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STORY HEADLINE: Charles Duke - Astronaut who brought Olympic spirit to the Moon with 'Lunar Olympics' honoured by IOC

DATE: 12 December, 2018
LOCATION: Lausanne, Switzerland
LANGUAGE: English

Broadcast quality footage available at the IOC Newsroom: http://iocnewsroom.com

STORY SCRIPT:

Charles Duke, the first man to perform athletics on the Moon along with his commander John Young, was today honoured by IOC President Thomas Bach at a ceremony held in Lausanne, Switzerland.

In April 1972 Apollo 16 astronauts Duke and Young did high jumps on the Moon’s surface in what they dubbed ‘The Lunar Olympics.’

Receiving the ‘Sky is the Limit’ award from President Bach, Duke said: “I’m honoured and humbled really, it’s a great honour to receive the ‘Sky is The Limit’ award. I’m sorry my commander John Young is not here to be part of this, he died last January…”

Presenting Duke with the trophy in honour of his feat, President Thomas Bach quipped: “Until today we could say with many good reasons that the Olympic spirit and the Olympic movement is global - with 206 National Olympic Committees I think that we have all the right to do so. But from today we can say that it’s universal, having seen Olympic Games being organised on the Moon.”
In April 1972, 36 year old former test pilot Charles Duke became the tenth and youngest person to walk on the Moon’s surface.

Realising their mission coincided with the Olympic Games Munich 1972, and with just a few minutes of surface time left, he and commander John Young decided to honour the occasion with some low-gravity high jumps.

Archive footage of the mission depicts the two astronauts performing their leaps, only to be surprised by the effect of the Moon’s reduced gravity.

Duke fell backwards during his leap, and was lucky not to rupture his suit.

He is heard exclaiming: ‘About four feet. Wow!’ before apologising: ‘That ain’t any fun is it? That ain’t very smart. Well I’m sorry about that.’

Young adds: ‘Right, now we do have some work to do.’

Drawing parallels between astronauts and athletes, Duke today reflected: “Well Olympic champions have to be in top shape and plan and train and work really hard, and Apollo was the same way. We trained sometimes 60-70 hours a week, not only in the simulator but also out in the field.”

President Bach added: “This performance is a reflection of many of the Olympic values. Excellence in flying to the Moon, excellence in doing all your scientific work there and excellence in sport. I would not have the idea about a better example of what it means: ‘Faster, Higher, Stronger, Citius, Altius, Fortius,’ the Olympic motto, this example which you have been setting.”

SHOTLIST:
ARCHIVE FOOTAGE (1972)
00:00 NASA astronaut’s quarters, crew members relaxing
00:06 Astronaut John Young
00:10 Astronaut Ken Mattingly
00:12 Astronaut Charles Duke
00:15 Apollo 16 mission launch
00:24 Lunar surface
00:27 POV shot of lunar module landing
00:33 Lunar module
00:35 Caption: ‘1972 was an Olympic year, so the Apollo 16 crew decided to hold their own.’
00:39 Graphic of Moon with caption: ‘Lunar Olympics.’
00:41 Archive of ‘Lunar Olympics’ taking place.
John Young (v/o): ‘We were gonna do a bunch of exercises that we had made up as the Lunar Olympics to show you what a guy could do on the Moon with a backpack on but…’
Mission Control: ‘For a 380 pound guy that’s pretty good.’
John Young: ‘They threw that out. Yeah I jumped flat footed straight in the air. 300…’
Charles Duke: ‘About four feet. Wow!’
John Young: ‘Charlie…’
Charles Duke: ‘That ain’t any fun is it? That ain’t very smart. Well I’m sorry about that.’
John Young: ‘Right, now we do have some work to do.’

01:22 Caption: Instant Replay with Charles Duke Comments
01:25 Charles Duke (v/o): 'We have a few minutes left so we decide to do the 'Moon Olympics'. I decide to try to set the high jump record on the Moon. And as I start to do that I bounce a couple of times and them I fall over backwards. And as I fall over backwards fear strikes. If I split my suit open I’m dead. As John helps me up I get very very quiet. As I listen to the pumps and the oxygen flow in the suit. Fortunately the suit holds and my fear subsides.’

02:03 Ext IOC Museum, Lausanne, Switzerland
02:07 IOC President Thomas Bach presents Charles Duke with the ‘Sky’s the Limit’ trophy

01:44 SOUNDBITE: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English language)
"Because until today we could say with many good reasons that the Olympic spirit and the Olympic movement is global - with 206 National Olympic Committees I think that we have all the right to do so. But from today on the latest we can say that it's universal, having seen Olympic games being organised on the Moon.”

02:45 SOUNDBITE: Charles Duke, Apollo 16 Astronaut (English language)
"It’s with humility and on John’s behalf also that we thank you for honouring us and we are happy to have honoured the Moon Olympics."

02:56 SOUNDBITE: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English language)
“This performance is also a reflection of many of the Olympic values. There is first of all excellence, excellence in all you are doing there. Excellence in flying to the Moon, excellence in doing all your scientific work there and excellence in sport. I would not have the idea about a better example for what it means there: ‘Faster, Higher, Stronger, Citius, Altius, Fortius,’ the Olympic motto than this example which you have been setting.”

03:45 Charles Duke tours Olympic museum, watches wall projection

03:54 SOUNDBITE: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English language)
“Because the title of this IOC President’s Trophy is ‘The Sky isthe Limit’ so it will depend on how your definition is about the sky. Whether you think we have gone beyond the sky or whether you think the sky is still beyond the Moon.”

04:21 SOUNDBITE: Charles Duke, Apollo 16 Astronaut (English language)
“I'm honoured and humbled really, it’s a great honour to receive the ‘Sky’s The Limit’ award. I’m just sorry my commander John Young is not here to be part of this, he died last January…”
04:39 SOUNDBYTE: Charles Duke, Apollo 16 Astronaut (English language)
"I've always loved the Olympic Games we watched the summer Olympics and the Winter Olympics since I was a young boy so to be able to take that spirit of an Olympic athlete in an Olympic Games and a bringing together of people from all over the world and I think Apollo was able to do that. We had our differences but it all came together in an international adulation if you will and to see that cooperation that the world experienced during Apollo reminded us so much of the spirit of the Olympics of bringing everyone together."

ARCHIVE FOOTAGE (1972)
05:30 Lunar module prepares for lift off
05:36 Mission control
05:39 Lunar module separates and lifts off
05:43 Charles Duke eating
05:45 Earth as seen from Moon
05:47 POV spaceship rear view
05:50 Module splashes down in sea
05:52 Onlookers applaud
05:55 Astronauts descend from helicopter to applause

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