

# Olympic Update

By Mitchell Bard

SARAJEVO, Yugoslavia — There is no better description of the performance of Israel's Olympic team than 'agony of defeat.' The Olympics began with the opening ceremonies; the Israeli team marched in their native costumes: khaki trousers and shirts, army hats, and sandals. There are no women on the team because the female athletes said it is too cold in Yugoslavia, and they were afraid they would lose their tans. There was a bit of confusion caused by the sign with "Israel" written in Serbo-Croatian. The athlete carrying it could not determine which direction the letters should be read and ended up holding the sign upside down. The team has not yet won any medals, but the athletes arrived wearing enough gold around their necks to fund the Sarajevo city budget.

An early disappointment came in the 70 meter ski jump where Yosef Landing was disqualified for parachuting. The biathlon was also a problem for the Israelis. They had no trouble with the shooting portion but could not strap their skis onto the sandals for the cross-country phase.

The ski team has been a surprise. It is comprised of four Californians and a Russian. The Russian, Moshe Snowski, thought the flags on the slalom course marked land mines so he skied as far away from them as possible and wound up in the middle of the fifteen kilometer cross-country race. In the giant slalom, Shmuel Tipsha was disqualified for a false start. He claimed he was making a preemptive start

to prevent being defeated.

Security for the Israelis has been very tight. Armed guards ride up the chair lifts with the skiers. One inexperienced Israeli skier forgot to get off the chair and went around and back down while his guard chased him underneath the chair.

The Israelis were also embarrassed when the Yugoslav guard had to keep stopping so the Israeli cross-country skiers would catch up.

The Israeli bobsled team has had trouble. The sled, made of old tank parts, has been very slow. Apparently tank treads are not as fast as metal runners on snow. The sled has also had trouble in the turns because the cannon keeps going getting stuck in the snow banks.

The American influence was evident in figure skating where Skip Leibowitz tried "brake skating" and spun around on his head on the ice. The judges were unimpressed and gave him low marks. Leibowitz argued afterward with each judge: "4.2? How about 4.3? Okay, 4.25 . . . I can get 4.75 in Haifa . . ."

There was one minor incident after the Israeli coach, Yitzhak ben Goldstein, tried to convince one of the athletes to enter the luge even though he had never seen one before. "You're *meshuga*," he said and added a hand gesture which was definitely not the signal hitchhikers use. Poor American-born Goldstein didn't know Israeli men refuse to lie on their backs (or so the Israeli women say).

A few Israeli dignitaries have followed the team. Menachem Begin turned up and

seems to be in good physical shape, but he's suffering from senility. When he arrived, he insisted in visiting Tito's grave, thinking Tito of Yugoslavia was related to the Vilna of Gaon. He has refused to leave his hotel room since because he says it's part of *Eretz Israel* — the "winter part."

Shimon Peres is also here since he had nothing better to do. He has been telling the press Begin's hotel room could be traded for peace with the communist bloc. Meanwhile, a member of the National Religious Party is in jail for allegedly throwing rocks at the cross-country skiers on Saturday.★

*Mitchell Bard broke several bones at the Israeli Ski School and as a result had nothing better to do than write two articles and a letter to the editor.*

## Secret

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in years. This approach is completely wrong! One should go to a doctor as often as possible. Why take chances? If everyone at the Jewish Home saw a doctor when they were younger as often as they do now the average age might be 188 instead of 88. My sources tell me that one should see a doctor at least as often as he has sex or goes to the bathroom.

Closely related is the idea that when you have an operation you must talk about it, boast about it. Ever have dinner with a bunch of your parents' friends? They know more medical terms than most graduates of the Harvard Medical School because so-and-so's latest surgery is always the hottest topic of conversation. Jews compare the latest cut-and-paste miracles of modern medicine performed on them like most normal people play "Can You Top This." The

operation itself does not prolong life as much as the will to live and talk about the hospital experience. ("Was it good for you, too?") And to argue over whose son invented the procedure.

**DRIVING** — A recent study by the *Journal of Irreproducible Results* proved that the life-shortening threat posed by driving can be easily overcome. An article called "Unsafe at Zero Speed" showed that the potential dangers of driving can be completely eliminated if one never gets behind the wheel. However, total abstinence from driving, as with sex and going to the doctor, is difficult to attain in modern society. Accordingly, the best advice coming from octogenarian drivers is to drive only when absolutely necessary, go as slowly as possible, and, again like sex, avoid sudden stops.

A friend of mine inherited a 1960 Ford Falcon from his grandfather just a few years ago. The grandfather had driven the car throughout his seventies and eighties, but that Ford had only 26,000 miles on it. You or I would have driven about 326,000 miles during the same period. Moreover, that car had a top speed, with windows rolled up to minimize drag, of about 45 miles per hour. That is about how fast my grandmother was going when she got a ticket for going too slow on the freeway.

**CONCLUSION** — As Pat Summerall says when advertising hardware, "If you treat the equipment right, the equipment treats you right." ★

*Bill Friedman lives, works and votes Democratic in Los Angeles and is a member of the Jewish Federation-Council's Commission on New Yorkers which addresses the problems caused by too many New Yorkers in California.*

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