

How serious are the nation's sports bodies about reform? An example involving the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee (CTOC) says it all: Former Executive Yuan spokesman Sun Lih-chyun (孫立人) of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) has confirmed that he will assume the post of secretary-general of the committee in November. Acknowledging that his expertise lies in cross-strait and administrative affairs, and that he is unfamiliar with the sports sector, Sun said he would try his best to learn on the job, adding that he has been watching sports events with former Sports Administration director-general Ho Jow-fei (何俊夫).

This arrangement instantly prompts the question: How is someone whose entire working experience never involved sports qualified to lead a national sports organization?

Sun's stance on sports affairs has left many shaking their heads and making pessimistic predictions.

On the issue of the referendum campaign calling for the nation to compete as "Taiwan" rather than "Chinese Taipei" at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and other international sports events and China's interference with the East Asian Olympic Committee that resulted in the latter revoking Taichung's right to host the East Asian Youth Games next year, Sun has no harsh words for China.

Aside from failing to chide Beijing for its involvement in the East Asian Olympic Committee's decision, Sun also stigmatized civil groups' efforts to get rid of the demeaning appellation of "Chinese Taipei" by stating: "I will try to minimize the influence of political elements as much as possible so that Taiwanese athletes' right to compete at international competitions can be ensured and not jeopardized."

Truly pathetic.

Who needs an aggressor like China that incessantly schemes to squeeze Taiwan off the world sports stage when Taiwan has people such as Sun who willingly give up on the fight to demand respect for Taiwanese athletes who bring honor to the nation?

## Sports still under party-state control

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However absurd this appointment is, it is not that surprising given the history of the governing bodies of the nation's sports associations.

The management of the CTOC — as is the case with other sports associations — is not appointed by the government, but elected by executive committee members. In the case of the CTOC secretary-general, the candidate is first nominated by the CTOC chairman before its executive committee members vote on the nomination.

A glance at the executive committee shows that it is comprised largely of KMT members, such as Taipei mayoral candidate Ting Shou-chung (丁守中) and former legislator Huang Chih-hsiung (黃智雄).

In other words, although the KMT is no longer the ruling party, most of the nation's sports associations are still under its control and any move on the part of the government to reform the associations would be branded political interference.

Another example is the Chinese Taipei Football Association: As part of the government's reforms to attempt to eliminate nepotism, and demand transparency and accountability, the Legislative Yuan on Aug. 31 last year passed amendments to the National Sports Act (國家體育法) that allow members of the public to join sports associations and vote for their leaders.

The change was instantly met with opposition from a number of sports associations, with the soccer body filing a complaint with FIFA alleging that the amended law contravened FIFA regulations, as those in power within the soccer body looked to defend their interests under the guise of "no political interference."

So when exactly can sports associations be freed from the shackles of lingering party-state control?

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