

Dr. Yitsik Ben-Melech (expert in Elite Sport)

Director of the Center for Medicine and Methodology and Head of the School for Coach and Instructor Training at the Zinman College of Physical Education and Sport Sciences at the Academic College at Wingate.

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Yitsik Ben-Melech (born February 4, 1953) is a former Israeli athlete and coach. He served as National and Olympic Track and Field Coach for 8 years. He is director of the Elite Sport Unit in Israel, director of the Unit for Sport Methodology and Medicine at the Academic College at Wingate, and Scientific Director of the Israel National Football Team. At present he is also director of elite non-Olympic sports and is responsible for preparing strategic sport programs for many associations, organizations, federations and communities.

Biography

Ben-Melech was born and raised in Netanya. He trained with the Hapoel Tel Aviv and the ASA Tel Aviv teams. In youth competitions in the 1969 Maccabiah he won a gold medal in the 800 meter run, setting a record of 2:02.7 min, beating out David Laugomer (2:04.2).

In the 1970s, he was an outstanding athlete in mid-distance runs and in the 1980s he served as National and Olympic Track and Field Coach for 8 years.

In 1983, he completed his studies at the Cologne Academy in Germany, where he specialized in training theory, planning, monitoring and controlling training and competition processes.

In 1995, he completed his doctoral studies in Education Sciences at the University of Leipzig, Germany.

In both institutions he was the first – and to date only – Israeli graduate.

In 1985, he helped to establish the Elite Sport Unit in Israel, in a special cooperative effort by the Israel Olympic Committee, the Israel Sport Association and the Ministry of Sport. The unit became the spearhead for competitive and elite sport in Israel.

Ben-Melech directed the unit from its inception until 1997. As part of his functions, he introduced changes in how athletes were trained and prepared, in the organizational-professional structure of Israeli sport and in the integration of sciences in the preparation of athletes and coaches. During this period, Israeli athletes won the country's first Olympic medals.

Ben-Melech served as professional director of the Israeli delegation to the Olympic Games in Los Angeles 1984; Seoul 1988, Barcelona 1992 and Atlanta 1996.

In 1992, 1996 and 2000 he initiated and organized Post-Olympic Conventions in Israel with the participation of hundreds of experts from dozens of countries. Over the years, he has organized and directed many workshops, study days and conventions for coaches and professionals.

In 1997, Ben-Melech was invited by the government of South Africa to set up a sports academy and for two years he was director of the academy in Cape Town.

From 1999 to 2003, he was chairperson of the Sport Division of the Maccabiah Games where he introduced significant changes in administration of the competitions.

In 1999, Ben-Melech established and served as director of the Unit for Sport Infrastructure in Israel.

In 2001, he was appointed consultant to the Kenyan Olympic Committee and at the same time served as the head physical fitness instructor for the Maccabi Tel Aviv and Maccabi Netanya football teams. He also planned and implemented strategic and fitness programs for their youth departments.

In 2005 Ben-Melech was appointed Director of the Competitive Sport Unit of Eilat – the Federation of Non-Olympic Competitive Sport Associations, Director of the Center for Medicine and Methodology and Head of the School for Coach and Instructor Training at the Zinman College of Physical Education and Sport Sciences at the Wingate Institute (today, the Academic College at Wingate).

Ben-Melech has published many articles, prepared many projects and written books on training and competition theory, elite sport, summaries and analyses of Olympic Games, the status of sport in Israel and the world, identifying and nurturing youth athletes, planning training and competitions, and national and strategic elite and competitive sport programs.

Ben-Melech is married to Noa, a former Israeli Track and Field champion who trained under Ben-Melech's supervision, and they have three children (Keren, Liraz and Or).