



Welcome to the **Emory University 2026 Winter Olympics media tip sheet.**

Our media relations team has identified several Emory experts to discuss the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy. If you interested in one of the topics below, please contact the media relations team at news@emory.edu.

Emory's experts are leading authorities on a wide variety of global, national and local topics and issues.

Journalists interested in finding an expert who can address issues in the news should visit emory.experts.edu to browse the list.

Athletic Performance

- **How Olympic athletes respond to sleep disruption and competition-related stress.** Elite athletes often compete under conditions that disrupt sleep and circadian rhythms, from long-distance travel to high-pressure schedules. Dr. Hillary Rodman is an expert on how biological clocks and sleep patterns affect performance and resilience.

Emory expert: [Hillary Rodman](#) is an associate professor of psychology who specializes in psychology and neuroscience. She can provide insight into how athletes respond to sleep disruption, jet lag, and competition-related stress, and also the science-based strategies used to adapt and perform at the highest level during major competitions.

- **How U.S. athletes fuel for peak performance at high altitude and why some skip mouthwash.** Why altitude changes carbohydrate needs; How beets and spinach play a role in endurance; The surprising link between mouthwash and nitric oxide.

Emory Expert: Dan Benardot has worked with multiple U.S. Olympic teams and can discuss training, nutrition, and the impact of altitude and time-zone shifts on performance.

Health & Safety

- **What Olympic-level heart research shows about exercise and risk.** [Research](#) in elite athletes has consistently shown that exercise itself does not harm a healthy heart. Most cardiac events in sport are linked to underlying, often undiagnosed heart conditions. Athlete heart research has helped clinicians better distinguish normal athletic heart adaptations from signs of disease, why symptoms and medical history matter more than intensity alone, and what recreational skiers and older athletes should take away from that research.
- **What altitude really does to the heart during exercise.** Training and competing at altitude changes how hard the heart works because oxygen levels are lower. Dr. Kim can explain why these changes are expected and safe in healthy athletes, what symptoms should prompt evaluation, and what everyday people should understand before heading to higher elevations.

Emory Expert: Jonathan Kim is a nationally cited sports cardiologist at Emory who works with elite athletes and studies how the heart adapts to high-level training. He is available for interviews this week.

- **Why snow conditions matter more than speed when it comes to winter sports injuries.** Snow conditions play a major role in injury risk. Icy, artificial or inconsistent snow changes forces travel through the knee, hip and spine. Certain conditions raise the risk of ligament and overuse injuries. Our expert can also share what skiers and snowboarders should watch for this winter, how to adjust expectations when conditions change, and when it is smart to call it a day.

Emory Expert: [Dr. R Amadeus Mason](#) is an Emory sports medicine physician and medical director for USA Track and Field. He works directly with Olympic athletes and focuses on keeping them healthy during peak competition periods.

Race & Equality

- **History of Black Olympians and the role of race in sports.** Black athletes have historically played a significant role in the Olympic games, not only for record-breaking achievements and inspiring moments, but also for calling attention to political and social issues.

Emory expert: [Carl Suddler](#), associate professor of history, is a leading scholar of sport history. He can help audiences understand how the Winter Olympics reflect long-standing themes of nationalism, race, politics, and athlete activism—placing today's headlines in a deeper historical context. His expertise brings clarity to why the Olympics matter beyond medals and moments, and how past Games continue to shape the stories we see today.

- **How elite sports reflect broader issues of race, power, inequality, and national identity.**

Emory Expert: [Karida Brown](#), a sociologist, co-teaches *Sports, Power, and Society: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, a new course that uses the Olympics to examine how sport intersects with race, politics, fashion, urban planning, inequality, and global power. She can speak to athlete protest, access and exclusion in sports, and why the Olympics remain one of the most influential cultural spectacles worldwide.

- **Race and Sports**

When viewers tune into the Winter Olympics, the ice will look familiar: hockey, figure skating and speed skating fields that are still overwhelmingly white, even as history making Black athletes like Laila Edwards enter Team USA's lineup. Emory professor studies race and sport. She looks at why we associate certain sports with certain races and what happens when an athlete breaks that pattern.

Emory Expert: Devon Goss, assistant professor of sociology studies looks at why we associate certain sports with certain races and what happens when an athlete breaks that pattern.

Economics & Urban Planning

- **Economic impact of the Winter Olympics and urban planning.** As Milan prepares for the Olympics, what will be the economic impact on the city? How are city leaders balancing this influx by repurposing existing facilities and architecture for the Games, and what lessons can other cities learn from Milan's approach?

Emory expert: [Tom Smith](#), an economist specializing in sports economics, can break down the real economic and urban impact of hosting the Games, from public spending and infrastructure to long-term benefits and trade-offs. Smith studies the economics of mega-events and urban planning, offering context on who benefits when cities host the Olympics

Marketing & Sponsorship

- **Brand sponsorships, sportswashing, and generational fan engagement at the Winter Olympics**

What are the top brand-sponsorship stories of the year? How is the phenomenon of sportswashing influencing the Games, and what can we expect in terms of fan engagement across different generations?

Emory expert: [Mike Lewis](#), professor of marketing, is a leading authority on sports marketing and fan engagement. He can offer expert insight into how brands and nations use the Games to shape their image, along with insights on fandom —

exploring how sports, brands, and culture shape the way people connect, engage, and identify as fans.