

You didn't Build that Gold Medal Opportunity

✘ Earlier this week at the Olympics in women's gymnastics, Jordyn Wieber finished 4th overall in the qualifying round for the women's individual all-round finals. She did not, however, qualify for the final competition due to a rule that does not allow more than 2 athletes from each country to participate in the finals. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) put this rule in place to get more countries represented in the finals. A Russian gymnast, despite finishing 9th overall, also did not make the finals, which will have 24 athletes competing. Most people when hearing this rule are bothered by the feeling that this is unfair despite the possibly good intentions.

There has been no official word from the White House on this rule, but I was listening to my Ham radio after the event, and thought I intercepted a consoling call from President Obama to Jordyn Wieber. The woman was very upset, so he did most of the talking. Despite the static, I was able to write down most of what I heard the President say...

"We have found that it just works better when you spread the medals around..."

"A lot of gymnasts think they just work harder than others, but I know a lot of gymnasts from other countries who work hard..."

The woman on the phone started sobbing at this point.

"I do think at a certain point you have won enough medals. I mean how many do you need..."

"I was talking to my friend Warren Buffett the other day, and

I realized that we should propose a 'Phelps Rule' to the IOC, where if you win more than 5 medals you have to give at least 30% back..."

"If you have a fall and a doctor amputates your foot, somebody still wins a medal..."

The gymnast gasped and tried to ask a question, but the President continued.

"Medals trickling down from the top one percent has never worked..."

"You didn't build that pommel horse, you didn't build those uneven bars, somebody else made that happen!"

Jordyn at this point indicated that she appreciated the effort, but that she didn't feel this call was helping her feel any better. The voices started to fade away, the last thing I heard was the President saying something about Chicago Olympics in 2020.

The free enterprise system has created wealth and benefited all people throughout society, particularly the poor. The rules implemented in this sport are eerily similar to the principles behind what is being advocated for our country. Let's not allow some subjective idea of fairness to destroy the system that has raised more people's living standards than any other in history.