

## **Republican Perspective**

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### **Diversity Uber Alles---the Sequel**

**Winter 2018**

My Mar. 7 essay described the media adoration of the “diversity” of two 2016 summer Olympians. To the point where they celebrated the Islamic identity of one competitor while completely ignoring her lack of success in the actual competition. And in the other instance---an actual gold medalist!---they focused so much on her race that their headline failed to identify her by name.

Fast forward to the 2018 Seoul winter games. The Olympic motto is “faster, higher, stronger.” Fox News Executive Editor John Moody criticized the U.S. Olympic Committee’s effort to increase the representation of Blacks and gays. He wrote that the USOC’s goal was to make the team “darker, gayer, different.” Ooops.

Moody questioned how that effort would contribute to representation on the medal stand. Moody’s question was loudly booed, including by Fox News itself, which effectively disowned him: “John Moody’s column does not reflect the views or values of Fox News and has been removed.”

Well, it turned out Moody’s concern was correct: Team USA gathered 23 medals---fewest since 1998.

The most front-and-center, in-your-face, of the “darker, gayer, different” contingent made their mark not in their competitions but in their sideshow antics. These were speed skater Shani Davis, freestyle skier Gus Kenworthy, and figure skater Adam Rippon. Here’s what happened:

Shani Davis and luge athlete Erin Hamlin were among the nominees to carry the Stars and Stripes in the opening ceremony. According to USA Today, "...the vote was tied 4-4 between Davis and Hamlin. The USOC's official procedure, determined last year and communicated to athletes, dictated that a coin flip must be used to break the tie." Hamlin won the toss.

Davis did not accept this gracefully. USA Today reported that he tweeted: "...when I won the 1000m in 2010 I became the first American to 2-peat in that event. @TeamUSA dishonorably tossed a coin to decide its 2018 flag bearer...#BlackHistoryMonth2018..." And he then chose not to march in the opening ceremony parade with his teammates. So apparently Davis thought his color and his prior-year medal entitled him to be the flag bearer--rules be damned.

Officially gay Gus Kenworthy failed to medal in his freestyle skiing event. But he got his moment in the spotlight. At the conclusion of his failed event, his boyfriend Matthew Wilkas was waiting for him, rainbow flag in hand and wearing a shirt emblazoned USAGAY. According to time.com, Kenworthy had been vocal about representing LGBT Americans at the Seoul games. Kenworthy and Wilkas shared a televised kiss in front of an ecstatic crowd.

And just to be sure the world knew (as if the world cared) of his disdain for the current Administration, Kenworthy tweeted: "*Everybody here has worked so hard to make it to the Olympics...Everyone except Ivanka. Honestly, tf is she doing here??*" [tf is an abbreviation of wtf, see urbandictionary.com]

Flamboyantly gay (if you doubt it, google him) figure skater Adam Rippon spent his Olympic energy criticizing Vice President Mike Pence, who was charged, along with his wife Karen, to lead the U.S. delegation at the Seoul games. Reports differ, but it appears that Pence offered to meet with Rippon but was rebuffed.

Unlike Davis and Kenworthy, Rippon actually won a share of a bronze medal in a team event. Rippon was always-on: calling attention to himself, stirring up controversy, and yakking up a storm. After his competition in the games, NBC offered Rippon a gig as a correspondent for their coverage. But, as reported on [money.cnn.com](http://money.cnn.com), Rippon turned down the offer, saying he needed instead to stay with his teammates and friends in the Olympic village.

Fortunately, the Seoul games were not all about diversity and grievance.

Space won't permit listing them all but there were many highlights, including a gold for women's hockey and a surprise first-ever gold in curling. And the only American woman to land a triple axel in any Olympics. A total of nine gold medals, and no raised fists or rainbow flags on the medal stand.

And finally there's Lauren Gibbs (who is African-American). Gibbs and her teammate Elana Meyers Taylor won silver in the women's bobsled. Gibbs took several selfies with Ivanka Trump and White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders. Along with the selfies, Gibbs posted the message in the paragraph below. What a refreshing and encouraging contrast to the rudeness and disrespect displayed by the aggrieved.

"It's important to remember that we don't have to agree on everything to get along, be civil to each other and enjoy each others company.

#itsforamerica it was a pleasure to meet you both!

Lauren Gibbs (@lagibbs84) February 25, 2018."