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## EDITOR'S LETTER SPORTS AS STYLE



When random people discover me being a passionate motorcyclist, they usually conclude: “Got it, you support a sportive lifestyle!”

A “sportive lifestyle” is a hard-to-translate, very Russian (or even Soviet) expression. We feel, but do not completely understand its meaning. This weak idiom hides its deep essence. Because sportiness is just an image, like fitness. Sportiness is opposed to clunkiness, and fitness is opposed to limpness. Is there anyone who wants to hold a clunker or limp image?

Those of us who can remember our Soviet history, probably will agree upon the role of sport values in our human education. Sports were not our pleasant amusement. Our workshops

were exhaustive. Our sport clubs did not include fat, or motionless, or craven children. Everyone had both talent and potential. Otherwise, the coaches decided that it was an unreasonable waste of time. Sport lessons at schools covered all students. They were not mandatory only for the children with medical restrictions.

At the moment Russian sports which is a direct descendant of Soviet sports, experiences hard times, especially in track and field athletics and winter speed sports. I cannot judge who is right or wrong. Of course, I know that Soviet sports were a propaganda weapon, but it was only among high-level politicians. When it comes to routine life, in my opinion, sports – like much earlier – continue playing a proper role in education of new generations in Russia.

I cannot locate any other activity which is able to develop willpower, respect for competitors, and – which is most important – self-inflexibility in a growing personality with a similar effect.

**Victor Loupan**

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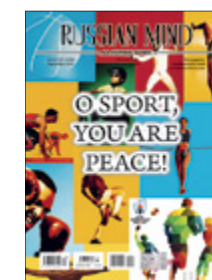
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## HIGHLIGHTS

# A MAN WHO STARTED RUNNING

**Learn about the environment and political background noise accompanying establishment of Soviet sports, an ancestor to Russian sports**

VICTOR LOUPAN,  
Head of the Editorial Board

It all started way back in 1970 when a wonderful movie named strangely as “Sports, sports, sports” was released for distribution in Soviet cinemas. As it was expected, the movie became a box office hit and was attended by millions spectators. Because the Soviet Union was a very “sportive” country in the best sense of the term.

As I was a “sportive” teenager and a movie fan, I have watched it thrice. The film was unusual, half-fiction and half-documentary. It contained some independence, pertness, humor alternating with existential drama, ups and downs.

At that time Elem Klimov, a filmmaker, had not become a master yet; it would happen ten or fifteen years later, after his “Agony”, “Farewell” and his unbeaten masterpiece “Come and See”. But if we check the cast and crew of the movie, it immediately comes to light that the movie had been made to become exceptional. For example, they used poems written and declared by Bella Akhmadulina, music pieces created by avant-garde composer Alfred Schnittke; the movie features such great actors as Daniel Olbrychski and Nikita Mikhalkov.



So, this was evidently not a propagandist film promoting Soviet sports. The movie included many pieces of Czarist-era historical records and international news items. The authors definitely attempted to demonstrate sports development, history, and its future, its connection with politics, arts, ethics, willpower, beauty. Sports play rather a metaphorical role. The funnies told by the principal character of the film, a massage therapist “dyadya Volodya” (whose role was precious presented by Georgy Svetlani), serve as a curtain wall hiding the true essence of the movie which

is a metaphysical start moment of engaging in sports. It means exactly the same what has been described by Bella Akhmadulina in her amazing poem read on the screen:

*Behold the man, whose race was first begun  
So long ago, when light first lit creation;  
One cannot count the centuries he's run:  
Run high, run far, toward some consecration,*

*Some blessed goal. What triumph might it be  
That beckons him to run, to conquer distance?  
Behold the man – oh, look at him!  
and see  
Through fogs of time his face's fine persistence.*

*Egyptian deserts held him as a slave,  
A swarthy outcast, breathless in his fleeing,  
Whom death awaited should he cease to crave  
To win this race: the essence of his being.*

*Around him all is motionless and dead.  
But he: alive with passion, flexed emotion,  
His golden muscles' movements all embed  
Humanity's own most perfected motion.*

*Oh, runner, run! Run, brother; run,  
my friend!  
By force of will your final lap completed,  
You run one more, your victory to extend,  
To nobly face a future undefeated.  
Oh, runner, run!*

Translated by Glen Worthey  
(Stanford University)  
Source: <https://ruverses.com/bella-akhmadulina/oh-runner-run/>

Sports were not essential both in Russian Empire and the rest Europe. Well-situated people and the upper classes constituted the core around the sports; albeit some workers' sport organisations already existed before the revolution. They were dissolved during World War I, however, they had been re-established upon its end. By 1920 the International Workers' Sport movement expressly led by the socialist ideology numbered over one million members over the globe. In 1920 the Lucerne Sport International (LSI) was established in Swiss Lucerne on the initiative of European Social Democrats. The preamble of the LSI Charter included the following idea: “The workers' sport movement is no less important than the workers' union, political and cooperative movement. We should also struggle against capitalism, nationalism and militarism in the field of physical culture in all countries”.

However, this very promising organisation had polarized very soon due to toxicity of the USSR in Social Democrats and any of their initiatives.

The Comintern III Congress (1921) in its reaction to foundation of the LSI pleaded the proletarian sportsmen to “pull a mass of young men out of the idea-driven dependence from the middle class or compromisers, and put them under the workers' common Red Banner”. Just a week later Moscow welcomed the First International Congress of the representatives of revolutionary workers' sport associations of Russia, Italy, Germany, France, Czechoslovakia, Scandinavian countries, the Nether-

lands, where the International Association of Red Sports and Gymnastics Associations, or the Red Sport International (RSI), was established.

The RSI ideology became the basis for sport movement in Soviet Russia. The Red Sport International held “Spartakiads” to balance “middle-class” Olympic Games held by the International Olympic Committee. Nowadays it is amusing to read proclamations of the Red Sport International, because they might be enthusiastically signed by modern fans of political correctness in the West. This is just a short example taken from the RSI ideological platform: “The Olympic Games are aimed at demonstration of sport achievements and detection of record-breaking achievements in the field of truly individualistic sports. In contradiction to the Olympic Games held between bourgeois-capitalistic countries, the Red Sport International holds International workers' sport events (Spartakiads) aimed at propaganda of physical training as a method of health promotion among proletarians and class-specific education of labour masses”.

The International Olympic Committee received criticism not only from the Soviet RSI, but also from the Social-Democrat LSI due to almost exclusive participation of privileged class representatives in the Olympic Games. But it was not the only reason for the attack. Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the IOC, con-

tinuously opposed women's participation and affirmed that “a white race prevailed over other races”. Count Henri de Baye-Latour, the first president of the IOC (1925–1942), and Avery Brundage, the president of the US Olympic Committee (1928–1953) and then the president of the IOC (1952–1972), were straight anti-Semites

and cooperated with Nazi. In contrast, the workers' “Olympic Games” were levelled against any forms of chauvinism, gender discrimination, racism and social exceptionalism. Unlike the Olympic Games which were based on competition among the nations, the workers' “Spartakiads” emphasized internationalism, friendship, solidarity, and peace.

That was the environment and political background noise accompanying establishment of Soviet sports, an ancestor to Russian sports.

Soviet sports started competing with Western sports only in 1951 with the establishment of the National Olympic Committee of the USSR that had been immediately recognised by the International Olympic Committee.

Inclusion of the USSR into the global sport community had a direct influence on the general competition level: by 1958 over 40% of the Soviet record achievements improved the world records.

The 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki and the 1956 Winter Olympics in Cortina d'Ampezzo were the first two for the Soviet Union.

Many people still think that international sport competitions had been politically charged by Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany. Well, this is far from being the case. The Olympic ideal never was true angel. Its left-wing and communist opponents were much closer to

our modern understanding of equality and ethics than “imperialist, racist and sexist” Coubertin or his fellows.

This is not a single example of now-dominating Western ideology of global equality which is so closely linked to the equality and fraternity roots and principles of the Communist ideology.





## SOCIETY

# IMMIGRATION – BOON OR A BANE?

*Mass immigration always contributes to rise in crime  
and significantly increases shady economy*

VYACHESLAV KATAMIDZE,  
*writer and historian*

There was once a time when Moscow habitants entered the streets with a smile on their faces: pathways were swept out, trash deleted, and flowerbeds watered. All of these – thanks to immigrants who came from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and other Stans. We could see the fruits of their labour in every field they were engaged in.

However, now a sizeable portion of habitants of Moscow and other cities receiving thousands of migrants became thoughtful about their reasonability.

The major concern relates to rise in crime and violation of laws and rules by immigrants. Between the early 2017 and the middle of 2018 immigrant labourers coming to Russia have committed over 27,000 offences which vast majority falls upon Moscow, Moscow Oblast, and Voronezh, Ivanovo, Kaluga, Orel, Ryazan and Smolensk regions.

Between January and September 2018 foreigners and stateless persons have committed over 2,000 offences in Saint Petersburg. It is also considered that every fifth crime is committed in Moscow by migrants. Moreover, the significant part of this number includes serious crimes, such as murder, act of assault, robbery, home burglary, traffic in arms and drugs. And this is still the tip of the iceberg. It is to be remembered that dozens of migrants had been retained for cooperation with IGIL (banned in Russia).

The picture of immigration to Western countries to no extent is better.

But our readers may be mostly interested in the current situation in the United Kingdom. Mass immigration always contributes to local rise in crime, so the government grants law enforcement bodies higher budgeted funds. It is well recognised that ethnic minorities are proportionally wider engaged in robberies, violent street demonstrations and drug sale.

Since 2000 ethnic minorities have been usually responsible for 30 to 40 percent of street offences committed in London and some other UK cities.

Note the fact that London shows dramatic increase in the number of ethnic gangs originating from Eastern Europe (Latvia, Albania, Poland). Some of the gangs control ethnic shops and cafes, plea markets, charity shops. They also manage a significant number of seasonal workers recruited

by British farms as harvesters. British newspapers repeatedly publish articles disrobing fraud and false representations used by ethnic gangs to attract workers to Britain, put them into poor housing conditions and deduct the better half of their earnings.

Over the recent two decades government officials, representatives of different political parties and local scientists have been heavily discussing necessity of immigrants in developed countries. Representatives of liberals and Labourists usually affirm that no developed country is able to meet the demand for workforce, speed up economical growth and increase gross domestic product (GDP) by own efforts. Their opponents argue that mass immigration, especially if left behind control, presents a threat to regular political life of the country,

leads to higher unemployment and significantly increases shady economy. Consequently, immigration is not a boon but a bane.

Who is correct? Let us consider the facts presented by both parties, for which we shall need to go to statistics. Over the recent 15 years the number of Polish immigrants has increased 20 times in UK reaching over 1,152 thousand people to date. Today every fifth child coming into the world in Britain, is being born into a family of Polish immigrants. Over the last decade the

number of Romanians has increased 5 times exceeding 400 thousand people in total. Over the same decade the number of Albanians has increased 6 times reaching 120 thousand people; by the way, many of them entered the United Kingdom under the guise of Kosovo refugees. In addition to them, according to overall estimation, the country tolerates around 200 thousand people from Lithuania and Latvia and over 100 thousand Ukrainians, with almost all of them residing and working illegally. It means that only Eastern Europe has delivered around 2 million immigrants to the United Kingdom.

What are the changes happening to the British economy as a result of immigration? In the year of 2000 immigrants contributed around 0.25% to GDP of UK. Now it is estimated at only 0.14% that is very nearly to a half of the previous index. There is nothing to be surprised about. The most part of earnings of this population group is a part of shady economy: constructors, maintenance technicians, drivers and service workers at ethnic shops and restaurants get their salary mainly in cash, and low taxation requirements release them from being charged to the budget. Polish, Albanian and Ro-



manian families receive public benefits as a part of their income.

It is also should be noted that immigration continuously contributes to population growth even if it leads to increase in GDP too. Once we detect immigrants' contribution to GDP reaching at least 0.25% again, the population will immediately show increase by 1.4%. In essence, GDP in Britain taken on a per capita basis is simply decreasing due to immigration instead of rising.

According to scientists, visa-free access of immigrant labourers to European job markets tanks their economies. The number of enterprises with Eastern European and local founders increases; they are broadly satisfied with the existing wage level established for immigrants and easy replacement of any worker under the current job market conditions. As immigrants declare, minivans loaded with British Pounds often departure from London to Eastern Europe where the banknotes are sold to banks for a big profit. Guest workers also transfer substantial amounts of money to their relatives abroad.

It is an empirical fact that since the 1970s most legal migrants have been arriving in Europe not for work. Many

of them are dependent family members of the immigrants already living in Europe (for example, in France they constitute over 70% of the total number of people arriving in the country for permanent residence), as well as refugees. Such immigrants are usually underqualified. The country does not need them as specialists or active population. At the same time, emigration from developing countries not only limits job markets, but also leads to a "brain drain", exodus of rare technical experts.

When it comes to developed countries, such as Great Britain, immigration at current scales is a heavy pain. It leads to revenue contraction – both for locals and immigrants who had resided a couple of decades ago. It also results in environmental degradation, social and racial conflicts, lack of social infrastructure.

British schools feature overcrowded rooms, municipal housing becomes almost unaffordable to locals, and public health centers show massive lines. One of my acquaintances, 80-year-old Englishman, once noted that he quitted visiting a local health center. "Whenever I come, I see fifteen immigrants in the queue, and a half of them are pregnant Polish girls..."





## HISTORY

# COLD WAR SPORTS: HOW MOSCOW AND THE WEST PLAYED FOR SUPREMACY

KATERYNA KHINKULOVA



*The Americans received a gold medal after beating Finland*

During the Cold War, Sport was one of many spheres the USSR and the West competed in bitterly. Purportedly amateur, sport meant a lot to the Soviet authorities as did awards and gold medals. Athletes often spent most of their time training in world class facilities even though they were meant to be factory workers or army officers.

The largest sports event ever to be hosted by the Soviet Union was the Summer 1980 Moscow Olympics. It became a landmark in modern history as a total of 65 countries boycotted the event over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. But before July 1980 came the February

Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York, and an ice-hockey match which later became known as the "Miracle on Ice".

## *Miracle on Ice*

Contrary to popular belief, the legendary match between the national teams of the USSR and the USA was a so-called medal-round, not a final. Both teams went on to play other countries in order to secure their medals: the USA played Finland and the USSR – Sweden. But it was the Americans' victory (4–3) on February 22 which came as a real shock

and the aggregate score which made the US into winners. A bunch of college-team kids representing USA managed to beat the country which took six gold medals in the last seven Olympic Games and were world champions in 1978 and 1979. The first-line Soviet players were true legends of ice-hockey: Tretiak, Kharlamov, Petrov and Mikhailov. The coach of the team, Viktor Tikhonov, blamed these players for the poor result.

The Americans received a gold medal after beating Finland, whereas the Soviet team was supposed to collect silver medals after beating Sweden. However, the players refused to have their names

engraved on the medals – a highly unusual move which showed how much of a humiliation second place was. Sports commentators at the time were stunned by the Americans' victory.

The match, which became a turning point for the previously unbeaten team, also happened in the midst of the US decision making-process whether to boycott the coming summer Olympics. President Carter gave the USSR an ultimatum in January, demanding they withdraw troops from Afghanistan within one month or face consequences including international isolation. Moscow did nothing so the US pressed ahead with the boycott.

Soviet sports commentators called the "Miracle on Ice" an accident, yet it left a lasting mark on the national team's morale. Most of the American players went on to become professional hockey players within the NHL.

## *Summer 1980 Moscow Olympics: Cold War in sports at its worst*

When the USA finalised their decision not to take part in the Moscow Olympics, they put pressure on their allies to follow suit. With 80 countries participating the Moscow was a far more sparsely attended event than its organisers had hoped – in fact it was the smallest Olympics since 1956. Some Western countries like Britain, France or Italy did not boycott the games, but sent reduced numbers of athletes.

The Olympic Games had been awarded to Moscow as a sign of reconciliation in 1974. The relations between East and West and especially between the two superpowers were not perfect but in the early 70s they had entered a stage of what was later described as "peaceful co-existence". Two SALT (Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty) agreements were signed – in 1972 and 1979, the latter less than six months before the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The treaties aimed at freezing and then reducing the number of ballistic missiles the USSR and the USA held.

Because of Afghanistan, instead of helping to stabilise peace the Moscow Olympics turned into another ground for the two superpowers to fight their battles. Some of US allies disagreed as to how effective the boycott was and argued that it was emotional and strategically pointless. It did however, contribute to the already strong sense of mistrust and brought on the next boycott – of the Summer 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

## *Tit for tat, Olympics for Friendship: boycott of 1984*

In May 1984 a couple of months before the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles were due to open the Soviet Union issued a statement expressing an intention to boycott the games. The reasons cited were "anti-soviet hysteria and chauvinistic sentiments". Then Soviet chairman Konstantin Chernenko also said that there were reasons to believe that the Soviet athletes would not have adequate security while in the US. 13 other countries joined forces with Moscow and did not send their teams. Somewhat strangely Iran and Albania boycotted both 1980 and 1984 games. Romania was the only country with ideological links to the USSR to send its athletes to Los Angeles.

The Soviet Union quickly organised its own event, much like it created alternatives to many Western institutions and cultural phenomena. The event was to be called The Friendship Games and it was carried out from July to

September 1984 in several countries of the Communist bloc.

The Soviet authorities would not admit that the Friendship Games were meant to constitute an alternative to the Los Angeles Olympics. Instead, they claimed the competition was about the promotion of peace and friendship between nations. Most of the participating countries boycotted the US Olympics but some western states, such as Italy and West Germany took part in both. Soviet authorities boasted that there were plenty of world records established there.

In reality, 1980 and 1984 Olympics and the Friendship Games showed how sport could be used not to strengthen ties between nations but to create divisions and more reasons for confrontation. The 1988 Olympics were to be held in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, a perennial enemy of the USSR's friend North Korea. Another boycott was in site.



*Summer 1980 Moscow Olympics*



HISTORY

# SPORTS ENJOYED BY ROMANOVS

GEORGY MANAEV

The Russian tsars were connoisseurs of sports and enjoyed a wide array of activities from playing chess with their children or billiards with foreign officers, to riding bicycles in the halls of the Winter Palace and spending days on tennis courts.

What can one say about a country whose leader holds a title of Master of Sports in judo? President Vladimir Putin's public image is one of a stark, competitive individual, and his sport of choice complements his political and media image. For Russian tsars public image was not very important, because they were not often seen by their subjects. Nevertheless, some of the tsars had passion for sheer competition, fitness and fun.

Before Peter the Great, sporty stature wasn't considered a virtue in Russia. In the 17th century, every nobleman, including the tsar, had to be a little overweight to show his material abundance and wealth. Probably the only contemporary sport game that medieval Russian sovereigns played was chess, the favourite game of the first Russian tsar, Ivan the Terrible.

An English diplomat Jerome Horsely witnessed Ivan's last chess game. In the evening of the last day of his life, Ivan sat in his bed for a game of chess with one of his boyars. Before the game started, the tsar himself managed to set up all his pieces on board, except for the king, which Ivan couldn't place firmly, so he had to use

his servants' help. Minutes after that, Ivan fainted and died, still playing the game of chess.

Chess was also a popular game among the first Romanovs. Tsar Alexis, the father of Peter the Great, ordered numerous beautifully crafted chess boards from abroad, so his son learned the game in his youth. It was



*Ivan's last chess game*

Peter who really introduced sport as a means of entertainment and exercise into Russian royal family.

## **Peter the Great, Russia's first cueist**

Peter was familiar with the European way of life since his youth when he frequented the German area in Moscow. In German taverns Peter learned to play the game of druck-tafel, a hybrid of pool and bowling. Later, when Peter was in the Netherlands, he got a billiards table as a gift from the Dutch king. Peter installed the table in his waiting room to keep his guests busy, and, following the tsar's example,

many noblemen also started playing billiards. In 1718, a tsar's decree established billiards as a compulsory game for the nobility's evening parties, while playing cards was banned.

Peter's daughter Elizabeth, who ruled Russia for 20 years, was very concerned about her physical beauty, so to stay fresh and young, she practiced rowing and horseback riding, which helped her to keep a straight bearing and graceful pace. The next empress, Catherine the Great, also engaged in horseback riding to some extent, but it was her grandson, Nicholas I, who grew up to become a real athlete.

## **The cycling tsars**

Emperor Nicholas I, who was 6'2 feet tall and exceptionally strong, used to take part in chivalrous competitions modelled after medieval knight tournaments. During them, Nicholas wore armour so heavy that at one time, his nose started bleeding because of high blood pressure and overall tension. Nicholas understood the assets of sport for the young, so he organized gymnastic grounds for his children on the seashore in his estate in Peterhof.



*Nicholas II was perhaps the most avid sportsman of all Russian tsars*

Nicholas's elder son, Alexander II, was the first of Russian royal to take up cycling. He got his first bicycle in 1867 in Paris. For a 50-year-old tsar, this was a mere toy, but his sons, teenage princes Sergey and Pavel, really developed a passion for cycling. They rode their bikes in winter in the halls of the Winter Palace. Their bikes had solid rubber tires and produced an enormous racket, but nobody could reproach the princes for having their fun. By the end of the century, almost every member of the royal family owned a bicycle, and long fitness rides became a usual royal pastime.

Emperor Alexander III owned a bike, too, but because of his giant stature and bulkiness, he preferred a more meditative and static kind of sport –

fishing. One time, when the emperor was fishing in his country estate, foreign minister Girs approached him for a meeting concerning European affairs. Alexander dismissed him, saying, "Europe can wait while the Russian tsar fishes!"

The last emperor of Russia, Nicholas II, was perhaps the most avid sportsman of all Russian tsars. He took up cycling at an early age, and, as we can see from his bills, regularly repaired and maintained his bikes. But Nicholas's great passion was lawn tennis. He first got real sight of the game during his visits to England in 1890s, and soon began playing almost every day. 5 tennis courts were set up in different royal estates, and the tsar's favorite game soon became widely popular among

the nobility. One of tsars' prime tennis partners was Felix Yusupov, later known as one of Rasputin's assassins. Yusupov was trained in tennis on the lawns of Oxford, and his elder brother was one of Russia's top players, so he could play better than Nicholas. But Felix cleverly lost a few games, which pleased the emperor and earned Yusupov a marriage to Nicholas's niece.

During the last years of the Russian Empire, Nicholas continued playing tennis and cycling – maybe it helped him put up with the enormous pressure of those times. His last bill to a bicycle repair man was written on May 10, 1917; and his last tennis games date back to the same month – even after the resignation, no longer an emperor, Nicholas stayed a keen sportsman.



## SPORT

RUGBY  
IN RUSSIA

The 2019 Rugby World Cup will be the ninth Rugby World Cup, and is to be held in Japan from 20 September to 2 November. This will be the first time the tournament is to be held in Asia, and outside the traditional heartland of rugby union.

Hong Kong and Singapore had expressed interest in hosting some of the matches and were included as part of the JRFU's successful original hosting bid to World Rugby (known at the time of bidding as the International Rugby Board, or IRB) but were not amongst the fourteen locations announced by organisers Japan 2019 on 5 November 2014 that had formally bid for the right to host games. [1]

The opening match of the 2019 Rugby World Cup will take place at the Ajinomoto Stadium in Chōfu, Tokyo, where Russia will meet Japan.

To welcome the Russian national team to the Ajinomoto Stadium, we give a breakdown of the history of rugby in Russia.

It is unclear when rugby first made its way to the Russian Empire. Games are known to have been played in Moscow well before the Russian Revolution, and around a decade before football first made an appearance. Rugby matches were played sporadically in the early 1880s, making it the first form of football to be played in the country. The sport's popularity was short-lived, however, with Tsarist police in 1886 banning the sport on the grounds that it was brutal in nature and likely to incite demonstrations and riots.

Records documenting the game in Russia following the crackdown are scarce, but there appear to have been occasional matches set up by visiting sailors while their ships were in dock

at numerous ports. Certainly at least one game appears to have been played in Odessa in 1908 between locals and the company of a British trading ship.

However, it wasn't until 1923 that the first officially registered game in Russia took place. The teams that day were the Moscow River Yacht Club and the Society for the Physical Education of Workers. That game was organized by a Comrade Kozlov, who was later to become the first coach of the Soviet national football team and both codes had a strong relationship throughout the 1920s and 30s.

Rugby slowly began to establish itself in the Soviet Union, principally in Moscow, although other cities such as Minsk in present-day Belarus also had teams. An exhibition match in the capital in 1934 led to the creation of the Moscow championship, and two years later in 1936, the same year that Russian-born Prince Alexander Obolensky famously scored two tries against in England's first-ever win over the All Blacks, Soviet rugby had one of its most important years.

Firstly, it saw the formation of the Rugby Union of the Soviet Union – which would be marking its 75th anniversary this year, and secondly, the first USSR championship for rugby was held. It was created alongside a national football championship and one original side from both tournaments – Spartak Moscow – still fields teams in the top division of both sports. The game continued to develop, with notable key Bolsheviks pushing the sport's merits in encouraging courage and other attributes desirable in Soviet Man.

The Second World War and the disastrous effects it had on Russia's population meant rugby in the 1940s

existed as occasional one off games in geographically disparate parts of the country. What little rugby structure was left in place suffered further hardship in 1949, when Soviet authorities announced rugby was “a game not relevant to the principles of the Soviet people” as part of the USSR's

“struggle against cosmopolitanism,” effectively banning it.

Rugby revived in the USSR only after Stalin's death with the staging of the World Youth Games in Moscow in 1957. The first documented games in the country in years saw Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium packed to capacity,

but the tournament final between Wales' Llanelli and Romanian side Grivita Rosa was marred by violence on and off the pitch, threatening to send rugby immediately back into exile. However, enthusiasts continued efforts to grow the game across the USSR until the 1960s saw its



Russian-born Prince Alexander Obolensky





genuine reappearance on the Soviet sporting landscape.

Vast expansion of Soviet industrial manufacturing saw funding for sports rise dramatically, and many factories or combines had sports outfits for their workers, including rugby sides. The

same was happening at universities and seats of vocational education and 1966 saw an All-Union rugby championship held for the first time in decades. It was not held in 1967, but that year did herald the re-birth of the country's governing body for the sport of rugby union, the

Rugby Federation of the Soviet Union (RFSU). It ran the All-Union championship again in 1968 and the tournament was held every year thereafter until the break-up of the Soviet Union.

It was at this time that rugby first began to establish itself in Siberia, with coal-mining town Novokuznetsk founding a team in 1967. A number of teams also emerged in Krasnoyarsk, the city on the banks of the Yenisei which has gone on to become one of the present-day heartlands of Russian rugby.

By the early 1970s, the USSR had over 10,000

registered players and its national championship had expanded to 20 teams. Top clubs such as Slava Moscow began to establish ties with clubs abroad in traditional working class areas such as South Wales, where they toured in 1973. The next year, almost



40 years since the formation of its first rugby union, the USSR played its first international test match, losing 26:6 to Romania. The RFSU was admitted to the International Amateur Rugby Federation (FIRA) in 1975 and began playing in its European Championships the following year.

apartheid meant South Africa's membership of the game's governing body saw the invitation declined.

In 1991, the USSR finally earned test matches against the world's top unions, including providing opposition for Will Carling's England in their Rugby World Cup warm-up at Twickenham,



A series of internationals against other Eastern Bloc countries took place through the second half of the decade, and by the 1980s the USSR was scoring regular wins over Italy and Romania, threatening to become a powerful player on the international scene. By the end of the 1980s only France were keeping the Soviets from the top spot in the First Division, and Russian player Dmitry Mironov was noticed enough to play several games for the Barbarians. Delegates from the RFSU were in attendance at the centenary IRB congress in 1986, and the USSR received an invitation to take place in the inaugural Rugby World Cup in New Zealand in 1987. However, the USSR's staunch opposition to

a match the Soviets lost 53:0 in one of their last tests before the break-up of the USSR. Following that collapse, Russian players played for the interim Commonwealth of Independent States team before the Rugby Union of Russia (RUR) was formed in 1992.

The first game played by the new Russian national team took place on June 6, 1992, when Russia beat the Barbarians 27–23. Russia's first game against a full IRB member was versus Belgium four months later in the 1992/4 FIRA-AER European Trophy. That edition of the tournament, the first time Russia participated in Rugby World Cup qualifying, saw the national side secure its first, and to-date only, win over rivals Georgia.

Since the realignment of FIRA-AER competitions in 2000, the national team has played its regular competitive rugby in FIRA-AER's European Nations Cup (ENC), often referred to as the Six Nations B. At the turn of the century, Russia continued its attempts to qualify for the Rugby World Cup and in 2002 hosted Brian O'Driscoll's Ireland in Krasnoyarsk, losing 3:35 but for the first time alerting the rugby world that something was stirring in the East.

Shortly after, in 2004, the Rugby Union of Russia underwent mass re-organisation, including relocating 4,500 kilometres from Krasnoyarsk to Moscow. Structures began to be put into place with the aim of bringing the Union to the top of European rugby. One of the first steps was the creation of a professional domestic league, which has operated since 2005 and has continued to grow attendances and quality. A near miss in qualifying for the 2007 World Cup spurred Russia on to

greater success, and successive second places in the ENC saw the Bears finally qualifying for their first World Cup in 2010. Russia will play in Group C in New Zealand in 2011, where they will face the United States, Italy, Ireland, and Australia.

Rugby World Cup qualification was the first step on what is a decade full of potential for Russian rugby. Both the national team and domestic club sides are seeking increased integration into international competition and the decision to include Rugby Sevens into the Olympics means that significant funds have been unlocked to grow the sport across the country.

It is hard to argue that Russian rugby boasts a very bright future.



# WHAT DO OLYMPIC ATHLETES EAT?

5 Team GB stars reveal their diet secrets...and guilty pleasures

We've quizzed boxer Nicola Adams, gymnast Dan Purvis, diver Jack Laugher, taekwondo ace Jade Jones and BMX cyclist Liam Phillips to find out what they eat to keep themselves in tip top condition.

**Daniel Purvis, gymnast**

## Breakfast

On a typical training day I would normally get up for breakfast and have two poached eggs on wholemeal toast. You can't go and have a three-hour training session without anything and this gives me what I need.

## Main meals

I do my training before coming in for lunch, which is normally chicken, pasta, a bit of salad and a protein shake.

I am very motivated about my protein shakes – especially when I am training so hard because I know how much they refuel your body.

Then I'll train again, have a little rest and then come back and have a little lighter meal, so normally another piece of meat – maybe beef, chicken again, gammon – with potato. Maybe I'll also have a bit of wholemeal bread again just to fill myself up.



For snacks I love my cereal bars. They are tasty, high protein, and give me some energy as well.

The meals that I will rely on in the run-up to Rio are the ones that I have taken before. Everything is high protein, high carb and energy sufficient. I'll also be having lots of fresh fruit and vegetables to really feel healthy.

## Guilty pleasures

I have microwave meals! Yes, I know how to do that perfectly [laughs]. It is probably not the best for you to be honest but if I am cooking for my friends, they don't mind too much.

**Nicola Adams, boxer**

## Breakfast

So breakfast on a morning for me would be cereal. I can't start my day without it.

## Main meals

Lunch would normally be chicken with carbs like rice and vegetables. In the evening I would probably just have soup and a piece of bread roll to dip it in.

I enjoy all kinds of soups really – tomato soup, chicken, chicken and vegetable to name a few.

My favourite thing to cook is chicken fajitas. My favourite world cuisine



would be Mexican. I absolutely love nachos chili beef.

## Guilty pleasures

Every now and again I will have an ice cream or a cream cake after a really hard session.

My go-to comfort food would be ice cream, I absolutely love it. Either strawberry and cream or just plain vanilla.

**Jack Laugher, diver**

## Breakfast

On a typical training day I'll have scrambled eggs on two pieces of toast, with a big, big cup of tea – like a pint cup of tea! And a glass of apple juice as well.

## Main meals

Lunch is normally pasta or rice based with some form of meat – just a simple dish basically.

And then in the evening I'll often be cooking Mexican food, lasagnas, roast dinners and stuff like that. Anything that is basically just huge that I can have a lot of.

## Guilty pleasures

I love chicken wings – they are my favourite thing in the world. I also like chicken madras with rice and garlic naans – that's my normal order.



**Jade Jones, taekwondo**

## Breakfast

I like to have six different fruits with yogurt for breakfast all mixed up, so that is giving me all of my five a day already and I've only had breakfast.

## Main meals

On a training day I try to eat lots of carbs to keep me going throughout the sessions. I'll have protein after each one to make sure I am repairing the muscles and recovering myself for the next session and then just loads of fruit and veg.

Fruit and veg is really important to get all the nutrients that you need, especially for me in a weight category like sport.

Fruit is the thing that keeps my weight low, so I can eat as much fruit and veg as I want and my weight doesn't really go up. It is a great help.

My advice for athletes would be to make sure you are getting enough protein through eggs and milk and things like that, and then also if you are training quite hard, you'll need carbohydrates so make sure you are having pasta and rice.

## Guilty pleasures

I love to go out and have a drink with my friends and then the next day just be in my pyjamas and have a movie night and get some popcorn and ice cream and just chill out.

**Liam Phillips, BMX**

## Main meals

If I've been training in the afternoon from two until five, I don't get home until six so don't want to be stood up cooking for a couple of hours. I just want



something quick, easy and tasty so I often use recipes that I think up within half an hour. Something like a simple prawn pasta with lemon and garlic and chilli.

I really like anything fresh. I am a firm believer that if you've got good produce that's fresh, then your food's going to taste great anyway.

The key ingredient of my diet is eggs, just because again it's so easy to have. I go through a ridiculous amount of eggs in a week because it's a great source of protein and it's so easy. It's almost as if I want a snack between efforts or sessions I just have a boiled egg.

When we go away to a race now we take a rice cooker with us to cook rice and quinoa. Then we have chicken and things that we can eat at the track that we actually have control of so that we are making sure that our body is fuelled efficiently.

I do a lot of snacking but obviously again it all comes back to the protein, making sure that the protein content in that snack, like Greek yogurt, is good food that I really enjoy to eat.

## Guilty pleasures

Cake and a coffee goes down well. I try my best at making a good coffee.

## SMOKY HAKE, BEANS & GREENS

By Jane Hornby

Grill white fish fillets and serve on top of chorizo, cannellini beans and spinach for a quick dinner that packs in 3 of your 5 a day

## Ingredients

mild olive oil  
½ x 200g pack raw cooking chorizo (we used Unearthed Alfresco Smoked)  
1 onion, finely chopped  
260g bag spinach  
2 x 140g skinless hake fillets  
½ tsp sweet smoked paprika  
1 red chilli, deseeded and shredded  
400g can cannellini beans, drained  
juice ½ lemon  
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil



## Method

Boil a full kettle of water and heat the grill to high. Heat 1 tsp oil in a large frying pan. Squeeze the meat from the chorizo directly into the pan. Add the onion and fry for 5 mins, crushing the meat with a spatula until broken up, golden and surrounded by its juices. The onion will also be soft and golden.

Meanwhile, put the spinach in a colander, slowly pour over the boiled water to wilt it, then run under the cold tap. Squeeze out the excess water using your hands, then set aside. Line a baking tray with foil, rub with a little oil and place the fish on top. Season, sprinkle over the smoked paprika and drizzle with a little more oil.

Tip the chilli into the pan with the sausages, fry for 1 min more, then add the beans, spinach, lemon juice and extra virgin olive oil. Let it warm through gently, then season to taste.

Grill the fish for 5 mins or until flaky but not dry – you won't need to turn it. Spoon the bean mixture onto plates, then carefully top with the fish and any juices from the tray. Serve with a dollop of Quick garlic mayonnaise (see recipe, right), if you like.

Recipe from Good Food magazine



BOOKS

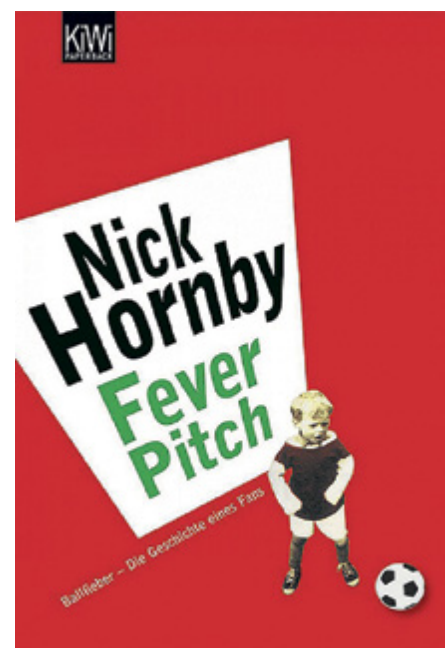
# THE TOP 10 SPORTS BOOKS

JOHN GAUSTAD

Sometimes it seems that I have measured out my life in sports books. I've probably read more than 50 sports books every year for the last 30 years; and I'm comforted by just how much better sports books have become since we set up the award. There's no doubt that publishers have become much more adventurous and imaginative, and the general quality has improved dramatically.

## 1 Fever Pitch: A Fan's Life by Nick Hornby

A blindingly obvious choice perhaps, but it was a hugely significant, ground-breaking book, and it's also sublimely written, telling more about what sport means to fans than almost any other. We now see it as an established classic, but at the time it was a brave piece of publishing. I remember the publishers consulting me about it – they were not at all convinced there



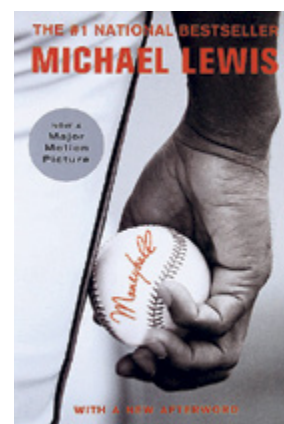
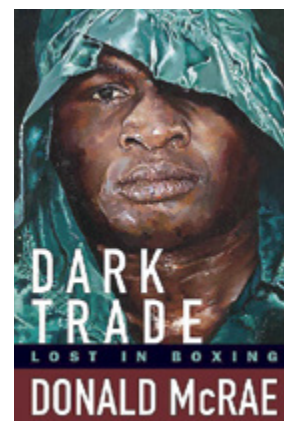
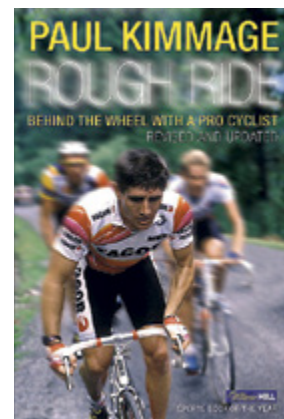
was really a market for an “intelligent” football book. I assured them there was, and once I'd read the manuscript, and been utterly bowled over, urged them to get it out as soon as they could.

## 2 A Rough Ride: An Insight into Pro Cycling by Paul Kimmage

This was a revelation. For the first time a young ex-cyclist spilt the beans about what went on behind the scenes in the world of professional cycling, detailing the dilemma he faced – to dope or not to dope. There have of course been many books since about performance-enhancing drug use in cycling, but this one still stands out for its urgency and raw honesty.

## 3 Dark Trade: Lost in Boxing by Don McRae

For five years McRae lost himself in the bleak and shadowy world of boxing, spending time with a host of fighters, trainers and managers. His book is a vivid and illuminating account of this personal journey, ultimately a quest to understand why men might choose this brutal path. What I most admired



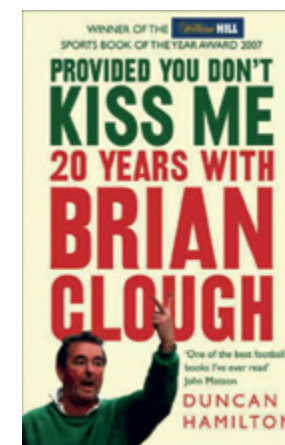
about it was not only his steadfast determination to get to the bottom of it, and record what he discovered, but also the qualities he himself brought to the task: his wit, compassion, lucidity and eloquence.

## 4 Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game by Michael Lewis

I couldn't convince my colleagues on the panel of the merits of this one. “It's about baseball!” they exclaimed. Indeed it is, and you do need to know the game pretty well to really appreciate it. But I do know (and love) baseball, and I found it absolutely fascinating. It tells the story of how the Oakland Athletics, the paupers of the major leagues, adopted a new strategy on player recruitment based on a new way of analysing baseball statistics, which led them to pick up players none of the other franchises, using traditional evaluation methods, rated or wanted. The glory is that it worked; the Oakland As became a powerhouse, at least until all the other teams began to copy what they'd done. I loved the audacity of it all, and the wonderful intricacy of this account of it.

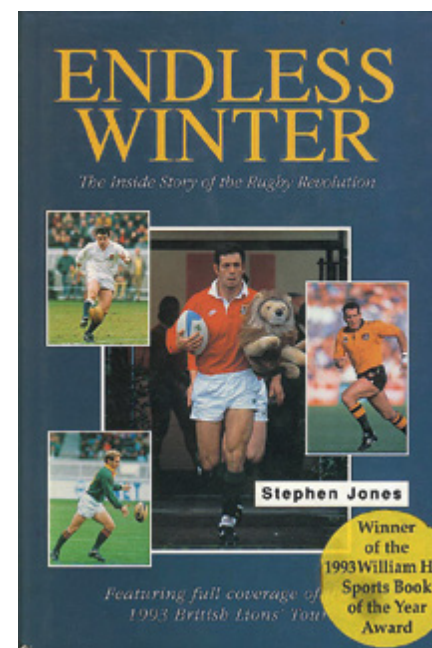
## 5 Provided You Don't Kiss Me: 20 Years with Brian Clough by Duncan Hamilton

This is not just a strikingly intimate and vivid portrait of an unforgettable character but also, between the lines, the story of a young man learning to be a sports journalist. From his first day on the job as a green 16-year-old, politely declining Clough's offer of a morning whisky, Hamilton recounts their interplay with vigour and panache. I simply loved it.



## 6 Endless Winter: The Inside Story of the Rugby Revolution by Stephen Jones

Since I'm a New Zealander, rugby has always had a special place in my heart. In the early 90s, rugby was changing, rapidly and dramatically. In the course of reporting what happened



love of rugby wouldn't waver. It's rare indeed to find a rugby book written with such crisp intelligence and such a delicate touch.

## 7 Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team, and a Dream by HG Bissinger

They do love their football in Texas; this offers an engrossing portrait of high school football in smalltown west Texas. The hard-luck town of Odessa follows its Permian High School Panthers with a passionate and single-minded devotion; Bissinger's chronicle of their 1988 season reveals how the enormous emotional investment in the team shapes the community and inspires, or shatters, the teenagers who play for them. It's a sensitive account, both frank and compassionate, yet the picture it paints is ultimately almost horrifying; one of fandom gone wrong.

## 8 Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times by Thomas Hauser

How do you write a biography of the most recognised man on the planet? Hauser's answer was to weave together the testimonies of the more than 200 people he'd interviewed in depth, whose lives had been touched

in international rugby between August 1992 and July 1993, Jones offered a wise and perceptive analysis of the hows and the whys, a clear-eyed and sure-footed appraisal of what the rush towards professionalism might mean for the game. While he didn't hide his anxieties about what might be lost, it was clear his love of rugby wouldn't waver. It's rare indeed to find a rugby book written with such crisp intelligence and such a delicate touch.



## 9 My Father and Other Working-Class Football Heroes by Gary Imlach

Fathers, sons and football – it's been done before, but rarely as well as this. After his father died, Imlach realised to his dismay that while he'd seen the mementos – the shirts, medals, programmes, photos – he'd never talked to his father about his memories, about what it was like to play in the days of the maximum wage. His book is a record of his quest to find out, retracing the steps his father had taken, and offers a thoughtful and heartfelt blend of the personal and the historical. I found it captivating.



## 10 Road Swing by Steve Rushin

I finish with a very personal choice, included because I like the author so much. Steve had written a wonderful piece in Sports Illustrated about my bookshop, Sportspages, and after that we all got to know him. Whenever he was in London we'd all go out for a few beers and lots of talk, and I was always charmed by his acerbic wit and penetrating verbal thrusts. His book is very much him – a quirky, very wry account of his journey, as a fan, in search of the soul, the essence, of sport; what could be better than that?





# THE EIGHT BEST SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR DAD-CHILD BONDING

*Spending time with your children is the perfect excuse to get healthy*

At weekends and evenings, it's easy to end up playing computer games with your child or being an armchair expert on TV sports, but the stand-out memories for when your kids are looking back on their childhood will be the times you got off the sofa to play some sport with them in real life.

Doing something active together with your children works for all of you on so many levels: the adrenaline-pumping joy of racing each other on bikes; one-on-one time to chat, laugh, tease each other and catch up in a relaxed way while you're playing; the opportunity to teach the important stuff like being a good and bad loser, supporting each other, not giving up and the pride of doing something to the best of your ability and succeeding.

Here are some suggestions for sports to play with your children.

## 1 Ball games

From crawling age, your child should have a ball to pursue. By the time they're toddle-running, you can be teaching them how to throw, kick and catch. You're the role model, and unless you want your child to be uncomfortable when teams are picked at school,



it is up to you to show them how to be relaxed – and hopefully skilled – playing ball sports and enjoying hours of fun together. As they get older – and always taking your cue from their enthusiasm – you can sign them up for weekend football or rugby classes and even volunteer to be a coach. The same is true for any sport: inspire some early interest, take a supporting role in a club or continue learning alongside him or her and share the memories together.

## 2 Cycling

That moment when your child pedals off solo on their first bike may be the stuff of



'proud dad moment' in ads but for true father-child bonding, nothing beats a long (and preferably muddy) bike ride. Cycling on roads can be nerve-wracking with and for children, but cycling trails away from traffic can be a chance to really relax and enjoy family time.

## 3 Tennis

Kids' tennis racquets are so light nowadays that from the age of three or four, you can be throwing balls to your child and teaching them to 'back and smack'. Like any sport, be prepared to put the time in if you are looking for a future tennis partner.

## 4 Wrestling

Rough housing, rough and tumble, play fighting, rowdy games, whatever you call it, it's great fun for you and your kids.

"In rough housing, fathers and children get the endorphin rush of athletics as well as the oxytocin rush of a good hug (oxytocin is often called the 'cuddle chemical')," explains Anthony T. DeBenedet, author of *The Art of Roughhousing: Good Old-Fashioned Horseplay and Why Every Kid Needs It*.

Children who enjoy rough and tumble with their dads learn the difference between boisterous fun and angry aggression, have a closer, trusting relationship and have been shown to be more sociable and independent, not timid and fearful. Add in a swimming pool and the fun ratchets up even more.

## 5 Climbing

Climbing is a great way to build strength and fitness, as well as confidence and trust. Many indoor climbing walls will offer family taster sessions where you can all have a go at scaling some beginner routes.



## 6 Orienteering

Get outdoors, have some hearty exercise and learn new skills together. Win-win-win! You can choose your pace with orienteering – a race to the finishing line or a brisk walk navigating the course using a map and compass (a useful skill for everyone, even with mobile phones!).

Orienteering can take place anywhere from woods to parks, courses are colour-coded according to length and technical difficulty so you can choose one best suited to your child's age.

## 7 Running

Parkrun are free Saturday morning run events taking place across the world. Kids can take part in either the junior 2km specifically for 4–14 year olds, or in the regular 5km runs with an adult. You can enter just for fun but you also have the option of

recording your times to create some healthy family competition and a regular date in your diary.

## 8 Canoeing

Messing about on boats is a wonderful way to create child-dad bonding memories. Go Canoeing starter sessions give you a chance to dip your toes in the water and there are also



guided tours so you can enjoy an adventure without stressing about being solely responsible for your child in an unknown waterway.



KIDS

# THE NEW FAMILY-FRIENDLY MEMBERS' CLUB YOUR KIDS WILL LOVE, TOO

SOFIA KOVAL

Located in London's bohemian heart of Notting Hill, Cloud Twelve is a one-of-a kind family-friendly lifestyle and wellness club created by the former fund manager-turned-herbalist and naturopath, **Jenya Di Pierro**.

Extending over three floors, on arrival little ones will be delighted to discover a magical forest-themed Family Space rich in interactive play zones and sensory elements. Designed for parents and children to play and learn together, fairytale balls, wellness parties and baby raves are part of the experience, as well as a diverse schedule of interactive "edu-tainment" classes from ballet to mindfulness, lead by qualified child development experts.

Alternatively, parents can relax in the elegant parents' lounge or enjoy the three floors of the club while Ofsted-registered assistants take care of the children – there is even an additional crèche service to cater to the youngest members.

Upstairs, adults will find their haven away from the city within the spa. Complete with a thermal suite with a steam, sauna and Himalayan salt room, treatments bring together the best of Western and Asian philosophies, including Ayurvedic-inspired rituals, high-tech anti-aging facials, and bespoke packages tailored to specific skincare and wellness concerns such as detoxification and sleep.

For the ultimate 'lying on the beach' sensation, facials and massages can be performed on custom-made Dolomites Quartz beds. Filled with warm crystals that mold around the body, this unique experience provides a deeper state of relaxation, reducing inflammation and promoting healing.



The pampering continues at the luxurious nine-seat salon equipped with a barber chair, with world-class blow-dries, haircuts and colour treatments using plant-based, eco-sustainable brands American English and Aveda. Members and guests can enjoy the perfect finishing touches with deluxe manicures and pedicures using vegan, natural nail brand, Nailberry.

At the beautifully designed brasserie, alongside fresh, organic, plant-based dishes curated by The Alternative Kitchen, you'll find plenty of organic wines and champagnes as well as medicinal teas, tonics and smoothies. Wellness events from natural beauty master classes to yoga and interactive cooking classes also run throughout the year.

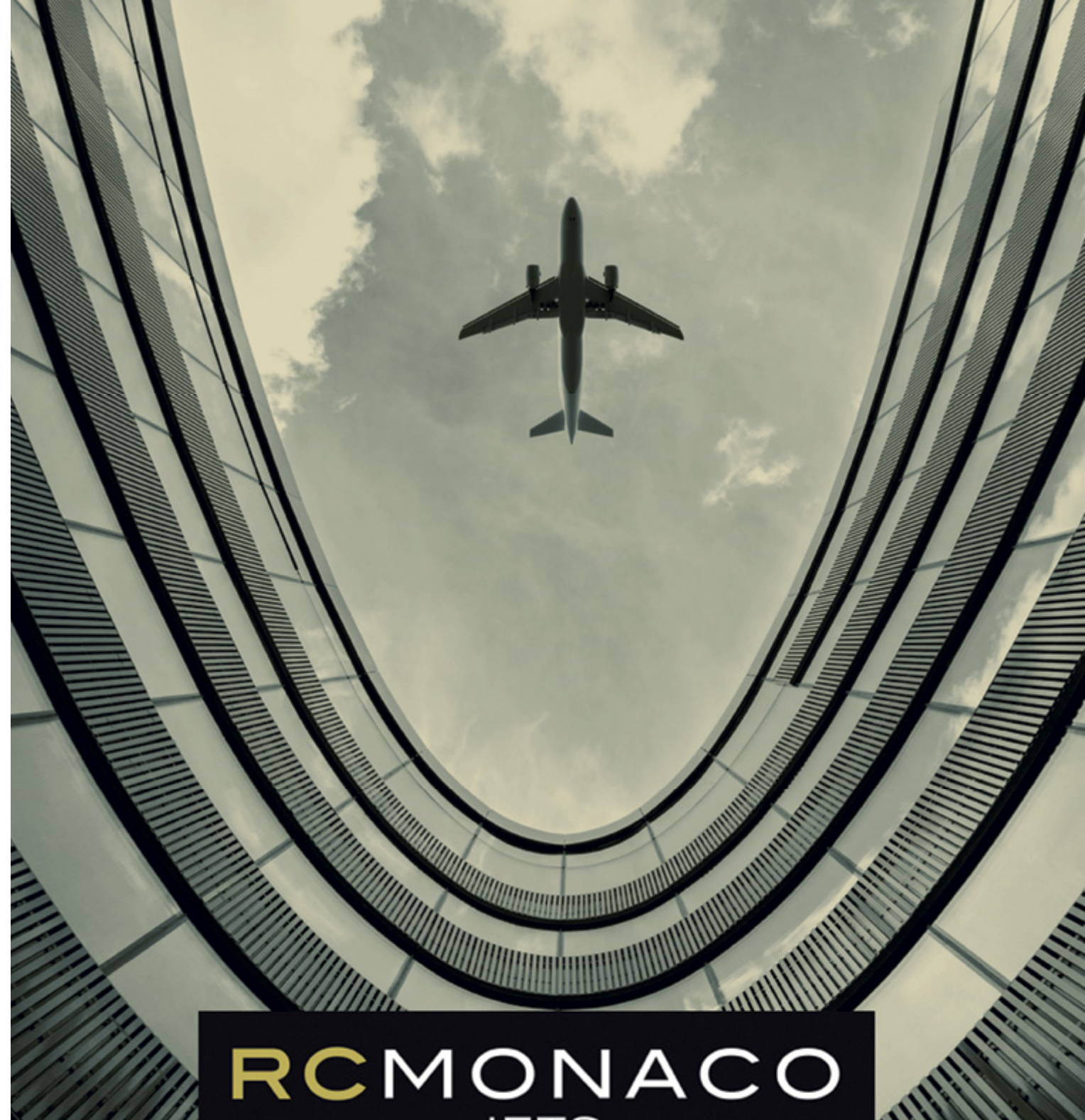
The third and final floor is a wellbeing paradise with experts from therapists to herbalists all under one roof. Founder, Jenya, offers herbal medicine consultations for adults and children, which

sits alongside naturopathic nutrition, acupuncture, colonic hydrotherapy, IV infusions and osteopathy to holistically optimise health and well-being. Family members can additionally book appointments with the Cloud Twelve team of sleep, lactation, holistic education, speech therapy, family support, childbirth education and child development consultants, which are available on request.

While the family space is a member's only area tailored to families with young children, the state-of-the-art wellness facilities, spa, salon and brasserie cater to adults and are open for non-members to enjoy.

Cloud Twelve,  
[cloudtwelve.co.uk](http://cloudtwelve.co.uk)  
Family Space  
Membership starts  
from £2,000 per year.

Spa, Salon, Brasserie and Wellness Clinic are  
open to non-members.



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TRAVEL

# 15 BEST PLACES TO VISIT IN JAPAN

Japan is revered as being a destination that makes every type of traveller feel right at home. From big cities to quaint temples to adventure trails and snow slopes, Japan is a diverse landscape that does an incredible job at blending a modern lifestyle with ancient traditions. A trip here is sure to be one that's exciting, informative, and even inspiring.

Lets explore the best places to visit in Japan:

## 1 Kyoto

A sacred city with iconic temples, shrines, palaces, gardens, and bamboo forests, Kyoto often tops the list of people's favourite Japanese cities for good reason. In Kyoto, traditional culture is rich and vibrant, seen weaved in the citizen's daily life.

Though it would take months to visit every site that Kyoto has to see, you'll

feel at ease in at the temples of Kinkaku-ji, Kiyomizu-dera, Ginkaku-ji and the bamboo forest of Arashiyama.

## 2 Tokyo

Busy, vibrant, and often the first point of contact for travellers, To-



kyo is Japan's lively capital city. A visitor can easily spend a few days dining on fresh seafood, wandering through the many museums, gazing up at the skyscrapers, and enjoying a lifestyle of opulence and culture. To give a sense of how busy this city of 13 million people can be, the intersection at Shibuya Crossing is known as 'The Scramble.'

Customs that are simply Japanese are found all throughout the city. In Harajuku, you can watch Japanese fashionistas use the main street as a runway, shop for the clothes yourself, view anime collections, and enjoy the overdose of colour. For fresh seafood, head to the Tsukiji Market, thousands of tons of seafood are traded daily. The city also hosts tens of shrines, temples, and palaces

perfect for finding peace if the crowds become overwhelming.

## 3 Osaka

Not your average port city, Osaka has a range of fun things to do for vis-



itors. Osaka hosts Universal Studios Japan, the Osaka Aquarium Kaiyukan, and Osaka Castle Park. The heart of the city, Dotonbori, is a place filled with flashy billboards, scrumptious dining options ranging from fine restaurants to foot carts, and shops. Families should check out Kids Plaza, where children can let their imaginations run wild with dress-up areas, hands-on science experiments and plenty of room to run around.

## 4 Hakone

Hakone is a peaceful mountainous village with hot springs with Mt. Fuji as a backdrop. Take a traditional onsen bath in a public bath house or inn for a relaxing experience unique to this part of the country. Travelers will also find peace at the Hakone Shrine at the end of Lake Ashinoko, a stunning crater lake.

The hot springs will come in handy after a long hike through the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, with several well-maintained hiking trails where Hakone is an ideal base. A local favorite is the hike from Owakudani to Lake Ashinoko because of its views of Mt. Fuji



## 5 Kobe

Kobe is located on the harbour with incredible vistas of the nearby mountains with a variety of activities, adventures, shops, and restaurants to explore. For a well-rounded itinerary, include activities like relaxing at the Arima Onsen, a hot spring resort in the middle of Kobe, riding above the city on the Kobe Ropeway, learn about planet at the Earthquake Museum, and enjoying the oasis known as the Sorakuen Garden. Trekkers should walk up Mount Rokko for a panoramic sight of Kobe and neighbouring Osaka.



Foodies, especially those with carnivorous cravings will love the city's gastronomy scene. Kobe beef is king of nearly every menu and you can order warm sake at one of the many breweries in the Nada district.

## 6 Nara

Captivating and peaceful, Nara is a city in Japan with a devoted Buddhist population who find peace inside the Nara's many temples daily. Nara houses artwork and cultural pieces dating all the way back to the 8th century, making it one most culturally signif-



icant cities in the country. Beloved sites include the Todai-ji with its gargantuan Buddha, the Kasuga-taisha, and the Nara Park where you can browse through temples, the museum, and spot wildlife.

If looking for a peaceful, interesting, and not as heavily visited city in Japan with temples galore, then Nara is the perfect spot.



## 7 Sapporo

Sapporo, located in the mountains and renowned for its cold brew, is one of the best places to visit in Japan for



thrill seekers and adventure travellers. Sapporo hosts ice sculpture festivals, ski and snowboard competitions, and is a prime base for athletes wanting to hit the slopes themselves.

Find out more in-depth about the city's famous beer at the Sapporo Beer Museum, where you can learn all about this history of the beer and taste some yourself amidst a beautiful beer garden.

## 8 Kamakura

Escape the chaos of big-city life in Kamakura, a peaceful city with dozens of Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, and a gargantuan Buddha statue to greet visitors at the Kotoku-in Temple.



In between temples are lush hiking trails leading through bamboo forests and over calm hills. For a fun break from walking, hop on the Enoden, an electric train that weaves between the stations of Fujisawa and Kamaku-

ra. It's loud, rickety, and slow, but a fun experience nonetheless. Kamakura is also known for its beaches, where surfers can catch a wave at Yuigahama Beach.

## 9 Yokohama

Walking around some streets in Yokohama, you might be mistaken for being in China. This city has a thriving Chinatown and Chinese influence with hundreds of restaurants, shops, and



decorations centring around that central theme.

Home to 3.7 million residents, this big city considers itself Tokyo's largest rival, citing its high standard of living and opulent skyscrapers as back-up for this claim. Travelers can witness this rivalry by attending a BayStars game if they ever play the Giants during your stay.

The Sankeien Garden is a local favourite, where you can wander in peace through beautiful gardens and view buildings from eras gone past.

## 10 Izu Hanto

Fit for tourists, Izu Hanto has a plethora of relaxing and adventurous activities to choose from that are a far cry from big-city sightseeing. The



island has many hot springs, luxury resorts, calm beaches, and a rugged coastline ideal for exploring. The city hosts the vibrant Kawazu Cherry Tree Festival, where tourists can appreciate the country's most iconic blossom with all senses.

## 11 Hiroshima

During World War II, a nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, killing over 100,000 of



its residents and decimating many of the city's buildings. Today, visitors can pay tribute to those who lost their lives at Peace Memorial Park and Museum.

The city has now made a comeback with a climbing tourism industry. Travelers can visit two UNESCO World Heritage sites of the Itsukushima Shrine and the Bomb Dome in Peace Memorial Park, learn traditional craftwork at Fudenosato-kobo, and even explore the lush islands in the Seto Inland Sea. Additionally, shops and restaurants are aplenty.

## 12 Shikoku

The smallest of Japan's main islands, Shikoku is one of the best places to visit in Japan due to its religious importance which is why it's often dubbed as the 'Spiritual Island.' Many devotees embark on the Shikoku pilgrimage, a 1,200 kilometre walk that takes Buddhist pilgrims to 88 temples and many other religious sites. Visitors can embark on the entire walk, or go to just the main sites that catch their interest.



Adventure travellers should take a cycling tour over the Shimanami Kaido Highway bridges, around Omishima Island, and through Imabari, followed up by a relaxing dip in the Dogo hot springs. Those looking for a souvenir will find one at the Towel Museum ICHIIHIRO, where you can find the world's fluffiest towel. Otherwise, consider seeing the sites of the Matasuyama Castle and Uchiko-za Kabuki Theater.



## 13 Nikko

Nikko is a vibrant town located at the entrance of Nikko National Park, home to Toshogu, Japan's most beloved and lavishly decorated shrine. After standing in awe at one of the world's most beautiful constructions, head



further into the national park to explore the waterfalls of Kegon Falls, Ryuzu Falls, and the mountain of Mt. Nan-tai. Outdoor enthusiasts



will also love walking around Lake Chuzenji, a placid lake set on the foothills of the national park.

If you're short on time during your visit to Japan, Nikko makes for a great day-trip from Tokyo.

## 14 Takayama

Takayama is one of the few Japanese cities to cling tight to its architectural roots. The city does a fantastic job preserving its heritage, especially in the Old Town district, where colourful old merchants' houses line the streets. During the

feudal ages, skilled artists and carpenters took pride in their craft which is why so many of the buildings have an ornate flair. For the best experience, visit during the Takayama Festival, a celebration that happens twice a year and celebrates the arrival of Spring and Autumn. The festival features performances, incredible floats, and draws crowds hailing from all over Japan.

You can easily spend a few days passing through temples on the Higashiyama Walk, checking out the museum of Matsuri no Mori, and gaze at the Yatai Kaikan, an exhibition hall filled with festival displays and floats.

## 15 Chichijima

Perhaps one of the most remote places in Southeast Asia, the faraway island of Chichijima is a hidden island with a tropical vibe. Water lovers will delight thanks to its surfing, scuba diving, snorkelling, whale watching, and more. Interestingly, the journey here requires over a twenty hour boat ride, which is what has kept the island so hidden from the main tourist trail and preserves its magic.





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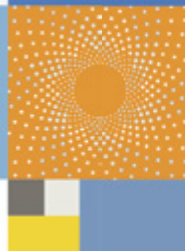


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## LEGAL ADVICE

# WHY NOW MIGHT BE THE BEST TIME TO BRING RELATIVES TO THE UK?

MERIAM ALTAF

The largest group of applicants for family visas in the UK are for 'family of a settled person' visa. It is quite common for people (sponsors), after having settled in the UK (i.e. having obtained Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) or British citizenship), to want to bring their family members to join them. This relates to parents, grandparents, siblings or children 18 years of age or over.

There are two main ways to bring adult relatives into the UK. The first is through the UK Immigration Rules, and the second is through the European Regulation Rules.

The first condition for non-European applicants, applying through the Immigration Rules is that that they, as a result of age, illness or disability, require long-term personal care to perform everyday tasks. Additionally, it must be shown that they are unable even with the practical and financial help of the sponsor, to obtain the required level of care in the country where they are living, because – the care is not available and there is no person in that country who can reasonably provide it; or it is not affordable. Hence, applicants have a very high evidential threshold when applying for this visa, which are extremely hard to meet in practice.

On the other hand, the requirement of dependency under the European Regulations drastically differs to the one under the Immigration Rules. For instance, if the sponsor is a European national, who has a non-European financially dependent parent, he will



mainly need to prove a financial dependency of the parent. Applicants must provide evidence of money transfers from the sponsor to their family member along with bank statements or other evidence of their financial resources. It must be noted that there are other requirements to this route, however, the threshold of meeting the criteria is not as high as when applying under Immigration Rules and is generally much easier to meet in practice.

Applicants could also consider the EU Settlement Scheme, which came into force this year, as they might be eligible to apply for it without the need to go through the European Regulations route. Some of the main requirements of the Settlement Scheme are evidence of the sponsor's residence in the UK and evidence of the

sponsor's relationship to their family members, if the applicant is non-EU national. This is obviously be even more straightforward.

Therefore, as the Brexit's deadline approaches, now might be the final opportunity for those who wish to rely on the European Regulations in the UK to bring their family members to the UK, as the UK Immigration Rules' route is practically extremely difficult to meet.



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