

Don't complain about the water

by BRIAN LOCKHART

The Winter Olympics are underway as the best athletes in the world give their greatest performance in a bid to bring home a medal.

Almost every sport in the Olympics should have a clear winner. It's not like they are tossing hand grenades and hoping to hit a target.

For the most part, the first person to cross the finish line, or posts the fastest time, wins.

The exception is the sports that are judged. 'Judged' being the key word here.

If you remember the Olympics when the Soviet Union was still around, the judged sports were, at best, highly suspicious.

If an Eastern Block figure skater performed and was awarded a 7.5 by five western judges, the judge from East Germany would award a 9.5. It got so ridiculous, you would almost end up dismissing the sport at the international level as a bunch of nonsense on ice.

The Olympics should be about sports and nothing else. There should be no politics involved and no national grandstanding to the absurd level. The Beijing Olympics are under a diplomatic boycott by several countries including Canada. Now that the games are underway, we can see why.

The Chinese have been accused of detaining around 1 million people in detention camps and re-education camps. It is something they deny but there is proof of such camps.

Next, is the typical communist attitude by the Chinese government.

A Chinese Foreign Minister warned the U.S. to stop 'interfering' with the Winter Olympics.

'Pressure will only make the Chinese people more united, and confrontation will not stop China from becoming stronger,' the Minister said.

What he should have said is 'we will put more people in prison if they disagree.'

That became evident when a committee member of the Beijing organizing committee warned 'any behaviour or SPEECH that is against the Olympic spirit, especially against the Chinese laws and regulations, is also subject to certain punishment.'

It's a guess as to what that is supposed to mean. Are they going to arrest any athlete that questions a call from a ref during a hockey game?

Western athletes were told to leave their cell phones and tablets at home and to use untraceable 'burner' phones, because their calls would be intercepted and they would be spied on when in Beijing.

Who would want to risk being arrested for making a call home and complaining about a local Beijing restaurant that was favoured by communist party officials?

The actual sports themselves are also under scrutiny.

There have already been two instances in speed skating where a western skater was disqualified which moved a Chinese skater into

the medal round.

Then there is the instance of a Chinese team figure skater who fell. That in itself is not a big deal. Skaters fall ? it's part of the sport.

Except the skater who fell was born in the U.S. and renounced her U.S. citizenship only so she could compete with the Chinese team under a new name. After the fall, all videos of the incident suddenly disappeared from all social media. The Chinese could not allow anyone to witness a failure.

Compare that to the old Wide World of Sports TV show opening that featured a ski jumper wiping out rather badly, week after week ? the 'agony of defeat' is part of sports.

Take a look at the Chinese hockey teams. Out of 25 members on the men's roster, there's only 10 Chinese players. On the women's team, only 11 of 23 players are Chinese.

One woman on the women's team is from Canada, is white, and has a very Anglo name. She refused to answer a reporter's question about her nationality or how she ended up on a Chinese hockey team.

China doesn't recognize dual citizenship, so how are these players even allowed to compete on a Chinese team?

Several of the players don't have any obvious Chinese heritage at all, prompting even some Chinese citizens to question why the team is mostly foreigners. They would like to see their country represented by Chinese athletes, not foreigners.

Most likely the people who complained are now being welcomed at one of the re-education camps.

There was the Dutch Journalist who was tackled and dragged away during the middle of a live broadcast by two uniform wearing 'authorities'.

No one has explained why this happened.

Maybe the 'authorities' heard him make a sarcastic comment about the way the locals drive or something equally offensive.

I can now see why there is a diplomatic boycott.

No official wants to risk going to Beijing and being arrested for cheering too loudly for their team.

Still, I hope our athletes do well, and win honestly.

Winning by stacking your team with ringers is a hollow victory and does not belong at Olympic level sports.