

Munich Memory Project

SPORTS DAY

During the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, 11 members of the Israeli Olympic team were taken hostage and murdered by the Black September terrorist organization.

For 22 hours the world watched to see what would happen. During the standoff and after the deaths of the athletes – the Games continued. In 2012, in honor of the 40th anniversary of this tragic event, organizations, communities, families from around the world sought recognition of this event by requesting that the International Olympic Committee approve 1 minute of silence in their memory at the opening ceremony of the 2012 games. The request was denied.

The **Munich Memory Project Sports Day** was designed to be a yearly memorial for the 11 murdered athletes.

Ceremonies are important and useful but the most powerful way, the Jewish way, to perpetuate the memory of the deceased is by integrating it into LIFE.

Munich Memory Sports Day is a natural and fun way to make sure neither the horror of what happened nor the humanity of the victims are forgotten. As a community, we honor their legacy through passing on the joy of sports, strength in community and memory of each of the victims as a human being - a man who loved sports, a friend, a family member, a Jew.

Why do the youth of today need to know about this?

The Munich Massacre was the first time the terrorism spectacle unfolded on TV, and one of the first times that antisemitic terrorism took place on a global stage. Sadly, it would not be the last.

Less than 30 years after the Holocaust, Jews were again murdered on German soil simply because they were Jewish, because they were Israeli. Today Jews are still targeted simply because they are Jewish. It is increasingly clear that terrorism is not a Jewish (or Israeli) problem but rather a global problem, and Jews and Israelis in particular are continuously and constantly singled out.

Sadly, in mainstream media and global awareness, victims of terrorism in Israel do not garner the same sympathy as victims of attacks in Europe. It is in this complex reality that our children live. Empowering them with the knowledge of how to address the horror of terrorism and memorialize victims in a positive way is an unfortunately necessary life-skill to have.

*Be a part of making memory meaningful
with this positive engagement opportunity.*

INSTRUCTIONS

Sports Day can be as large or as small as you like.

This can be an activity in gym class, an event for an entire grade level, school or the kids in your synagogue, youth movement or just something you do with family or friends.

Set up the games:

The goal: tie together games participants will enjoy with the memories and faces of the Munich 11 (see the [athletes memory section](#) below).

How?

Define "arenas" of competition in honor of the athletes.

We understand that it is not possible to recreate each of their field of sport in Olympic dimension however it is possible to create different games to symbolize the games these athletes excelled in: wrestling, weightlifting, shooting, fencing, track.

Schools that have these or some of these sports as part of their repertoire can set up competitions according to the guidelines of those fields. Communities that do not have these capabilities can adapt to what is available for example:

- Don't have a race track? Set up markers to define the "race track" for a 400 yard dash competition / Run, touch the wall of the gym and race back to the other side.
- Don't have weights to lift? Create your own weights by filling up bottles of water.

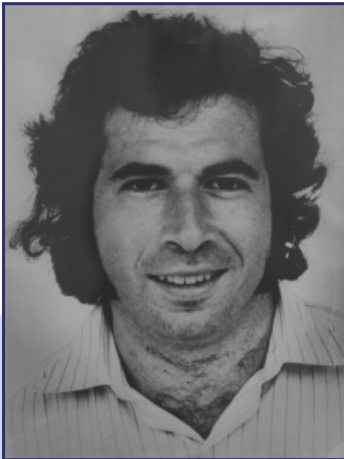
- Don't want to hold a wrestling match? Hold any kind of competition that utilizes the skills of a wrestler: strength, speed, balance and declare that it is symbolic of a wrestling match. It could be who can do the most cartwheels in a row, walk the fastest across a balance beam or anything else that suits the participants.
- Shooting can become anything that entails concentration and precision from throwing darts to a game of pin the tail on the donkey. Be creative!
- Fencing can become anything that involves speed, balance, strategy from a duel with pretend swords to a game of tag. Utilize the games that are natural to the age level and capabilities of the participants!

Integrate the memory:

- 1) Print the athletes' memory section below.
- 2) Make sure the participants have read the memory section. This can be done by reading it together before the start of the games. Alternatively, the participants can receive the section ahead of time and read it before the Sports Day. The goal is to make sure that all of the participants are familiar with the names and faces of each of the athletes.
- 3) Post the corresponding memory pages in a highly visible place next to the games in honor of that athlete so that the participants see the names, faces and bios of the athletes that are being honored with that specific game:

Field of Athletics	Athlete	Athletic Profession
Wrestling	Moshe Weinberg	wrestling coach
	Yossef Gutfreund	wrestling referee
	Eliezer Halfin	wrestler
	Mark Slavin	wrestler
Weightlifting	Yakov Springer	weightlifting judge
	Yossef Romano	weightlifter
	Ze'ev Friedman	weightlifter
	David Mark Berger	weightlifter
Shooting	Kehat Shorr	shooting coach
Fencing	Andre Spitzer	fencing coach
Track and Field	Amitzur Shapira	track and field coach

Let the Games begin!



David Mark Berger

WEIGHTLIFTER

May 24, 1944 – September 6, 1972

Born: May 24, 1944 in Shaker Heights, Ohio

Field of athletics: Weightlifting

Age: 28 years old

Survived by: Parents

Buried: Mayfield Cemetery, Cleveland, Ohio

Born and raised in the United States, Berger was a lawyer by education and had emigrated to Israel after taking part in the 1969 Maccabiah Games.

While studying at Tulane, he continued weightlifting training at the New Orleans Athletic Club. As a junior at Tulane, he won the NCAA weightlifting title in the 148-pound class. Berger earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Tulane in 1966. He went on to enroll in a combined MBA-law degree program at Columbia University in New York, from which he graduated in 1969. While working toward his degrees, Berger continued to devote time to weightlifting, training at the McBurney YMCA in Midtown Manhattan. His father, Benjamin, was once quoted as saying, "I used to tell him 'You may not be the best weightlifter in the world, but you're certainly the smartest!'"

After winning a gold medal in the middleweight weight-lifting contest in the 1969 Maccabiah Games, Berger emigrated to Israel, intending to open a law office in Tel Aviv after completing his compulsory military service. Continuing his weightlifting competitions, he won a silver medal at the 1971 Asian Weightlifting Championships, and achieved a long time dream when he was chosen to represent Israel as a member of the 1972 Israeli Olympic team. In late August of that year, Berger flew to Munich with his teammates. On September 2, 1972, Berger competed, but was eliminated in an early round.

During the terrorist attack Berger was shot in his left shoulder, a wound seen by German officials later in the day. It is believed that Berger, being physically one of the largest of the hostages, was also beaten in order to intimidate the other hostages. During the attempt by the German border guards and Munich police to ambush the terrorists and free the hostages and the ensuing two-hour gunfight, one of the terrorists turned on the helicopter in which Berger was sitting and sprayed it with machine-gun fire. The other three hostages in the helicopter were killed instantly, but somehow Berger only received two non-lethal wounds in his legs. The terrorist then detonated a hand grenade inside the helicopter, causing a huge explosion and fire. Berger died of smoke inhalation. The five hostages in the other helicopter were all shot to death by another terrorist.

While the 10 other Israeli Olympians were flown to and buried in Israel, David Berger's body was returned to the United States on an Air Force jet personally ordered by President Richard Nixon.





Ze'ev Friedman

WEIGHTLIFTER

June 10, 1944 – September 6, 1972

Born: June 10, 1944 in Prokopyevsk, Soviet Union

Field of athletics: Weightlifting

Age: 28 years old

Survived by: Parents and sister

Buried: Kiryat Shaul Cemetery, Tel Aviv

Ze'ev Friedman was a child survivor of the Holocaust. His parents had fled to the Soviet Union to escape the Nazi regime. The family went to Bielawa, Poland in 1957 with the aim of emigrating to Israel. For a number of years, Bielawa served as an important transit point for Jews before their emigration. The Friedmans finally managed to leave Poland in 1960 and make Aliyah.

He began his sports career as a gymnast, but later switched to weightlifting. He was a member of Hapoel Kiryat Haim sports club.

In 1972, Ze'ev Friedman competed at the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, West Germany as a weightlifter. He placed 12th, one of the best achievements of any Israeli athlete at the time.





Yossef Gutfreund

WRESTLING REFEREE

December 20, 1931 – September 6, 1972

Born: December 20, 1931 in in Romania

Field of athletics: Wrestling (referee)

Age: 40 years old

Survived by: Wife and two daughters

Buried: Kiryat Shaul Cemetery, Tel Aviv

Yossef made Aliyah in 1948, at the age of 17. He served in the 1956 Sinai War and the 1967 Six Day War.

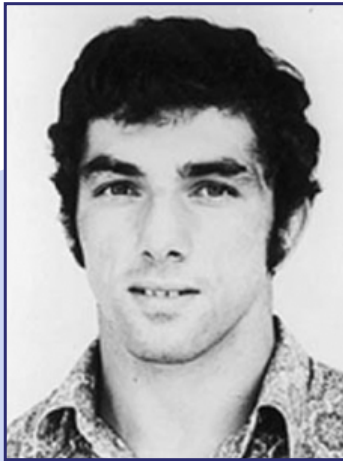
Yossef lived in Jerusalem with his wife and two daughters. He was head coach of the Betar Club Gym, and he also ran an electric appliance shop.

He was an was an Olympic official at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich; his fourth Olympiad.

On 5 September 1972, Gutfreund was sleeping in the Israeli coaches' quarters in the Olympic Village. At around 4:30 am he heard a noise outside the door and went to investigate, thinking that it might be wrestling coach Moshe Weinberg, who had the other key to the door. He saw the door begin to open and caught a glimpse of masked men with guns on the other side. Gutfreund threw his 6-foot 3-inch, 290 pound frame against the door and screamed a warning to his fellow Israelis. The force expended by Gutfreund on one side of the door and the eight terrorists on the other was enough to twist the hinges and doorjamb out of place. The precious few seconds allowed his roommate, weightlifting coach Tuvia Sokolsky, to smash a window and escape. In the adjacent Apartment 2, race-walker Dr. Shaul Ladany was jolted awake by Gutfreund's screams and also managed to escape the building.

Yossef's last name, Gutfreund, means "good friend." His wife, Miriam, said "His last act was typical of him. He spent his whole life helping others."





Eliezer Halfin

WRESTLER

June 18, 1948 – September 6, 1972

Born: June 18, 1948 in Riga, Latvia

Field of athletics: Wrestling

Age: 24 years old

Survived by: Parents and sister

Buried: Kiryat Shaul Cemetery, Tel Aviv

Eliezer Halfin was born to Holocaust survivors in Riga, Latvia. He was denied from playing sports for being a Jew. He made Aliyah with his family only in 1969 and officially became an Israeli citizen seven months prior to his death.

Eliezer was a lightweight wrestler and was active for 11 years. In Israel he was a member of Hapoel Tel Aviv club. He won 12th place in the world championships.

During 1971 he placed second place in the international competition in Bucharest, Romania. In 1972 in Greece he placed 3rd.

Participating in the 20th Olympic Games was the highlight of his career and his dream.





Yossef Romano

WEIGHTLIFTER

April 15, 1940 – September 5, 1972

Born: April 15, 1940 in Benghazi, Libya

Field of athletics: Weightlifting

Age: 32 years old

Survived by: Wife and three daughters

Buried: Herzilya Cemetery

Yossef Romano was born to a Jewish family in Benghazi, Libya, one of ten children born to Larnato and Hieria Romano. When he was six years old, Romano and his family made aliyah to Mandatory Palestine in 1946 following the upheaval of violence against Jews.

Yossef was an interior decorator by profession, and had three daughters with his wife, Ilana. They lived in Herzliya. Romano fought in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Romano devoted much of his free time to weightlifting, and spent 14 years doing so. He represented his association, Hapoel Tel Aviv, and the national team in various competitions and for ten years was the Israeli champion in the weight category of -75 kg. During the final years of his life Romano coached and managed the discipline of weightlifting at the association.

Romano competed in the middleweight weightlifting division in the 1972 Olympics, but was unable to complete one of his lifts due to a ruptured knee tendon. He was due to fly home to Israel on September 6, 1972 to have an operation on the injured knee.

During the attack, Romano fought back against the terrorists. Deciding to make an example of Romano, they castrated him and left him to bleed to death in front of the bound hostages. His bloodied corpse was left at the feet of his teammates all day as a warning.

After the death of her son, Romano's mother committed suicide. Several years later his brother did as well. Romano was portrayed by actor and producer Sam Feuer in the 2005 film, *Munich*, which was directed by Steven Spielberg. After viewing the movie, Ilana Romano, Yossef's widow, said "We don't have a problem with it; the opposite, we are glad that people are being reminded of what happened in Munich so it will never happen again".

Ilana Romano fought unsuccessfully for a moment of silence to be held at the 2012 Summer Olympics in memory of the Israeli athletes murdered forty years prior. In 2014, the International Olympic Committee agreed to contribute \$250,000 towards a memorial to the dead Israeli athletes.





Amitzur Shapira

TRACK AND FIELD COACH

July 9, 1932 – September 6, 1972

Born: July 9, 1932 in Tel Aviv, British Mandate Palestine

Field of athletics: Track and field (coach)

Age: 40 years old

Survived by: Wife and four children

Buried: Kiryat Shaul Cemetery, Tel Aviv

Amitzur Shapira was born in Tel Aviv and lived in Herzliya. He was one of the outstanding sprinters in the 1950s and in 1952 earned a degree to be a physical education teacher while also becoming a track and field coach. For many years, he served as a teacher and educator at the Wingate Institute's Jewish College.

Shapira dedicated his time and efforts to sport and helped guide the younger generation of stars in track and field. He was the head coach for the Israeli track and field team trained 10 of Israel's best athletes.

One of his most outstanding achievements was the discovery of Esther Shachamarov, as he served as her coach and guide for six years while she competed in Israel and abroad – until the Munich Olympics. When she heard the news that her coach had been murdered, she withdrew from the 1972 Olympics. In 1976, she became the first Israeli to reach an Olympic final.

His grandson is the German-based artist and comedian Shahak Shapira.





Kehat Shorr

SHOOTING COACH

February 21, 1919 – September 6, 1972

Born: February 21, 1919 in Romania

Field of athletics: Shooting (coach)

Age: 53 years old

Survived by: Wife and married daughter

Buried: Kiryat Shaul Cemetery, Tel Aviv

Kehat Shorr was born in Romania. He survived the Holocaust in Romania as a partisan in the Carpathian Mountains, continuously risking his life to rescue other trapped Jews. A patriotic Zionist, he was barred by Romanian authorities from emigrating to Israel. In Romania he devoted himself to marksmanship and became an expert marksman.

Kehat made Aliyah on September 5, 1963 - nine years to the day before his murder. He lived in Tel Aviv with his wife and daughter.

He joined the "Hapoel" team and quickly became its coach, training many young Israeli marksmen. He trained the national team for the Twentieth Olympic Games in Munich.

During the Munich hostage crisis Kehat Shorr was photographed standing next to fellow coach Andre Spitzer at the second-floor window of their besieged building while terrorists trained guns on the pair.





Mark Slavin

WRESTLER

January 31, 1954 – September 6, 1972

Born: January 31, 1954 in Minsk, Belarus

Field of athletics: Wrestling

Age: 18 years old

Survived by: Parents, brother and sister, and a sister who was born after he died

Buried: Kiryat Shaul Cemetery, Tel Aviv

Mark Slavin was a child of survivors of the Holocaust from Minsk. He had taken up wrestling as a youth to defend himself against anti-Semitic attacks. Slavin soon became noted as a talented wrestler, and won the Soviet Greco-Roman wrestling middleweight junior championship in 1971.

Slavin had moved to Israel just four months before the Olympic games, joining Hapoel Tel Aviv and the Israeli Olympic Team.

The 1972 Olympics was due to be his first international competition for Israel, and Slavin had been considered Israel's most likely medal winner at the Munich games. He was the youngest Israeli Olympian competing at the Games. Slavin had been due to make his Olympic debut on the day of the terror attack.





Andre Spitzer

FENCING COACH

July 4, 1945 – September 6, 1972

Born: July 4, 1945 in Timișoara, Romania

Field of athletics: Fencing (coach)

Age: 27 years old

Survived by: Wife and daughter

Buried: Kiryat Shaul Cemetery, Tel Aviv

Spitzer was born in Timișoara in Romania. His parents survived the Holocaust in Nazi forced labor camps. After his father died in 1956 when he was 11, Andre and his mother moved to Israel. He served in the Israeli Air Force and attended Israel's National Sport Academy, where he studied fencing.

In 1968, he was sent to the Netherlands for further instruction in fencing for further training in The Hague with fencing master Abraham. In 1971, he married one of his students, Ankie, who converted to Judaism. Andre returned to Israel with his wife soon afterward, where at age 27, he became the country's top fencing instructor. The couple lived in Biranit, Israel, along the border with Lebanon.

Andre helped found the National Fencing Academy, and became chief fencing instructor at the Wingate Institute.

The couple's daughter, Anouk Yael, was born two months before the 1972 Olympic Games. Ankie Spitzer recalled her husband's idealism and attitude towards the Olympics:

(While strolling in the Olympic Village) ... he spotted members of the Lebanese team, and told (me) he was going to go and say hello to them... I said to him, "Are you out of your mind? They're from Lebanon!" Israel was in a state of war with Lebanon at the time. "Ankie," Andre said calmly, "that's exactly what the Olympics are all about. Here I can go to them, I can talk to them, I can ask them how they are. That's exactly what the Olympics are all about." So he went ... towards this Lebanese team, and ... he asked them "How were your results? I'm from Israel and how did it go?" And to my amazement, I saw that the (Lebanese) responded and they shook hands with him and they talked to him and they asked him about his results. I'll never forget, when he turned around and came back towards me with this huge smile on his face. "You see!" said Andre excitedly. "This is what I was dreaming about. I knew it was going to happen!"

After Andre's murder, Ankie decided to remain in Israel with her daughter, because, "[In Amsterdam] I would never be able to explain to Anouk what her father was about. She would always be an exception there. Here, she would fit in."

Ankie Spitzer led the fight to get the German government to admit their culpability in the failed rescue of the athletes and pushing for appropriate recognition from the Olympic Committee.





Yakov Springer

WEIGHTLIFTING JUDGE

June 1921 – September 6, 1972

Born: June 1921 in Poland

Field of athletics: Weightlifting (coach and judge)

Age: 51 years old

Survived by: Wife, son, and daughter

Buried: Holon Cemetery

Yakov Springer was born in Poland in 1921. During the Holocaust, Yakov Springer fought in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. He lost his entire family during the war.

After World War II, Yakov studied at the Academy of Sports in Poland, and married Rosa, his second wife.

In 1957, Yakov made Aliyah to Israel with his wife, son, and daughter. In Israel Yakov coached weightlifting. He was a beloved teacher at Ramot High School in Bat Yam.

Yakov generously gave his free time to organize sports clubs for slum children in Jaffa, trying to wipe out juvenile delinquency the best way he knew.

He was a renowned international judge, attending the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, serving as the first Israeli Olympic judge ever. Yakov was reluctant to attend the 1972 Olympics in Munich, but went as an act of solidarity with his fellow Israelis.





Moshe Weinberg

WRESTLING COACH

September 19, 1939 – September 5, 1972

Born: September 19, 1939 in Haifa, Mandate Palestine

Field of athletics: Wrestling (coach)

Age: 32 years old

Survived by: Wife and son

Buried: Holon Cemetery

Moshe Weinberg was the coach of the Israeli international wrestling team as well as being the coach of Hapoel Tel Aviv. He was the Israeli youth champion in wrestling and also the adult champion for a period of 8 years.

He began his career in Hapoel Haifa, later becoming a certified coach at the Wingate Institute. In his capacity as national wrestling coach, he was sent to the 1972 Summer Olympics at Munich.

In the early morning hours of September 5, 1972, eight members of Black September entered the Olympic Village, Munich and broke into Apartment 1 at Connollystraße 31, which housed five coaches and two referees of the Israeli Olympic team. As the terrorists broke into the apartment, Weinberg was confronted by the group's leader and tried to fight him off using a fruit knife he had found in the room and picked up. He managed to slash at but not wound the terrorist and was shot through the cheek.

The wounded Weinberg was ordered by the terrorists at gunpoint to show them where the Israelis were. Weinberg led the terrorists past Apartment 2, which housed the fencers, shooters and track athletes, and instead took them to Apartment 3, which housed Israel's weightlifters and wrestlers, hoping they would be able to overpower the terrorists.

Taken by surprise, the six athletes of Apartment 3 were captured by the terrorists. While the hostages were being marched back to the officials' apartment, Weinberg once again attacked the intruders, knocking one of them unconscious and allowing one of his wrestlers, Gad Tsohari, to escape. The terrorists fatally shot Weinberg, then threw his body into the street.

Weinberg's actor son, Guri, portrayed his father in the 2005 movie Munich.

