From the IOC of 1946 to the Montreal Boycott

Reference Chronology, 1946–2026 · Version 2, October 2026

This second version of the timeline builds on the reference chronology prepared for the project and expands it using two research dossiers: “Precedents, the Target and Oblivion” and “The African Voices of 1976.” The first version focused mainly on the exchanges between the IOC and South Africa. This one gives more room to the building of African institutions, from Bandung to the SCSA. It also follows the Taiwan affair, which unfolded in parallel in Montreal, and the failed campaigns of 1974–1975, which hindsight tends to erase.

The timeline now extends to 2026. A fourth period gathers the milestones in the memory of the boycott: the final repayment of the Olympic debt, the dissolution of the SCSA, recent scholarship and the publications marking the fiftieth anniversary. It contains one hundred entries. Twenty-two are carried over unchanged from the first version, thirty-seven clarify or correct it, and forty-one are new.

How to read the table. Shaded rows mark turning points. • **NEW** marks an added entry; ◂ **REVISED** marks an entry from the first version that has been clarified or corrected. Both marks are for review purposes and can be removed from the public version.

Before 1976: The IOC, Apartheid and African Assertion

1946 – 1975 · 49 ENTRIES

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
1946 ◂ REVISED	Sigfrid Edström is elected IOC president (1946–1952); South African Reginald Honey is co-opted to the IOC on September 4, 1946. He will remain a member until 1982, twelve years after his country's committee was expelled.	Clastres, Outre-Terre, 2004; ISOH; Olympedia
1948 TURNING POINT	The National Party formalizes apartheid; according to Ivey, apartheid laws did not apply directly to sport until 1956.	Ivey, 2024
1952	Avery Brundage succeeds Edström (1952–1972).	Olympics.com
April 1955 • NEW	Bandung Conference: twenty-nine Asian and African governments meet, creating an international stage outside the institutions designed before decolonization.	Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State
1956	Brundage: “The Games are contests between individuals and not between nations.”	University of Pretoria

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
November 1956 TURNING POINT • NEW	Melbourne: Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq withdraw in protest against the Israeli attack on Sinai, while the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland protest the Soviet intervention in Hungary. Olympedia regards it as the first genuine boycott in modern Olympic history.	Olympedia, “1956 Summer Olympics”
1958	Dennis Brutus and Alan Paton found the South African Sports Association (SASA) to win recognition for non-racial federations.	Ivey, 2024, pp. 28–29
1959 ‹ REVISED	Brundage accepts Honey's assurances that there is no discrimination in sport; the IOC Executive bars all contact with SANROC. SASA nonetheless gets the South African question placed on the agenda of the Rome Session.	University of Pretoria; Ivey, 2024, pp. 28–29
1959 – 1963 • NEW	France creates the “Community Games” for its colonies and Cameroon, later renamed the Friendship Games: Tananarive (1960), Abidjan (1961), Dakar (1963).	Le Monde, 1961 and 1973; Charitas, 2023
1960 TURNING POINT • NEW	“Year of Africa”: seventeen African countries gain independence, and sixteen African states are admitted to the UN that same year.	CBC, “1960: The year of Africa”; United Nations
March 21, 1960 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	Sharpeville massacre: police kill sixty-seven Black demonstrators. South Africa nonetheless competes at the Rome Games, for the last time before 1992, with an all-white team.	Ivey, 2024, pp. 29–30; Los Angeles Times, 1991
September 1960 • NEW	Rome: Ethiopia's Abebe Bikila wins the marathon barefoot, becoming the first Black African Olympic champion in the event, in the capital of the power that had invaded his country in 1935.	World Athletics
1961 ‹ REVISED	Brundage and Jean de Beaumont set up a committee to assist newly independent countries; Beaumont stresses the “urgent need” for aid to the new nations of Africa and Asia. The committee will become Olympic Solidarity in 1971.	Clastres, 2025; IOC Archives
1961 • NEW	The Casablanca group (Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic), which favours political union, stands opposed to the larger and more moderate Monrovia group, which includes Côte d'Ivoire.	African Union, OAU60

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
1962 • NEW	The UN General Assembly adopts Resolution 1761, calling for sanctions against Pretoria and establishing the Special Committee against Apartheid. The IOC issues an ultimatum to the South African committee: field a non-discriminatory team or face suspension.	African Activist Archive; Ivey, 2024, pp. 31–33
April 1963 • NEW	Dakar: the organizers of several regional competitions award the first African Games to Brazzaville.	Charitas, 2023
May 1963 TURNING POINT • NEW	Thirty-two states found the Organization of African Unity (OAU), born of the rapprochement between the Casablanca and Monrovia groups.	Bancel, The Conversation, 2024
1963 • NEW	Guinea and Mali take part in preparing the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO), launched by Indonesia in opposition to the IOC.	International Journal of Culture and History
1963	Baden-Baden Session: South Africa will be barred from the Games unless it adopts non-discriminatory policies.	Wikipedia – Avery Brundage
January 1964 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	Innsbruck Session: after the South African committee refuses to change its selection policy, the IOC suspends it and withdraws its invitation to the Tokyo Games. This first exclusion rests on the Charter alone, with no boycott threat.	Ivey, 2024, pp. 31–33; Olympedia
1964 • NEW	The Group of 77 is formed at the first UNCTAD. Between Melbourne and Tokyo, the number of nations at the Games rises from 67 to 93; in eight years the IOC admits twenty-six new nations, most of them African and Caribbean.	Group of 77; Ivey, 2024, p. 30
July 1965 ‹ REVISED	First African Games in Brazzaville, with Jean-Claude Ganga as secretary general of the organizing committee: 29 countries according to the IOC, 27 according to Charitas.	Clastres, 2025; Charitas, 2023
December 1966 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	Bamako: founding of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa (SCSA), mandated to secure South Africa's expulsion “by all means.” First executive: André Hombessa (president), Abraham Ordia and Badara Sow (vice-presidents), Jean-Claude Ganga (secretary general).	Charitas, 2023; Ivey, 2024

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
1967 • NEW	Prime Minister John Vorster agrees to Black athletes on the Olympic team, provided separate selection trials are held.	Ivey, 2024, pp. 36–37
1967	IOC fact-finding commission to South Africa, chaired by Killanin, with Ade Ademola and Reginald Alexander.	Wikipedia – Apartheid-era South Africa
February 1968 ‹ REVISED	Judging Vorster's concession sufficient, the IOC votes by mail to readmit South Africa to the Mexico City Games.	Wikipedia; Ivey, 2024, pp. 36–37
February 16 – 26, 1968 • NEW	Ethiopia threatens to boycott Mexico City (February 16), followed by Algeria, Tanzania and Ghana; the OAU recommends a boycott to its thirty-eight members (February 24); the SCSA endorses it unanimously (February 26).	Ivey, 2024, pp. 37–38
April 1968 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	Forty-six states threaten to boycott, two-thirds of them African, joined by India, Brazil, Cuba, the Scandinavian countries and the Soviet bloc. On April 21, the IOC Executive withdraws the invitation; a mail ballot confirms it (47 to 17, with 8 abstentions).	Ivey, 2024, pp. 37–38; Olympedia
1968 • NEW	The SCSA moves to Yaoundé. The UN General Assembly calls for the suspension of sporting exchanges with South Africa.	Charitas, 2023; Bancel, The Conversation, 2024
October 1968 • NEW	Mexico City: Kenya wins eight medals in athletics, led by Kipchoge Keino.	Olympedia, “Kenya”
1969 • NEW	Abraham Ordia (Nigeria) becomes president of the SCSA, a post he will hold until 1983.	Commonwealth Oral Histories
November 28, 1969 • NEW	Letter from Mitchell Sharp supporting Montreal's bid: all representatives of NOCs and federations recognized by the IOC will be free to enter Canada.	Pound, 2012, p. 18
May 12, 1970 TURNING POINT	Amsterdam: Montreal wins the 1976 Games over Moscow and Los Angeles.	New York Times, May 13, 1970
May 1970 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	At the same Session, the South African Olympic Committee is expelled (35 to 28, with 3 abstentions) after pleas by Ordia and Ganga.	Olympedia; Ivey, 2024, pp. 38–39
October 1970 • NEW	Canada recognizes the People's Republic of China and breaks with Taipei.	IOC, “Diplomatic controversies”

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
1971 • NEW	The Commonwealth adopts its Declaration of Principles in Singapore, from which the Gleneagles Agreement will later flow.	Commonwealth Secretariat
August 4, 1972 • NEW	The OAU and the SCSA call for a boycott of Munich if Rhodesia takes part; Tanzania, Zambia, Ghana, Kenya and Ethiopia declare their positions publicly.	Ivey, 2024, pp. 39–40
August 22, 1972 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	Munich: Rhodesia's invitation is withdrawn four days before the opening (36 to 31, with 3 abstentions). For Andrew Novak, quoted by Ivey, “Africa, as a continent, had won.”	BBC; Ivey, 2024, p. 42
September 6, 1972 ‹ REVISED	Brundage, at the memorial for the Israeli athletes: “We lost the Rhodesian battle against naked political blackmail.” He later apologizes.	WNYC; Los Angeles Times, 2002
1972 ‹ REVISED	Killanin succeeds Brundage (1972–1980). Nine African members then sit on the IOC, two of them white men.	Monnin, 2008; Olympedia
January 1973 • NEW	Lagos: Ordia offers Killanin a bargain. If the views of African sports leaders are heard “with better understanding,” the SCSA will ensure that Africa will “reaffirm their loyalty to the IOC” and drop its boycott threats.	Ivey, 2024, pp. 40–41
1973 ‹ REVISED	New Zealand's Labour government under Norman Kirk postpones the Springbok tour. Kéba Mbaye (Senegal) joins the IOC; Mohamed Zerguini (Algeria) follows in 1974.	Ivey, 2024; NZHistory; Olympedia
May – July 1974 ‹ REVISED	British Lions tour South Africa. The SCSA votes a sporting boycott of the United Kingdom; according to Kenya, only 22 of its 41 members apply it. This is the first instance of a strategy aimed at “third-party offenders” (Sikes).	Ivey, 2024, pp. 48–49
1974 – 1975 • NEW	The Portuguese colonies gain independence, and the fight against apartheid becomes the OAU's main political objective.	Bancel, The Conversation, 2024
November 1974 • NEW	The UN General Assembly suspends the South African delegation from its proceedings (91 to 22), an unprecedented decision.	New York Times, November 13, 1974

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
1975 ‹ REVISED	The French national rugby team tours South Africa. Ganga warns Jacques Chirac and even “coaches” the French ambassador in Cameroon; the SCSA announces a break with France, to no effect. Ivey judges these campaigns “weak and uncoordinated,” lacking a “rallying moment.”	Ivey, 2024, pp. 50–52
May 1975 ‹ REVISED	The IOC expels Rhodesia (41 to 26), under the implicit threat of a boycott of Montreal.	Ivey, 2024; New York Times
November 7, 1975	Killanin circular: the Tripartite Commission condemns breaches of the rules driven by political considerations.	Monnin, 2008
November – December 1975 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	Robert Muldoon's National Party wins after campaigning against the 1973 postponement and pledging that government will stay out of sport.	Ivey, 2024; NZHistory

1976, Week by Week

JANUARY – DECEMBER 1976 · 25 ENTRIES

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
January – February ‹ REVISED	New Zealand hosts a world softball championship that includes South Africa. Ordia threatens a boycott; Lance Cross dismisses the threat, and Ordia extends it to the Olympic Games.	Ivey, 2024, p. 53
March 9 ‹ REVISED	Ordia's threat makes the front page of the New Zealand Herald, following his letter to T. P. McLean: no competition with New Zealand, “including the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games.”	Ivey, 2024; The Spinoff
April 27 – 29 TURNING POINT	Nairobi: the SCSA executive adopts a boycott of any competition involving New Zealand; Ganga warns that a full Olympic boycott could “isolate” Africa.	Ivey, 2024, pp. 56–57
May 17	Beijing warns Trudeau that it will not tolerate a Taiwanese team competing as the “Republic of China.”	Monnin, 2008
May 28 • NEW	Mitchell Sharp informs Killanin that Taiwanese athletes may enter only if they do not represent the “Republic of China” or use its flag, anthem or name.	Pound, 2012, pp. 20–21
Late May ‹ REVISED	Ordia visits New Zealand; Muldoon refuses to meet him, and he is booed during a televised debate.	Ivey, 2024
June 8 • NEW	Killanin replies that these conditions are “in complete conflict with the Olympic rules”; the IOC would not have chosen Montreal had it known of them.	Pound, 2012, p. 21
June 16 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	The Soweto uprising begins. For Ivey, “the real issue was Soweto.”	Ivey, 2024, pp. 59–62
June 24 – July 3 ‹ REVISED	OAU Council of Ministers in Port Louis: Resolution CM/Res.488 condemns New Zealand and invites states to “reconsider” their participation. It is adopted in the absence of Ganga, then in Gabon, and of Ordia, who intervenes only by telegram.	OAU, CM/Res.488; Ivey, 2024
June 25	The All Blacks leave for South Africa.	Ivey, 2024
June 30 • NEW	The All Blacks play their first match in South Africa while the Port Louis meeting is in session.	Ivey, 2024, pp. 59–62

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
July 6 – 11 ‹ REVISED	Madagascar (July 6), Tanzania (July 9) and Mauritius (July 11) announce they will not send teams. The Tanzanian daily Uhuru frames the choice as “Olympic medals or freedom and respect”; Filbert Bayi will not run.	Ivey, 2024; The Spinoff
July 10 – 15 • NEW	The IOC devotes its meetings of July 10, 11, 12 and 15 to the Taiwan question; on July 11, its Executive Board protests “unanimously and strongly” against Canada's decision.	Ivey, 2024, p. 84; Pound, 2012, pp. 25–26
July 13 – 14 ‹ REVISED	The IOC Session opens in Montreal; the text of the OAU resolution arrives with a delegate from New York, then as a paper copy.	IOC Library; The Spinoff; Ivey, 2024
July 15 ‹ REVISED	Ordia and Ganga convene the heads of delegation; representatives of sixteen African NOCs, including Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, write to Killanin. The IOC approves Trudeau's compromise on Taiwan (58 to 2, with 6 abstentions).	Monnin, 2008; IOC Library; New York Times, July 16, 1976
July 16 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	Killanin refuses: rugby is a sport “over which the International Olympic Committee has no control whatsoever.” Nigeria withdraws on its government's instructions; Taiwan withdraws.	The Spinoff; Ivey, 2024, p. 83; IOC Library
July 16 – 17 • NEW	Zambia, Kenya, Congo, the Gambia and Ethiopia follow. “As sportsmen, we have no alternative but to comply with the instructions of our government” (Zambian delegation).	Ivey, 2024
July 17 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	The opening ceremony takes place without many African delegations; the BBC reports that more than three hundred competitors will not take part.	Ivey, 2024; BBC, July 17, 1976
July 18 – 21 ‹ REVISED	Staggered withdrawals: Cameroon, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia compete for a few days before their governments recall them. Depending on the criterion used, between 22 and 32 countries boycott in all.	Monnin, 2008; Olympedia; IOC; CBC
July 22 TURNING POINT • NEW	In Montreal, the IAAF expels South Africa's athletics federation. The same day, African leaders are still seeking a compromise based on an official condemnation of sporting ties with South Africa.	New York Times, July 22 and 23, 1976
August 16 ‹ REVISED	The IOC asks the 31 non-participating NOCs in writing to justify their absence. Zaire cites “national priority realities and needs.”	Monnin, 2008; Ivey, 2024

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
September – October • NEW	Mohamed Mzali, IOC vice-president, publishes an article in the Olympic Review (nos. 107–108) calling the boycott “impoverished in its inspiration, rushed in its execution, and relatively ineffective.”	Mzali, Olympic Review, 1976, p. 464; Ivey, 2024, p. 173
October 13 – 17 ‹ REVISED	Barcelona: the Executive Board and the IFs decide against sanctions, treating the African NOCs as “victims of their governments.”	Monnin, 2008; Ivey, 2024
November 9	UN Resolution 31/6F on apartheid in sport (128-0-12) establishes an ad hoc committee to draft a convention.	Ivey, 2024
December 23	Killanin: membership in the Olympic Movement is not compulsory, but a member NOC must respect the Charter.	Monnin, 2008

Aftermath: From Gleneagles to Readmission

1977 – 1992 · 20 ENTRIES

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
January 1977	Extraordinary meeting of the SCSA in Yaoundé; Guinea speaks of “high treason,” but the majority opts for leniency toward Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire.	Monnin, 2008; Ivey, 2024
March – April 1977	IOC meeting with the NOCs in Abidjan: proposals from Nigeria (Rules 3 and 25) and from the Canadian Olympic Association (sanctions).	Ivey, 2024; Monnin, 2008
June 15, 1977 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	Gleneagles Agreement: Commonwealth heads of government commit to discouraging all sporting contact with South Africa, notably to protect the Edmonton Games.	Commonwealth Secretariat; CBC, 2026
1977 • NEW	The SCSA becomes a specialized agency of the OAU. Zambia withdraws a seven-player badminton team because a single New Zealand player is present.	Charitas, 2023; Ivey, 2024, pp. 186–197
1977 – 1978	Bashir Attarabulsi (Libya), Lamine Keita (Mali) and René Essomba (Cameroon) are co-opted to the IOC; Kéba Mbaye is appointed to the Juridical Commission (1977).	Clastres, 2025; Krieger, 2025
December 14, 1977 ‹ REVISED	UN International Declaration against Apartheid in Sports (125-0-14). Canada is the only Western member of the committee tasked with drafting the convention.	United Nations, A/RES/32/105 M; Ivey, 2024, p. 227
1978 ‹ REVISED	Edmonton Commonwealth Games: only Nigeria and Uganda boycott; Kenya calls the initiative “unwarranted.”	Ivey, 2024, pp. 200–202
1979 ‹ REVISED	Rule 25 is amended so that the host country's NOC may be sanctioned if the organizing committee fails to meet the conditions of award. Ganga publishes Combats pour le sport africain (L'Harmattan).	Krieger, 2025; L'Harmattan
December 1979	Yaoundé: the SCSA recommends taking part in the Moscow Games; Ganga loses the post of secretary general to Lamine Ba (24–20).	Ivey, 2024
December 24 – 27, 1979	Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.	Ivey, 2024

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
January 20, 1980 TURNING POINT ‹ REVISED	Carter's ultimatum; some sixty countries boycott the Moscow Games (64 according to Ivey, 66 according to CBC). Twenty African committees boycott, twenty-one take part.	Ivey, 2024, pp. 157–161 and 218–219; CBC, 2026
1980 • NEW	Julius Nyerere refuses to follow the American call: “when two elephants are fighting, it is the grass that suffers. Afghanistan and Tanzania are the grass.”	Ivey, 2024, pp. 328 and 332
1981 • NEW	The Springbok tour of New Zealand is marked by protests and violence. In the British House of Commons, it is noted that Gleneagles “seeks only to discourage and dissuade.”	Hansard, July 31, 1981; Ivey, 2024, p. 302
1982 – 1983 • NEW	Reginald Honey leaves the IOC (1982); Ordia steps down as SCSA president (1983).	Olympedia; Commonwealth Oral Histories
1984 ‹ REVISED	Soviet boycott of the Los Angeles Games, with no more than fourteen countries absent according to the Washington Post. Morocco leaves the OAU after the admission of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.	Ivey, 2024; Washington Post, June 5, 1984; Encyclopædia Universalis
1985 • NEW	The planned New Zealand tour of South Africa is cancelled.	Ivey, 2024, p. 302
December 10, 1985 TURNING POINT	Adoption of the International Convention against Apartheid in Sports (in force April 3, 1988).	United Nations, Treaty Series; OAS
1986 • NEW	Jean-Claude Ganga becomes an IOC member; he will chair ANOCA from 1989 to 1999.	Charitas, 2023; Olympedia
June 21, 1988	The IOC issues a declaration against “apartheid in sport” and creates a dedicated commission.	Wikipedia; UN Yearbook 1988
1991 – 1992 TURNING POINT	South Africa is readmitted and returns to the Games in Barcelona.	Wikipedia – Apartheid-era South Africa

Memory and Legacies

1999 – 2026 · 6 ENTRIES

DATE	EVENT	SOURCES
1999 • NEW	Ganga is expelled from the IOC in the wake of the Salt Lake City scandal.	Le Monde, March 17, 1999; RFI, March 28, 2020
December 12, 1999 TURNING POINT	Olympic Charter, Rule 31.3: “each NOC is obliged to participate in the Games of the Olympiad by sending athletes.”	IOC, amendments of the 110th Session
November 14, 2006 • NEW	Final repayment of the Olympic debt, some $1.5 billion, which anchored the memory of the Games in their cost.	The Globe and Mail
2013 • NEW	The SCSA is dissolved; where its archives are held has not been established.	Camara, A divided house
2024 • NEW	James Ivey's dissertation (UC San Diego) and Louis Brosseau's master's thesis (Université Laval) place Montreal within the history of decolonization and date the Olympic “era of crises” to 1976–1980.	Ivey, 2024, pp. 5–6, 11 and 120
2026 TURNING POINT • NEW	Fiftieth anniversary: CBC series on the boycotting athletes; La Presse quotes Jean Drapeau, “Une grande tristesse des jeux de 1976 demeure le retrait d'un continent” (“One great sadness of the 1976 Games remains the withdrawal of a continent,” July 13); Nicolas Moreau publishes the Canadian Olympic Association's correspondence (October 15).	CBC, 2026; La Presse, July 13, 2026; The Conversation, October 15, 2026

Verification Notes

Several entries from the first version have been corrected in light of the two dossiers. The most significant concerns Rhodesia. In August 1972, the IOC did not expel it: it withdrew its invitation to the Munich Games, four days before the opening rather than two. Formal expulsion came only in May 1975, by 41 votes to 26. Likewise, South Africa was suspended at the Innsbruck Session in January 1964, which also withdrew its invitation to the Tokyo Games. The 1962 ultimatum and the 1963 Baden-Baden decision were the preliminary steps.

Some figures differ from one source to another, and the timeline flags these discrepancies rather than settling them. According to Charitas, thirty-two nations founded the SCSA in Bamako, whereas the first version, following Ivey, gave twenty-nine. The first African Games brought together 29 countries according to the IOC and 27 according to Charitas. The number of countries that boycotted in 1976 ranges from 22 to 32 depending on the criterion: Olympedia counts 26, including 4 that competed before being recalled. The safest wording remains “some thirty countries, almost all of them African.” The Moscow boycott involved 64 countries according to Ivey and 66 according to CBC. Tanzania's withdrawal is dated July 9 in the archives used by Ivey, and July 10 by The Spinoff.

Mohamed Mzali's words should be quoted with care. The French wording circulated in the interview guide, “improvisé dans son inspiration, précipité dans son exécution,” does not match the verifiable version of his article in the Olympic Review (nos. 107–108, p. 464). That version reads “impoverished in its inspiration, rushed in its execution, and relatively ineffective.” Only the French edition of the review can establish his exact French wording. The timeline therefore quotes the English version.

Two further points are worth keeping in mind for public outreach. Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire were among the sixteen signatories of the letter sent to Killanin on July 15, yet they did not withdraw from the Games. In addition, none of the sources consulted shows the Canadian government invoking the political neutrality of sport against African demands; that argument was the IOC's. On the evening of the withdrawals, Trudeau instead expressed sympathy for the countries that had pulled out.

The page numbers for James Ivey's dissertation are not the same in the two source dossiers. The first refers to the printed pagination, the second to that of the PDF posted on eScholarship. The page references in the Sources column will need to be harmonized before any print publication.