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# New Sports Announced for 2028 Los Angeles Olympics

George Burquest, Staff Reporter

The International Olympic Committee announced Oct. 16 that it had accepted a proposal by local organizers of the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles to add squash, cricket, flag football, lacrosse, baseball and softball to the official event pool.

In the cases of squash and flag football, LA 2028 will mark the first time they have been played on the Olympic stage. Cricket has not been included since the 1900 Paris Olympics, and lacrosse has been absent since being featured in 1904 and 1908. Baseball and softball will be skipping over the 2024 Paris Olympics, but were featured as recently as Tokyo in 2020.



Annabelle DeGuzman-Carino

There are a variety of factors at play when it comes to what sports are included and added to the Olympics.

Jagan Nemani runs the youth national tournament for Major League Cricket (MLC), a professional cricket organization in the United States founded in 2019. Nemani shared that the inclusion of cricket in the Olympics is something they have been working toward for a long time.

“One of the big milestones for us was to get cricket in the Olympics,” Nemani said. “One of the things the U.S. is crazy about is the Olympics, and one of the fastest growing sports in the U.S. is cricket. So it is perfect timing to have more people introduced to the sport.”

In the MLC’s inaugural season, which was just this past year 1,400 miles away from LA in Prairieville, Texas, “[the league] beat all of [their] expectations,” according to Nemani. “87% of the games sold out.”

The style of cricket that will be played in the Olympics is Twenty20 (T20), a shorter version of the occasionally dayslong sport introduced in the early 2000s. Games typically last around two and a half hours, making T20 cricket much more digestible. This comes to an American audience who had to revamp their national pastime, baseball, this year to speed things up with the addition of the pitch clock.

Squash is another example of a sport that has seen much of its popularity lie beyond the U.S..

Sam Juszczuk, a former collegiate squash player at Xavier University, was “beyond hyped” about squash’s inclusion in the 2028 Olympic Games.

“The sport is huge on the east coast but not really in the midwest where I was,” Juszczuk said.

Juszczuk has been involved in a larger campaign to have squash included in the Olympics for close to a decade. Once a participant in the 2020 National Championships at Harvard in his senior year, Juszczuk recalled signing a petition in 2014 for squash’s inclusion in the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics.

With major international tournaments around the world, such as the British Open or PSA World Tour, squash is a very popular sport throughout Europe and the Middle East. It may be a while before the U.S. wins a gold medal though, as the highest-ranked American player is Timothy Brownell at #40 in the world. Still, Juszczuk hopes that its inclusion in the Olympics will “give American kids a chance to look up to something different, and even think about playing squash beyond the college level.”

Shifting to a sport that is not internationally popular, flag football is a non-contact version of American football and will be included in the 2028 Olympics. Large backing from the National Football League (NFL), one of the world’s richest sports leagues, has played a major role in the sport’s inclusion, which came as a surprise to many people.

Antonio Woo, a fourth-year economics major who has been playing intramural flag football since his second year at Seattle U, is excited about the chance to watch flag football on the international stage.

“I have to say that I was pretty surprised by the inclusion of flag football in the Olympics,” Woo said. “I think overall it’s a good thing for football, and especially the NFL, in their attempts to make the sport more international.”

The NFL already has different initiatives to broaden the sport’s fanbase, including games being played this season in both London, England and Frankfurt, Germany.

Woo assumed “the fact that the Olympics are being played in the U.S. likely has a large influence over flag football’s inclusion.” But he is also excited by the fact that the NFL is encouraging active professional players to participate, as the league has stated their intentions to enable its players to join the new Olympic event.

For cricket, squash and flag football, the Olympics provide a great chance to grow. Depending on their popularity in 2028, they stand the chance of establishing themselves as international competitions on the largest global stage.