review
the YOG
Youth Olympic Games



ACNOA - ANOCA

DAKAR 2026
YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES

FROM OCTOBER 31 TO NOVEMBER 13, 2026

OPENING CEREMONY YOG
DAKAR 2026

Dakar Hosts, Africa Shines



The Opening Ceremony of the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) Dakar 2026 lived up to all expectations. As the first Olympic event ever hosted on African soil, anticipation was especially high. It was a mammoth organisational challenge - and Dakar rose to the occasion.

Beyond the artistic performance, the Organising Committee (COJOJ) opted for a show that reached far beyond Senegal's borders. The choreographed sequences gave equal prominence to Senegal's cultural expressions and those of other countries across the continent. This unifying approach celebrated cultural diversity while highlighting what brings people together. Through songs, movements and performances, Senegal presented a rich and multifaceted identity to the world.

Creativity and craftsmanship were equally remarkable. Masterful choreography, innovative stage design, digital technology, lighting effects and artistic creations combined to deliver a breathtaking show. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the performance demonstrated the technical, artistic and organisational capability required to host an event of this magnitude.



History and collective memory were also woven into this visual narrative, celebrating heritage and the transmission of traditions. True to the spirit of the YOG, special attention was given to young people and future generations. They embodied the ambition to make sport a vehicle for education, unity and openness to the world.

The delegations, young athletes, artists and choreographers played a key role in bringing to life a production in which sport interacted harmoniously with cultural identity.

The event was graced by the country's highest authorities, led by the President of the Republic, H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Faye. Their presence underscored the historic significance of the occasion.

Beyond the ceremony itself, one message came through loud and clear: Dakar is hosting, Senegal is delivering, and Africa is making its mark.



YOG Dakar 2026

A Spectacular Show for an African First

Senegal turned a new page in African Olympic history on Saturday, 31 October 2026, with the Opening Ceremony of the Youth Olympic Games Dakar 2026 at the Abdoulaye Wade Stadium in Diamniadio.



Graced by the President of the Republic, H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Faye, and attended by several foreign leaders and dignitaries of the Olympic Movement, the show celebrated Senegalese identity and African cultural diversity through artistic displays, choreographed performances and musical acts.

The ceremony marked a historic first - the hosting of the Youth Olympic Games on the African continent - kicking off two weeks of competition and bringing together some 2,700 athletes across 25 sports.

Beyond the competition itself, Dakar 2026 offers Senegal and Africa an international showcase to highlight their cultural heritage, hospitality and sporting ambition.



IOC President's speech

Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games Opening Ceremonythe full speech delivered by International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Kirsty Coventry during the Opening Ceremony of the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games.Good evening Dakar!



How are you all?

For years, we have talked about this moment.

The first Olympic sporting event on African soil.

And now - here we are!

This historic moment is for Senegal and for Africa. And for our entire Olympic Movement.

And to all our amazing young athletes - are you ready for this?

You are going to have the time of your lives and I am so excited for you!

And Senegal - what an incredible welcome you have given our athletes!

Thank you, Your Excellency, for welcoming the world.

I know how much heart, how much passion, how much hard work has gone into making this moment possible.



To the Government of Senegal, to the Organising Committee and my dear friend - and above all, to the people of Senegal: Thank you very much!

Thank you also to our World-wide Olympic Partners and Media Rights-Holders, who are helping us share the spirit of these Youth Olympic Games around the world.

And of course: a big shout-out to our amazing volunteers - let's hear it for the volunteers!

What makes these Games even more special is that young people have been at the heart of everything.

Not just young athletes, but the young people of Senegal who have helped bring these Games to life.

With your ideas. Your creativity. Your energy.

These really are Games for the youth, by the youth!

You have opened your arms and hearts to the world.

This is the spirit of teranga.

To everyone joining us from around the world: I hope you enjoy every moment here in Senegal.

The warmth of the Senegalese people. The culture. The creativity.



I think you're in for something very special!

This is the Africa that I am so proud and so excited for the world to experience.

It makes me incredibly proud to be standing here tonight.

A proud Zimbabwean.

And proud to be an African woman.

And so proud that our continent is welcoming the Olympic Movement for the very first time.

And now, to our amazing young athletes!

Tonight is YOUR night!

Just take a moment.



Look around you.

Take it all in.

You have worked very hard to get here.

The early mornings.

The long hours of training.

And all the people who have helped you along the way.

And I know how you're feeling right now.

Excited? A little nervous? Maybe a lot nervous?

I remember that feeling!

Sport opened so many doors in my life.



It gave me the confidence to believe in myself and to dream big.

And that is what I wish for every single one of you during these Games.

I hope these Games give you confidence to believe in yourselves.

To dream big. And to do things you never thought possible.



So give it everything you've got.

Be brave. Make new friends. Get to know people from different countries.

Cheer each other on.

And have fun!

To everybody watching and competing, Let’s make every moment count!

And now: Dakar - let's celebrate!

I have the huge honour to invite His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Senegal, to now open the Games.



CONGRATULATIONS TO SENEGAL ON THIS SPECTACULAR OPENING CEREMONY

ANOCA President, Honourable Mustapha Berraf, congratulates Senegal.

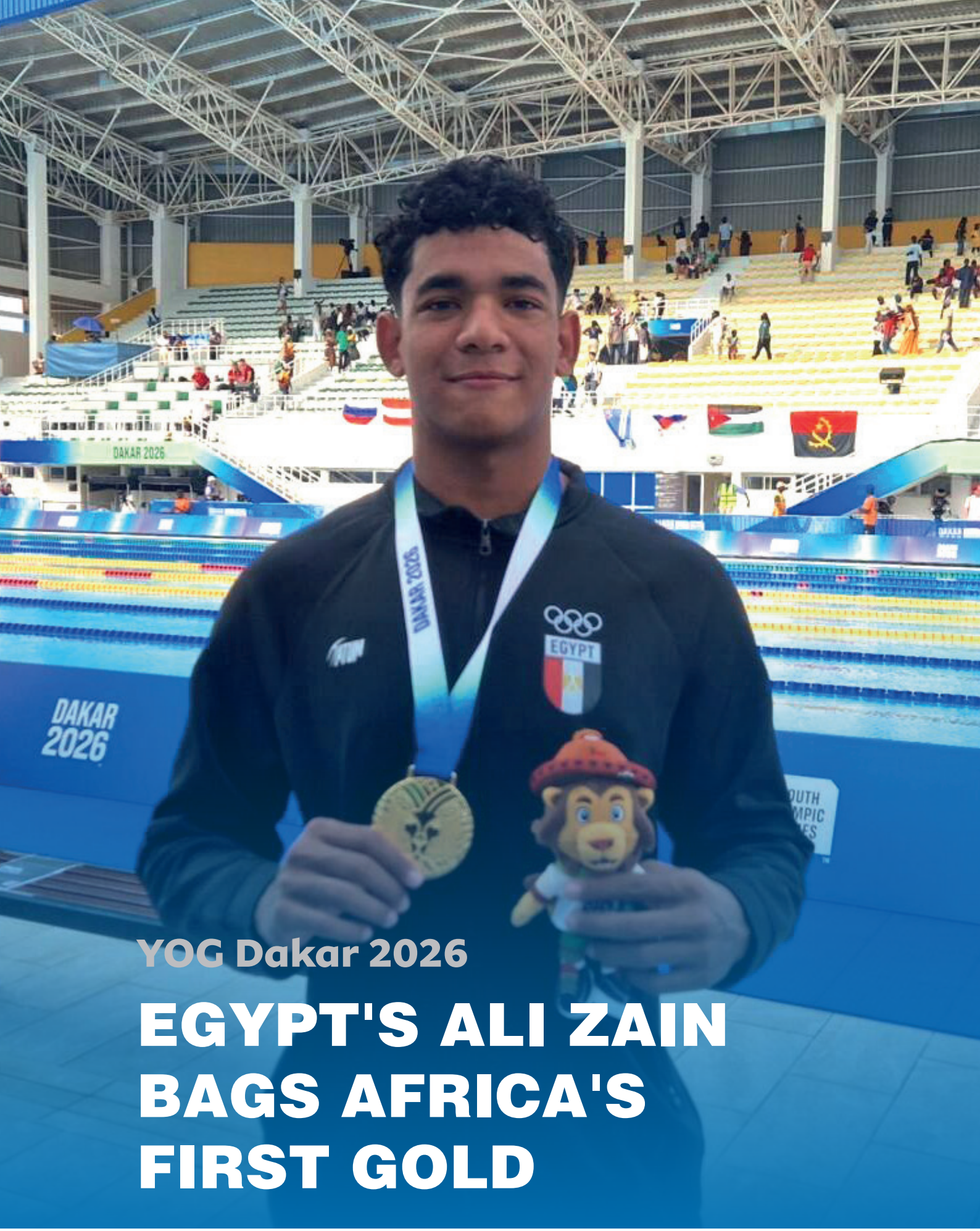


The Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) commends Senegal for a colourful and remarkable celebration, marked by high-quality organisation, great creativity and a wonderful spirit of unity.

Through this event, Senegal has showcased its rich heritage, the dynamism of its youth and its ability to make sport a vehicle for unity, dialogue and fraternity.

We extend our warmest congratulations to the Government of Senegal, the organisers, the partners and all those who helped make this opening ceremony a memorable occasion.

Together, let us continue to uphold the values of peace, solidarity and inclusion. May this historic event serve as a symbol of unity and pride for the whole of Senegal and for an Africa that strives to excel.



YOG Dakar 2026

EGYPT'S ALI ZAIN BAGS AFRICA'S FIRST GOLD



On Sunday, 1 November, 17-year-old Ali Zain won Africa's first gold medal at the Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, at the Tour de l'Œuf complex. The Egyptian, who has enjoyed a meteoric rise, won the 100m butterfly in grand style.

Less than two hours after South Africa's Leah Markgraaff won silver in the 400m freestyle, Ali Zain claimed gold in a final he controlled from start to finish. The young "Pharaoh" quickly took the lead before pulling further ahead over the second 50 metres. At the finish, his lead of nearly two seconds over Slovenia's Kalan Aleksej reflected a clear dominance that even took the Egyptian by surprise.

"***Honestly, it was absolutely crazy. It was incredible. Touching the wall, finishing first at the Youth Olympic Games – it's a massive achievement. It was absolutely crazy,***" said the Olympic champion once the medal was around his neck.

Always smiling, Zain has the perfect physique for the sport, with well-defined muscles and broad shoulders. Yet his introduction to swimming was purely by chance.



"***At first, I didn't know how to swim. I'd just go to the pool and get into the water. I took up swimming just to learn how to float, that's all,***" he admits.

Today, more than 5,000 km from home, he reflects on how far he has come.

"***Four years ago, I was nowhere near where I am now. I was way behind. I just worked hard and believed in myself. That's the key. From start to finish, it's been a tough journey. It wasn't easy. I worked hard every day, getting up at 4 o'clock in the morning. Everything was difficult, from training to competition. I had to give it my all every day. It was incredible. I wasn't prepared for a moment like this***."

His coach, Amr Elsayed, has supported him through this journey for several years. Together, they are continuing the tradition of Egyptian success at the Youth Olympic Games, following Ahmed Akram's gold in the 800m freestyle at Nanjing 2014 and Abdelrahman Sameh's bronze in the 50m freestyle at Buenos Aires 2018.

Dakar 2026

Les jeunes racontent les jeux



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