

## **“De jure” vs. “De facto” Discourse: Battle over ROC Membership with IOC (1960-1964)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The civil war of China ended in 1949 with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) founded in Beijing and the Republic of China (ROC) retreated to Taiwan. The confrontation of these two regimes resulted in a divided China. While the PRC claimed herself as the legitimate government succeeding the ROC and enjoyed effective control of the Mainland, the ROC still regarded herself as the legal government after the downfall of Qing Dynasty and her legitimacy did not end with the retreat to Taiwan. Hence, both regimes were fiercely engaged in diplomatic struggles for the “sole legitimate” status. The fight for representation in the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1952 was the first cross-Strait diplomatic warfare.

With the withdrawal of the PRC from the IOC around 1960, the international legal status of the ROC was more or less secured. However, with no effective control over the field of sports, the IOC considered neither regime representative of each other. Hence, the IOC adopted the principle of “de facto controlled athletic area” in its Charter to regulate the membership of the PRC and ROC in the IOC. IOC asserted that “since Taiwanese did not administer sport in China, the Republic of China was to taken off the IOC membership list. However, if it chose to reapply for admission under another name the application would be considered.” This provoked severe protest from Taiwan. Although the ROC was forced to reapply for membership under “Republic of China Olympic Committee”, Taiwan still claimed to be the sole legitimate representative of China. This triggered the name ROC rectification campaign in the IOC.

As demanded by IOC, Taipei had to give up her original membership title of “Chinese Olympic Committee”, and to recognize her control over the field of sports only in Taiwan. Faced with such change in status, the ROC on the one hand reapply for admission to the IOC as “Republic of China Olympic Committee, ROCOC”, and on the other hand,

campaigned for effective control over the field of sports in the PRC. While the application for membership succeeded, the title was refused by the IOC. The bone contention remained the inclusion of 'China' in the title. The IOC was suspicious of Taiwan's intention to extend the "de facto controlled athletic area" to Mainland China. To continue the fight, The ROC government through the Central Committee of KMT formed the Name Rectification Committee with the Sports Federation of the Republic of China as the convener and with members including the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Lobbying thus began through the support of overseas consulates and targeted at not only the IOC president and committee members, but also the participants of annual IOC executive committee meetings held in Baden-Baden, Innsbruck and Tokyo.

Two achievements were eventually made. First, it was resolved at the Baden-Baden meeting that that "ROC" could be embroidered on athletes' sportswear; and second, it was agreed at the Tokyo meeting that "Republic of China" in Chinese characters could be added under the word "TAIWAN" in English on the nameplate of the ROC delegation. Hence, the humble wish of the ROC was granted. Nevertheless, besides athletes from countries in East Asia using Chinese characters, most of the foreign athletes from western countries would hardly see the difference, nor understand its meaning or significance.

1960 to 1964 saw persistent efforts of the ROC in name rectification in the IOC but with little success. The same plight was suffered in her other battles in the international arena. The culture and value of status and rank provided the impetus to ROC's name-rectification campaign.

**Keywords:** Republic of China Olympic Committee, International Olympic Committee, Tokyo Olympiad, National Olympic Committee, Name Rectification, de facto controlled athletic area