The background of the top half of the image is a stylized American flag. The top left corner is a solid red field with a pattern of white stars. The rest of the top half features the wavy stripes of the flag in shades of white and light blue. 

# **ATHLETES & ACTIVISM**

**2021 OLYMPIC WATCH PARTY TOOLKIT**





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# OVERVIEW

# HEY, EVERYONE!

I am very excited for our next chance to celebrate Black joy and Black excellence together, as a community. Thank you, thank you, thank you for hosting your Athletes and Activism Watch Party during the Olympics in Tokyo this month.

With parties like yours happening across the country, we are going to rally friends and family around Black athletes who have used their platform to send a message of justice to the world, inspiring millions. **And we're also going to rally them around our campaign to make sure the International Olympic Committee finally gets rid of Rule 50.**

That's the rule specifically aimed at suppressing the speech of Black athletes. And we can make it history.

The Olympic Committee does not own Black people: not our talent, not our image, not our minds and not our bodies. Gwen Berry sent her message of justice this year. WNBA players sent their message last year (and helped elect Senator Raphael Warnock to champion the cause of racial justice), as did Naomi Osaka and so many others.



Black athletes have been making statements and supporting movements for justice every single year, going back to Tommie Smith, John Carlos, Muhammad Ali and beyond. Color Of Change members like you were among the first to rally around Colin Kaepernick when he made his statement and inspired Eric Reid, Raiana Brown and athletes far and wide to take a knee. Color Of Change members raised the money Gwen Berry needed to make it to Tokyo this year, after Nike dropped her when she protested.

Now, we can stand up for those athletes so they can keep standing up for us.

They believed, like we do, that protest belongs everywhere injustice is tolerated. Protest belongs on the podium and the field. It's a first in the air. A knee on the ground. A hashtag on a uniform. A photo on social media. It belongs everywhere that people need to be reminded what being Black in America means, and what we're fighting for.

It's racism that doesn't belong.

That's why we're going to come together to party and celebrate, and also to put an end to Rule 50. **Make sure your guests sign the Color Of Change petition to end Rule 50** and join your local Color Of Change squad by **texting SQUADS to 55156.**

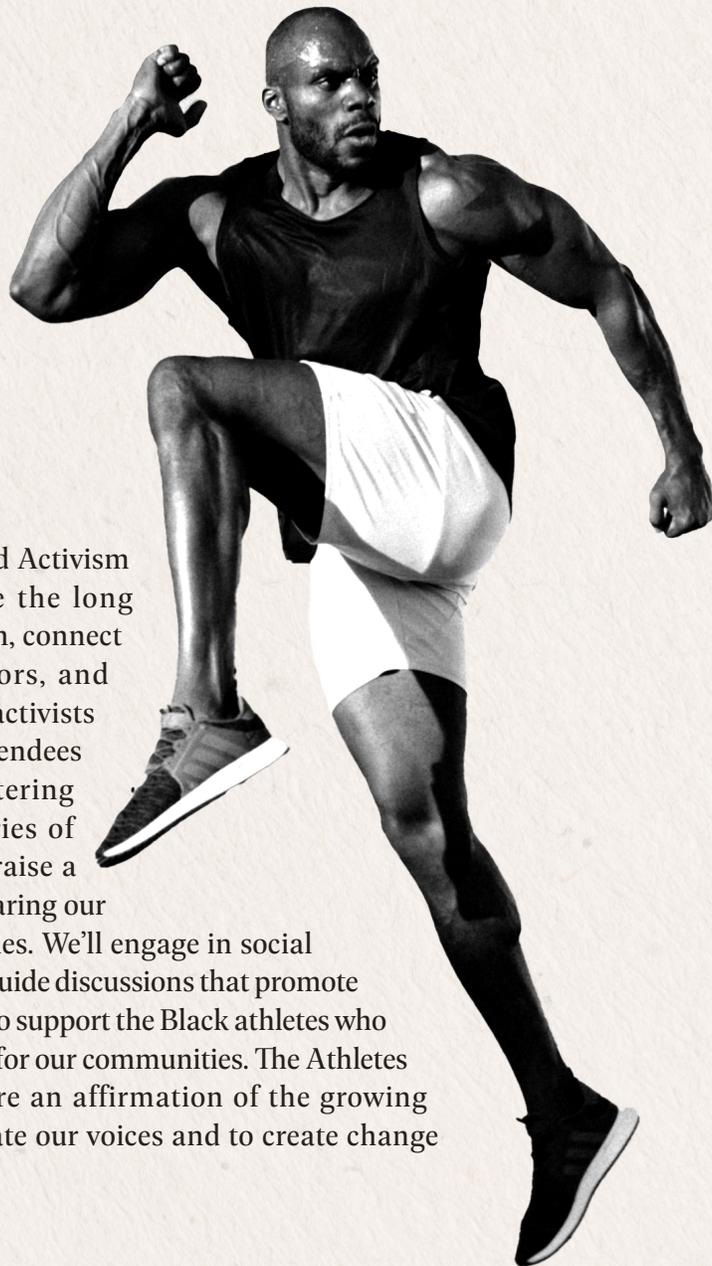
Enjoy your party — you are giving your friends and family a true gift! I will be watching with you. Thank you for all you do.

Until justice is real,  
Rashad Robinson  
President  
Color of Change



# OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of the Athletes and Activism Watch Parties is to celebrate the long history of Black athlete activism, connect with our friends and neighbors, and cheer on today's Black athlete activists striving to lift us all higher. Attendees will experience the joy of centering our history, uplifting our stories of how we felt seeing our heroes raise a fist or refuse to be silent, and sharing our hopes for our friends and families. We'll engage in social icebreakers that make us laugh, guide discussions that promote reflection, and commit to a plan to support the Black athletes who risk it all to speak truth to power for our communities. The Athletes and Activism Watch Parties are an affirmation of the growing power of Black athletes to elevate our voices and to create change for all of us.



# BEFORE YOUR EVENT

## INVITATION

To invite people to your Athletes and Activism Watch Party, you will need to create an event page by visiting <http://bit.ly/aaolympicshosts>

**PRO TIP:** Be sure to name your event something unique to add your style to it. (Ex: Join the Aggie Pride Olympics Watch Party!)

Once you've created your event page, it's time to invite your folks to your watch party! The invitation link can be shared via email, text, or social media!

## RUN OF SHOW PREPARATION

We got you! In order to make for a smooth event, we'll be reaching out to all Athletes and Activism Watch Party hosts to better support and prepare you for your event.

We recommend that you start your Athletes and Activism Watch Party with an "Icebreaker" activity! You are free to create your own activity, or you can choose one of our visual icebreakers at <http://bit.ly/cocicebrk>.



# BEFORE YOUR EVENT CONT'D

## YOUR HOST TEAM

We recommend that you grab (1-2) friends to support you prior to and during your event — a Host Committee. Your Host Committee can support you with tasks the day of and prior to the event. Host committee role details can be found on the Athletes and Activism Watch Party.

- Kick off your event with a Black Joy [Icebreaker](#)
- Set the vibe with our official Olympic Playlist
- Engage your guests with an [Athletes and Activism Watch Party animated video] and/or [Black Olympics Cultural Experience]
- Celebrate your attendees with a Black Joy activity

[SCRABBLE](#)

[SCATTERGORIES](#)

[SCAVENGER HUNT](#)

## CELEBRATING BLACK JOY

Athletes and Activism Watch Party is a celebration and acknowledgment of the collective action and power of Black athletes in the Olympics and beyond. Your Athletes and Activism Watch Party event is the perfect time to facilitate community conversation and connection with your people! Here are a few ways that you can engage with your guests:

*Let's keep it real*, our community shows up and shows out at events with good food. We recommend getting grab and go meals or snack bags and sealed drinks from local **BLACK BUSINESSES** to provide your attendees with a delicious and safe meal experience.

# DAY OF EVENT

## SETUP

On the day of your event, we recommend you give yourself at least 30 mins for set up (review the agenda, set up food/drinks, test audio for a playlist) and a check-in with your optional Host Committee.

## MAKE IT YOUR OWN

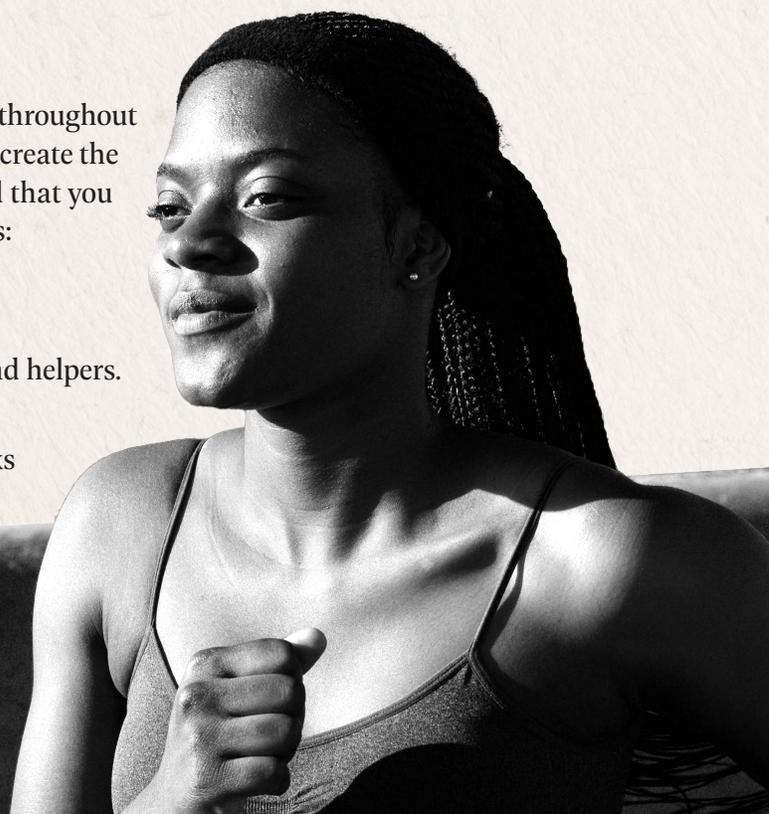
The Toolkit is here to support you in making your watch party run smoothly, however we want you to make your event your own.

Black Joy is what you make it! Whether it's the celebration of the beauty of your community, or the pride in your heritage, or the joyful moments that connect us to the Black experience, lean into the activities that bring you joy!

## SAFE PRACTICES

Safe distribution and access is the name of the game throughout your Athletes and Activism Watch Party. In order to create the safest experience for your attendees, we recommend that you follow the CDC's recommended gathering guidelines:

- Allow a distance of 6 feet apart wherever possible.
- Wear masks and utilize sanitizer to event hosts and helpers.
- Create hand sanitizing or hand washing stations throughout your event space. Keep food and drinks covered throughout the event.



# OUR CAMPAIGN/ATHLETES



## AUGUST 2019

Gwen Berry wins the gold in the hammer throw at the Pan American Games in Peru. During her medal ceremony, Berry raised her fist during the national anthem in protest of racial injustice.

Within days, all of her corporate sponsors cut ties with her and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee condemned Berry and put her on a 1-year probation—threatening to end her career if she protested again—for violating the International Olympic Committee’s discriminatory Rule 50.

## JANUARY 2020

The IOC updates Rule 50 to explicitly ban forms of protest associated with Black-led movements for racial justice.

Color Of Change launches petition—Tell the Olympic Committee: Stop silencing Black athletes

## Demand companies sponsor Olympic athlete and activist, Gwen Berry!



Olympian, record holder, and Pan-American gold medalist Gwen Berry, was abandoned by her corporate sponsors after she raised her fist to protest racial injustice on the awards podium at last year’s Pan-American Games. Gwen Berry is one of many Black athletes all over the world who are putting their careers and lives on the line to demand justice.

Much like Eroseanna “Rose” Robinson, John Carlos, and Tommie Smith, Gwen is finding ways to fight for change in between rigorous training and competitions. **But because of her commitment to use her platform to demand justice for Black people, and her fight against Rule 50, the Olympic charter rule that silences athletes, corporate sponsors dropped Gwen.**

## FEBRUARY 2020

Color Of Change sends letters to the USOPC and IOC demanding to meet and that both organizations apologize to Berry and revoke their discriminatory bans on racial justice protests.

## Sign the Petition

Name\*

Email address\*

ZIP Code\*

Your personal comment (optional)  
Your personal comment (optional)

By taking action, you will also receive periodic communications from ColorOfChange. By providing your mobile number you consent to receive call phone and text communications from ColorOfChange and its affiliated entities concerning news and action opportunities. Message and data rates may apply. You can unsubscribe at any time by texting STOP to 55156.

SIGN THE PETITION

## JULY 2020

Color Of Change meets with leaders from the USOPC to discuss their treatment of Gwen Berry and their lack of support for Black athlete activists.

## AUGUST 2020

Color Of Change announces it is making Gwen Berry our first sponsored athlete, and commits to pressuring Olympic corporate sponsors to match our sponsorship.

## SEPTEMBER 2020

Airbnb agrees to sponsor Gwen Berry, becoming the first corporation to match Color Of Change’s sponsorship.

Nike doubles down on their stance, explicitly refusing to sponsor Gwen Berry.

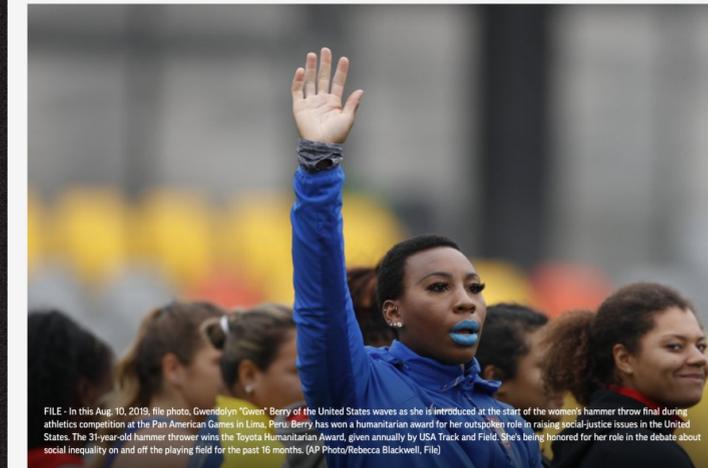
## OCTOBER 2020

Color Of Change launches a petition calling on corporate Olympic partners to sponsor Gwen Berry and demand the IOC end Rule 50.

**December 2020:** Gwen Berry wins the U.S.A. Track and Field Humanitarian Award. The USOPC publicly apologizes to Gwen Berry.

## Gwen Berry wins humanitarian award, insists US can do better

By EDDIE PELLIS December 2, 2020



FILE - In this Aug. 10, 2019, file photo, Gwendolyn “Gwen” Berry of the United States waves as she is introduced at the start of the women’s hammer throw final during athletics competition at the Pan American Games in Lima, Peru. Berry has won a humanitarian award for her outspoken role in raising social-justice issues in the United States. The 34-year-old hammer thrower wins the Toyota Humanitarian Award, given annually by USA Track and Field. She’s being honored for her role in the debate about social inequality on and off the playing field for the past 16 months. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell, File)

## MARCH 2021

The USOPC announces that they will no longer enforce the IOC’s Rule 50 ban on racial justice protests.

## JUNE 2021

Puma agrees to match Color Of Change’s sponsorship of Gwen Berry, provide her training and competition gear, and make her a part of their “She Moves Us” campaign, and commits to standing with Berry if she protests at the Olympics.

# HISTORY OF BLACK ATHLETE ACTIVISM AT THE OLYMPICS



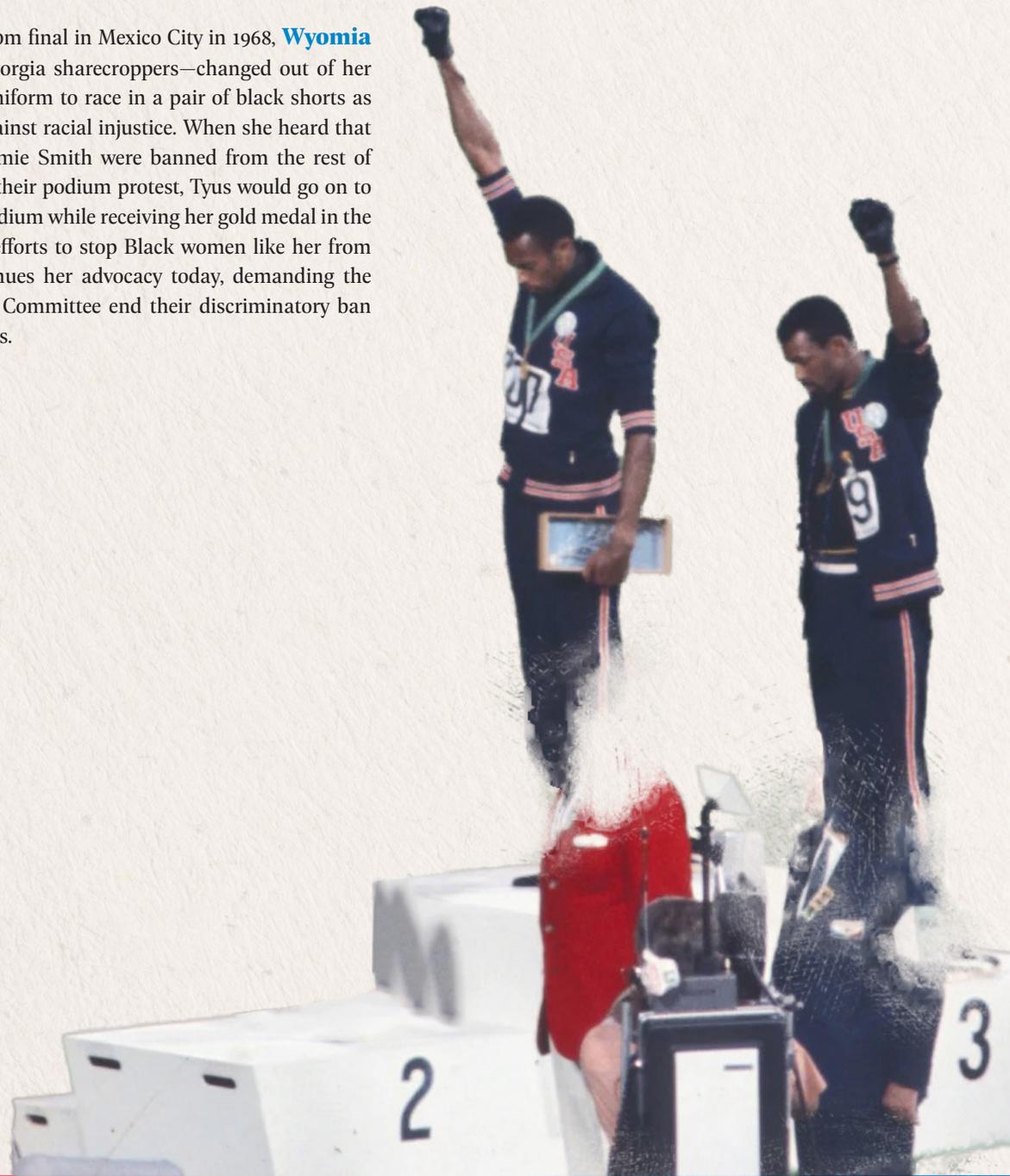
Black athletes have a long and storied history of using the Olympics and other international sporting events to elevate the voices of our communities and drive real world change. Some of their protests have become iconic - both in the fabric of the Olympics and of the broader struggle for Black liberation, others have been nearly forgotten or whitewashed to reduce their power. No matter how big or small their actions, their protests have often come with heavy personal cost and sacrifice. But all of their actions have moved us forward. As we wait for the start of what will undoubtedly be a historic Olympics it is important that we reflect on and remember those Black athletes who came before, what they sacrificed, and what they won.

Sixty years before Colin Kaepernick knelt during the national anthem, **Rose Robinson** took her place in history. During the 1959 Pan American Games opening ceremony, Robinson refused to stand for the anthem in protest of racial injustice, becoming the first U.S. athlete to ever protest during the anthem. Off the track, Robinson was a fearless leader in organizing protests against segregation—where she once had her arm broken by white patrons for trying to integrate a skate-rink—and participated in multiple hunger strikes while wrongfully imprisoned for eating at a segregated restaurant.

After winning three gold medals at the 1960 Olympics, **Wilma Rudolph** refused to attend her own celebration back in the U.S. since the event would be segregated. Because of her protest, Wilma's parade and banquet became the very first integrated events in her hometown of Clarksville, Tennessee. She went on to participate in protests in the city until the segregation laws were struck down, and paved the way for many more Black women to become U.S. track stars.

During their medal ceremony at the 1968 Olympics, **Tommie Smith** and **John Carlos**, each raised a black-gloved fist during the playing of the US national anthem as a protest against racial injustice. For their protest, the International Olympic Committee banned Smith and Carlos from the games. Back home, Smith and Carlos were ostracized by the US sporting establishment and received numerous death threats. Despite the costs at the time, both Smith and Carlos are, today, widely celebrated for their courage. They continue to fight for racial justice and advise the next generation of athlete activists.

Before the Olympic 100m final in Mexico City in 1968, **Wyomia Tyus**—the child of Georgia sharecroppers—changed out of her required Team USA uniform to race in a pair of black shorts as a symbol of protest against racial injustice. When she heard that John Carlos and Tommie Smith were banned from the rest of the 1968 Olympics for their podium protest, Tyus would go on to raise her fist on the podium while receiving her gold medal in the 4x100m relay despite efforts to stop Black women like her from protesting. Tyus continues her advocacy today, demanding the International Olympic Committee end their discriminatory ban on racial justice protests.





SPOTLIGHT ON

# GWEN BERRY

**“THE IOC WILL SEE ME, AND THEY WILL HEAR ME.”**

**Gwen Berry** is a world-class hammer thrower. Born and raised just outside Ferguson, Missouri, Berry has been fighting for racial justice long before the uprisings swelled in response to George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery murders. **At the 2019 Pan American Games, Gwen Berry won gold, and while on the awards podium, she raised her fist, much like Tommie Smith and John Carlos did at the 1968 Olympics.** Instead of being celebrated for taking a stand against racism, **all of Gwen’s corporate sponsors—including Nike—dropped her,** eliminating her income overnight and putting her athletic career in jeopardy. The U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) punished her for violating the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) **Rule 50**, a discriminatory rule that prohibits athletes from protesting against racial injustice at Olympic events. The punishment was a year-long probation where if Berry protested again, or broke any USOPC rule, they would permanently end her career.

However, **Berry would not be silenced.** In 2020 Color Of Change and Berry joined forces, with Color Of Change making her our first ever sponsored athlete, providing her the funding she needed to keep competing, and partnering with her to demand the USOPC and IOC end their discriminatory policies. As a result, the USOPC formally apologized to Berry and early this year agreed to stop enforcing the IOC’s Rule 50. **In addition, Color Of Change successfully pressured Airbnb and Puma to become financial sponsors for Berry and to stand with her if she protests.**

The USOPC’s commitment to refusing to punish protesting athletes was quickly put to the test this June at the U.S. Olympic Trials for Track and Field. At the trials, Berry took third in the hammer throw, qualifying her for her second Olympic games. Just like for all other U.S. Olympic Trial events, Berry was told that the national anthem would not be played during her medal ceremony. But when Berry took the podium to receive her medal, the anthem began playing. In response, Berry turned away from the flag and held a shirt over head that said “Activist Athlete.” **Her actions ignited another national reckoning around the injustices Black communities face everyday and the role Black athletes play in moving us all forward.** For her protest, Berry received numerous death threats and a torrent of hate was directed at her on social media and by right-wing media.

Despite the costs, Berry is determined to continue using her platform to call out racial injustice at the Tokyo games. Even though the IOC has doubled down on their protest ban—even banning the phrase “Black Lives Matter” from athletes’ clothes—Berry will not be deterred from speaking out against injustice.

To learn more about the IOC’s rule 50 ban visit <https://bit.ly/endrule50>.





The key to building a power in our community is through brave conversations that illuminate our stories and exemplify our values. Take a moment to listen to [Gwen Berry's courageous conversation](#) on the Olympics and Black athleticism. In your courageous conversation, you are tasked with the challenge of connecting your stories to the work ahead.

### Sample Questions:

- How have sports impacted your life?
- What athlete has had a profound impact on you?
- What (professional) athlete embodies Black Joy to you?
- Which Olympic Game is your favorite?
- When do you feel most free?
- How will you support activism in the Olympics this year?
- How will you inspire others to take action?

# THE CONVERSATION

# NEXT STEPS

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- 1 Tell the IOC to strike rule 50 — which silences the free expression of Black athletes — by signing the petition at <https://bit.ly/blockrule50>
- 2 Join your local Color Of Change squad by texting **SQUADS** to **55156**
- 3 Support Black Women Athletes in the Olympics by signing the petition at <https://bit.ly/supportblkolympians>
- 4 Join the conversation online at [www.teamcoc.org](http://www.teamcoc.org)

# CHECKLIST & RESOURCES

- Create your event page at <http://bit.ly/aaolympicshosts>
- Share your personal event page on your social media
- Ensure your home/entertaining area is COVID safe
- Make a copy of and REVIEW your **Athletes and Activism Watch Party** agenda and (optional) presentation
- Review and select your Icebreaker activity (view examples at <http://bit.ly/cocicebrk>)
- Select/queue up your **Athletes and Activism Watch Party** Playlist at <https://djtay.com/coc-c3>
- Assign an attendee to document your **Athletes and Activism Watch Party** (photos/videos)
- Post and share your **Athletes and Activism Watch Party** photos and videos on social media
- Complete the **Athletes and Activism Watch Party** Host Feedback Form
- Commit to one self care action following your **Athletes and Activism Watch Party**

## RESOURCES

- **Athletes and Activism Watch Party** (Host an) event page: <http://bit.ly/aaolympicshost>
- Black Joy Playlists: <https://djtay.com/coc-c3>
- **Athletes and Activism Watch Party** [External] Virtual Presentation: <http://bit.ly/cocolympicslides>
- Black Joy Icebreakers: <http://bit.ly/cocicebrk>
- **Athletes and Activism Watch Party** Cultural Experience Hub: <http://bit.ly/olympicculturehub>
- **Athletes and Activism Watch Party** Tick Tock/Agenda: <http://bit.ly/olympicticktock>
- **Color Of Change Rule 50 Ban Explained** (Video): <https://bit.ly/endrulerule50>
- **Gwen Berry's Olympic Inspiration** (Video): <https://bit.ly/gwenwatchparty>
- GiftOGRAM How To: <https://bit.ly/cocgoghlp>

The background of the entire image is a stylized American flag. The top left corner features a field of white stars on a red background, which transitions into a blue field with white stars. The rest of the image is a light blue gradient.

**THANK  
YOU**

