters to participate in dance or sport so and an Uzbek author stating that some parents forbid their daughters to bare their arms and legs, so they cannot participate in sports (Riordan, Sport in Soviet Society 319). The Soviets established women-specific sporting events to overcome these positions, such as the First Spartakiad for

Rural Women of Uzbekistan in 1969, where three-quarters of the three hundred finalists were Uzbek (Riordan, Soviet Sport 137).

Still, there were successful women athletes from this region who, like their male counterparts, were integrated into the Soviet sport system. In 1952, Galina Shamray, gymnast, is credited as being the first Uzbek to win an Olympic gold medal (Akyildiz 7). Riordan describes the risks and successes some of these women faced in pursuing sports:

“The impact of women’s sport is even greater - though emancipation far more protracted and painful - in communities in which women have, by law or convention, been excluded from public life and discouraged from baring face, arms and legs in public. In fact, some multiethnic communities have quite deliberately used sport to break down prejudice and gain a measure off emancipation for women. This has been a conscious policy in communist nations with a sizeable Muslim population . . . **It is a sobering thought that had the grandmothers of such Soviet Uzbek gymnasts as Nelli Kim or Elvira Saadi appeared in public clad only in a leotard, they would almost certainly have been stoned to death**, . . . [like] such murders in Uzbekistan in the 1920s - and as would women today in some fundamentalist Islamic societies.”

(Riordan, Developing Societies 293 (emphasis added))

This policy may be one that had the most lasting effect in KKTTU, as can be seen from the ongoing participation of women from these countries from 1996 on, even as other Muslim countries prohibited women from participating. Even in the London 2012 Olympics, there were Muslim countries that entered female athletes for the first time (Gohir). In this context, sportswomen from KKTTU can be considered to be in the vanguard on this issue, an apparently positive outcome of this Soviet policy.

#### **IV. Participation by KKTTU in the Olympics During the Post-Soviet Period**

##### **A. The Transitional Years: 1992 – 1996 Olympics**

In order to evaluate the real impact of the break-up of the Soviet Union on Olympic-level athletes in KKTU, it would be helpful to compare exactly which athletes in which sports were from these countries while they were Soviet republics. However, while some examples are available, the information is difficult to obtain. In trying to evaluate factors that led to success in the Olympics, Oyeyinka found that “information on participants and medals were nonexistent for the years when the countries were unified...For instance, no participation or medals were available for Russia [or other former Soviet countries] between 1952 and 1988. All medals and participants were thus recorded under the Soviet Union. From the 1992 Games, the medals and participation were then allocated to the respective countries” (168).

In the cases of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, these countries have included information on their own National Olympic Committee (“NOC”) web sites “claiming” certain Soviet athletes as their own. However, those athletes classified as Uzbek by the NOC of (Independent) Uzbekistan may also have been ethnic Russians or Tartars living and training in Uzbekistan (Akyildiz 11-13; NOC Uzbekistan). The same is true of the athletes listed during the Soviet period on the Tajikistan NOC web page, where some of the names listed appear Slavic (NOC Tajikistan). Should the determination for this purpose be ethnic or geographic? There is no agreed methodology for making this determination.

Of course, the USSR had been training for the 1992 and 1994 Olympics long before the break-up of the Soviet Union. As previously explained, two of the new Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, participated in the 1992 Winter and Summer Olympics as part of the Unified Team. That Unified Team finished second in the overall medal count in Albertville and first in Barcelona, again demonstrating the power of the Soviet training system (Riordan, Soviet Sport Diplomacy 135). The performance of the women also demonstrated the success of the Soviet efforts to equalize sports opportunities for women. The women won fifteen medals on their own and four more in paired events



with men in Albertville (*ibid.*). Uzbekistan is credited with three golds, two silvers and one bronze medal in gymnastics, track, weightlifting, shooting and fencing (Akyildiz 13).

However, after these Olympic Games, the many changes impacting these new countries were also felt in their sports training programs. Training facilities, funding and professional trainers were lost and the strong youth programs critical to developing high-level sport were undermined (Rein 82; Riordan, *Soviet Sport Diplomacy* 135-136). After years within a structured and funded Soviet program, much of this was lost at the same time the countries had more pressing concerns arising from newfound nationhood.<sup>5</sup> For example, Tajikistan, in addition to the break-up of the Soviet Union, suffered civil war, “falling apart like a house of cards” (Grabarenko 429). It did not participate in the 1992 or 1994 Olympics, entering again in 1996 with only a small group of eight athletes in five sports.

“A high price must be paid for success in high-performance sport. It necessitates an increasing amount of personal and financial resources.... Even if developing countries concentrated the means at their disposal for sports advancement on high-performance sport, their chances of success would still be very limited. Thus, high-performance sport remains almost exclusively limited to industrial countries. Financial reasons as well as other factors lead to a lack of equal opportunities.” (Heinemann 148-149)

This fact uniquely impacted KKTU, as they were forced to transition from being a part of the Soviet Olympic powerhouse to competing as individual countries, lacking the financial and programmatic training resources that had been a part of their athletic system for many years. Each country is in the process of deciding how to re-prioritize their efforts to develop athletic programs and considering what sports policies are important to them. Their participation and success rates, as

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<sup>5</sup> At first glance, the creation of so many new countries might seem to create more opportunities for individual athletes to become Olympians and/or high-level international competitors, and in fact some athletes sought to represent these new countries rather than Russia. However, this approach is complicated by the necessary organizational structures for each country (federations, Olympic committees, etc.) and the need to pay for training (see Section C, Winter Sports in KKTU: Figure Skating as an Example...).

measured primarily by medals, vary greatly among the countries. Nevertheless, certain aspects of the Soviet period training and traditions of each country are visible in the choices made regarding participation in the Olympics.

Appendix 1 provides charts for each of the CCTUs, listing the Olympics each country participated in, number of male and female athletes, number of medals (gold, silver and bronze) and sports entered. There has been much higher participation in the Summer Olympics, although each country except Turkmenistan has entered some athletes in Winter Olympics. For Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the two countries listing their claimed athletes during the Soviet period, a comparison between that data and the attached charts shows only a rough correlation between sports entered pre- and post- Soviet period. None of the Uzbek athletes competing as part of the Unified Team in 1992 competed again in 1996 in Atlanta (see Charts; NOC Uzbekistan).

Only one athlete from Tajikistan was entered in both the 1992 and 1996 Olympics. The information available on this athlete is an excellent example of the problem described above: since there are no agreed upon parameters among these countries as to who “claims” an athlete, the data is often inconclusive or inconsistent. According to Tajikistan’s National Olympic Committee, Andriy Abduvaliev competed in hammer throw in 1992 and in 1996 (injured) (NOC Tajikistan). However, Sports Reference lists him as competing for the Unified Team in 1992, which would mean he competed for Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan since Tajikistan was not part of the Unified Team (Sports-Reference.com). In addition, Abduvaliev is not listed by Sports-Reference as competing in 1996 at all, but is then listed as competing for Uzbekistan in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games (Ibid.). Since Sports-Reference lists Abduvaliev’s birthplace as St. Petersburg, Russia, one can see why it is difficult to assign a country to some of these athletes.

## **B. The London 2012 Olympics**

Per NBC Olympics, London 2012, and Sports-Reference, the number of athletes participating in the London 2012 Summer Olympics for each of the KKTTU was:

Kazakhstan: 120<sup>6</sup> athletes, of which thirty-eight were women competing in archery, gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, tae kwon do, track & field, weightlifting, shooting, wrestling, judo, boxing, synchronized swimming and tennis. In addition to these events, men also competed in water polo, modern pentathlon and canoe/kayak. Kazakhstan earned thirteen medals, consisting of seven golds, one silver and five bronze, in five different sports (NBC Olympics/London 2012, Kazakhstan; Sports-Reference, Kazakhstan). Of countries winning ten or more medals, Kazakhstan had highest percentage of golds, three of seven in women's weightlifting (Bloch). This outcome suggests the criteria outlined in Silver's "Medalball" article may have some validity.

Kyrgyzstan: Fifteen athletes, of which three were women who competed in the marathon, swimming and wrestling. Other sports entered by men were tae kwon do, swimming, wrestling, track & field, weightlifting, sailing, swimming and judo. There were no medalists. (NBC Olympics/London 2012, Kyrgyzstan; Sports-Reference, Kyrgyzstan)

Tajikistan: Sixteen athletes, of which three were women. Sports entered were athletics, boxing, judo, shooting, swimming, tae kwon do and wrestling (NBC Olympics/London 2012, Tajikistan; Sports-Reference, Tajikistan). The only medalist was a female boxer, showing success in a low cost sport generally more popular among men.

Turkmenistan: Ten athletes, of which three were women competing in judo, swimming and track & field. Additional sports entered by men included weightlifting and boxing. There were no medalists (NBC Olympics/London 2012, Turkmenistan; Sports-Reference, Turkmenistan).

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<sup>6</sup> One section of the web page shows 107, however, and Sports-Reference lists 114 (compare NBC Olympics/London 2012 with Sports-Reference). There is also a similar disparity in the number of women (thirty-eight versus forty-one). Additional discrepancies of this nature exist, but are not the focus of this paper so will not be otherwise noted.

Uzbekistan: Fifty-three athletes, of which seventeen were women competing in sports from swimming, track & field, rowing, gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, shooting, trampoline, weightlifting and Tae kwon do. Men also entered wrestling, boxing, judo, cycling, and tennis, in addition to many of the sports women entered. The team received four medals, one gold and three bronze, all in wrestling, boxing and judo (NBC Olympics/London 2012, Uzbekistan; Sports-Reference, Uzbekistan).

Thus, in the most recent Olympics, three of the five KKTU countries earned Olympic medals, excluding Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. Nearly all of the medals were in sports Silver concluded were relatively easy to medal in – boxing, wrestling, and weightlifting. Of these, seven were won by women and all but one of those was in a sport not typically popular with women, such as weightlifting or boxing. The only outliers were two gold medalists from Kazakhstan: a woman in triple jump (track & field) and the well-publicized story of the upset in the men’s cycling road race by the 38-year old rider from Kazakhstan who was competing in his fourth Olympics (see Fotheringham). Thus, it is possible to conclude that Silver’s analysis, while simplistic, holds some truth for transitional countries seeking to focus their sports programs toward success in the Olympics. In addition, the importance of women in sport as a part of that success is also clear.

### **C. Winter Sports in KKTU: Figure Skating as an Example of the Difficulty of Entry in an “Outlier” Sport**

As already discussed, KKTU have had limited participation in the Winter Olympics. First, the majority of the sports in the Winter Olympics do not have a history in Central Asia. Although the Soviet Union was strong in these sports, the athletes and training facilities were typically in the Slavic area of the country. Second, many of these sports require extensive facilities like ski areas and ice rinks that are uncommon in Central Asia. Thus, it is not surprising that KKTU are not strong in these winter sports.

When selecting sports to support at a national level, these would not likely be the first choices for any of KKTTU. Still, one of these – figure skating – provides an illustrative example of what is involved in getting athletes to an elite level in such an “outlier” sport.<sup>7</sup>

In all cases, a country must have a National Olympic Committee that is under the International Olympic Committee for its athletes to participate in any Olympic events (NOCs for KKTTU previously referenced). Figure skating is also governed on the international level by the International Skating Union (“ISU”), which determines Olympic qualifiers, based on World Championships and another qualifying event in the Olympic season (see ISU.org). In order to compete in ISU events, a skater must be entered by the governing ISU federation in his/her home country. Not all countries have an ISU member federation, as there are various requirements for approval of such a federation, including an ice rink in the country and a provisional period, among many others. Thus, a skater can never enter the Olympics unless they are from a country with an ISU member federation. This is, of course, in addition to having citizenship in the member country to compete in the Olympics and having previously “cleared” by the ISU to compete in qualifying events.

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan do not have ISU member federations. Thus, even if they had a talented skater, that skater would be unable to participate in international competitions for their home country. This complication is in addition to the fact that figure skating is one Silver would definitely warn transitional and developing countries away from – it is extremely expensive, requires year-round training for many years which means year-round, artificially-maintained ice (also expensive), and offers very few Olympic medal opportunities – only one event per person competing, only one set of medals per event. It is also somewhat dominated by certain strong countries (Japan, Russia, USA,

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<sup>7</sup> Much of the information regarding the governing bodies and requirements for figure skating is based on my personal knowledge, derived from nearly fifteen years in the sport. As such, I have not attempted to reference each sentence, but can provide additional citation, if desired.

Canada), but this is not consistently the case, like the Chinese in table tennis, and it is this opening that may make it appealing to Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan.

Undoubtedly, the Soviets were the strongest in the world in figure skating for years, and Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have this tradition to draw from (Sports Reference/Soviet Union Figure Skating). Both countries have active ISU member federations, and are in a better economic situation than the other three Central Asian countries. The sport is typically popular among females, although dress could be a concern in Muslim countries taking a stricter view than these two countries seem to at this time.

Currently, Kazakhstan lists three women athletes at international level (one retired in 2001, two listed as current competitors) and five men at the international level. Of these, two have Olympic experience and three are listed as current competitors. There are no pairs listed and there are two current ice dance teams (ISU.org). Of these, Dennis Ten is the most well-known. "Ten is the first skater from Kazakhstan to medal at an ISU competition (gold at 2008 ISU Junior Grand Prix in Gomel/Belarus) and his fourth place finish at the 2009 World Junior Championships is the best Championship result for a skater from Kazakhstan so far. Ten is a descendant of famous Korean General Min Keung Ho. His family is part of the Korean minority in Kazakhstan. Ten switched coaches after the 2009/2010 season and has moved to the USA for training" (ISU.org/Athlete Biography).

Uzbekistan currently lists two women athletes at Olympic level but both are retired. There are four male athletes at international level; two are currently competing. Three pairs are listed at the Olympic level, with one each competing in 2002, 2006 and 2010. Surprisingly, there are eight ice dance couples listed, but only one is currently competing and none have made the Olympics (ISU.org). Of these skaters, Tatiana Malinina is perhaps the most well-known. She is an as example of an athlete that switched from representing Russia where she trained. "Originally from Russia, she chose to represent

the former Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan after moving there as a teenager. Her father is a former figure skater and ice dancer who became coach, her mother was a gymnast” (ISU.org/Athlete Biography).

Misha Ge is developing his reputation in figure skating, and definitely benefits from his opportunity to compete internationally for a smaller federation rather than working through the ranks of larger federations like those in Russia, China or the United States. Ge grew up in China as his parents were coaching there. His parents are part of his coaching team (ISU.org/Athlete Biography). His representation of Uzbekistan is an example of a switch from China, similar to Malinina’s switch from Russia, and he currently trains in the United States.

For both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the existence of ISU member federations, allowing for Olympic competitors in figure skating, derives from the strength of that sport in the Soviet Union. However, there is no indication that either of these countries has, or should, focus on developing a program to increase success in this sport, especially given the high costs and lengthy training times. Instead, their figure skaters are those who have some connection to the country and are able to switch, typically through maintaining double citizenship, from a country that currently has a strong, deep program to develop figure skaters. In this way, both the country and the individual athlete benefit. Any of the KKTU could choose to take this approach with athletes from other sports, depending upon the particular sport’s governing structure.

#### **D. Other Observations About KKTU’s Participation in the Olympics from 1992 – 2012 and Possibilities for Future Development**

Some general observations can be made about KKTU’s participation in the Olympics from the end of the Soviet period to the present. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan continue to have the broadest participation, both in terms of numbers, gender mix and sports entered. It is really only those two countries that have entered any athletes in “outlier” sports, meaning those that there is little history of

competition in the country and/or those that are more expensive to participate in, e.g., cycling and figure skating. Similarly, there is very little involvement in the winter Olympics, but each country except Turkmenistan has entered at least one athlete in winter Olympic events. Of course, the numbers are significantly higher for Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and these are the only two countries that have won medals in the Winter Olympics: a total of seven medals, one by an Uzbek woman, two by Kazakh women and three of the remaining medals by one Kazakh man. Once again, this demonstrates the significance of women in elite sport, especially if winning medals at this elite level is one of the goals.

In considering the reasons initially outlined for participating in Olympic and elite, international sport competitions, gender equity continues to emerge as one of the most significant and the one where results are most readily noticeable. Grabarenko noted a post-Soviet resurgence of traditional Islamic values, including *hajib* (426-427). However, in the case of Olympic sport, Tajikistan continued to be proud of its athletes, even Muslim women who competed during the Soviet period, such as Zebuniso Rustamova (Archery, World Champion, Olympic silver medalist, 1976) and Erica Shiller (World Champion, gymnastics) (Ibid. 429). Stating that this could overcome Islamic values that would preclude women from participating in sport, Grabarenko concludes, “these names indicate and prove that Tajikistan had a good basis for preparation of sportswomen, and even now has a great potential and all the necessary resources for sport bringing up, which can bring good results not only within the Republic, but also abroad” (Ibid.). Rustamova, taking to heart the IOA edit that Olympic athletes have an obligation as role models, was still speaking out as of 2004 to encourage the participation of Muslim women in the Olympics (Moore).

As of 1998, Tajikistan undertook a governmental program to attract attention and interest to women’s sport and then hosted the 2003 Central Asian games (Grabarenko 430 et seq.). However, this event still showed inequity between men and women. While all of the KKTU participated, men



competed in ten events, but women only competed in three – tennis, tae kwon do and track & field. Grabarenko attributes this to “problems of financing, shortage of sport equipment and facilities, conditions of sport venues, absence of a certain stable sport program” (Ibid. 431). From the standpoint of a sport development plan, this inconsistency does not suggest it is well-thought out. For example, Tajikistan has yet to enter anyone, male or female, in tennis at the Olympics. No females have entered tae kwon do and only a few have entered track & field events (Sports Reference). Quite a few have entered archery in the last three Summer Olympics and Tajikistan’s one medal in the London Olympics was earned by a female boxer (Sports Reference). Thus, Tajikistan’s plan and event hosting do not correlate with the actual development of elite athletes, truly encourage gender equity in sports or create positive “branding” as described by Rein. However, Grabarenko states that post-Civil War efforts include rebuilding training facilities and programs in the known female sports of field hockey and archery, the latter especially significant due to Rustmova’s influence (Grabarenko 431-432). Improvements are still difficult due to impacts of the civil war, but it is a telling example of the transition from being part of an Olympic powerhouse to the role of a transitional or developing country.

Uzbekistan has intentionally attempted to build on the “legacy of Soviet coaching and sport science,” through development of a domestic leisure culture and sport for “international prestige” (Akyildiz 9). Participation in the Olympics has continued, but funding is an issue which the country is trying to address through private sponsors and commercialization of sport (Ibid. 9-10). Despite this, Uzbekistan has continued to earn approximately the same number of medals in each Summer Olympics (four to six, from 2000 to 2012) (Sports Reference). Per Akyildiz, this is approximately the same number of medals won as during the Soviet period, though some of this data may be questionable as previously explained (Akyildiz 10). Popular sports are archery, wrestling, fencing, soccer, martial arts, boxing, ice hockey, figure skating, gymnastics and soccer (Ibid.).

Unlike Tajikistan, the popular sports are more closely aligned with the events entered at the Olympics, although this could be partly because Uzbekistan has been able to field a team in a broader group of sports (see Chart, Uzbekistan). Regardless, of the popular sports, Uzbekistan athletes have competed in all of them except archery and the two team sports, ice hockey and soccer (Ibid.). Development from the lower recreational and competition levels in these popular sports can lead to greater depth from which to select elite athletes, which was consistent with the Soviet approach. However, Uzbekistan, like Kazakhstan, also has had entries in “outlier” sports, like figure skating, that are very expensive and offer few medal opportunities. The number of women has remained relatively stable, and they have competed in sports both typical for women and those less popular; e.g, gymnastics to weightlifting (Ibid.). Although Akyildiz references an Uzbek plan to improve Olympic results, the available information is inadequate to determine the goals of the plan or if it is achieving results. It may not be necessary, however, since Uzbekistan is much better situated in this regard than, for example, Kyrgyzstan, and could therefore find advice like that in Rein’s article more useful: using branding opportunities to take its Olympic participation to the next level in developing international recognition.

Of the remaining countries, Kazakhstan’s situation is most like Uzbekistan’s in connection with sport and opportunities to be developed from Olympic participation. Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan are more analogous to Tajikistan, but each has their own unique concerns and needs that are likely more pressing than an elite sport program. However, a focused program that made the most of a limited budget and took into account traditional sports could lead to interesting outcomes. For example, despite the jokes in Silver’s article about Kyrgyzstan, their horses versus pressing budget needs, and the high cost of competing in equestrian, horseback sport is strong in this area and a focused effort just

might work – even the Jamaican bobsled team made the Olympics and received a lot of positive press for years afterward!

## **V. Conclusion**

It may seem that athletes simply work hard, have talent and luck, and end up representing their home countries in the Olympic Games. However, after considering the national policies and goals involved, one can safely conclude that the image of an individual athlete simply choosing a sport for fun at a young age, practicing and reaching the pinnacle of success of an Olympic medal while representing his/her country is at best overly simplified and, in most cases, inaccurate. That athlete is, instead, a part of a national system that may encourage Olympic participation for various reasons including nation-building, integration, international recognition, sports diplomacy, gender equality and others. In transitioning from the USSR to individual countries, each of the KKTU has chosen to remain part of the Olympic movement, and most of the countries have had some success, particularly in the areas of international recognition and gender equity. Each also has unique strengths – particular sports, known athletes, etc. – to build on. However, the most direct and measurable impact to date of KKTU's participation in the Olympics and elite international sport is the involvement of successful female athletes from these Muslim countries, a result that clearly seems to derive from Soviet programs but sets KKTU as an positive example for other Islamic nations.

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**Participation in Post-Soviet Olympic Games by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**

**Kazakhstan - 10 Games**

Games	Participants	Men	Women	Sports	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Top Medalist(s)
<u>2012 Summer</u>	114	73	41	19	7	1	5	13	13 athletes with 1 medal
<u>2010 Winter</u>	37	21	16	8		1		1	Yelena Khrustalyova (1 medal)
<u>2008 Summer</u>	130	60	70	19	2	4	7	13	13 athletes with 1 medal
<u>2006 Winter</u>	55	43	12	7					
<u>2004 Summer</u>	114	71	43	17	1	4	3	8	8 athletes with 1 medal
<u>2002 Winter</u>	50	20	30	7					
<u>2000 Summer</u>	130	86	44	17	3	4		7	7 athletes with 1 medal
<u>1998 Winter</u>	60	45	15	8			2	2	Lyudmila Prokashova and Vladimir Smirnov (1 medal)
<u>1996 Summer</u>	96	72	24	14	3	4	4	11	Sergey Belyayev (2 medals)
<u>1994 Winter</u>	29	19	10	8	1	2		3	Vladimir Smirnov (3 medals)

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KAZ/>

**2012 London**

Archery	Athletics	Boxing	Canoeing
Cycling	Fencing	Gymnastics	Judo
Modern Pentathlon	Rhythmic Gymnastics	Rowing	Shooting
Swimming			

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KAZ/summer/2012/>

**2010 Vancouver**

Alpine Skiing	Biathlon	Cross Country Skiing	Figure Skating
Freestyle Skiing	Short Track Speed Skating	Ski Jumping	Speed Skating

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KAZ/winter/2010/>



### Kazakhstan (continued)

#### 2008 Beijing

Archery	Athletics
Cycling	Handball
Rhythmic Gymnastics	Rowing
Synchronized Swimming	Table Tennis
Volleyball	Weightlifting

Boxing
Judo
Shooting
Taekwondo
Wrestling

Canoeing
Modern Pentathlon
Swimming
Triathlon

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KAZ/summer/2008/>

#### 2006 Torino

Alpine Skiing	Biathlon
Ice Hockey	Ski Jumping

Cross Country Skiing
Speed Skating

Freestyle Skiing
------------------

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KAZ/winter/2006/>

#### 2004 Athens

Archery	Athletics
Cycling	Gymnastics
Rhythmic Gymnastics	Shooting
Taekwondo	Triathlon

Boxing
Judo
Swimming
Water Polo

Canoeing
Modern Pentathlon
Synchronized Swimming
Weightlifting

Wrestling

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KAZ/summer/2004/>

#### 2002 Salt Lake City

Alpine Skiing	Biathlon
Ice Hockey	Ski Jumping

Cross Country Skiing
Speed Skating

Freestyle Skiing
------------------

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KAZ/winter/2002/>

#### 2000 Sydney

Archery	Athletics
Cycling	Diving
Judo	Rowing
Synchronized Swimming	Triathlon

Boxing
Fencing
Shooting
Water Polo

Canoeing
Gymnastics
Swimming
Weightlifting

Wrestling

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KAZ/summer/2000/>

**Kazakhstan (continued)**

**1998 Nagano**

Alpine Skiing	Biathlon	Cross Country Skiing	Figure Skating
Freestyle Skiing	Ice Hockey	Ski Jumping	Speed Skating

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KAZ/winter/1998/>

**1996 Atlanta**

Archery	Athletics	Boxing	Canoeing
Cycling	Diving	Fencing	Gymnastics
Judo	Modern Pentathlon	Shooting	Swimming
Weightlifting	Wrestling		

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KAZ/summer/1996/>

**1994 Lillehammer**

Alpine Skiing	Biathlon	Cross Country Skiing	Figure Skating
Freestyle Skiing	Short Track Speed Skating	Ski Jumping	Speed Skating

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KAZ/winter/1994/>

### Kyrgyzstan --10 Games

Games	Participants	Men	Women	Sports	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Top Medalist(s)
<u>2012 Summer</u>	14	11	3	8					
<u>2010 Winter</u>	2	1	1	2					
<u>2008 Summer</u>	20	16	4	9		1	1	2	Kanat Begaliyev and Ruslan Tyumenbayev (1 medal)
<u>2006 Winter</u>	1	1	0	1					
<u>2004 Summer</u>	29	22	7	9					
<u>2002 Winter</u>	2	2	0	2					
<u>2000 Summer</u>	48	35	13	9			1	1	Aydyn Smagulov (1 medal)
<u>1998 Winter</u>	1	1	0	1					
<u>1996 Summer</u>	33	26	7	9					
<u>1994 Winter</u>	1	0	1	1					

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KGZ/>

#### 2012 London

Athletics  
 Swimming

Judo  
 Taekwondo

Sailing  
 Weightlifting

Shooting  
 Wrestling

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KGZ/summer/2012/>

#### 2010 Vancouver

Alpine Skiing

Cross Country Skiing

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KGZ/winter/2010/>

#### 2008 Beijing

Athletics  
 Shooting  
 Wrestling

Boxing  
 Swimming

Fencing  
 Taekwondo

Judo  
 Weightlifting

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KGZ/summer/2008/>

### Kyrgyzstan (continued)

#### 2006 Torino

Alpine Skiing

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KGZ/winter/2006/>

#### 2004 Athens

Athletics

Modern Pentathlon

Wrestling

Boxing

Shooting

Cycling

Swimming

Judo

Weightlifting

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KGZ/summer/2004/>

#### 2002 Salt Lake City

Biathlon

Ski Jumping

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KGZ/winter/2002/>

#### 2000 Sydney

Athletics

Judo

Boxing

Shooting

Cycling

Weightlifting

Fencing

Wrestling

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KGZ/summer/2000/>

#### 1998 Nagano

Biathlon

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KGZ/winter/1998/>

#### 1996 Atlanta

Athletics

Judo

Wrestling

Boxing

Modern Pentathlon

Canoeing

Shooting

Cycling

Weightlifting

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KGZ/summer/1996/>

#### 1994 Lillehammer

Biathlon

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KGZ/winter/1994/>

**Tajikistan – 8 Games**

Games	Participants	Men	Women	Sports	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Top Medalist(s)
2012 Summer	16	13	3	7			1	1	Mavzuna Choriyeva (1 medal)
2010 Winter	1	1	0	1					
2008 Summer	15	12	3	8		1	1	2	Yusuf Abdusalomov and Rasul Bokiyeu (1 medal)
2006 Winter	1	1	0	1					
2004 Summer	9	5	4	5					
2002 Winter	1	1	0	1					
2000 Summer	4	2	2	2					
1996 Summer	8	6	2	5					

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TJK/>

**2012 London**

Athletics  
 Swimming  
 Boxing  
 Taekwondo  
 Judo  
 Wrestling  
 Shooting

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TJK/summer/2012/SWI/>

**2010 Vancouver**

Alpine Skiing

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TJK/winter/2010/>

**2008 Beijing**

Archery  
 Shooting  
 Athletics  
 Swimming  
 Boxing  
 Weightlifting  
 Judo  
 Wrestling

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TJK/summer/2008/>

**2006 Torino**

Alpine Skiing

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TJK/winter/2006/>

**Tajikistan (continued)**

**2004 Athens**

Archery

Athletics

Boxing

Shooting

Wrestling

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TJK/summer/2004/>

**2002 Salt Lake City**

Alpine Skiing

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TJK/winter/2002/>

**2000 Sydney**

Athletics

Swimming

Alpine Skiing

Freestyle Skiing

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TJK/summer/2000/>

**1996 Atlanta**

Athletics

Boxing

Diving

Judo

Wrestling

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TJK/summer/1996/>

**Turkmenistan -- 5 Games**

Games	Participants	Men	Women	Sports	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Top Medalist(s)
<u>2012 Summer</u>	10	7	3	5					
<u>2008 Summer</u>	10	6	4	6					
<u>2004 Summer</u>	9	6	3	6					
<u>2000 Summer</u>	8	4	4	6					
<u>1996 Summer</u>	7	4	3	6					

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TKM/>

**2012 London**

Athletics  
 Weightlifting  
 Boxing  
 Judo  
 Swimming

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TKM/summer/2012/>

**2008 Beijing**

Athletics  
 Swimming  
 Boxing  
 Weightlifting  
 Judo  
 Shooting

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TKM/summer/2008/>

**2004 Athens**

Athletics  
 Swimming  
 Boxing  
 Weightlifting  
 Judo  
 Shooting

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TKM/summer/2004/>

**2000 Sydney**

Athletics  
 Weightlifting  
 Judo  
 Wrestling  
 Shooting  
 Table Tennis

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TKM/summer/2000/>

**1996 Atlanta**

Athletics  
 Table Tennis  
 Boxing  
 Wrestling  
 Judo  
 Shooting

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/TKM/summer/1996/>

### Uzbekistan -- 10 Games

Games	Participants	Men	Women	Sports	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Top Medalist(s)
<u>2012 Summer</u>	53	36	17	14	1		3	4	4 athletes with 1 medal
<u>2010 Winter</u>	3	1	2	2					
<u>2008 Summer</u>	56	41	15	14	1	2	3	6	6 athletes with 1 medal
<u>2006 Winter</u>	4	2	2	2					
<u>2004 Summer</u>	69	51	18	14	2	1	2	5	5 athletes with 1 medal
<u>2002 Winter</u>	6	3	3	2					
<u>2000 Summer</u>	70	52	18	12	1	1	2	4	4 athletes with 1 medal
<u>1998 Winter</u>	4	2	2	3					
<u>1996 Summer</u>	71	63	8	12		1	1	2	<u>Karim Tulyaganov</u> and <u>Armen Bagdasarov</u> (1 medal)
<u>1994 Winter</u>	7	3	4	2	1			1	<u>Lina Cheryazova</u> (1 medal)

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/UZB/>

#### 2012 London

Athletics  
 Cycling  
 Shooting  
 Trampoline

Boxing  
 Fencing  
 Swimming  
 Weightlifting

Canoeing  
 Judo  
 Taekwondo  
 Wrestling

Cycling  
 Rhythmic Gymnastics  
 Tennis

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/UZB/summer/2012/>

#### 2010 Vancouver

Alpine Skiing

Figure Skating

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/UZB/winter/2010/>

#### 2008 Beijing

Athletics  
 Gymnastics  
 Swimming  
 Weightlifting

Boxing  
 Judo  
 Taekwondo  
 Wrestling

Canoeing  
 Rowing  
 Tennis

Cycling  
 Shooting  
 Trampoline

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/UZB/summer/2008/>



