

DAY 5

02.13.2018

WINTER OLYMPICS: WHEN THOMAS BACH (AFP) MEETS THOMAS BACH (CIO)



Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Olympic fencing champion in 1976, has very much made the news since the start of the Pyeongchang Games. This is also the case for the other Thomas Bach, a reporter for AFP's sports department - one of them is the Story, while the other one tells it. And what was bound to happen did: the two men met. Our reporter tells us how it went.

“Ever since Thomas Bach was elected head of the IOC in September 2013, jokes have flown from all sides about our very special homonymy. I once even landed an accreditation for an F1 Grand Prix bearing my full name and function as an AFP journalist, along with a picture of the IOC President. Not to mention Twitter

messages intended for the IOC's Thomas Bach that end up on my own account.

I suppose he was aware of Thomas Bach the journalist's existence, because when he spotted me in the AFP room while visiting the press center at Pyeongchang, he came out with an “Ah! At last!”, then shook my hand and greeted me with a “Hello brother” in French. It was the first time we'd actually met. And the funny thing is that he told me there was a third Thomas Bach in the world of Olympism!

We talked for about ten minutes, for an interview and then in a much more informal manner. We discussed the Alsace region, Riesling and Gewürztraminer wines, and fencing which I cover for AFP and was his sport (team foil Olympic champion in 1976) during his time as an athlete.”

The French-speaking journalist, one of more than 100 AFP text reporters, photographers, video reporters and technicians currently covering the Games for a global audience, tells the anecdote.